

System change to reach net-zero

1. Urgency

Okay, the situation becomes crystal clear. That's the only advantage of not supporting decisions with facts and figures. and ignoring dire warnings. This holds true in business, in relationships, and in traffic. If you don't react to danger with foresight (feedforward), at some point you will come face to face with the very last chance to save your life.

Consider the climate situation. Disruption is definitely accelerating at the moment.

The climate is showing more and more sharply where it is going.

Alarming reports are stringing together for all to see: The increasing frequency and ferocity of floods, fires, heat waves, and droughts; the increasing poor harvests of agricultural crops, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and fish; the acceleration of meltings, of ocean warming, and of sea level rise.

Meanwhile, the current trend in the rate of change of the CO₂ concentration (Atmospheric CO₂ Growth Rate) in our atmosphere cannot soothe us either as it continues to rise. On November 22, 2022, for example, it appears to have risen 3.37 ppm. compared to the same date in 2021. [Stefan Rahmstorf](#): "*...die Emissionen müssen jetzt in einen steilen Sinkflug übergehen und bis 2030 halbiert werden. Und bis jetzt sinken sie ja nicht mal!*"

This **emergency** is, however, increasingly recognized. The experts and politicians at COP27 displayed a certain desperation, and recent waves of protests put their finger on the urgency. The extra-parliamentary protest is becoming more urgent, more decisive, more general, and also more radical, but in terms of content – in terms of direction of the solution – it is no big deal. Yes, people are calling for the immediate decarbonization of all energy use, and thus for a rapid acceleration of the ongoing transition. However, that solution is guaranteed to crash. We no longer have that leeway on emissions. We are already at 420 ppm. So within 6 years we will probably cross the 450 ppm mark, because the reduction path we are going down now^{*1} – also an accelerated variant – will succeed only if we intensify industrial production and international traffic flows over the next 20 years^{*2}. Above 450, a fatal unleashing is an immutable fact, and we are going to crash, if we [are not already](#) crashing. "*We need to mobilize*," Greta cries out. Her exclamation, of course, is meant to make addressing climate heating a top priority, but if you don't specify what commands to give when everyone is mobilized, mobilization gets **no direction** and therefore no mass. Everyone is willing, but to which direction?

Some to producing and transporting on hydrogen, [others](#) to "industrial food production and rewilding," [thirds](#) to "air cabs and urban redesign", fourths to higher regions, and fifths to living without wanting to have children of their own.

The positive is that the bandwidth of our **options** is shrinking considerably. How so?

If the current path clearly ends in a crash (= extinction), we must start thinking of much crazier ways out than those conceived so far. I see only two real options left:

*1 Namely, a global energy transition i.e. keeping all globally interconnected production processes going while accelerating their conversion to low-carbon energy inputs.

*2 Global manufacturing, transatlantic trade, communications and distribution depend in a cascade of fossil energy applications. Raw material extraction, heavy transport and mass transit, the armed forces as well, plan to run on fossil fuels for decades to come. Hundreds of very large airports are under construction or **expanding**, all ports and servers are expanding, and international road building, cabling and pipeline construction are bursting beyond at the seams.

- α. Either we start like mad^{*3} with preparations to move 3 to 6 billion people from all low and too hot areas to northern highlands within 15 years.
- β. Or we completely stop using fossil energy within a few years, **without** the condition that it should be completely replaced by renewable energy;

Both operations are huge, both physically and socio-politically. But the funny thing is that the level of insanity of these two options is slowly beginning to come closer together.

Option β (i.e. reduce our energy consumption violently) seemed madness until recently, but is physically feasible, plus you're preserving a future. Whereas option α will drive emissions and carbon ppm levels in the atmosphere completely through the roof. And then: where are these people supposed to go? No one will be eager to see them coming. In an ambiance of fast deterioration of living and growing conditions, where everyone begins to suffer with no signs of better times, "we" won't amount to anything anymore, so it will be pushing and killing at the exit to other unstable habitats, and being decimated at their entrance. Everyone (citizens, countries, companies) will fight their asses off to maintain their purchasing power and position. Even now we see that small obstructions within and between nations (such as Covid, migration, water problems, recessions) cause polarization, escalate tensions, and then provoke wars. Therefore, implementation of option α is a path full of global conflict. Everything there becomes shaky and suicidal. It amounts to persistent crashing.

Is option β then more appealing? Let's flesh out that option somewhat in order to answer^{*4} the question..

2. What might option β look like?

We can derive some direction regarding the shape of option β from the way organisms, people, and groups react to severe input disturbances (environmental changes). They then cling to things around them. A piece of wood, for example. Near Calais is a town ([Grande-Synthe](#)) with a huge number of unemployed people because Arcelormittal has closed factories there. A French mayor has a lot of power, and this one exploited that power as follows. His **slogan**: not buying power but having the power to live. His **philosophy**: autonomy and self-reliance. His **deeds**: the city bought farmland and gave it on lease to organic farmers, more and more bike paths are being built through the city, neighborhoods are being greened, vegetable gardens are being set up and issued everywhere, and workshops have been founded to teach people to make things themselves.

Something like that lifts the mood locally quite a bit. Not only around feelings of powerlessness over climate disruption, but also around the stalemate between the ecological and the social. Even the powerless can transform their situation.

Similar initiatives are currently gaining momentum all over Europe. Countries, regions and municipalities want to ramp up the circularity and autonomy of their processes. This takes the form of [local vegetable growing](#), community [gardens](#), repair-workshops, clothing and furniture recycling, [energy generation](#), transportation services, and tiny house expansion plans. See, for example, this

*3 Given the current acceleration of warming (no one really saw coming), it is not unwise to start using the upper edge of climate predictions as a benchmark. Which means? Amongst other things, our children will already have to move within a few decade or so to stay alive. See Elizabeth **Weise's** review (*End of civilisation: climate change apocalypse could start by 2050 if we don't act*, report warns, USA today, 9 June 2019) or see **Spratt & Dunlop's** scenario analysis (*Existential climate-related security risk : A scenario approach*, Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration, Melbourne June 2018).

*4 In this article, of course, I am only going to shape option β. Option α is not urgent because we end up in that automatically if we continue our current lifestyle. At the end of this article, I will refer to a couple of studies that describe what the hell of option α looks like approximately

[description](#) of some 20 German municipalities that are preparing large areas of land for the construction of micro-houses with a permanent residence permit ('Erstwohnung'). Also notable: economists and politicians, a bit shy still, are looking more often at degrowth propaganda (see this [CNN article](#)).

Still, there are a lot of snags along that path of "**providing locals more autonomous access to locally available livelihoods**". I am going to touch and explore those as much as possible, to determine in what way they can be neutralized. After all: Setting up a new lifeboat (i.e., a zero-emission habitat) to function stably for centuries is not a matter of solving an equation with three unknowns. It has countless aspects. So I'm going to propose some rudimentary outlines first, and later start configuring them deeper with regard to security, liveability, and stability.

The main ambition, of course, is to stay alive. That would not be inconvenient. Well, then, within a very short time (3 to 5 years) we would have to move along a linear and accurate trajectory to a nearly zero-emission economy. So, at first glance, it would seem necessary and sufficient that we **totally** redesign and stabilize, above all, the processes by which we fulfill our primary necessities of life – such as food, housing, transportation, care and relaxing – and shut down all unnecessary processes.

Just to be clear: if we want to go down this radical route (option **β**), we must start working together completely straight. Quite different from what we have done so far. We must face the situation honestly and clear-headed^{*5} together, i.e. no more goal-directed rubbing syrup or vinegar on each other's mouths. **The role of scientists** also needs to be rethought. Science has become a counting machine that runs after the decision-makers, a specialised staff function that does not realise that it is part of a solution drive that is actually making the problem worse. The drive to win (dominate) make the deciders always only flee into thinking instead of actively putting the brakes on^{*6}. Especially the cooperative sustainability-science mindset has contributed to the public authorities' and companies' attempt to solve the climate problem by reconciling the goat (expansion and growth) and the

*5 Bloody honest is, for example, to represent the emissions of each product and service as 'the sum of all emissions that have been necessary during the entire chain of the production process, including the emissions of the transport services that have taken place in between'. That means, for example, stopping attributing only direct emissions to an airline trip but also adding all emissions around aircraft construction and airports to it, and ceasing, for example, to administer the renovation of a runway (as is soon to happen at Schiphol Airport) under the emissions of Dutch road construction (and, through the cement they use, under the emissions of China). **Fair also means** stop presenting China as a big emitter. China is only a very small emitter of greenhouse gases if you consistently subtract from their current emissions all the emissions they commit for products and services they produce for Western consumers.

*6 See the behaviour of Gates, Musk, and Bezos. Their recently published climate solutions are all high-tech, energy-intensive, risky and seductive. These are dealers. Dealers need active markets. Their main concern is to keep the level of global interactions, transactions, goods and information flows at an all-time high. Solving every problem with a step forward (= innovation), in other words. See how [this open letter](#) uncovers that greedy grasping (and arrogance). New round, new prizes, new customers. **Look at 5G**. We do not need it. There is enough reality around us so we don't need excessive access to reality from elsewhere. It is new technology that forces us to use more energy and raw materials, and to enter into new transactions. **Look at Microsoft**, which does no more than delivering information weapons to parties that are competing with each other for customers. They earn their living by creating tools to boost the update, cookie, and tracking paranoia that allow parties to push each other out of the spotlight on the internet To feed their AI algorithms (which are needed to configure those tools) with data, by now absurd computing power is required, resulting in data centres that consume more energy than a substantial city. [See this one in NL](#), for example. Are we going to listen to climate solutions from people who cannot [restrain themselves](#)? Why doesn't Bill Gates simply put a total brake on Microsoft's absurd energy and resource use in order to stay ahead with their megalomaniac AI and Cloud programme? And why doesn't he dump his [own private planes](#) – he privately owns two Gulfstream's, two Bombardier Challenger's, a Cessna Seaplane and a collection of helicopters – in the [Mojave Desert Airplane Cemetery](#)?

cabbage (climate). It has been tried and proved impossible within the boundaries set by the decision-makers (owners). It failed^{*7}. The cabbage is almost gone and the goat is fat. We are steaming at full speed towards a wall of destruction and misery. Presenting illusions in order to shy away from more realistic observations and deep solutions will not work and drives us even further into a dead end. That leeway is gone.

3. Outlining option β

The option β main themes that should be unquestionably under discussion both nationally and internationally are demographics^{*8}, defense^{*9}, production, and consumption (i.e. lifestyles). Regarding the latter two, option β requires limiting and containing volumes^{*10}, and this by – logical right? – eliminating the superfluous^{*11}, prioritizing (i.e. assigning priority to) the necessary, and then greatly standardizing^{*12} what remains of necessary industrial production and greatly appealing it in terms of innovation by greatly extending the lifespan of products and services.

Kate Raworth puts it in a more difficult way, "*Primary processes must be circular, regenerative, and local.*" Circular and regenerative so that it needs to take in as little new material and energy as possible to keep running. Local (i.e. short and small) circular chains so that almost no packaging, refrigeration, **transportation**, and preservation is needed. And local (a) to minimize governance, communication, and external resource use, and (b) to maximize internal resource – i.e. what exists on the spot or comes in from above (light, air, and water) – use.

The rough outline above is about the only feasible way to prevent a chain reaction of catastrophic climate developments. Nevertheless, very big differences of opinion immediately arise around this outline.

In fact, the elite then immediately exclaims: "*Whoa, man doesn't want that!! They want convenience, efficiency, and then to discover the world. Man just wants more and more. That is the desire for freedom^{*13}, it is innate!*".

*7 This fact has recently been increasingly recognised by sustainability-people. **Afionis** et al. (in *Consumption-based carbon accounting: Does it have a future?* WIREs Climate Change, vol. 8, 2017) conclude: "The climate change regime has gradually evolved into a prime example of an ossifying process that continuously receives new technical or scientific input but consistently fails to act on it". **González-Márquez & Toledo** (in *Sustainability Science: A Paradigm in Crisis?* Sustainability 12, 2802, 2020) dig even deeper, and are arguing that the core idea (namely, the necessity and viability of economic growth) behind sustainability science and sustainable development must be questioned because the pillars beneath it (namely, the belief in the power of markets and human ingenuity) can no longer bear the load of the current vortex of misery.

*8 Population numbers should be at least stabilised country by country.

*9 Peace and total disarmament must become top priorities of international negotiations. Military activity at sea and in the air is both poorly quantified and frequently absent from CO2 emission records. We must [dismantle](#) this war machine if we want to survive. See also [this analysis](#) of Nick Buxton of the Transnational Institute.

*10 In order to quickly scale down the demand for energy to the level where that demand can be liquidated by the limited supply of relatively clean energy that we can now get going.

*11 Or to be substituted by emission-free variants. In cultural services, for example, this is feasible.

*12 Developing, marketing and servicing **hundreds of brands and types** of cars, washing machines, computers, phones, etc. in parallel represents an incredible waste of resources, labour input, and energy.

*13 Of course, the world elite don't want to hear about limitation at all. They are **transactionists** i.e. they milk people. They live off transactions between people. Of interfering in interpersonal interactions. They assist transactions (transport, storage, distribution, guidance, providing), intervene in transactions (trade, banking, brokerage, insurance), initiate transactions (politics, advertising, marketing), renew and repair transactions (law, applied research), administer transactions (statistics, accounting), and tax transactions

And I bounce right back: "*Man wants first of all security around the satisfaction of essential needs in a way that he gets enough of them. He only wants more when he cannot be sure to get enough, or when he can no longer feel that he has enough.*"

That last sub-sentence points to two deficiencies in the elite's field of vision that have given the current zeitgeist the blindness that has caused us – as is currently starkly [becoming evident](#) – to wander too close to the abyss.

Let me explain which more or less sneaking developments have increasingly narrowed and focused the field of vision of our zeitgeist, and have also changed the sense of being present to ourselves.

We have done nothing with energy applications in recent decades but relieve our muscles. We withdrew our bodies from seizing and manipulating hardware situations and coping harsh conditions. We have been distancing ourselves from those situations, scaling them up as well, making them operable with levers, buttons, keys, swipes, eye movements, sounds, and software. Whatever we want is being done. We can handle more of it now, can bypass them much more, but merging with it, residing with it through thick and thin, we hardly do anymore. **We don't receive any flow anymore.** We don't have the time or the closeness for it. For we are in a hurry to grab still a bigger piece of the pie by means of an ever-expanding arsenal of energy-powered devices.

In the above sketch, we see the two developments that have profoundly changed our existence in the last few decades, without us being aware of it^{*14}, coming out in full glory, namely

1. Our power and our domains have increased, with the consequence that we are increasingly functioning in **fiercer** competition among ourselves – i.e. innovatively competing with each other.
2. Because we function less muscularly and less versatile sensory, we **do not develop** enough feelings^{*15} to determine the direction of our behavior through impulse-making^{*16} and value development.

ad 1.

By choosing^{*17} for more and better energy applications in our interactions, we have also started to push (compete) against each other more and more fiercely, trying to outdo each other, to get ahead of

(governments). Transactionism, the good ones notwithstanding, is often accompanied by energy addiction (= their power tool), obsession with scientific futures (their lure) and with limitlessness (fresh markets, new customers).

[See also the distinction between somewhere's ("change is loss") and anywhere's (who control the commanding heights of political and cultural power) in Goodhart D., *The Road to Somewhere: The New Tribes Shaping British Politics*, Penguin, London, 2017.]

*14 Falling out of our field of vision.

*15 A **feeling** is: an output of our inner sensory (perceptual) system.

A human being is always trying to regulate himself and his environment (via behaviour) in such a way that a number of variables essential to him (= Essvar) will not get outside certain critical margins. Each Essvar guards a subsystem of our body. The trick is that those subsystems emit certain types of sensation depending on the extent to which their state is going to deviate from their equilibrium state. Those sensations can be roughly divided into like-feelings (**L-feeling**) and dislike-feelings (**D-feeling**).

The transition from like to dislike and vice versa is often quite vague. After all, feeling is a continuum, hence the term **LD-feeling**. Stomach, intestines, liver, pancreas, heart, genitals, leg muscles, nails, eyes, and brain, all have their own repertoire to relay their state upwards, and thereby report whether they are doing well or badly; whether they are singing or suffering.

*16 An 'impulse' is a (credit) balance of feelings. In normal language it is called 'craving for' or 'longing for'. More formally: An impulse is the difference between the LD-feeling linked to the actual Essvar state and the LD-feeling linked to the wanted Essvar state. What's a LD-feeling? See the preceding note.

*17 Both because we need to consolidate our position against pushing competitors, and because, due to **2**, we score less satisfaction where we are and are therefore less attached there.

the rest. Those energy applications have, as it were, taken possession of us. That game has of course been going on for centuries, but we got more and more hooked on it because of the new possibilities, and we no longer question it^{*18}. Nowhere else have I seen signaled, for example, that it is precisely our excessive mutual pushing (innovating, reorganizing, updating) that blocks us from ever being able to control the demand for energy. Any emission-reduction gain from installing renewables is already being cancelled out by increasing demand for energy. And that will continue. Thus: Because we can no longer think outside that competitive framework, we are caged in a game^{*19} that is going to get us killed.

ad 2.

Why does less direct bodily active contact (i.e. less flow with the stimuli and forces of reality) induce weaker development of feelings, and why would this evolution be of importance for configuring option β ? Well, there are many climate solutions being proposed – such as energy-autonomous mega-cities or robotized food production – that do not ask themselves how the change of position of man in such a solution will affect what he will want, and thus do, there. Whereas those effects are of course essential for the quality of life, for the development of the demand for energy, and for the stability of such a solution. Ergo: The **volition development** (i.e. the orientation and strength of his drives) of man is the crux of our configuration problem. All solutions proposed so far, including those around circular economy, tacitly assume that people and organizations will and can simply live on in the same specialized way and continually moving forward. That assumption is also a core part of transactionalists' resistance to localization and limitation. They basically say: you will never get a local configuration stable because that goes against the human desire for freedom; it will be a prison, unworthy of human beings.

It sounds like they're right, but then they overlook the fact that if you put a slightly different **carburetor**^{*20} in the local interaction mode (i.e., economy), coexistence there can run like clockwork without killing itself (as the current economy does). Transactionalists fail to see that because they systematically overlook the effects of 'having exposure' for human orientation. The innovations of the past century served convenience goals in addition to competitive goals. Many energy applications have appealed to the idea of freeing human beings for more interesting things than muscle work and sensory chores, of liberating them, so to speak, of elevating them. Thus the role of exposure for human volition development has become more or less a secret in the present zeitgeist. A silenced relic of the past.

In 2018, I wrote a book (*Tackling human complexity*) about the development of the relationship between feeling and reason within a human being. Briefly, it comes down to this: Human beings have a secret (i.e., an inner process) that you don't need to know in order to apply it. Lots of people use it without knowing what it is or how it works. That doesn't matter. Far worse is that there are also many who know it but never find out what it is nor how it works. What is it all about?

*18 As we did in the 1970s and 1980s. Please recall the active opposition to military regimes in Southern Europe (Greece, Portugal) and South and Central America, and to the U.S. military and covert interventions to overthrow anti-imperialist governments worldwide.

*19 How exactly that game works?

Economy is about efficient management of scarce resources, and thus concerns how a population organizes the exchange of (or competition for) scarce assets, goods and services. It's all about scarcity. It's about things that many people want (need) and don't have easy access to. This inter-competitive struggle to get access to assets, products and services actually runs completely on the fear (= sensing of eventualities) of all participants that they **might not be able to get enough** out of what is available (i.e. get insufficient access to). In that fear resides the ignition of the dynamics of the whole game, and especially of unlimited expansion (growth). Because? Where we need to compete, we keep trying to outdo each other (through innovations), we never get enough (because no matter how high we rise, competitors keep threatening us), and so we keep collectively intensifying and **expanding** that exchange.

*20 By relating people to (equipping with) resources in a slightly different way.

A human being is an open object. Stuff and impressions go in, stuff and actions come out. The turnaround speed of all that is critical. It should not go too fast, and it should not go too slow. The body must be able to handle top speeds, and get through the day even with little input. OK, so a main problem is "**finding and keeping balance in pace and rest**". How hard is the machine running? Everyone struggles with it. Determining for yourself what you need, whether you are not overloading, doing something for too long, taking too short a rest. It is also an important social issue when we are drawing from the same source or environment, because who among us is chronically taking too much, and who is chronically getting too little.

One would expect that the interaction between on the one hand the development of the relation between mind and feeling and the ability to find and keep balance on the other hand, would be a main topic in pedagogy, psychology and psychiatry. Yet it is not. Scientists hardly notice what's going on there, because they belong to the category that are able to know (describe) it, but are poorly-equipped to feel it. And so, they don't grasp fully the significance of feeling in the lifelong process of finding balance and moderation. The mind wants to control the corporeal (physical), but does not want to identify with it or become merged into it. It cautiously keeps its distance from feeling. Does not see it as a safe home (home) and source (of value) but rather as a problem to be solved. Professionals (brainies and nerds) who spend most of their time on logical reasoning, are very likely to distrust the instantaneous, immediate, small, and scary of being in feeling. Thereby: Science lives on intemperance^{*21}. So there is never enough of that.

4. How to configure option β to produce balance and satisfaction

Now what's in fact the core process to make daily life produce balance and enough? My grandparents milked 20 cows right by the North Sea. Those cows calved in the barn on the winter day. Each calf was taken away from its mother to the calf pen after three days. That was a closed barn that stood against a wide canal. The calves could walk around there (inside that barn) freely. Grandma gave them all individually 3 liters of cow's milk twice a day, and threw in a bale of hay each time. Enough input to grow. In that barn, so to speak. Because here it comes! Grandpa's ancestors were aware of the fact that if those calves were to stay alive outside that pen in the pastures that were all surrounded by deep ditches, canals, and sea coves, they still needed to get something very essential inside them, namely a feeling for water. Well how do you do that? Very simply, by constructing a door between the pen and the canal, and then, at the beginning of the grazing period, throwing all the calves into the canal. I experienced that a few times. How they all bellowed and screamed as they tried to climb out of that mud on the steep other side, desperately slipping back, sometimes giving up halfway, then trying to get one leg up in front of the other, and then finally standing on the other side shaking themselves uncomfortably dirty and wet, sniffing each other's disgusting stench. However one thing was for sure. No calf ever fell into the water again.. Whenever they had to go into the ditch side to drink, the black glow evoked so much disgust-feeling (dislike-feelings) from their memories and before their eyes that they determined their actions with extreme caution and took their sips with much caution and precision. Voilà, balance and cadance^{*22}.

Only where you desperately have to deal with, where you seem to get stuck, where reality gets very close to your skin, you develop a taste for all aspects, and thus harvest the raw materials to love or dislike something. Irresistible. You don't have to (and can't) figure it out: It works like a fart. But this one doesn't smell, but directs your thoughts, gives you – via doubt, fear and hope – orientation and

*21 I.e. workings within an individual or in their immediate environment that they themselves cannot cope with, cannot get in the right direction.

*22 Regulating capability too. They know how to deal with ditch sides, and get what they want there, and avoid what they necessarily don't want.

moderation. Sensibility is not a jammer as is quite often claimed^{*23}.

Three essential conditions for gaining feelings:

- Exposure: There must be impressions. The environment must have a sufficient bandwidth
- Do you allow? Do you let the impressions come in, or do you hold them off?
- Is it allowed? Are you being allowed to feel touched? Are you allowed to feel?

There is much philosophising about this. Also in economics. Why and when does someone have enough? Actually unnecessary because we are witnessing all around us how people manage to limit themselves in numerous situations, how they fix their leeway in dealing with something (sex, drinking, working, partners, friends, going out, buying, sports, eating, websurfing). Still: where does this constraining come from, if it comes, and why do some keep expanding and exceeding and making a mess, and others don't?

The general sloppiness of thinkers on this matter is that they do not penetrate **to the depths of our need factory**, to the point where our desire (i.e. liking something, longing for something) is put together. Desire (i.e. impulse) has a direction and intensity. This operates entirely on balancing feelings – i.e. weighing up the D-feelings and L-feelings – that possible situations we imagine evoke in us from previous experiences^{*24}. But that box of feelings is becoming increasingly impoverished. Senses and muscle groups, organs and limbs – in short, everything that contains neurons that can measure and transmit what the state of that body part is at a given moment – are increasingly less at stake (less switched on) in the regulation and manipulation of our concrete environments. They no longer get orders, become less perfused, lose size and reaction bandwidth because they get fewer thumps from the surrounding. People no longer have calluses on their hands, no longer suffer daily injuries, pushing and pulling has become a bit of finger work, and people want to get rid of that too. In short, that box of feelings no longer has any traffic, some don't get to open it at all without drugs either. Everything outside us and between us is managed and controlled by specialists, care workers, devices, machinery, regulations, formal arrangements, manuals, and apps.

But isn't being human defined as the ability to give meaning to something i.e. transport value from one thing to another? Isn't that volition process (i.e. making impulses, desires, values) a core process in everyone's existence alongside knowledge acquisition and creativity? So it is immensely important to keep the feeling bin inside us well-filled, and to learn to use it, such that the feelings we accumulated in all kinds of situations are easily retrievable at the moment of behavioural determination (i.e. decision-making).

It also cuts double. Why? See, without good desire, you quickly run the wrong way, because your direction is poor and your tenacity is weak (i.e. the controllability is low), but much worse is that your **satisfaction** when you achieve what you wanted is a bland bite that you soon finish with. Not much passes through you then; you're not noticing, for instance, how delicious it was, or how beautifully it fulfilled you, how terribly valuable it made your body. You don't dwell on it, don't fall silent, because you don't notice anything. As such, you take little comfort from the reality around you and thus create less of a home where you are. Which means? You don't find satisfaction, no haven, no rest point, so you start grasping for the next thing.

Do you notice the danger? Are you also noticing now that our engine **brake** (or retarder brake) **on expansion** and growth (i.e. our leverage towards enough) is not so easily findable and operational?

*23 Each feeling conveys, like a kind of mailman, a piece of reality, and contains data about what is happening here and now inside and outside the body. But the mind is usually busy traversing arguments, imaginations, and models with full attention, and thus often has no desire to address the messages of feeling. The thought show must go on, not get disturbed, even while eating.

*24 Chapter 3.2 of the 'Tackling Human Complexity' book includes a model of how this 'weighing' during impulse-making occurs, and how it develops over a lifetime.

Namely: you can talk a lot about feeling, but if you don't have it (or only to a small extent), you don't know what it is or how it could work. For instance, you can very easily alienate or isolate from it by too much mental activity, by too much power^{*25} or by an environment that is too protected, or by an environment that makes you uncomfortable with it. Unnoticed often. And that has happened. Slowly but surely. With invention after invention, organisation after organisation, arrangement after arrangement, warning system after warning system, cable after cable, road after road, we have built up that distance and supremacy, and phased out bare contact and manual labour. An ever-growing class of transactionists has positioned us in chains of specialists, streamlining our transactions (interactions) in every field. Rolling in convenience and wealth, we have become more desensitised. This makes it almost impossible, prevents us from being able to take quiet time to feel where we are any more, and encourages us to be mainly preoccupied with thinking about where we need to go next – thus also strengthening the increasing competition (see ad 1) and (where that competition has been outsourced to low-wage countries or robots) reinforcing disorientation^{*26}..

So: The development of sensibility (guaranteeing balance and satisfaction) requires exposure and thus having a certain accessibility^{*27} to a domain. That is, that one is dependent on^{*28} a domain/environment/space and also has the levers (potential input) to influence the processes in that domain i.e. that one thus has, to some extent, autonomous control over those processes. Current societal development^{*29} has been at odds with that trend for decades. That means that most people - since they no longer practice their secret - also find it very hard to imagine how option β could flourish, remain stable, and thus remain a safe way out. At most, they still sigh, "*It can't be done*" and shrug. They don't see it (i.e. don't feel it) working.

5. Scanning society's attitude toward option β

Still, as I noted above, we are increasingly being driven^{*30} towards option β !!! It is noticeable by more and more opposites in the language used when talking about the climate problem. Obvious things are questioned more frequently, time limits for reduction are set ever tighter, and the question of blame is raised more frequently^{*31} and louder. I cite here some voices taking a broader outlook on

*25 Because feeling is necessary to the extent that an environment needs to be known to get something done from it, force (and reserves in general) can offset this knowing, make it unnecessary even. Force (=resources) and model (=knowledge) together determine controllability (i.e. regulating capability). So one can compensate for the other. Thus, the potential influence of available force (**power**) on the place designated to experiencing feeling in thinking (i.e. by reason) is not small. People with a lot of power can afford not to feel domains (and also commit less feedforward), because through their power they can still adjust the course of events if what happens there is not to their liking.

*26 Case and Deaton spotlight with hard data (in *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*, 2020) the deterioration – since around 1999 when the free market began to run wild (qua outsourcing and automation) and did dry up the impression-flows – of the mental health (i.e. orientational ability) of that part of the US labor force that used to manipulate hardware-situations.

*27 A broad and wide interaction with a domain.

*28 Being at the mercy of it for fulfilling certain needs.

*29 Mechanisation and automation have already taken over many functions from people. And language, paying attention, deciding and commanding are also on the list of earning models of the biggest international companies (see Meta and Microsoft). These sweet guys also want to start exploiting your brain work. For your own good, mind you!

*30 Particularly because of recent climate disruptions and the power which radiates that. Those upheavals show that our entire rigged glow-world can collapse completely, swallow up cities, shut down economies. The extreme powerful California, for example, is increasingly helpless against heat, wind and fire. No system can outrun or resist this waltz, it becomes clear.

the fossil energy issue. By establishing broader links between technical and socio-economic variables they make more integrated approaches (than a pure tech-fix) assessable.

- x *"I am not against trade, but against the current volumes. The ecological systems can't handle that, everything is dying out, including our future. It's about protecting a future for all of us, and in that a reduction in volumes will be an inexorable part"*, says Meynen^{*32}.
- x *"Reforming our lifestyles is more important than adjusting our choices here and there"*, say Rick Stafford and Peter Jones^{*33}
- x *"The shocking reality of climate change is working its way into the web of our everyday lives, emotions, thought processes, relationships, hopes, dreams and fears. Fears about the loss of animal and plant species and their habitats, as well as the loss of our way of life. This prompts more constructive questions: what do we want to hold onto....?"*, says Matthew Adams^{*34}.
- x *"Je suis certain que nous allons désormais à une catastrophe dont notre histoire ne nous donne aucun exemple, si nous ne changeons pas au plus vite nos coutumes, notre économie et nos politiques"*, says Michel Serres^{*35}.
- x *"There are no 101 ways to stop global warming: one must shut down everything that produces CO2, literally and figuratively.....The wasteful economy must be replaced without delay by a climate recovery economy"*, argues Ronnie de Fossé^{*36}.
- x Ronald Rovers^{*37} is clear and concrete. He appeals to physics, and argues that is only sustainable if we start living by the productive capacity of our land, and what energy is beamed in from above there. Sustainable is roughly, according to him, the welfare level of the sixties. *"Allocate everyone their rightful share of land, burn your money, and act like Cuba"*
- x Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP. *"We had our chance to make incremental changes, but that time is over. Only a root-and-branch transformation of our economies and societies can save us from accelerating climate disaster."* See the Emissions Gap [Report 2022](#)..

Yet these opinions are by no means popular. Why do most people, when faced with potential structural changes, start to dig their heels in?

1. First, because almost everyone thinks that national economies **cannot be curbed** in terms of volumes and structure. As soon as we don't follow the global trend, we'll be overrun, and others will take over our business. So borders would be needed to prevent that. We would have to isolate ourselves from the global race. That's the first dark hole we don't really want to get into.
2. The second is that we don't believe in **constraining**. It would involve putting control valves on all kinds of activities, and we don't see such trimming working. It would go against human nature to have to live our lives within them. It would be a camp life. A prison with

*31 Consider the calculations of cumulative emissions by country so far; the accusing fingers to meat and aviation; and the public observation that the upper classes are better positioned to benefit from sustainable subsidies, while emitting the most.

*32 Meynen N., *Frontlijnen: een reis langs de achterkant van de wereldeconomie*, Epo, Antwerpen, 2017.

*33 Stafford R., Jones P., *Climate change: obsession with plastic pollution distracts attention from bigger environmental challenges*, The Conversation, 21 feb. 2019.

*34 Adams M., *The climate crisis has arrived- so stop feeling guilty and start imagining your future*, The Conversation, 7 feb. 2019.

*35 Serres M., *Le contrat naturel*, Editions du Pommier, Paris, 2018.

*36 De Fossé R., *Het niet te overschrijden rode lint*, Uitpers, 29 jan 2019.

*37 Rovers R., *People vs Resources, restoring a world out of balance*, Eburon, Delft, 2019.

jailers. Some people would also rather die than not be allowed to drink coffee anymore. Constraining freedom of action is very sensitive, although this is based less on principles (after all, everyone limits himself and others) than on the skill of being able to resist any change in an interaction with that sensitivity as an argument.

3. The third bear is that **we are fused** with the current occupational structure, are all specialists, and have a hard time imagining a future in which we cannot continue to develop in our own profession. We are all in a position, and are afraid of being torn from it.
4. The fourth is fear of **unstable** structures. Who can guarantee that any new structure we start pursuing will put us in socially calm waters? Won't we end up bickering in ever greater misery?

These are very logical resistances that actually always come up when someone living in a group (school, organisation, relationship) going in a certain direction starts thinking about getting out or switching. The resistance from our cognitive consciousness is huge because everything was going so nicely. Everything was getting easier and better. The whole world accessible. Well, from that mindset - that chair actually - switching is not reasonable.

However, reality is increasingly crushing that bright high-tech future. We will have to change to a different mode. The only thing left to choose is how we organise this but the main direction is inevitably that if we want to curb emissions quickly and keep basic biological processes executable (plant growth, for instance, so that we don't go hungry, and oxygen continues to be produced), we have to give absolute economic priority to food supply, energy supply, and liveable housing. Everything else is already out of reach. Must go to zero. Forget those economic activities, and close those fences. We need to move towards simple survival. Into the lifeboat, so to speak.

However, hola, isn't this a bit stated in a simplistic way?

Are the reluctant perhaps right not wanting to jump at all? Isn't this lifeboat somewhere far too shaky? (See also the many arguments by economists against degrowth proposals)

6. Demining option β

Yes, there are solid snags. Namely: if you don't think of another carburetor in it, you won't get anyone crazy enough to jump in. That is, many post-carbon, degrowth, and steady-state thinkers outline the transition to a simpler more basic^{*38} level of life as a matter of being slowly forced by (as in wartime) a progressively scarce long-distance input and shrinking availability of fossil energy. But that prediction is probably wrong^{*39}. As long as the competition – based on the current rules^{*40} of society – for gaining access to essential livelihoods^{*41} continues, everyone will be forced to compete

*38 Holmgren: The Great Simplification.

*39 They **underestimate** the role of technology, energy, and reserves (a.k.a. capital) as primary means of capturing subsistence from others, and defending them from others. They observe sharp limits to growth and from there come up with norms regarding the use of resources (regulation through quotas), but they leave essential aspects of the competition (i.e. rat race) alone: the open borders, the development of technology, the ongoing scaling up of specialization and with it the necessity to more and more transportation, the unsustainable speed of change, ungovernability of the whole, decency regulation, and the disorientation of participants. Although **Herman Daly** (*Toward a Steady-State Economy*) recognizes the inherent "growth dynamics of capitalism," and consequently proposes – in addition to the quotas on resource use and on emissions – a rather revolutionary limitation of income, property, and family size, he nevertheless leaves the bulk of the structuring decisions (= allocation) to the values and goals of possessors and their managing crews, leaving both the direction and the intensity of economic activity to the delusion of the day, i.e. making money by responding to the needs of those who touch the red line. The latter will not go lacking as essential living conditions become increasingly degraded.

*40 Regarding getting property and income (i.e. of a livable safe place, that is).

*41 Such as food, home, safety, affection.

with each other by all available means^{*42}, and thus to innovate expansively themselves, thus ruining local circularity, in order to hold their ground in the competition.

In my view, their assessment of an inevitable exodus of humanity to option **β** is wishful thinking. I think you do have to seriously tinker^{*43} with society's cast-in-concrete rules regarding the acquisition of property and income if you want to make it possible for people to abandon fossil energy and live much more manually and simply. To get people moving, future situations should evoke sufficient like-feelings on key dimensions (i.e. available resources, stability and rules). In wartime, you have to step into the army. That is terrible, but it is well organised in terms of resources, stability, and rules. And so it can be done.

The downside of option **β** is the fact – and anyone who has ever moved from the city to the country knows this very well – that buying a place with enough land is quite expensive, and yields from such a place can fluctuate greatly, and so the fixed costs can very easily break your neck. Basically impossible to get in if you have nothing to start with.

In short: How do we get option **β** mentally accessible and acceptable?

What kind of carburettor should be placed in that situation for it to work well, for it to be conceivable to people that that lifeboat could work out well, that it stays afloat in rain and wind and high waves, that the boat and oars can take a beating, that you can get where you need to go, that the social situation in it is stable and not uncomfortable?

7. Configuring option **β** more concretely

Based on the foregoing, we can now flesh out or define more precisely the configuration (i.e. set-up/design) of option **β**, the function of which is to make net-zero attainable in the short term.

First, try to eliminate as much competition from economic interactions as possible. This can be done by focusing mainly on **assets** – by allocating assets in fairly equal portions, and making them non-stackable (and therefore non-tradable) – and almost no longer on income. Positioning everyone mildly autonomous early on, with a blanket of resources around them – without having to fight for them all their lives – as well as preventing anyone from accumulating any more resources^{*44}, is, given the mental workings around the production of inner orientation and balance, both the trick to dampen greed and competition (and thus calm down the demand for energy), and to boost satisfaction and attachment.

Second, squeeze as much transport out of the production trajectories as possible. This can be done by making individuals, groups, regions self-sufficient. Energy can be made and used locally, through wood, solar, wind and bio-gasification. The wet circle^{*45} can be very short. This avoids packaging, refrigeration and heavy transport. Most services^{*46} can also be made and used locally. In grain and potato supply, a little more transport can be tolerated. And the materials circle will have to cover even larger areas. Standardised buses, tractors, and trains can be produced close to raw material supply and recycling centres.

*42 Including fossil energy.

*43 Oh no, we don't like to tinker with the rules about how we treat each other, and about how we give each other access to means of livelihood, income, and property. We are so touchy and **scared** of each other that we continue to dodge the rules-issue and instruct the youth that we must attack the climate, while it is precisely this being at each other throats (that has materialized in a culture of disconnection and abandonment, of getting ahead of the rest), that should be changed..

*44 By which you halt the competition for resources, and also equalise the distribution of power and powerlessness (by debts) over the population.

*45 Water, dairy, vegetables, fruit, meat.

*46 Such as healthcare, education, consulting, governance, repair.

Third, cut the coat to suit the cloth (i.e. carbon budget). This can be done by weighing together what is important for survival^{*47} and what is less important^{*48}. According to space in the local emissions balance, one can then activate or scale down an economic activity.

Fourth, keep the weight of governments, intervening and corrective structures^{*49} minimal such that they (a) do not dampen exposure and freedom, (b) do not induce high fixed costs. This can be accomplished by positioning everyone in such a way that they naturally develop a common drive (direction), such that they get along well, communal decision-making runs smoothly, and polarizing processes are dealt with early by everyone's efforts. All this can be triggered by linking humans more directly to the most essential production process in the living space (= food), and giving them largely the wheel there as well (i.e. giving them responsibility). As much as possible, because of course in addition – in cooperative ventures such as governments – a lot has to be decided and coordinated about infrastructure, joint inputs (such as machines and raw materials), and services (such as education, elderly care, health care).

If we add the following general psychological and social conditions, an even clearer configuration of option **β** emerges:

- We all need to do all we can to get out of this. If necessary at the expense of all the unnecessary extras in our current lifestyle.
- We must pull together, so everyone must be willing and able to pull. So every person must participate. So everyone must have exposure. No one can stay on the sidelines. On the side is no exposure and therefore no direction. If even a few have insufficient direction, there is no basis for trust, and therefore no social cohesion. That cohesion must be optimal: We must all pull in the same direction. Managing masses takes far too much. They must keep moving in the same direction by themselves.
- So they should all have more or less the same exposure i.e. all must be in a similar situation.
- In this fight against a fatal climatic development, everyone must have weapons to attack that fatal development, i.e. to go emission-free. You have to equip people to do that. The only resource that, coupled to sunlight and rain, can make everything humans need in a sustainable emissions-free way is **land and water**.
- Finally, to conclude: if you want to ensure that they can all pull along, that they all pull in an emission-free direction, and ensure that this all comes naturally from their hearts, that they all intensely desire it themselves so that you can get by with minimal governance and control, then you should give them all more or less the same amount of land, non-tradable, and unconditional, for the duration of their working lives. In fact, this upscaling of widespread accessibility is the core of the systemic change that option **β** entails^{*50}.

*47 Such as shelter, food, energy, minimal transport facilities, reproduction.

*48 Like convenience devices, space exploration, satellites, the military, individual modes of transport, travel, advertising, research and innovation, luxury.

*49 Banks, advice, insurance, security, justice, police, jails, rehabilitation.

*50 **The β system change in wider perspective:** So each part cannot be expanded, enlarged or reduced. Assets are therefore always distributed among the population. No one can in any way obtain anything more than he is assigned. In fact you thereby create a society that unites the liberal element of capitalism with communal controlled rules of transmission. Although **capitalism** is primarily a way of dealing with reserves/stocks, this way has mainly been based on a practice of strong mutual competition for access, and less on practices in which equal division was useful. It therefore contains two design errors, it makes excessively unequal access possible, and it secures nobody to a basic extent. It is propelled by the need for cushions/back ups/reserves. And so actually makes itself necessary. More and more blankets around you, buffers for when, for later, for the children if then. Everyone keeps on

8. Re-evaluating option β

We can now evaluate this set-up more profoundly. The key point of this setup – namely, to provide a spot to people between the ages of 30 and 60 – does not come from a momentary lapse of reason. See [here about](#) main reasons for increasing autonomous accessibility, and [here](#) some more details.

The autonomous accessibility configuration is a well-considered outcome of a sum encompassing four groups of variables.

- ✓ Group 1: The **psychological**: This set-up provides people, by giving them a basic set of livelihood resources, (a) security; (b) freedom; (c) challenge; (d) attachment, bandwidth, and thus control and direction; (e) developmental opportunities; (f) procreation space; and (d) body wear allowing them to die in time.
- ✓ Group 2: The **social**: This set-up satisfies the human need for equal treatment and equal opportunities, while still wanting to have a decent degree of autonomy. Being more or less autonomous also prevents people from having to spend full time pretending to be themselves in order to influence others. Staying with themselves allows them to better develop their feel for their situation, and also satisfies the need to let someone else drop dead if they just refuse to keep their pants up. By letting young people play, learn and help until they are 30, you give them room to look around, find a partner, develop a taste for all kinds of work and life situations, and gain an overview of how natural, economic and social structures are functioning. By allocating independent living space to the elderly after age 60 in villages where there is marketing, lots of craft activity, and all the services, they can make the best use of their life experience to keep themselves healthy and well, and find meaning in all sorts of ways in the social life around them.
- ✓ Group 3: The **Economic**: If people chose to connect vegetable production with some animal production at their spots (e.g., 10.000 to 20.000 sq. ft. per person), the food cycle – concerning vegetables, dairy, meat, and fruit – can get perfectly self-sufficient organized, including residual streams. Education, furniture, footwear, and clothing can also be made and used locally. Cereals and potatoes can be grown on large farms quite closed if one combines it with dairy cows for cheese production. Furthermore, the economy consists of production of building materials, complex tools and kitchen equipment, and production + maintenance and operation of machinery, equipment and means of transportation. Those productions require interregional alliances.
- ✓ Group 4: The **Ecological**: This set-up focuses everyone's efforts directly on establishing a balance between greenhouse gas emissions and carbon absorptions. Of course, by pairing everyone individually so close to a piece of land, some plants, some trees and some animals, you are optimally working to boost absorption. Nature desperately needs hands. Forty years ago, every village family had a sizeable vegetable garden. Gardens thrived on hands, care, and presence. But actually much more important about this setup is that you put a game in man's hands that is so intriguing and seizing that it drags him out of the car, out of his

grabbing, there is no end to it. It is cruel and limitless. The mistake of **communism** (and theoretical socialism) is in their reformatory character by applying the idea of the commons too deep into the private lives of the inhabitants. All those private places had to be broken open and regulated because they also opted for making everyone's efforts highly productive by training people to become specialists and then connecting them in series in large-scale production processes. But that meant on the one hand that everyone was exposed one-sided, and therefore started to diverge (qua values, knowledge, living condition), and on the other hand concatenating in series of highly centralized production processes caused intensive long-distance exchange lines between the processes. If you then have to coordinate all that, you get a huge mountain of planning, allocating, and control above each economical activity, and consequently a prison regime for everyone.

airplane seat, out of the gym, out of the getaways and vacations, out of the store shelves, out of the games and ipads, out of the hectic energy-guzzling global interaction circus. In doing so, you not only dampen very large global flows, and thus enormous emissions, but you also solve the macro-government problem we face, namely, how do you get and keep people in line, because we have to maintain that equilibrium situation for centuries to come. Why will you solve that with this set-up? The governance problem evaporates because everyone will build up so many impressions and feelings in this new game that you can bet that before you know it he will have a sharper grasp than anyone else of what can and cannot be done. So that everyone can see, smell, and feel how to walk together to get out of this shit-storm; what the priorities are at any moment. Such optimal social cohesion and value convergence can make the governance and management activity necessary to keep it moving together in a coordinated way a dance. Each individual advocates caution (= feedforward). The noses are in the same direction, and everyone learns to keep their lifeboat running. Governments can remain small, and will have little need for applied research. This will greatly reduce the heavy burden (both in terms of costs and emissions) of the administrative and scientific elites. Those elites are now the highest emitters, and receive the highest pay.

9. Could allocation of personal emissions budgets be an alternative?

Can we avoid the distribution of property (resources) to quickly achieve net-zero by allocating people all an equal emissions budget?

This approach consists of allocating everyone an equally large annual emission space (= **budget**) and combining that with real-time monitoring of all operations in production chains in order to be able to present the unique **emission score** of each (intermediate) product or service, per supplier, at any time through the emission integral of all operations involved. Envision this [article](#).

This approach^{*51} is gaining more and [more attention](#). Compared to the option- β -configuration, I envision it especially not working in the long run due to the fact that it (a) continuously generates divergent positions, and (b) is difficult to implement because it has to be globally perfect for it to work.

More in detail: First, the carbon-budget approach continuously produces inequality. The rich will acquire the places where it is possible to produce low-carbon, and thus they are able to become highly self-sufficient, and stretch the consumption volume of their budget. Whereas the poor, because of more transport emissions in the emission scores of their consumptions, get a smaller consumption volume with their budget. This will generate tensions around annual budget setting. **Second**, this approach requires a huge amount of globally standardized accounting of emissions scores, as well as super-heavy monitoring of how the budgets are spent, and thus cannot get off the ground without very high quality and protected IT that must constantly work well globally. **Third**, it makes social cohesion crippling. Property and income differences will constantly evoke opposing orientations and diverging opinions about core issues within populations, making the path to net-zero not safe at all.

In short: The carbon-budget approach is **difficult to implement** - because it cannot take off on a spot-by-spot, low-tech pace but needs global regulation - and is too unstable in terms of social dynamics to achieve net-zero quickly and then to be maintained over the long term.

When it comes to implementation, option- β -configuration is much, much more favorable than carbon budgets. It can start like a straw fire in different places and then expand.... In fact every

*51 i.e. distribution of allowable direct and indirect CO₂-emissions caused by an individual's consumption of products and services.

municipality has the leeway to organise themselves the access of young adults to local livelihoods – such as land, housing, workshops, etc.. By targeting their spatial planning entirely at people who aspire to a modest, community-based, self-sustaining way of life that combines gardening and housekeeping, local production and care tasks, a circular economy of proximity can really taking hold. See [this example](#).

When those straw fires reach each other (i.e. gain more regional weight and political attention), they can then jointly intertwine into a force that culminates in a central (constitutional) intervention on freedoms – in particular the freedom to build up unlimited reserves and to spend them as one pleases – and the transfer of possessions (assets), in such a way that the current rules are finally abolished and the total society, up to every corner, can transform into a low-emission, low-tech, short-chain economy by means of new rules on acquisition and use of property (especially real estate).

Yes, I know, **sounds** pretty high from the sky. But what do you want to fight for when you have nothing to dream about, when your existence is hanging by a thread? And that's where we are!!

By the way, this option- β -configuration only sounds insane to the ears of the energy-addicted main stream (folks, brainies, and bosses) who have so far made a crazy big mess of their response to the enormous climate hazard whose severity and scale has been fully public knowledge for 25 years, by (a) failing to recognize their own addiction, (b) totally underestimating the priority and scale of this problem and allowing the idea to take hold that this gigantic disruption (radiative forcing) could be stabilized – without having to limit the demand for energy – with a few technical gimmicks (such as renewables, heat pumps, hydrogen, batteries) with the result that meanwhile, against all danger, during the last 25 years the volume of international flows has increased fourfold – namely, driving [3-fold](#), flying [4-fold](#), shipping [3-fold](#), internet traffic [300-fold](#). – when they should have dried up completely if we had faced this matter soberly and with less dollars in the eyes.

10. Choosing option β

Why might accelerating people's autonomous access to locally available livelihoods do the trick, and do other plans^{*52} have much less solution power in the current emergency?

Because, **first** of all, they keep **property transmission rules** as they are, and thus lay the ball at the feet of leaders and investors. These, they say, must be able to view their organizations and their assets as part of society, and be attentive to the limits of resources in the environment.

While those resources remain unrestricted graspable? And remain stackable?

Do you foresee how those leaders and investors will then calmly be willing to limit themselves?

Affectionately nod at each other courteously and sit quietly waiting for their portion?

No way!!!

Second, those plans fail to face the fact that you cannot instill values and volition in the masses through education and argumentative efforts alone. Thus, the proactive collective towing capacity of that mass will remain minimal and divided^{*53}. Such a **crippled social cohesion** will then both give transactionalists opportunities to keep citizens quiet with bread and play, and safety nets (at the cost

*52 Such as, for example, Transition Towns, Scaling Behavioural Change plans (like [this one](#) and [this one](#)), Societal engineering plans (like [this one](#)), Limitarism, and Ecological economics.

Please be aware that the systemic change I have built into the configuration of option β , is intended to be complementary to the structural reforms that many degrowth configurations and the back-to-basics proposals (of, for example, Paech, Hickel, Norberg, Kallis, Bihouix, and Jancovici) entail. That is, one will have to complement those proposals (those stories actually) with that systemic β -change if you want to get the sharp net-zero reduction we face, done on time.

*53 See the 25-year delay that US Republicans have brought to global climate action..

of a lot of emissions and a lot of unhealthiness), and necessitate a heap of public regulation and control to be able to implement restrictive government policies^{*54}.

Hence: The aforementioned plans do not demolish the energy-slurping pistons^{*55} from the current economy engine but build so many blowers, mufflers, and regulators around it that anyone in the cabin who takes a moment to look at the dashboard gets dizzy. No faith, no go!

Conclusion: it is either this way out or option **α** (see [Urgency](#)) in which mass migrations^{*56}, wars, and disasters will start chaining together^{*57}.

It's just dumb hard. Right now we are dangling on a silken thread. Every inch we go further, it gets thinner and weaker. Until it breaks.

Jac Nijssen, december 2022

*54 See, for example, the **insane control task** envisaged by [this McKinsey report](#) if you want to combine the free use of reserves (i.e. capital, assets) by citizens with both facilitating sustainable ways of living, as well as supporting the development of innovative technologies. In fact, that path was also chosen in the latest IPCC mitigation report. It is a tech-fix with a 'behavioural change' flag on it.

*55 That is, you only get access to the basic necessities of life by competing, and energy guzzling is the main pillar of competitiveness.

*56 For a tiny peep into the most likely trajectories of option **α**, see for example Gaia [Vince's article](#). There he spells out **population movements** and migrations on the following scale : *"It would mean abandoning huge tracts of the globe and moving Earth's human population to the high latitudes: Canada, Siberia, Scandinavia, parts of Greenland, Patagonia, Tasmania, New Zealand and perhaps newly ice-free parts of the western Antarctic coast. If we allow 20sq m of space per person – more than double de minimum habitable space allowed per person under English planning regulations – 11 billion people would need 220.000 sq km of land to live on. The area of Canada alone is 9.9m sq km and, combined with all the other high-latitude areas, such as Alaska, Britain, Russia and Scandinavia, there should be plenty of room for everyone"*.

Vince G., *The heat is on over the climate crisis. Only radical measures will work*, The Guardian, May 19, 2019.

*57 Spratt and Dunlop examined how wrong things could go if we assume the upper end of the ranges in warming predictions. Their 2050 scenario illustrates how easily we could slip into an accelerating out-of-control climate scenario that would lead to a largely uninhabitable planet within just a few decades. The report concludes that "irreversible damage" to global climate systems occurs "**resulting in a world of chaos where political panic is the norm and we are on a path to the end of human civilisation**".

Spratt D., Dunlop I., *Existential climate-related security risk: A scenario approach*, National Centre for Climate Restoration Breakthrough, Melbourne, June 2018.