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5 August 2012 | Draft

12 Mindsets Ensuring Disappearance of Employment Opportunities

Towards a systemic reframing of the job culture

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Introduction

Figures released by Eurostat on 31 July 2012 showed that unemployment in the 17 Eurozone countries had increased to a record 11.2% - some 17.8 million people being without jobs. Spanish unemployment has reached 24.6%. The situation has increased pressure on the European Central Bank to find ways to help indebted states and spur growth (*Eurozone unemployment at record high*, *EurActiv*, 1 August 2012). These figures reflect a worldwide trend (*Worldwide unemployment rate rising*, *says ILO*, *France24*, 30 April 2012). The International Labour Organisation has predicted global unemployment would reach 202 million people in 2012 -- a global unemployment rate of 6.1%. These figures focus exclusively on "job seekers" amongst those defined to be of "working age". They offer no indication with regard to others who may be variously inactive or unemployed.

The ILO's *World of Work Report 2012: Better jobs for a better economy* indicates that fiscal austerity and labour market reforms had had "devastating consequences" for employment while mostly failing to cut deficits, and warns that governments risked fueling unrest unless they combined tighter spending with job creation. Some 50 million jobs were reported to have disappeared since the 2008 financial crisis, with a further 5 million people expected to become unemployed in 2013. It is described as unlikely that the world economy will grow at a sufficient pace over the next few years to both close the existing jobs deficit and provide employment for the over 80 million people expected to enter the labour market during that period. The share of informal employment remains high, standing at more than 40% in two-thirds of emerging and developing countries for which data are available. Women and youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment and job precariousness. In particular, youth unemployment rates have increased in about 80% of advanced economies and in two-thirds of developing economies.

The report indicated that **there is a growing sense that those most affected by the crisis are not receiving adequate policy attention**. It notes further that, according to the ILO *Social Unrest Index*, high unemployment and growing inequality are fuelling social unrest around the world with more than half of 106 countries surveyed by the ILO facing a growing risk of social unrest and discontent.

The quality of political discourse in response to unemployment is comparable to that in response to the global financial crisis. There is now little value in commenting on the continuing demonstration of incompetence of the highest order in governance. The prospect for the emergence of viable strategic responses is highly questionable. Current political discourse might best be described as a simplistic process for blaming the other for failing to be convinced by a preferred argument and converting immediately to that worldview. The blame-game is clearly going nowhere.

The inability to achieve global (or regional) agreement on anything of more than a technical nature is becoming ever more apparent -- despite naive assumptions that it remains possible, as previously discussed (*The Consensus Delusion: mysterious attractor undermining global civilization as currently imagined*, 2011). The systematic abuse of confidence in authority is now striking to an ever greater proportion of the population -- especially including the unemployed (*Abuse of Faith in Governance*, 2009; *Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011). ***-- remaindering

The preoccupation here is with the "job culture" as variously framed. This is seen as being as problematic as the current preoccupation with "growth" as a preferred strategy -- itself challenged by various arguments in the light of the problems it is perceived to engender. The argument here follows from earlier exercises (*In Quest of a Job vs Engendering Employment*, 2009; *Sustainable Occupation beyond the Economic Rationale*, 1998; *Being Employed by the Future: reframing the immediate challenge of sustainable community*, 1996).

The "mindsets" tentatively identified in what follows could be provocatively caricatured together as being systemically analogous to that of regimes with a policy of "disappearances" -- as with the initiatives of the junta during the *Dirty War* (1976-1983) in Argentina. These may be interpreted by the future as crimes against humanity.

Mindsets endangering employment: 1-6

The implications of the mindsets constraining employment are noted below within a context of an ever-increasing population. The consequences of this are variously denied or ignored as previously noted (*Institutionalized Shunning of Overpopulation Challenge: incommunicability of fundamentally inconvenient truth*, 2008). The lack of scientific and strategic diligence typically fails to focus on:

- Direct and evident risks of **increasing mortality through starvation** and associated illness. From the perspective of employment, those suffering in this way are clearly unable to seek or engage effectively in permanent employment -- further exacerbating their condition. Cynically it might of course be argued that their very condition offers employment to others who are mandated to address it (aid workers, etc).
- The manner in which increasing numbers imply **increasing systemic complexity** in conditions in which it has become only too evident that strategic and management capacity is much challenged by such increases in complexity. This is especially evident in the capacity to deliver goods and services and the vulnerability of those systems to failure (as indicated at the time of writing by power failure in India affecting 600 million people).
- The constrained **capacity to offer employment in an increasingly complex system** requiring ever greater technical expertise. Whilst questionable arguments may be advanced for the capacity of the environment to sustain the numbers in terms of food supply, given the probable need for ever-increasing use of technology to ensure such productivity, it becomes even more questionable in what capacity those numbers are to be employed.

It is within this context that the lack of jobs is already widely evident and a matter of central political concern. The following "mindsets" can then be considered as enabling the "disappearances" of employment opportunities:

1. **Religion:** The major religions, especially those of the Abrahamic tradition, have an unquestioning commitment to multiplying the number of people in the world. Whilst this is done with little or no consideration of the resources required to sustain those increasing numbers -- other than the belief that somehow "God will provide" -- even less consideration is given to how those people are to be employed. In this sense, through the increasing competition for a limited number of jobs, it can be argued that the religious mindset is ensuring the effective disappearance of employment opportunities for increasing proportions of future generations -- as job opportunities are conventionally understood.

Religion is perversely complicit in correcting for its asystemic inadequacies through supplying a moral framework for **just wars** -- eliminating job-seekers in their thousands, if not in their millions. Whilst religion can be readily deprecated as the "opium of the people", much less is said about the manner in which it provides leaders with "conscience laundrettes" (complete with spin cycles) for "moral easement" for any crimes against humanity, as argued separately (*From Quantitative Easing (QE) to Moral Easing (ME): a stimulus package to avert moral bankruptcy?* 2010).

Some religious institutions are of particular interest to this argument through the manner in which they encourage "work" by their adherents (cf. the Papal Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, 1981). Work may be valued as a means of ensuring a sustainable income through practices such as **tithing**. The implications when conventional work is not available are unclear. Attention to tithing is currently highlighted as a consequence of the candidacy of a Mormon for the president of the USA. It has been noted that the Mormon church is one of the wealthiest in the world.

The religious mindset is especially interesting in the light of the historic models it has offered for alternative approaches to "employment", most notably in monastic settings, but also through its encouragement of charitable and voluntary action. Together with the extensive focus on prayer, ritual, meditation and spiritual exercises, this should have encouraged broader reflection on the nature of "work" and "employment" of relevance to the future -- whether within a religious context or otherwise. It is difficult to deny that some forms of religious practice are to be understood as "work" -- if not extremely hard work. It is through such work that many religious buildings were constructed in the past, and it is through such work that many have been educated in mission schools. It is less clear how activities such as prayer and ritual are to be considered as "work", if not gainful employment.

2. **Economics:** It is through the mindset of economists, and its overriding influence on conventional approaches to governance and administration, that the nature of "work" and "employment" are currently defined. This effectively precludes, or neglects, consideration of other kinds of "work" -- notably some forms honoured by religion, but especially those in the informal economy. It is therefore useful to explore the distinctions offered by *Wikipedia* in its separate discussions of:

- **Employment**, as a contract between two parties, one being the employer and the other being the employee. Whilst this would appear to extend to any form of "contract", in effect the focus is on those in which the employee receives remuneration in monetary tokens (and possibly limited to those recorded for fiscal purposes). Economics is much challenged to encompass those forms of "contract":
 - in which the remuneration is "in kind",
 - in which there is provision of facilities "free of charge"
 - where the "employee" is required to pay a fee to the "employer", or suffer the consequences (as in racketeering)
 - where, as in the traditional marriage contract, the husband is readily understood to be the "employer" and the wife the "employee"
 - typically unwritten, based on obligation and duty, as evident in the role of many carers, or in a lifelong debt (such as that incurred when the life of one of the parties was saved by the other, or the Japanese understanding of *giri*)
 - where the "contract" is of a non-binary nature, as within a group (cf. *Transcending Simplistic Binary Contractual Relationships*, 2012)

- **House work**, including cleaning the rooms and furnishings of a home, and cooking. Despite a degree of recognition of **home economics** as a discipline, economics has traditionally been much challenged to recognize as "work" the activities of a "homemaker", or the management of a household. This failure has long constituted a manner of demeaning the work done by women as traditional homemakers.

The failure to recognize "women's work" suggests that the mindset enabling this failure may be subject to analogous failures -- yet to be rendered "obvious" -- through which other forms of employment have been "disappeared". School "homework" also offers an interesting case.

- **Labour (economics)** as a measure of the work done by human beings. It seeks to understand the functioning and dynamics of the markets for labour through the interaction of workers and employers. Consequently it focuses on the suppliers of labour services (workers), the demands of labour services (employers), and attempts to understand the resulting pattern of wages, employment, and income. In so doing economics avoids consideration of broader understandings of "labour" and "work" by which people and groups may consider themselves to be employed -- or through which they might possibly be employed.

Whether within an academic environment, or independently of it, how is intellectual work to be measured -- or other forms of creativity? Is it possible that there are forms of "work" to be discovered which cannot be "measured"? Do they offer possibilities for "employment"? Clearly "voluntary labour" poses a particular challenge to the mindset of economics, especially when the remuneration could be better understood as "**psychic income**", restrictively defined in the *Financial Times Lexicon* as: *Something apart from money that you get from your job, and which gives you emotional satisfaction such as a feeling of being powerful or important.*

Curiously the "work" of the voluntary sector is increasingly seen as a means of compensating for deficiencies in the capacity of service delivery systems in which people are conventionally employed. This tends to arouse controversy when "voluntary work" is framed by labour unions as taking jobs away from conventional workers -- possibly framed as doing "real work".

- **Manual labour** as physical work done by people, most especially in contrast to that done by machines, and also to that done by **working animals**. It is most literally work done with the hands, and, by figurative extension, it is work done with any of the muscles and bones of the body. It is unclear whether this specificity could be understood as including singing and the manual control of any technology -- whether musical instruments or computers. The case of so-called "sex workers" would be equally controversial. It is of course questionable whether those so employed would consider themselves manual labourers. Ironically the product of some forms of "manual" labour may well be recognized as a "work", as with any creative **work of art**, itself potentially the subject of **copyright law**.

As indicated above, with respect to housework, economics would clearly be challenged to recognize the work done in a garden, on an allotment, or on a subsistence farm -- and the "employment" opportunities these may represent for many. An interesting case is offered by the classic question asked of a man "digging a trench" as to what he was doing -- given the response that he was "building a cathedral".

- **Wage labour**, in which a worker sells their labour and an employer buys, as in modern mixed economies, where it is currently the dominant form of work arrangement. According to *Wikipedia*, the forms of wage labour are distinguished in terms of
 - *employment status*: a worker could be employed full-time, part-time, or on a casual basis
 - *civil (legal) status*: the worker could for example be a free citizen, an **indentured labourer**, the subject of **forced labour** (including some prison or army labour); a worker could be assigned by the political authorities to a task, he could be a **semi-slave** or a **serf** bound to the land who is hired out part of the time. So the labour might be performed on a more or less voluntary basis, or on a more or less involuntary basis, in which there are many gradations.

- *method of payment (remuneration or compensation)*. The work done could be paid "in cash" (a money-wage) or "in kind" (through receiving goods and/or services), or in the form of "piece rates" where the wage is directly dependent on how much the worker produces. In some cases, the worker might be paid in the form of credit used to buy goods and services, or in the form of [stock options](#) or [shares](#) in an enterprise.
- *method of hiring*: the worker might engage in a labour-contract on his own initiative, or he might hire out his labour as part of a group. But he may also hire out his labour via an intermediary (such as an employment agency) to a third party. In this case, he is paid by the intermediary, but works for a third party which pays the intermediary. In some cases, labour is [subcontracted](#) several times, with several intermediaries. Another possibility is that the worker is assigned or posted to a job by a political authority, or that an agency hires out a worker to an enterprise *together with means of production*.

These categories elicit a variety of [criticisms](#), notably as to the degree to which wage labour may be compared with [wage slavery](#). Again the question is what forms of work do these categories preclude -- effectively ensuring failure to recognize possibilities of employment, or deprecating them for ideological reasons? Of relevance is the question as to whether receipt of remuneration implies that "work" has been done -- as in the case of some dubious "consultancy" arrangements.

- [Work \(project management\)](#), the effort applied to produce a deliverable or accomplish a task
3. **Technology:** It is appropriate to this argument to note the manner in which the more theoretical understandings of "work" in economics are potentially associated with understandings of "work" by disciplines on which the development and use of technology is dependent. These include, according to *Wikipedia*:
- [Work \(physics\)](#), namely the amount of work done by, or energy transferred by, a force acting through a distance.
 - [Work \(electrical\)](#), namely the work done by, or energy transferred by, a force from an electric field acting on a charge through a distance
 - [Work \(thermodynamics\)](#), namely the quantity of total energy transferred from one system to another, not counting energy transferred by heat

These are of relevance to the extent that they may offer metaphors suggestive of understandings of "psychosocial work", especially in the light of arguments for [technomimicry](#) (*Psychosocial Work Cycle: beyond the plane of Möbius*, 2007) and the derivation of "psychosocial energy" (*Psychosocial Energy from Polarization within a Cyclic Pattern of Enantiodromia*, 2007; *Massive Elicitation of Psychosocial Energy: requisite technology for collective enlightenment*, 2011).

The case of "psychosocial energy" is especially interesting when, in the event of the disastrous failure of technical systems, it is "people systems" which provide vital relief services, substituting for "work" done otherwise (*Reframing Sustainable Sources of Energy for the Future: the vital role of psychosocial variants*, 2006).

Of particular relevance to this argument is the manner in which "economics" encourages ever-increasing production efficiency, most notably through the mechanization of tasks previously performed through human labour -- possibly such as to ensure the complete replacement of human jobs in the "work force", other than in the design, maintenance and operation of such technology. This is notably envisaged with the increasing use of artificial intelligence in a knowledge-based competitive economy (cf. David M. Dutton, et al., *Knowledge-based Systems and the Internet: a future perspective*, 1996; Jan Herring, *The Future of Competitive Intelligence: driven by knowledge-based competition*, *Competitive Intelligence*, 2012).

Whilst there is the possibility of remunerating intelligence according to current understandings of employment, the extent to which such trends will ensure the disappearance of employment opportunities for those less endowed is equally evident. No provision is made for the relatively "ignorant" who are as likely to be numerous in the future as they are in the present. People may well be "released" by technology to enable them to perform "more interesting" jobs. However the argument is cynical if -- in promoting "jobs for the excellent" -- no consideration is given to the nature of "jobs for the ignorant" and the "left behind", and whether such jobs will in fact exist in adequate numbers

The envisaged increase in the use of robots raises the further question as how "work" is to be reframed when it can as readily be performed by a robot -- and when robots are framed as "taking jobs away from humans". An enlightening anecdote is offered by an intentional community which needed to address thousands of newsletters distributed in rural India -- a task regularly performed manually by a group of women without other employment. Plans were made to replace them by a more efficient computer application. To this they responded: *And what will we do then?*

4. **Legislation / Administration:** As noted above, conventional economics is the framework through which "work" and "employment" are conceived and defined in legislative measures and administrative procedures. It is the categories recognized by economics which are effectively "set in administrative stone" with little scope for radical reframing, whatever the limited possibilities for "tweaking" them. It is through such blinkered measures that other alternative opportunities are effectively "disappeared" -- becoming effectively invisible.

The reliance on double-entry bookkeeping to impose a semblance of conceptual order then renders evident and debatable what is effectively a caricature of the real situation, as argued separately (*Spherical Accounting: using geometry to embody developmental integrity*, 2004).

The tendency to prohibit, undermine or deprecate experiments in alternative forms of employment is usefully to be contrasted with the flexibility accorded by legislators to [free trade zones](#) -- no consideration being given to the possibility of "free employment zones" (cf. *Social Experiments and Sects: beyond category manipulation by advocates and opponents*, 1997).

Of particular interest is the relation between those forms of contracted work and employment (and their transactions) and the forms which are "illegal" -- until their "visibility" is established for the purpose of criminal proceedings. The extent of such illegal employment is evident in daily news, notably implicating the highest authorities -- frequently on record for deprecating its existence. The extent of the "[black economy](#)", in which many variously participate, is also widely recognized. In the absence of conventional employment opportunities, this pattern of double standards obliges many to seek employment in "invisible jobs" in the informal economy.

The approach invites other forms of criticism with respect to "employment" at the extremes of the life-cycle:

- [child labour](#): the extent of this practice is upheld as a scandal, despite its role in ensuring the sustainability of families bereft of adequate sources of income -- and without the ability to obtain conventional forms of employment. The practice may blur into child prostitution.
- [retirement](#): namely the point where a person stops conventional employment completely. The legal [retirement age](#) varies between countries and is a matter of considerably political controversy. It is the age at which legislation ensures that employment opportunities are formally "disappeared". Curiously the measures do not appear to apply so systematically to politicians and business leaders. Those above the retirement age may continue to be remunerated for "work" in participating on the boards of corporations or as consultants.

At the beginning of life, the distinction is readily seen to be problematical in that children in all countries may well be required by their parents to perform tasks in the house ("work"?), whether or not they are remunerated with "pocket money". At the end of the formally defined "working life", individuals may take on many roles which involve "work" and may be understood to be "employment". This is most notably the case in voluntary associations. Irrespective of whether payment is involved with conventional monetary tokens, this may involve forms of exchange typical of barter economies. Such occupations are typically invisible to economics -- whose preoccupations tend to encourage their disappearance through repressive legislative and administrative initiatives.

Of particular concern, ironically -- given that economists and legislators also retire -- is the nature of the activity they perform when they are "unemployed" and are technically "unemployable". What is the nature of the "work" that they can perform, given that it cannot be recognized as "work"? The situation becomes especially tragic with senility and dementia. How are people then to "employ" their time? Depending on how "gainful" is defined, what proportion of the population is so inactive as to be considered to be not gainfully "employed"?

Given that legislators and administrators -- with economists as their handmaidens -- have a natural tendency to focus on the short-term, the personal implications of aging are as readily ignored as those of the longer-term challenges of the societies which they serve. It is in this respect that references to an "aging population" or an "aging society" fail to consider the manner in which current legislative measures ensure the disappearance of employment opportunities for increasing proportions of the population. Again, the legislators of the present may well live to experience the consequences of their negligence.

It is appropriate to note that administrative procedures are typically responsible for delays which postpone new initiatives, thus effectively depriving people of employment for periods (which may well prove to be lengthy). Other procedures oblige people to wait in line, whether frequently or for long periods, thereby making it difficult for them to seek conventional employment.

5. **Business initiatives and Consumption:** Business has a vested interest in increasing population numbers to sustain the balance between an adequate supply of cheap labour and an increasing the market of insatiably aspiring consumers with sufficient disposable income. The cheap labour provides a justification for the designed inefficiencies in production, compensating for inequalities in distribution of wealth. However the competitive dynamics of the situation create pressures for technology-based efficiencies which necessarily ensure job disappearances (if only through relocating production facilities). These are justified as cost-cutting measures to ensure accessibility of products and services to a wider market. The disappearance of employment opportunities necessarily occurs amongst those unwilling to perform cheap labour tasks.

The sustainability of the process sought on a larger scale -- through "[growth](#)" at all costs -- is difficult to distinguish from a classic [Ponzi scheme](#) on a smaller scale. This is evident both in the manner in which luxuries are reframed as necessities by skillful marketing and through various forms of miss-selling and misrepresentation. The latter was notably evident in the whole approach to the [sub-prime sale of housing mortgages](#) in 2007 which triggered the financial crisis.

Especially problematic is the manner in which strategic dilemmas are framed in terms of the acclaimed certainties of creating job opportunities (for some) in the short-term vs. precautionary sensitivity to uncertain problematic consequences (for many) in the longer term. Opting for the first reinforces conventional thinking regarding the nature of "jobs" and "employment, but does nothing to elicit the possibilities of alternative forms of "employment" -- which may well be all that might be available once any short-term project has been completed.

6. **Labour unions:** It is such associations which have done most to ensure job security over the past century. In doing so, however, they have contributed significantly to the commodification of jobs as a product to which the population has a right in sufficient quantity. Little thinking has gone into reframing employment where doing so could be held to place social security and other benefits of conventional workers at risk. To that extent, unions have contributed significantly to the process of ensuring the disappearance of employment opportunities. The mindset is curiously reminiscent of the heroic worldwide efforts at preservation of endangered species.

The role of society is seen as one of providing jobs and ensuring their longer term viability. Labour unions do not engage in the process of making jobs. An interesting exception is offered by experiments in [worker self-management](#), [employee ownership](#) and [cooperatives](#). However instances of labour unions creating productive enterprises, or unconventional employment opportunities, are relatively rare.

Mindsets endangering employment: 7-12

7. **Education:** It is remarkable that education is primarily seen as a means of adapting people for known job opportunities and for well-defined forms of "work" and "employment" -- for "job slots" . During the process, students are encouraged to articulate what they "want to be" by choosing (with [vocational guidance](#)) amongst a classical array of conventional occupations -- with which conventional status and rewards are clearly associated. There is however a degree of sensitivity to the fact that the "job market" is evolving rapidly and that flexibility is required in being able to adapt to jobs reframed in this way -- as well as in the subsequent course of any chosen career.

Education is typically themed by conventional subjects -- with teachers skilled in each subject (in which they have been trained in years past). It is however especially noteworthy that little effort is devoted to enabling imaginative bridges to be constructed between subjects -- despite recognition of the needs for creativity and interdisciplinarity, as argued separately ([Higher Education 8 Meta-education ? Transforming cognitive enabling processes increasingly unfit for purpose](#), 2011). Where these bridges exist, they may well be deprecated in comparison with conventional disciplines esteemed to be more serious and rewarding -- responding to "what employers want". There is thus an early investment in known job opportunities -- which may well be scarce (or have disappeared) by the time skills have been acquired to perform in them.

Of particular relevance to this argument is the situation in business management schools. There it is expected that corporations and agencies will actively seek to employ their graduates -- in jobs which those graduates actively seek. The possibility that students should learn how to create businesses is seldom recognized. The focus of an MBA program is on management of an existing business in which a conventional job slot is provided.

In contrast to "job centres", there is little evidence of initiatives to facilitate the capacity of individuals (including MBAs) to engender employment on their own initiative. This is an approach on which many in developing countries are obliged to depend, as well as the desperate obliged to sell their bodies or their organs. Engendering employment is not part of the skill set of any MBA programme and it is unclear where this skill set is cultivated -- and why the possibility does not figure in political discourse ([In Quest of a Job vs Engendering Employment](#), 2009). There is no "Master of Employment Creation" programme.

In noting that Europe not only has a "euro crisis" but also a "growth crisis", a current issue of *The Economist* ([Les Misérables](#), 28 July 2012) comments:

... European executives are extremely risk averse.... Data show that continental Europe has a problem with creating new businesses destined for growth... What it doesn't produce enough of is innovative companies that grow quickly and end up big... If Europe were more entrepreneurial, says everyone from the [European] commission down, it would not have been such a poor producer of big businesses. And it would have produced more successful new technology firms.

The point was otherwise reinforced, by a venture capitalist in *The Financial Times* (Luke Johnson, [Take the plunge for a life of freedom](#), 31 July 2012). His advice to graduates unable to find a job was:

My simple advice is: don't take a job, but make a job instead -- your own. Take the plunge, become an entrepreneur and experience a sense of freedom and independence that is impossible to find as an employee.

It is appropriate to note that it has been the business schools, together with their alumni, which have proven to be most complicit in the current global financial crisis. An embarrassing example is the case of the schools of management and business, many considered prestigious to the highest degree -- in which the culture of greed was cultivated and the ambitions associated with it were lauded. Indeed to what extent are business schools' MBA courses responsible for the global financial crash, as explored by Peter Walker ([Who taught them greed is good? The Observer](#), 8 March 2009)?

8. **Health sector:** The health sector is governed by a mandate to save lives at any cost. Its preoccupations are widely appreciated for that reason. These are however embedded in a wider systemic context whose implications the health sector typically chooses questionably to reframe -- if it does more than ignore them.

This is evident in the case of the cost of conventional health care concerning which there are continuing debates regarding the

resources required by the medical profession, the source of those resources, and the complicity with the commercial interests of the pharmaceutical and health insurance industry. As a consequence the health sector is defensively active in deprecating and marginalizing alternative forms of health care and those who offer it by some means. Every effort is typically made to ensure the disappearance of such employment opportunities, even though they may be associated with a long tradition, and even though conventional medicine cannot be effectively delivered where such approaches are practiced.

In its preoccupation with physical health, the health sector has been much challenged in coming to terms with quality of life, whether for the aging or for those with terminal conditions of disability. This is first evident in the pattern of relationships governing those temporarily unable to "work" because of illness. Medical certificates are issued to justify absence from work, or even for early retirement "for health reasons". People are thereby formally removed from the "work force". In a job culture this may be welcomed -- where there are adequate social security provisions.

In enabling this transition, the health professions devote little attention to the implications for quality of life -- on the assumption that individuals are free to occupy themselves fruitfully and know how to do so, even if they are bed-ridden. There is little attention to how those "unable to work" are then to "employ" themselves. Any such "employment" is disassociated from "work", especially where evidence of engagement in "work" may lead to loss of social security benefits.

The consequences become more evident with aging and the onset of further disabilities -- ultimately leading to hospice care, if such is available. Again the primary focus of the health professions is preservation of life at all costs -- unquestionably associated with the costs of doing so where resources can be found. This may extend to forms of "occupational therapy" through which the elderly are entertained -- if such facilities are provided. Again, how people "employ" themselves under those conditions is held to merit little attention -- especially when the facilities are not available. The health professions can thus be considered complicit in the deconsideration of employment opportunities.

The asystemic approach of the health sector is most evident in enabling the increase in population numbers, whether through births or through lengthening the lifespan -- given that no attention is accorded to how quality of life (and health) for ever increasing numbers will be progressively constrained by resources, living space and care facilities. Despite the sophistication of health insights, there is evident inability to clarify the dilemmas associated with the right to life, the right to die, and the right to choice in the matter. Central to these questions is how people are to employ themselves when they are not free to make those choices. The health mindset is notable in ensuring the disappearance of relevant forms of employment.

9. **Critical indifference:** One common mindset avoids creative engagement with any sense of crisis through a combination of denying its immediate relevance (or even its existence) whilst expressing scepticism more generally regarding the prospects of any viable remedial response. This approach may take the form of ignoring the disappearance of employment opportunities and supporting undertakings which embody or reflect that neglect. The essentially blinkered nature of the mindset may call for a curious form of skill, as discussed separately (*Lipoproblems -- Developing a Strategy Omitting a Key Problem: the systemic challenge of climate change and resource issues*, 2009).

The approach may be framed "positively" as in the classic injunction associated with the labour riots of the era of Margaret Thatcher, widely quoted as "*get on a bike and look for a job*" -- on the assumption that jobs are readily to be found. The simplistic advice derives from the account of [Norman Tebbit](#), whilst in her government as Employment Secretary in 1979, to the effect that "*I grew up in the '30s with an unemployed father. He didn't riot. He got on his bike and looked for work, and he kept looking 'til he found it.*". Dating from the same era, the widely quoted political slogan of Thatcher, *There Is No Alternative* (TINA), has come to mean that "there is no alternative" to economic liberalism, namely that -- despite any crisis, now or foreseen -- free markets, free trade, and capitalist globalization are the best way for modern societies to develop. It is thereby upheld that nothing needs to change except the attitudes of those complaining that change is required.

10. **Strategy:** It is through a strategic perspective that systemic insights might be expected with regard to the challenges of governance in societies with ever-increasing social unrest, most notably as a consequence of "unemployment" amongst the young. As noted above, political rhetoric is currently focused on the urgency of "job creation", and the resources which might be elicited to enable it -- in a resource constrained society.

The preferred strategy of "[quantitative easing](#)" (aka [printing money](#)) would be laughable, however disguised, if it were not one of the few strategies considered viable in the short term as a means of kick-starting the economy and enabling job creation. The longer-term implications are carefully ignored, most notably the manner in which jobs will be required in untold numbers to engender the fiscal income to pay off the debt thereby incurred. There is little reference to the expected availability of the necessary jobs -- beyond the numbers required to finance social security safety nets.

It is reasonably clear that the number of "jobs" that might be created according to conventional thinking is unable to meet the expressed need -- especially in the longer term, with ever-increasing population numbers. It might indeed be said that "jobs" have been commodified. Having done so however, innovative approaches as to how these "commodities" might be created are seemingly neglected. As a means of increasing availability of jobs, the questionable technique of decreasing the number of years of "work" by reducing the retirement age is necessarily controversial. More problematic is how people are then expected to "employ themselves" for the remainder of their years -- irrespective of whether they would have preferred to continue "working".

It is curious that political leadership is seemingly subservient to conventional thinking with regard to the nature of a "job", despite exposure to a rich pattern of subtle forms of "employment" with which the political process is associated -- including dependence on lobbies, sympathizers and the use grass-roots volunteers in political campaigns. It is however from this mindset that "alternatives" of every kind are systematically deprecated in practice, even to the point of criminalizing them. As noted in the remarks above with regard to legislation, the nature of a "job" is effectively set in stone.

It is left to the population at large, or subsets thereof, to explore alternative "employment" strategies, whether within intentional communities, local exchange trading systems, or crime. Most remarkable is the manner in which new forms of viable employment have been engendered through the internet -- most strikingly through open-source initiatives by-passing conventional business models, emerging and operating "under the radar" (cf. Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, *Wikinomics: how mass collaboration changes everything*, 2006; Eric S. Raymond, *The Cathedral and the Bazaar: musings on Linux and Open Source by an accidental revolutionary*, 1999). What future possibilities are emerging "under the radar" of conventional thinking?

Conventional strategic thinking regarding "employment" is seemingly completely incapable of reframing the boundaries of relevant categories. With respect to the enabling potentials of the internet, it might be said to be permanently locked into a process of "catch-up". The formal debate has become a victim of a conceptual form of gerrymandering -- protective of the status quo and thereby ensuring the disappearance of alternative employment opportunities.

The above-mentioned commentary of *The Economist* (*Les Misérables*, 28 July 2012) notes that many aspiring entrepreneurs simply leave Europe:

One of the things they find... [in the San Francisco Bay area]... is a freedom to fail... Trying to discover what holds back entrepreneurs, the [European] commission last year examined insolvency regimes and found that many countries treat honest insolvent entrepreneurs more or less like fraudsters, though only a tiny fraction of bankruptcies involve any fraud at all.

That argument with respect to conventional businesses entrepreneurship presumably also applies -- and to a far higher degree -- to [social entrepreneurship](#), so readily conflated with deprecated initiatives by cults and "extremists", as noted above (*Social Experiments and Sects: beyond category manipulation by advocates and opponents*, 1997; *Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism*, 2005). What alternative employment opportunities are "disappeared" as a consequence?

11. **Military / Security:** Security services are placed in the curious position of being required to defend the conventional understandings of law and "order" -- those effectively "set in stone". It is they from whom vigilance is required in undermining and disabling alternative forms of "order" within which people may find it appropriate, or necessary, to "employ" themselves. In its most extreme form, their preoccupation is with whatever is defined as crime, or as subversively undermining the conventional order. An interesting case is offered by their response to the informal economy, most notably prostitution -- perceived as one of the few forms of employment to which some have access.

Paradoxically the security services are usefully to be understood as both destructive of "jobs" -- as in their mandate with respect to "crime", or through acts of war -- and as creators of employment. The latter mode is evident in any post-conflict period of reconstruction. They are however also recognized as being innovative in sustaining extensive networks of informants -- including "honey traps". Although outside conventional frameworks, those participating are presumably to be understood as thereby in "employment" -- with which some form of remuneration may be associated. The situation of such informants may be dramatically changed when, as in time of conflict, discovery places their lives, or those of their families, at risk. As with the conventionally deprecated *jihadis* -- acting to propagate and defend another form of order -- soldiers are expected to "pay with their lives", or "take a bullet", if necessary. These paradoxical forms of "employment", contrary to prevailing convention, are also evident in the case of "resisters".

The understanding of the nature of "employment" may also be radically transformed within the military where engagement is involuntary and unpaid, namely through [conscription](#) -- or [impressment](#), as previously practiced by the Royal Navy. Especially problematic is the pattern of forced conscription of [child soldiers](#) currently practiced in many African countries.

Of most relevance with respect to ensuring the disappearance of employment opportunities is the radical role of the military in ensuring the deaths of thousands, if not millions -- through acts of war. This may be consequent on forms of strategically "thinking the unthinkable", which somehow it has proven impossible to do in relation to the creation of employment opportunities in time of peace. Cynically it is readily recognized that sustaining perception of threat is a means of ensuring longer term employment within the security services.

12. **Careerism / Status:** Preoccupation with conventional understandings of status and career typically reinforces conventional understandings of employment opportunities. This precludes consideration of alternatives -- readily framed as lacking status. Exploration of alternatives is readily considered as the mark of a "loser" -- in contrast with the competitive quest for conventional higher-paid conventional jobs by "winners".

This mindset is fundamentally hierarchical in restricting the number of jobs "at the top" and ignoring the challenges faced by others in finding opportunities for employment. The failure to find "jobs" is then also framed as the mark of a "loser". In precluding imaginative consideration of alternative possibilities, the mindset is then essentially destructive of employment

opportunities.

Job culture vs. Recreation culture

The mindsets above together frame thinking restrictively in terms of what might be termed a "job culture". This is characterized by factors such as the following:

- the expectation that jobs should be available for those seeking employment
- the assumption that jobs can be framed as a commodity to be "found"
- society is expected to find means of providing jobs, notably through government policies
- work is to be recognized as an unfortunate necessity, to be contrasted with recreation and the ideal of "not having to work"
- work should be avoided whenever possible, especially "hard work"
- retirement is framed as the much desired end of any obligation to work
- work is typically boring and unrewarding in the various senses of the term
- jobs which are undesirable should be performed by those with a greater need to work
- deprecation of any "work ethic" as unfashionable

Alternatives forms of employment: Ironically -- with respect to employment opportunities -- the emphasis of the job culture could be understood as consistent with the classic slogan of Margaret Thatcher: *There Is No Alternative* (TINA). Or rather the desirable alternative is "not working", namely the enjoyment of "recreation" in all its forms -- as a consequence of earning the right to do so. There is little sense that "employment" may take a wide variety of forms, which may include and combine what can be framed as "work" and "recreation" (cf. *Engagement: 14 Contrasting Concepts of Meaningful Employment*, 1996).

As noted above, many forms of recreation can involve considerable exertion, readily to be compared with "hard work" -- as with many sports, especially the competitive and extreme variants. Gardening offers another example. Denying that this activity is "work" could be considered a form of conceptual gerrymandering. Other forms of recreation involve considerable concentration, readily to be compared with "hard work". This is the case with gambling and online gaming -- even sudoku. In all these cases many find "work" to be enjoyable, whether or not it is associated with monetary remuneration. Psychic income may be equally valued, notably in voluntary activity.

Ironically some forms of online gaming focus on the accumulation of virtual wealth within a **virtual economy** (Michael J. Ross, *Virtual Wealth in MMOGs*, 2007). Others, such as the **Global Innovation Game**, explore use of "innovation capital" to transform ideas into social action in response to topical challenges in environment, technology, energy, health and the like.

Recreational employment?: The systematic reinforcement of this polarization -- work "bad", recreation "good" -- most notably fails to address the quality of "recreation" when there is no "work" to be found. How then are people to "employ" themselves -- especially when they "retire"? Curiously there is a strange similarity to the dynamics of people in quest of "work" and those in quest of "recreation" -- a quest which may be desperate in both cases. Whilst success in the one relieves economic needs, this does not necessarily relieve the boredom associated with failure to find satisfactory "recreation".

As the widely acclaimed light at the end of the tunnel of "work", recreation may be as desperately pursued as employment opportunities. Ironically, as with the quest for employment, the central aspiration of democracy -- *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness* -- may be as much characterized by the continuing "pursuit" of the elusive goal of happiness (through recreation) as by its achievement. Although the focus of political concern may be on unemployment and the social unrest to which it can give rise, there is clearly a case for recognizing that boredom may also give rise to unrest -- with "unemployment" and "boredom" then effectively indistinguishable (as discussed below).

It might even be asked whether the mindsets ensuring the disappearance of employment opportunities are not intimately related to those ensuring disappearance of recreation opportunities. The commodification of leisure is suggestive in that respect. Could it be that it is the "contractual" polarization they reinforce which inhibits achievement of more fulfilling outcomes in both cases, as otherwise explored (*Transcending Simplistic Binary Contractual Relationships: what is hindering their exploration?* 2012). Has this something to do with the manner in which it is considered fundamentally desirable to "switch" from work to recreation in quest of fulfillment (*Recontextualizing Social Problems through Metaphor: transcending the 'switch' metaphor*, 1990).

How is it that a richer understanding of work-recreation possibilities is not enabled -- an ecology of possibilities? Is there a need for a more radical approach to these matters, as discussed separately (*En-joying the World through En-joying Oneself: eliciting the potential of globalization through cognitive radicalization*, 2011).

It is appropriate to note that ILO's *World of Work Report 2012: Better jobs for a better economy* (cited above) has no reference to "leisure", "recreation" or "vacation", and with only a single reference to "absentee". Reference to "play" is limited to rhetorical expressions of playing a role. It is unclear whether any UN agency has a mandate with regard to the recreational and leisure activities of the world's population. There are however various references to UN Staff Recreational Councils and Centres.

Future of employment as a work-recreation hybrid

Employment: There is an extensive literature on the "future of work", the "future of jobs" and the "future of employment" (understood as jobs), including:

- James Manyika, Susand Lund, Byron Auguste and Sreenivas Ramaswamy: *Help Wanted: the future of work in advanced economies* (McKinsey Global Institute, March 2012)
- Anywhere, Anytime: the future of employment is flexible (*Financial Times*, Special Report, 25 January 2012)
- Glen Hiemstra: *The Future of Jobs, The Futurist*, June 2011)

- [Special Report: The Future of Jobs](#) (*The Economist*, 10 September 2011)
- Charles Hugh Smith: [The 13 Trends That Will Determine The Future Of Jobs In America](#) (*Business Insider*, 3 December 2011)
- Douglas Rushkoff: [Are Jobs Obsolete?](#) (*CNN.com*, 7 September 2011)
- Lynda Gratton: [The Shift: the future of work is already here](#) (2011)
- Orio Giardini and Patrick M. Liedtke: *The Employment Dilemma and the Future of Work* (Report to the Club of Rome, 2006)
- Thomas W. Malone: *The Future of Work: how the New Order of Business will shape your organization, your management style and your life* (2004)
- Jeremy Rifkin: *The End of Work: the decline of the global labor force and the dawn of the Post-Market Era*, (1995)
- James Robertson: *Future Work: jobs, self-employment and leisure after the Industrial Age* (1985)
- Charles Handy: *The Future of Work: a guide to a changing society* (1984)

The European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) solicits reports on the "future of jobs" in a variety of industrial sectors.

Recreation: By contrast, the literature on the "future of recreation" (notably surveyed by A. J. Veal) is typically framed in terms of the "future of leisure" (facilities and locations), and the associated "future of entertainment", with an extensive preoccupation with the forms provided (commercially) by the media and computer-enhanced experience:

- A. J. Veal: *The Elusive Leisure Society* (University of Technology Sydney, July 2009)
- Hal R. Varian: *The Future of Leisure That Never Arrived* (*The New York Times*, 8 March 2007)
- Chas Critchera: *The Future of Leisure: breaking with old distinctions* (*Leisure Studies*, 8, 2, 1989, pp. 201-208)

A forthcoming gathering on the sociology of leisure of the International Sociological Association is introduced by a useful summary under the heading [Future of leisure in a troubled world](#):

The human need for some form of leisure persists even in the face of the most dire situations and although war, economic depression, and natural disasters diminish opportunities for leisure as it is generally conceived, they do not extinguish the human propensity to play. Indeed, such traumas may stimulate leisure creativity. Of course, many leisure practices are means of denial, more or less temporary escapes from trouble, and modes of leisure may act as safety valves for the release of mental or emotional tensions. But leisure practices may also be significant vehicles for mobilizing resistance and promoting solutions to troubles. To expand our awareness of the human talent for leisure and to specify for future use the forms of leisure practiced in the midst of troubles past and present, this panel seeks papers that address leisure in the midst of troubles.

Work-Play mixes: There is however relatively little consideration of the nature of the spectrum of work-recreation mixes -- with an emphasis on how people "employ" their time and themselves -- whatever the proportion of "work" or "play", however these may be subjectively or objectively distinguished. The pioneering study in this respect was that coordinated by Alexander Szalai (*The Use of Time: daily activities of urban and suburban populations in twelve countries*, 1973), followed by that of J. Gershuny (*Changing Times: work and leisure in post-industrial society*, 2000), and more recently by the [Multinational Time Use Survey](#) (M.T.U.S.) aimed at developing and documenting internationally comparable time budget and demographic information. Most remarkable and relevant to this argument is the subsequent survey of time use in European countries, coordinated by Karin Winqvist for Eurostat ([How Europeans Spend Their Time: everyday life of women and men](#), 2004).

These necessarily focus on the objectively measureable, with relatively little capacity to integrate the sense of "satisfaction" and "fulfillment" explored otherwise through the [Happy Planet Index](#) (HPI) of human well-being and environmental impact (introduced by the [New Economics Foundation](#)), or the [Satisfaction with Life Index](#) created by Adrian G. White.

These in turn fail to integrate the subtler senses of [quality of life](#), or [subjective well-being](#), notably given the [boredom](#) which may well be the primary characteristic of experience for the final years (or decades) of a life (after "work"). Boredom is widely perceived as a characteristic of many forms of work (Amy Joyce, [Boredom Numbs the Work World](#), *The Washington Post*, 10 August 2005; Andrew Kenny, [Why Britain can't make it: how boredom killed British manufacturing](#), *The Spectator*, 12 November 2005). Boredom may also characterize the world of leisure (Orrin E. Klapp, *Overload and Boredom: essays on the quality of life in the information society*. 1986; Richard Wintern, *Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment*, 2002).

Integrating work and play: Recognition of the association of productivity with a sense of "job satisfaction" has promoted recognition of ways in which "work" can be appreciated to a degree as "play" -- and the possibility that emerging forms of employment will have this characteristic -- bringing more play to the workplace (Steve Wilson, *The Art of Mixing Work and Play*, 1992). Reference is made to the art of reframing "work" as "play" (David D. Friedman, [Work As Play](#), *Forbes*, 23 May 2006; [Alan Watts](#), *Work as Play*).

This now includes integration of online gaming processes, namely a "gamification" of the workplace, or "enterprise gamification" in tech-industry parlance (Rachel Emma Silverman, [Latest Game Theory: Mixing Work and Play](#), *The Wall Street Journal*, 9 October 2011). Controversially this now extends to the work-play environment of drone pilots in which the switch from "real enemies" to "virtual enemies" is increasingly imperceptible (Elisabeth Bumiller, [A Day Job Waiting for a Kill Shot a World Away](#), *The New York Times*, 29 July 2012; Scott Shane, [The Moral Case for Drones](#), *The New York Times*, 14 July 2012; David Walsh, [The New York Times makes the "moral case" for drones](#), *World Socialist Website*, 19 July 2012).

Potentially even more questionable is soliciting popular involvement in the task of monitoring surveillance cameras, notably at sensitive borders (Robert Mackey, [Thousands Sign Up for Virtual Border Patrol](#), *The New York Times*, 26 March 2009).

Reframing work-play: The case has been otherwise made by E. F. Schumacher (*Good Work*, 1979) citing, by way of introduction, an article in the *London Times* which began:

Dante, when composing his visions of hell, might well have included the mindless, repetitive boredom of working on a factory assembly line. It destroys initiative and rots brains, yet millions of British workers are committed to it for most of their lives.

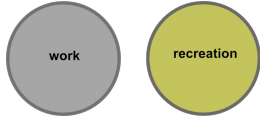
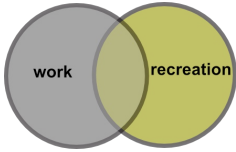

Schumacher then comments on this:

The remarkable thing is that this statement, like countless similar ones made before it, aroused no interest: there were no hot denials or anguished agreements; no reactions at all. The strong and terrible words -- *visions of hell*, *destroys initiative and rots brains*, and so on -- attracted no reprimand that they were misstatements or overstatements, that they were irresponsible or hysterical exaggerations or subversive propaganda; no, people read them, sighed and nodded, I suppose, and moved on. Not even the ecologists, conservationists, and doom watchers are interested in this matter.

Schumacher then concluded by citing Albert Camus: *Without work, all life goes rotten, but when work is soulless, life stifles and dies*. A corollary could be usefully framed as: *Without play, all life goes rotten, but when play is soulless, life stifles and dies* -- in the light of the work of Johan Huizinga (*Homo Ludens*, 1938).

Given the rapid and totally unexpected explosion of [social networking](#) in the past decade, and its impact on social relations in work and play, is it to be expected that its processes -- and the smartphones supporting them -- will transform the work-play interface beyond recognition over the coming period? (cf. *Re-Emergence of the Language of the Birds through Twitter?* 2010). How might this become central to the "future of distraction" -- the 21st Century equivalent to the circuses of the Roman empire and its implied policy of *panem et circenses*?

Relevant to any work-play reframing is the anthropological study of an indigenous tribe, the Ye'quana, by Jean Liedloff (*The Continuum Concept: in search of happiness lost*, 1975) -- described by the author as the happiest she had seen anywhere. As noted by a reviewer (*Leisure in Action: work as play*), in those Indians' attitude towards "work," or rather their experience of all activity as "play"; they made no distinction between work and play: *There appeared to be no Yequana concept of work similar to ours. There were words for each activity that might have been included, but no generic term.*

Some possible distinctions between work and recreation using Venn diagrams		
Complete separation of work and recreation	Emergence of partial overlap of work and recreation	Complete overlap of work and recreation
		

Challenging case studies in employment

- **Religious works:** In their various forms these offer interesting challenges to the work-recreation duality. As noted above, the exertion associated with some ritual merits recognition as "work", even if the only remuneration is psychic, or the assumed accumulation of merit for the afterlife or the next incarnation. An especially interesting case is the construction of a cathedral from recycled materials (*Don Justo's Self-Built Cathedral: metaphoric learnings for contemporary alternative initiatives*, 2003)
- **Working animals:** As noted above these raise interesting questions regarding the nature of work and its remuneration. Examples include: draught animals (substituting for transportation technologies), guide dogs (substituting for carers), tracker dogs, dogs employed in herding sheep or cattle (replacing extra human herders), guard and sniffer dogs (possibly replacing security agents), circus and aquarium animals (replacing entertainers)
- **Working plants:** Managed forests may be labelled as "working forests" (as in Tasmania). Trees offer a measurable example of the work done in raising water from the roots to the leaves. The development of biotech offers recognition of working algae and bacteria.
- **Resistance fighters and guerillas:** These offer the interesting case of exertions readily recognized as work, although any reward may be notional -- even postponed to an afterlife in the case of jihadis. The example usefully adds the complication of the illegality by which it may be framed -- as in the "terrorism", possibly subsequently reframed as heroic.
- **Voluntary workers:** The nature, justification, legality and reward for voluntary, benevolent and charitable work is a matter of continuing debate.
- **Carers:** This well-recognized case, often with tragic dimensions, helps to highlight the manner in which "work" is framed, possibly to the point of being unrecognizable, as with the nature of any reward or compensation.
- **Self-employed:** Whilst legislation may clearly distinguish some forms of self-employment -- as an "independent" -- it typically fails to identify other forms. The simplest examples are provided by craft work and sale of homegrown produce. Others include street entertainers and the like -- even begging.
- **Prostitution:** Sex workers offer a well-recognized but controversial example of what may be the only form of income generation to which some have access

Boredom and unemployment

Leisure and recreation time is readily disassociated from the obligation to be employed, whether at work or otherwise. In that sense unemployment could be misleadingly framed as a form of permanent leisure. This of course denies any need to work in order to sustain life. However it also negates the condition of boredom potentially associated with having "nothing to do". The web is replete with commentary on the boredom associated with joblessness and unemployment. Boredom is specifically noted as a factor in studies of the psychology of the unemployed -- and the associated tendencies to juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, and various forms of anti-social behaviour.

Boredom of those obliged "to do nothing": Boredom can be recognized as a primary characteristic of life in slums and refugee camps -- and in the "reservations" and "settlements" set aside for indigenous peoples. It is evident in those whose "unemployment" is institutionalized through incarceration -- possibly to be understood as a primary characteristic of punitive care. The extensive literature on unemployment might be usefully distinguished in terms of that portion which encompasses such forms, or specifically discusses boredom, in contrast to that which treats the matter more conventionally, as with the above-mentioned Report to the Club of Rome by Orio Giarini and Patrick M. Liedtke (*The Employment Dilemma and the Future of Work*, 2006).

From this perspective, how is the employment of time of the bedridden and those in care to be understood, namely the [quality of life of those receiving health care](#)? Clearly this is of ever increasing importance with the ageing of the population -- a burgeoning global population of the unemployed.

Boredom and subjective wellbeing: The implied subtlety of subjective wellbeing is however captured to a degree by the extensive literature on [lifestyle](#), as helpfully reviewed by A. J. Veal (*Leisure and Lifestyle: a review and annotated bibliography*, 2000). The subjective dimension is far more explicitly addressed in the remarkably insightful thesis of Lesley Kenny (*Boredom Escapes Us: a cultural collage in eleven storeys*, 2009), who notably includes a discussion of *The Future of Boredom* (pp. 266-272).

Kenny introduces her thesis as follows:

Few sociologists have addressed the concept of boredom despite interest in the subject and experience of boredom from psychology, philosophy, the arts and popular culture. Classical sociological concepts of alienation, anomie and disenchantment are related to boredom, but do not address it directly.... Most authors agree that an increase in individualism and the concomitant rise in secularization, combined with industrial changes in labour and increased bureaucracy, help to explain a perceived increase in the experience of boredom. This dissertation is a phenomenological exploration of boredom, informed by the writings of Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin on the subject

Each of her "storeys" serves to inspire a sociological meditation on the subject of boredom, all of which are grounded in extensive historical, social and philosophical reviews of the "ambiguous yet ubiquitous experience of boredom" in modernity. The thesis is introduced by quotes from:

- Friedrich Nietzsche: *Against boredom the gods themselves fight in vain* (1895)
- Patricia Meyer Spacks: *The expanding definition of boredom in our own time means that by now one might argue that virtually every word currently written speaks of the condition in one way or another* (1995)
- Robert Nisbet: ... *among the forces that have shaped human behavior, boredom is one of the most insistent and universal* (1982)
- Martin Heidegger: *Boredom - who is not acquainted with it in the most varied forms and disguises in which it arises, in the way it often befalls us, only for a moment, the way it torments and depresses us for longer periods too* (1995)
- Elizabeth Goodstein: ... *while boredom appears to be a private experience of primarily subjective significance, its very pervasiveness marks it as a socially meaningful phenomenon* (2005)

Kenny cites Murray Davis (1999) to the effect that: *the first criterion by which people judge anything they encounter, even before deciding whether it is true or false, is whether it is interesting or boring*. With regard to other authors, Kenny notes the use of dramatic hyperbole by some in their reference to boredom:

Healy (1984), for example, refers to it variously as *the emotional incubus* (p.16), *a deep seated agony* (p.28), *the escalating apprehension of the void* (p.92) and *the collapse of meaning* (p.99). Robert Nisbet is not alone in his rather melodramatic stance on the subject: *Boredom may become Western man's greatest source of unhappiness. Catastrophe alone would appear to be the surest and, in today's world, the most likely of liberations from boredom* (1982: p.28). Almost 40 years earlier, an author in a philosophy journal wrote that, *Boredom often generates wars, the supreme exhibition of human folly and wickedness* (Inge 1940: p.386). Political philosopher Eric Voegelin claimed that boredom is *the spiritual state of a society for whom its gods have died...*

Understood in this light, it is appropriate to argue that **the mindsets identified above are usefully to be recognized as "purveyors of boredom"** -- even of "soullessness" -- by which social catastrophe is engendered as a perverse form of relief.

Boredom as engendered by unemployment: For Kenny, with regard to unemployment:

I argue here that the largest group of use-less people, sociologically, are those without paid work. Most people have, at one time or another, experienced unemployment, or have at least been "in-between-jobs"; but at any given time there are tens or hundreds of thousands of people in a country or region who do not have paid work. While employment is often a means-to-an-end, for the paycheque that buys food and shelter as well as luxury items, the work itself provides us with a sense of purpose, if not initially, sometimes eventually. Although literature in work and occupations reports on the boredom commonly experienced by workers on the job, some research points out that at least the job gives us some sense of meaning and purpose, even if it is monotonous, repetitive and otherwise boring work. We can see this clearly in the example of the retiree who, after years of having a place to

go and particular things to do each day, suddenly finds him or herself without this routine, without purpose. For people who are either chronically, or suddenly, unemployed, the boredom that was at the least contained to work hours, now fills the days. People who have nothing meaningful to do with their time, are by definition bored, situationally and existentially. The same can be said for people enduring long hospital stays, and nursing home residents... (pp. 238-239)

Curiously, although specifically commenting on the boredom of life on reservations, Kenny makes no mention of the implications of boredom in refugee camps -- usefully to be understood as a contemporary form of "reservation", and potentially of great relevance to social unrest, especially in the Middle East (cf. *Boredom: the Israeli perspective on the Palestinian refugee problem*, *Only a Northern Song*, June 2012).

Boredom in Nirvana: This framing could be developed further by arguing that people -- in addition to refugees -- are effectively (and increasingly) to be understood as confined by social processes (in which they are complicit) to what amounts to "refugee camps" -- isolated in cocoons, possibly to be understood as "boredom zones" (cf. *Dynamically Gated Conceptual Communities: emergent patterns of isolation within knowledge society*, 2004). In her tenth "storey", entitled *Boredom in Nirvana*, Kenny comments on the lyrics of the hit song of a grunge band, *Nirvana*. The success of the song (*Smells Like Teen Spirit*) had led to its being dubbed the anthem of a generation of bored and apathetic teenagers. Kenny comments in particular on the lines: *Here we are now -- Entertain us. I feel stupid and contagious*.

In other words, *Now that you have me where you want me, now that I've obliged you, it's your responsibility to find a way to entertain me, to keep me here. The youth demands of the adult, of authority, Find meaning for me. Make me interested and keep me interested*. There is a certain kind of refusal in this tone, in these words; a refusal to entertain the self, meaningfully, to find enjoyment, satisfaction. I refuse to engage in such a way as to enjoy this moment/this life. (p. 248)

Ironically this argument might well be adapted to the setting of many international meetings -- and the expectation of participants faced with an authoritative speaker.

Kenny argues that *I feel stupid and contagious* should be taken to mean something deeper than easily dismissed teenage angst:

It can be read not just as a call of distress, but a call of warning: *I could infect you too*. Bigelow writes that boredom is "the existential demand that the world reduced by trivialization and fetishization become once again enchanting. But this is a demand that defiantly refuses the world as it is and that defiantly and disdainfully disowns the world" (1983: p. 260 italics in original). In other words, it is an unmeetable demand. We can read in these lyrics a refusal to participate in what Zizek calls the injunction to enjoy! (p. 249)

In the light of the name of the band, Kenny continues:

... Nirvana is a Buddhist concept, referring to a transcendent state, beyond all suffering and desire. The refusal to enjoy! suggests here that there is a potential transcendental quality to the refusal itself; that is, by refusing to participate in the injunction to enjoy!, a space for unknown possibilities is opened. While the refusal (of youth in this case) is partly an act of aggression, it is also an act of autonomy, a gesture of self-assertion that transcends (or at least attempts to), the social, legal and developmental limits of the teenage years. The passion in the music of this song tells us that the lyrics of stubborn refusal in fact belie a strong desire, a vigorous impulse towards meaning. (p. 250)

In her final "storey", themed as *The Hunger for Meaning*, Kenny uses as inspiration a tale of [Franz Kafka](#) (*A Hunger Artist*, 1924). No further reference is made to the nature of any mysterious dynamic within *Nirvana* -- as might follow from her introductory citation: *Against boredom the gods themselves fight in vain* (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1895).

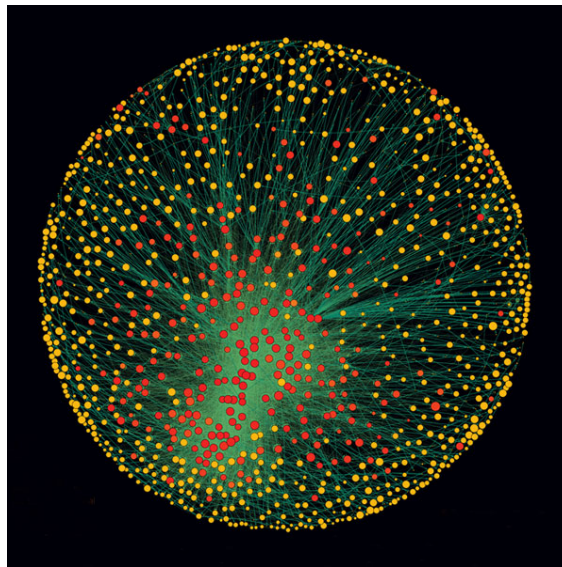
Sustainable employment as exemplified by dialogue amongst archetypes

Engendered pantheons of global governance: There is a strange irony to the fact that systemic equivalents to the deprecated pantheons of the past have been effectively re-engendered for the governance of a secular global society through the "gods" of today. The extent of this development could even be seen as corresponding to the enthusiasm of Hinduism for deities in their hundreds, and despite the ridicule this plethora attracts from some.

Systemically, the three contrasting pantheons could then be:

- the United Nations system of agencies, embodying one set of complementary values through which the world is purportedly governed according to a particular worldview
- the system of multinational corporations, embodying a profit-oriented value system -- and frequently recognized as the bodies which "really" govern the world (cf. *Revealed - the capitalist network that runs the world*, *New Scientist*, 24 October 2011)
- the system of international associations through which segments of the the population variously articulate their values

<p>Representation of the core of the global corporate pantheon The 1318 transnational corporations (dis)enabling conventional employment worldwide</p>



Superconnected companies are red, very connected companies are yellow.
The size of the dot represents revenue (Image: PLoS One)

Provocatively, these modern pantheons could be recognized as "secular" developments of the Abrahamic religions -- at least for purposes of debate:

- the UN system might be compared to Christianity (hierarchically ordered, perhaps as embodied in the Catholic Church and centered on the Vatican),
- the system of MNCs might be compared to Judaism (especially given its economic and territorial preoccupations),
- the NGO system might be compared to Islam (especially given its intensely tribal characteristics and the fervour of its adherents).

Each pantheon cultivates a distinctive "transcendental" perspective evoking characteristic patterns of popular belief and confidence. The beliefs of each are celebrated in modern equivalents to temples, with some even modelled architecturally on those of Greece and Rome -- as echoed in their logos. Curiously the names of the deities of the past -- with sectoral responsibilities, or associations to particular values -- are frequently used to name journals or to trademarks exclusive products. Characteristically this legacy "Abrahamic" framework is challenged by alternative worldviews it variously endeavours to ignore or displace.

Employment of the wise: Any framing of a transcendental realm, whether Nirvana or a realm of the "gods", offers the possibility of reflecting on the nature of discourse viable therein "for eternity" -- effectively an ideal model of the processes ensuring sustainable employment. In that spirit, [Soren Kierkegaard](#) has an insightful parable on the *Boredom of the Gods* in *Either/Or* (1843);

The gods were bored, and so they created man. Adam was bored because he was alone, and so Eve was created. From that moment on boredom entered the world, and increased in proportion to the increase of population...

What do archetypes and exemplars have to say to each other? How do they engage fruitfully with each other -- as might be suggested by the above image of the corporate pantheon? In cultures of the West, the question relates to the 12 gods of Olympus (the *Dodekathemon*), or the 12 equivalents of Rome (the *Dii Consentes*). Subsequently the question could be understood with respect to the discourse amongst the 12 [Apostles](#) of Christianity. Within Islam, as another example, the question could relate to discourse amongst the [Twelve Imams](#). It is appropriate to note the extent to which "realms of the gods" now figure widely in role playing and related games -- as occupying the imagination of the young.

The purpose of the question in relation to the theme of this argument is to elicit **understanding of how distinct archetypes "employ" their time fruitfully together** -- and how they are "rewarded" thereby. Discourse amongst the wise in "round tables" continues to draw on the legendary 12 [Knights of the Round table](#), itself recalling the [Last Supper](#) of Christianity. As noted with respect to the [Business Roundtable](#) (BRT) by [John Ralston Saul](#) (*The Doubter's Companion: a dictionary of aggressive common sense*, 1994):

This is not a lobby group but a corporatist organization; one of the most important in the developed world. At first glance the name of the group seems inappropriate. What possible link could there be between Arthur, Lancelot and the quest for the Holy Grail and a group of anonymous technocrats looking out for themselves and their systems? The answer is that they see themselves as the knighthood of technocracy and they claim the legitimacy of their corporatist power.

That said, as self-declared "[Masters of the Universe](#)", how do they fruitfully employ their time together? How is the requisite variety of perspectives to be recognized and interwoven? What is sustained thereby? In a time of global crisis, especially of the financial system at the core of the corporate pantheon and its consequences for employment, the question can be explored in the light of "misleadership" (*Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council* ? 2007; *Framing the Interplay of Leadership and Misleadership*, 2007). Arguments for criminality merit recognition ([James Petras](#), *The Ascendancy of a Criminal Financial Elite -- The Two Faces of a Police State: sheltering tax evaders, financial swindlers and money launderers while policing the citizens*, *Global Research*, 5 August 2012).

Sustaining employment: There is then the possibility that the interactions within any pantheon -- ancient or modern -- may evoke

insights of relevance to governance (*Enabling a 12-fold Pattern of Systemic Dialogue for Governance*, 2011; *Typology of 12 complementary dialogue modes essential to sustainable dialogue*, 1998). **The question might also give focus to reflection on "sustainable employment", especially amongst those conventionally framed as "unemployed" -- who are nevertheless obliged to find ways of "employing their time".**

Curiously, whilst the action and discourse of individual archetypes are the subject of various accounts, that between them -- within the "pantheon" -- is not clarified. However it could be argued that is their very interaction which sustains the "realm" they inhabit. That interaction is a key to their individual "employment" -- however they may also be considered "unemployed" through phasing of inactivity and activity. Provocatively, but with the potential for fruitful insight, the question could consider the nature of the employment of participants in parliamentary discourse -- as echoing a "realm of the gods" in democratic society. Is a dozing representative of the people to be considered as "working" -- even if remunerated for time spent in that process?

Interdisciplinary and interfaith discourse: The approach merits particular consideration with respect to current discourse within interdisciplinary committees and "councils of the wise", where those gathered necessarily have contrasting orientations and preoccupations. The issue is evident in the quality of discourse in an academic common room -- explored as a modern echo of Platonic dialogue by [Owen Barfield](#) (*Worlds Apart: A Dialogue of the 1960s*, 1963). The dynamics have been otherwise explored by [Arthur Koestler](#) in the light of his organization of symposia in Alpbach (*The Call Girls*, 1972). Those dynamics might be expected to characterize interfaith gatherings of spiritual leaders -- or gatherings of enlightened gurus of different persuasions (cf. *Evaluating Synthesis Initiatives and their Sustaining Dialogues*, 2000).

Religion, like science, whilst variously proclaiming unique insight into both "everything" mundane and "nothing" in its subtler implications, would seem to be totally inadequate in engaging fruitfully with any other worldview.

These contexts help to highlight the potentially problematic nature of such discourse in that the necessary contrast between the participants suggests the extent to which they are readily "bored" or alienated by each other (cf. *Epistemological Challenge of Cognitive Body Odour: exploring the underside of dialogue*, 2006). Effectively speaking different "languages", through their contrasting preoccupations, the question is how they ensure a dynamic which transcends the level of discourse which each would find "uninteresting", "irrelevant" or "boring". This helps to make the point that each of the mindsets identified above is potentially boring with respect to the others. How then do they "work" together -- to sustain the "economy" for which they share responsibility? (cf. *12 Complementary Languages for Sustainable Governance*, 2003).

Styles of interaction and play: One approach is to recognize that any "pantheon" of mindsets is necessarily the reflection of contrasts and styles identified by personality typing schemes (*Clues to patterns of dialogue from competing personality typing schemes*, 2011). Employment and unemployment might well be understood very differently between types (cf. *Engagement: 14 Contrasting Concepts of Meaningful Employment*, 1996). The value of this recognition is however limited because little attention is paid to how a gathering of people of strongly contrasting types would interact -- the focus being typically on their one-on-one sympathies or antipathies, as with the work on [interaction styles](#) by Linda V. Berens (*Understanding Yourself and Others*, 2008)

Another approach is to recognize the archetypes as engaged in eternal game-playing, variously trying to out-manoeuvre one another -- as discussed with respect to the the dynamics of thinking associated with the Knight's move in chess, or its [equivalent in go](#) (*Knight's move thinking: appreciated or deprecated*, 2012). This is consistent with the Hindu tradition of [Lila](#) -- the playfulness of the gods in the cosmos (cf. William S. Sax, *The Gods at Play: Lila in South Asia*, 1995). Lila is comparable to the Western theological understanding of [pandeism](#), which describes the universe as God taking form in order to experience the interplay between its elements.

Enactivating an archetypal pattern of employment and unemployment

Any archetypes, whether divine, mythical or societal exemplars, are readily to be understood as projections holding characteristics of the perceiver -- actively or by implication. This suggests that the transcendent realm of such "deities" and their (potentially playfully) interaction merits a degree of recognition as a modality "within" the individual, as much as "without" (cf. [Joseph Cambell](#), *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: metaphor as myth and as religion*, 1986; William S. Sax, *Dancing the Self: personhood and performance in the Pandav Lila of Garhwa*, 2002). Is there the possibility of a radical personalization of "employment" -- of relevance as much to that of conventional economics as to that framed as "unemployment"?

Ownwork: A valuable lead has been framed as "ownwork" in a classic study by [James Robertson](#) (*Future Work: jobs, self-employment and leisure after the Industrial Age*, 1985):

So, although there will no doubt continue to be many jobs, and although many people will no doubt enjoy more leisure than in the past, the real challenge is to move -- as understandingly and with as little disruption and distress as we can -- to new kinds of work and new ways of organising work.

The key is to understand this as a move to ownwork -- to forms of work, paid and unpaid, which people organise and control for themselves; in order to achieve purposes which they perceive as their own; as individuals, in groups, and in the localities in which they live. This transition from employment to ownwork can be seen as the next stage in the progression towards freedom, responsibility, and fuller participation in the life of society, that was marked at earlier historical times by the transitions from slavery to serfdom, and then from serfdom to employment....

However, let me make it plain that neither I nor anyone else at this point can see in detail how the ownwork agenda will be carried out. We cannot now describe precisely what new arrangements should be brought in across the board - as aspects of the

transition to ownwork-- for enabling people to receive incomes, to have access to land, and so on.

This helpfully places emphasis on taking personal ownership of any "work", irrespective of how others may define it or deprecate it -- or of how it is remunerated, if at all.

Ownmoney?: Appropriately in a period of unprecedented global challenge to confidence in the financial system, Robertson has recently published what might be considered a complementary study (*Future Money: breakdown or breakthrough?* 2012). This necessarily gives a degree of attention to community-level **alternative currency systems**. Exploiting Robertson's original argument with respect to "ownwork", the argument here can be taken further by considering the possibility for the individual of what might be termed "**ownmoney**" -- together with its "global" implications for the individual. This notably suggests that the individual "owns" the money as the creator of it -- effectively defining the tokens indicative of confidence.

Ownconfidence?: This radical possibility derives its legitimacy from the manner in which any monetary system is intimately related to the confidence it elicits from individuals -- also to be understood in terms of the confidence individuals choose to attribute to it.

Conventionally the focus is then readily shifted to the intimate association between that confidence and the tokens employed to represent it -- tokens supposedly backed by the guarantees of an issuing authority. Unfortunately it has become only too clear that the issuing authorities have been complicit in forms of action which are appropriately recognized as an abuse of confidence, if not a breach of promise.

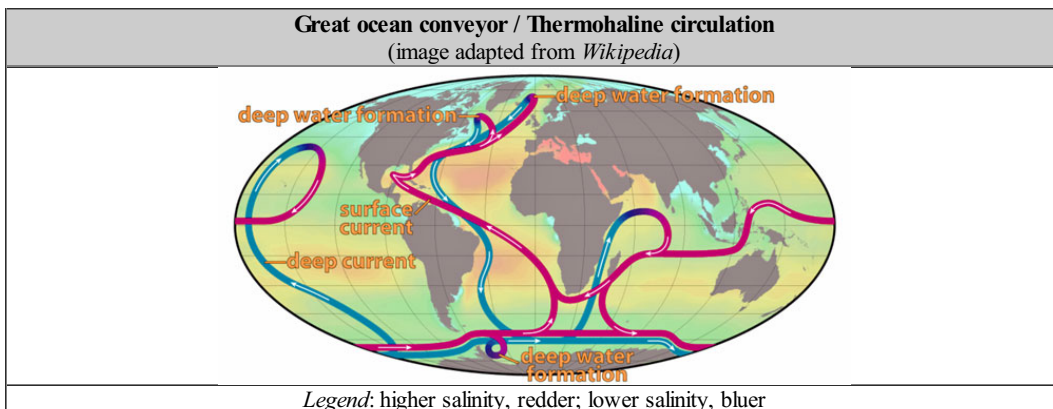
As with "ownwork", the questions for the individual are then:

- how to frame a zone of confidence ("ownconfidence") within which "ownmoney" can circulate -- effectively a "circle of trust".
- with what tokens can the individual associate "ownmoney" -- perhaps to be understood as "owntokens"
- does the understanding of "circulation" then imply a set of circulating "currencies" -- distinct but interlocking
- how might "ownmoney" relate to the "ownvalues" with which the individual is existentially identified
- how is the interface to be managed between the inner realm of "ownmoney" and the outer realm of conventional tokens

Confidence embodied in an interwoven set of circulating currencies

The sense of "ownwork" is fundamental to reframing the (exploitatively) unfruitful employment-unemployment polarization. However this sense is itself intimately related to the sense of confidence enabling a "currency" to be issued (or authorized) by the individual (or a group) -- hence the case for both "ownmoney" and "ownconfidence". This effectively "circulates" in various forms through the range of circumstances of daily life -- transformed between forms of currency as these circumstances require.

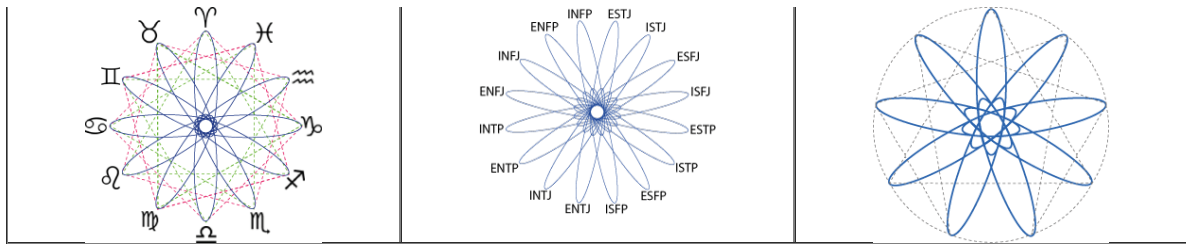
Interwoven currencies: The term "currency" offers not only the sense of carrying capacity -- as with any ocean current -- effectively carrying credibility. It also offers a sense of engagement with time through the present moment. The currents necessarily circulate "globally", variously engaging with the total experience of daily life as an integral whole. As conveyors, the principal ocean currents of the world (such as the [great ocean conveyor](#)) offer a remarkable illustration of this essentially global process. Their interweaving with each other implies an exchange between different notions of value -- governed by a form of "exchange rate" -- of which salinity is appropriately reminiscent of a traditional form (as indicated in the schematic)..



A more complex pattern of "currencies" within the individual is offered by depictions of the set of interwoven **metabolic pathways and cycles** -- by which life is sustained.

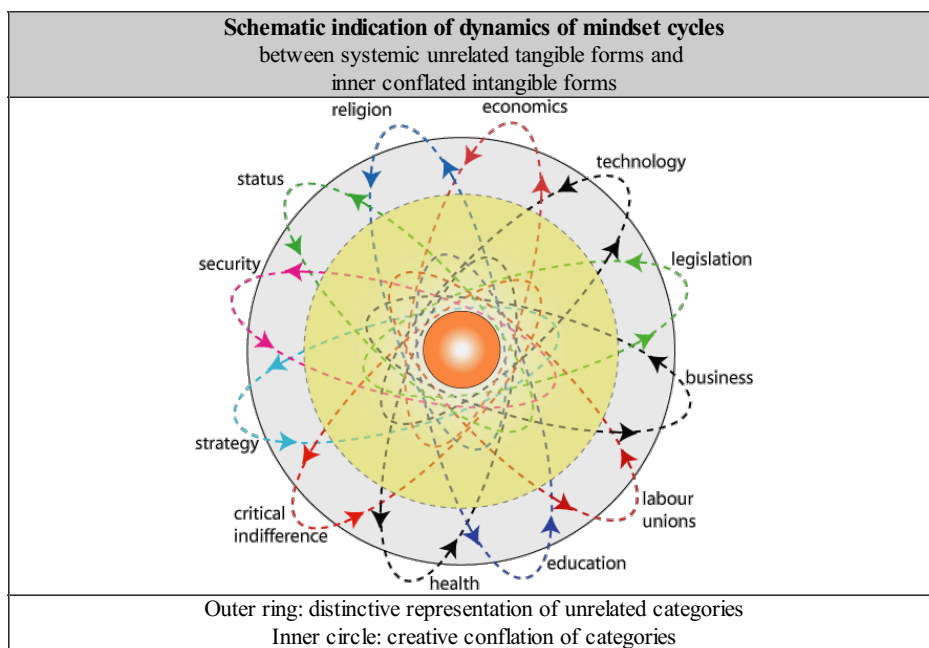
Personality styles as interweaving currencies: Further clues to any sense of a global confidence zone, within which different currencies can interweave, are offered by the various personality typing schemes -- illustrated schematically as follows.

Indicative examples of personality typing schemes represented in circular form		
Zodiacal form	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	Enneagram



Cognitive embodiment: In the promotion of any of these frameworks, emphasis is typically placed on the degree to which an individual **engages with each** of the other "currents", as noted above. For the individual, further emphasis may be placed on the value of **engaging with them all** in an **individuation process** through which greater maturity is achieved -- notably through the process of **psychological integration** articulated by **Carl Jung** (and basic to the Myers-Briggs framework, for example). In that sense all the currents are cognitively embodied -- exemplified by phrases such as a "well-rounded personality" and a "man for all seasons".

The geometry of such patterns can be adapted to the argument regarding any "pantheon" as offering an understanding of a set of distinctively contrasting values. Systemically these nevertheless complement each other in ways which may well be experienced as counter-intuitive. Rather than framing a "deity" in a more conventionally **static** manner, each deity could then be usefully considered **dynamically** as a cyclic process -- namely a "current" in the above terms. This is consistent with traditional associations of deities with orbiting planets and natural processes. These currents might then be schematically represented as interweaving together as follows.



This representation is helpful in clarifying the contrast between distinctly explicit manifestations of any one currency and the implicit commonality which underlies their overlap. This elusive commonality might be compared to a global "reserve currency" or "anchor currency" -- reminiscent of the **gold standard**. It is this which constitutes the psychological and existential underpinning offered by "ownmoney" -- through which any evolving pattern of (un)employment can be sustained.

The diagram also helps to clarify how it is in its "outer reaches" -- namely the **aphelion** region -- that each circulating currency may be readily rendered into explicit token form. This contrasts with its implicit essential nature in the **perihelion** region where the currencies together engender a strange region of unusual commonality. With respect to "dialogue amongst the gods", it is the "outer", token-enabled discourse which is liable to be most problematic -- as with the preferred symbols of the different disciplines or faiths. It is with respect to this particularity that boredom tends to emerge for the others, especially when the symbols are held to be subject to intellectual or spiritual copyright. These barriers to exchange can be discussed in terms of "branding barriers" and "semiotic barriers" (cf. *Branding barrier, semiotic barrier and status barrier*, 2012).

The economic conventions defining employment -- and enabling unemployment -- are necessarily focused on the "outer reaches" where tokens can be readily exchanged, if there is an "exchange rate". Closer to "perihelion" the employment-unemployment relation framed by "ownwork" and "ownmoney" might be better understood as governed by some form of analogue to the uncertainty principle. The counter-intuitive strangeness for the individual can be explored further through the "strange loop" arguments of **Douglas Hofstadter** (*I Am a Strange Loop*, 2007), as separately discussed (*Sustaining a Community of Strange Loops: comprehension and engagement through aesthetic ring transformation*, 2010).

It is within such a context that a sense of how the "gods" might be variously (un)employed and/or bored could be discussed. As projections of individual psychological functions, embodied ***

Cycling between tangible and intangible

Tangible vs. intangible: The above argument highlights a continuum between tangibility embodied in tokens and the intangibility of what

is valued -- which such tokens may represent to a degree, if at all. This corresponds to the continuum between the explicit and the implicit, explicit knowledge and **tacit knowledge**, both readily conflated with that between the objective and the subjective -- with the implicate potentially offering a sense of coherence, as argued by **David Bohm** (*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980).

Curiously it is the:

- **dynamics of the tangible** which are so intimately associated with the business that is the preoccupation of economics -- framed by governance in terms of growth as saviour of sustainability. Relatively little is understood about the dynamics of intangible values -- effectively the "realm of the gods", as argued above. Business -- deriving from "busyness" -- is easily identified with the dynamics of the tangible, with any relative degree of inactivity readily to be regretted, as with any need for vacation, a pause-to-reflect, a cooling-off-period, or the like. This regret might be better recognized as a failure to understand the implications of the **thermodynamic work cycle** fundamental to the industrial revolution, or the fallow period essential to any sustainable pattern of **crop rotation**. It is in this sense that preoccupation with "growth" is essentially acyclic (or subcyclic) -- precluding what might be fruitfully associated with "unemployment", and therefore a natural victim of **business cycles**, lacking the resilience required by the **adaptive cycle**, as argued by **Thomas Homer-Dixon** (*The Upside of Down: catastrophe, creativity, and the renewal of civilization*, 2006).
- **dynamics of the intangible** which are so intimately associated with creativity. It is this which is upheld as fundamental to innovation -- acclaimed as essential to business, competitiveness and growth (cf. Thomas Homer-Dixon, *The Ingenuity Gap*, 2000). Those dynamics are of course essential to quality of life, as argued above. It could be argued, cynically, that the only tangible global strategic recognition of the intangible is the current enthusiasm for printing money as a token of confidence -- and assumed to be a means of engendering it.

The concern here is whether the above argument offers a means of focusing attention on the dynamics of the intangible with which an individual can engage and identify confidently -- possibly in association with immediate others (but not necessarily so).

This focus calls for a careful dissociation of tangible tokens, which the individual can use as confidence markers, from the intangibles which they may represent. In effect, as in conventional economics, it matters little what those markers may be. Some societies have used sea shells, for example. An individual could in this case associate confidence with a painting, a tree, a sentimental object, a relic, or another person, for example.

The question here is how to understand the circulation from the intangible to the tangible (and back), the various forms this might take, and the manner in which those "currencies" interweave. The values variously associated with "gods" in a pantheon, or contrasting personality "types", are helpful indicators -- as schematically represented above. In those instances, the "gods" and "types" are tangible markers. The concern here is with the values represented by those markers with which the individual can identify. In that sense the markers serve as a form of vehicle by which confidence is carried -- vehicles from which it is possible to dissociate, possibly by transferring to another "carrier".

It is then less a question of the relation between the carriers, however suggestive this may be, and more the possible qualitative distinctions between what is carried as being intrinsic to the intangible dynamics. One approach to these is by reducing the number of such qualities for consideration. The number in the set of qualities is not relevant to the argument but rather to enabling comprehension of necessarily elusive subtleties. One previous exercise endeavoured to distinguish the dynamics associated with sets numbering from 1 to 20 elements (*Distinguishing Levels of Declarations of Principles*, 1980).

Fourfold pattern of qualitative dynamics: A convenient number for this argument is a fourfold pattern of "qualities" in which these engage confidence and interest in necessarily contrasting ways. These can be conveniently associated with:

- problems, their consideration and "re-cognition". The dynamics are then intimately related to the challenge posed by a problem and the engagement with it. This can be related to what has been strategically recognized as the "problematique"
- solutions, as the natural complement to problems. The dynamics are best recognized in the creativity and ingenuity they evoke, and the skills they call upon. This can be related to what has been strategically recognized as the "resolutique".
- imagination, as a manner of recontextualizing both problems and solutions, and dreaming dreams of desirable future alternatives to present circumstances. Following the above pattern, this could be labelled as the "imaginatique"
- play, as a form of dynamic involving the engagement with, and disengagement from, any particular commitment. It is intimately related to the above and recalls references above to Lila and the "gods at play". However this is also strategically of the greatest relevance in that "game-playing" is widely evident in every facet of psychosocial activity, irrespective of whether it enables or undermines initiatives. It might be labelled as "irresolutique" through the manner in which it avoids closure.

Complex system dynamics: These four have previously been represented together in a schematic reminiscent of the circulatory patterns presented above (*Imagining the Real Challenge and Realizing the Imaginal Pathway of Sustainable Transformation*, 2007). This evoked the need to consider the intangible dynamics as characterized by those of **complex systems**. This suggested the need to shift from a conventional planar representation (as above) to that of a **complex plane**.

Whilst "complexity" is necessarily complex and a fundamental challenge to comprehension, it is appropriate to note the manner in which any associated dynamics may exhibit elegance of a very high order, as with the **fractal organization** of the **Mandelbrot set**. The question is whether this is suggestive of understandings of intangible qualitative dynamics with which confidence can be fruitfully associated, as previously discussed (*Psycho-social Significance of the Mandelbrot Set: a sustainable boundary between chaos and order*, 2005). Since the quest is for a viable system of intangible dynamics, it is appropriate to note the association of a **viable system** with fractal organization (**Patrick Hoverstadt**, *The Fractal Organization: creating sustainable organizations with the Viable System Model*, 2008).

Given the nature of the **strange attractors** which may be associated with such complex dynamics, how might these then be associated

with human values (*Human Values as Strange Attractors: coevolution of classes of governance principles*, 1993; *El-Attractor -- Timeless Complex Dynamic Health, Wealth, Stealth / Youth, Couth, Truth*, 2007)?

Conflation at the core: The schematics above suggest a form of qualitative conflation at the "perihelion" core -- appropriately reminiscent of such categorial overlap in a [Venn diagram](#). Any such conflation would clearly be of fundamental significance from a semantic perspective. As with creative processes readily associated with the physics of solar processes and the "brilliance" they engender, the question here is how degrees of conflation between psychosocial currencies might be vital to new understanding of confidence and its role in ensuring sustainability.

The role of the Sun is variously recognized in every tradition as being fundamental to the sustainability of life on the planet. The question is then whether new understanding of solar processes offers insights into psychosocial processes vital to the individual by whatever tangible terms these intangible processes are articulated. This possibility could potentially be associated with a form of "memetic singularity" as yet to be understood (*Emerging Memetic Singularity in the Global Knowledge Society*, 2009).

Transformative processes at the core: as suggested above, the dynamics within any "realm of the gods", as in the case of the pantheons of Greece and Rome, merit exploration as systemic processes -- as a "viable system" of sustainable qualitative transformation.

Whilst the languages of problematique, resolutique, imaginatique and irresolutique are suggestive of such a systemic perspective, they are variously alienating in comparison with experiential forms with which confidence is more intimately identified. There is therefore a case for repopulating the transcendental "realm of the gods", as experienced by the individual, with qualitative and values more traditionally associated with deities and the confidence they have elicited (and may continue to elicit). These values might include:

- health: namely processes through which a sense of well-being is engendered and sustained, extending to an integrative sense of "being together", rather than dysfunctionally fragmented
- wealth: namely processes through which inner richness is variously engendered and understood, rather than a sense of impoverishment
- intelligence: namely processes through which conscious recognition of connectivity and integration is enhanced and sustained, rather than a sense of fragmentation or erosion of capacity to remember
- aesthetic elegance: namely processes through which beauty becomes apparent from higher orders of connectivity

There is an evident degree of interrelationship between these processes -- appropriately to be understood as complementary to one another in a viable system through which confidence is sustained. There is also an implication that there is a degree of cycling between greater and lesser health, wealth, intelligence, or aesthetic elegance. As in the operation of any work cycle, "impoverishment" (for example) may be a necessary phase in the dynamic. Also of relevance is the contrast between tokens by which these are represented and the manner in which those values are experienced -- with the possibility of paradoxical conflicts between tangible measures and contrary feelings.

Such dynamics are readily recognized in highly creative environments -- design studios, etc -- typically framed as innovative "hot houses" (or [incubators](#)), characterized by both a "cauldron" of activity and phases of exhausted inactivity.

This framing recognizes that "employment" may be a vital modality in such processes -- as a process of the resolutique. However, "unemployment" may also have a vital role to play. As in any dance, there is a necessary interplay between creative initiative and anticipatory receptivity -- most appreciated when the elegance of the dance is characterized by "nice moves". The challenge of unresolved problems is clearly a valuable stimulant.

Any attribution of names to distinguish variously such qualitative processes readily obscures the fundamental point of this argument regarding the intangible. As with the illusory naming of the "seven" colours of the visible spectrum of light -- with which "gods" have also been traditionally associated -- the more fundamental consideration is the spectrum as a whole and the "[circulation of light](#)", notably celebrated as a [Taoist Qigong](#) or [Taoist yoga Qi](#) energy cultivation technique (*Circulation of the Light: essential metaphor of global sustainability?* 2010).

Freezing and unfreezing categories: The necessary cycling between tangible and intangible can be fruitfully reinterpreted in terms of unfreezing and refreezing categories. The categories relating to the tangible are typically "frozen". Enabling the creativity and fulfillment of the intangible can be usefully understood in terms of "unfreezing", as separately explored (*Framing the Global Future by Ignoring Alternatives: unfreezing categories as a vital necessity*, 2009). There these consideration were notably discussed with respect to: [jobs \(employment / work\)](#), [resolutions](#), [drugs](#), [health](#), [safety](#), [death](#), [population](#), [energy](#), [extremism](#), [property](#), [education](#), [qualification](#), [growth](#), [corruption](#) and [crime](#).

Sustainability: Doing nothing intelligently?

This argument has highlighted the extent to which "employment" is framed conventionally as doing something productive, typically resulting in remuneration. The complement to such productivity is naturally the consumption of what is produced. Curiously consumption is then to be dissociated from productive employment since it is the exploitation of the work of others -- for which payment may have been made in some form. There is then a sense in which consumption is to be understood from a conventional economic perspective as "doing nothing" (irrespective of the work done by the digestive system). This caricature might even be explored as an insult to consumers.

As with consumption, "unemployment" is then to be understood as "doing nothing" -- a conventional response of the unemployed to the question "what do you do?". Relaxation and many forms of recreation may be similarly framed as "doing nothing" -- especially as the ideal of a sunny beach or "hanging out". As noted above, a survey of people in EU countries notably clarified the importance attached to "resting" (*How Europeans Spend Their Time: everyday life of women and men*, European Communities, 2004).

The argument here has however stressed the role of "doing nothing" as a phase in a cycle, most evident in the case of the fallow period in crop rotation -- a period when a field is "unproductive". The value of rest and vacation is similarly recognized -- together with any pause for reflection -- with its productivity open to question in each case. Such examples point to the need for a healthy balance between "doing something" and "doing nothing" -- to which the above-mentioned ILO *World of Work Report 2012: Better jobs for a better economy* accords no recognition (despite involvement of its staff in the activities of the UN Staff Recreation Council).

If sustainability is better understood in terms of an interlocking pattern of cyclic processes -- relating the tangible to the intangible -- the question is then how those phases framed as "doing nothing" are integrated into those cycles. There is the further intriguing possibility that such a dynamic pattern of connectivity may itself constitute a process of "doing nothing" from a subtler perspective. This could be readily understood if sustainability necessitated having zero impact on the environment -- an undetectable **ecological footprint**. This would be consistent with traditional wilderness lore of "leaving a place as it was found". A related principle is valued in any guest making temporary use of accommodation.

As yet to be understood -- irrespective of the tangible tokens by which they are represented -- is **how the intangible dynamics of "health", "wealth", "intelligence" and "elegance" can be fruitfully interwoven in "doing nothing intelligently"**. What are the dynamics enabling an inner sense of fulfillment, irrespective of outer circumstances -- as suggested by arguments for "**simple living**" (cf. [Duane Elgin, *Voluntary Simplicity*, 2010](#)). How do these relate to conventional framings of employment-unemployment within the job culture? How is a fruitful internal dynamic to be elicited within the long-term unemployed, the incarcerated, or those obliged to retire -- or be transferred to hospice care?

Clues to further exploration of this possibility might be derived from current thinking in the extensive preoccupation of physics with "nothing" (cf. John D. Barrow, *The Book of Nothing: vacuums, voids, and the latest ideas about the origins of the Universe*, 2002; Frank Close, *Nothing: a very short introduction*, 2009). Other clues might be derived from more traditional reflection of religion and philosophy on the matter (Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 1983; Simon Saunders and Harvey R. Brown (Eds.), *The Philosophy of Vacuum*, 1991). It might be said, on behalf of those categorized as "unemployed" and "unemployable" -- who currently experience life as offering them "nothing" -- that some aspects of this thinking should be of relevance to their condition.

Further clues could well be obtained from those who have emerged with insight and dignity from years of enforced isolation -- too readily framed as "unemployment" and "doing nothing". Striking examples include: [Nelson Mandela](#) and [Aung San Suu Kyi](#). As noted in a discussion of existential isolation by [Irvin D. Yalom \(*Existential Psychotherapy*, 1980\)](#):

The problem seems to be that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Those who can confront and explore their isolation can learn to relate in a mature and loving fashion to others; yet only those who can already relate to others and have attained some modicum of mature growth are able to tolerate isolation. (p. 399)

However the isolation may be enforced, necessitating a reframing of (un)employment, further clues are then offered by accounts of the dynamics solitude and quiet, as with those of: Anthony Storr (*Solitude: a return to the self*, 2005); Susan Cain (*Quiet: the power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*, 2012); Anneli Rufus (*Party of One: the Loners' Manifesto*, 2003); Lionel Fisher (*Celebrating Time Alone: stories of splendid solitude*, 2001); Sara Maitland (*A Book of Silence*, 2010); George Prochnik (*In Pursuit of Silence: listening for meaning in a world of noise*, 2011); Robert Sardello (*Silence: the mystery of wholeness*, 2008).

This potential relevance of "nothing" has been explored separately (*Emerging Significance of Nothing*, 2012), notably in relation to an emerging form of cognitive "ground zero" (*Way Round Cognitive Ground Zero and Pointlessness?* 2012). As creatively recognized by physics, nothing may actively engender "matter" in ways which may respond to the problematic experience of many that "nothing matters" (*Where There is No Time and Nothing Matters: cognitive challenges at the Edge of the World*, 2008). This could be related to the "importance" currently associated with "mattering" and "happening" (*Import of Nothingness and Emptiness through Happening and Mattering*, 2008).

To the extent that existentially "nothingness" is associated with the conflation of the intangibles (explored above), especially intriguing is the manner in which this is conceptually unrecognized -- effectively "unthought", as separately discussed (*Unthought as Cognitive Foundation of Global Civilization*, 2012). With respect to governance, this can be related to the strategic negligence characterized by a restrictive approach to "unemployment" (*Exploring the Hidden Mysteries of Oxfam's Doughnut: recognizing the systemic negligence of an Earth Summit*, 2012).

Conclusion

The argument has emphasized the degree to which certain "mindsets" are ensuring the disappearances of employment opportunities through various forms of rigidity and inflexibility. These qualities are inappropriate to a global civilization in a period of crisis. The case has been made for a more creative approach to flexibility to enable emergence of new and more dynamic understandings of employment. This may be contrasted with "quantitative easing" and "moral easing".

Quantitative Easing (QE), has emerged as the only viable possibility within the strategic thinking of conventional governance. It is usefully understood in terms of **easement** as a legal right -- the right to use the real property of another without possessing it. This is commonly recognized as the right to traverse the land of another on a pathway framed by these terms. This reframing of QE, highlights the manner in which the rights of future generations are effectively appropriated to some degree in order to enable conventional mindsets to traverse the present period.

Of particular interest is the manner in which it enables the easing of quantitative constraints which would otherwise be cause for the greatest concern, necessitating urgent action. These include increasing population levels, resource overshoot, unprecedented increase in

public indebtedness, increasing levels of pollution and waste accumulation, and even global warming. In practice easing then takes the form of denying such quantitative pressures or reframing them as irrelevant to the short-term priorities of business as usual. It is exemplified in financial terms by the imminence of bankruptcy, and the possibility of its avoidance by simply "printing money" -- long deprecated as indicative of incompetent financial management.

Moral Easing (ME), may be most readily understood as the process whereby imminent moral bankruptcy may be avoided. The easement in this case reduces the implications of moral and ethical principles which would otherwise challenge those strategic initiatives perceived as the only way for conventional mindsets to traverse the current period. Put simply it is a matter of relaxing principles where these are perceived to be a constraint on overriding (national) interest, irrespective of any global implications (cf. *From Quantitative Easing (QE) to Moral Easing (ME): a stimulus package to avert moral bankruptcy?* 2010). The moral easement -- by which "torture", "rendition", "assassination", "long-term imprisonment without charge", "collateral damage", "impunity of agents of state", and the like, have all been very recently reframed -- is now striking.

Of particular interest is the manner in which recognition and rewards are now accorded to those who act contrary to principles previously upheld as sacrosanct. These include instances of what would otherwise be recognized as forms of injustice and crimes against humanity. Recent awards of the Nobel Peace Prize, and indulgences accorded by the Vatican, offer striking examples. The current status of a set of bankers, economists, central bankers and politicians -- identified in 2009 as being at the heart of the global financial crisis -- offers further insight (Rupert Neate, *Financial Crisis: 25 people at the heart of the meltdown - where are they now?*, *The Guardian*, 6 August 2012).

Categorical Easing (CE) is the approach whose exploration is advocated here -- given the extent to which forms of quantitative and moral easement have already been so actively embraced strategically. The argument is that governance is endeavouring to respond to essentially dynamic crises using excessively rigid conceptual frameworks. Whilst this has been effectively recognized in the "quantitative" and "moral" case, it has yet to be recognized with respect to categories which currently restrict employment opportunities.

There is a sense in which the reliance on effectively "frozen" categories is completely inappropriate to understanding of the psychosocial crises of the times and to enabling more creative responses. Curiously this is especially evident in the case of fundamental "values" considered to be the bedrock of global civilization. Rather than being static, the question posed by this argument is whether categorial easing would enable dynamic engagement with such values (cf. *Freedom, Democracy, Justice -- Isolated Nouns or Interwoven Verbs? Illusory quest for qualities and principles dynamically disguised*, 2011).

The argument has emphasized the merit of exploring a cyclic relationship between the more tangible tokens through which values are communicated and the more intangible modalities through which they are experienced -- and which are fundamental to creative flexible response at this time.

The interweaving of such cycles has been presented as opening up access to a central space in which new forms of transaction between value "currencies" become possible. This is presented as a key to new understanding of "employment" which transcends the restrictive work-recreation polarization of the job culture -- offering vital possibilities to those currently framed as "unemployed", "inactive", if not "use-less" to society.

As a mnemonic device, the subtle realm of categorial easing has been framed above in terms of the mythical "realm of the gods". It is there that the "magically" transformative relations between categories are enabled. Rather than being flat or spherical, as so readily assumed, this "realm" might be better characterized by a more complex geometry in which the boundaries of tangible/intangible, objective/subjective, explicit/implicit are essentially paradoxical and counter-intuitive.

Relevant arguments have been presented by [Steven M. Rosen](#) (*The Self-Evolving Cosmos*, 2008; *Topologies of the Flesh: a multidimensional exploration of the lifeworld*, 2006). His exploration of the Klein bottle to that end suggest an unexpected cognitive possibility, as previously discussed (*Intercourse with Globality through Enacting a Klein bottle*, 2009; *Strategic Complexity 8 Attracting Consensus Klein is beautiful 8 Sustaining identity in time*, 2011).

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