

## Towards Mature Regional Harmonization with Ourselves and Nature

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## Abstract

Psychological research shows that our behavior is mainly conditioned by our environment. It equally distinguishes academically between immature and mature behavior by determining its characteristics. We can see such characteristics also back in the functioning of societies. Mature societies stimulate mature behavior, not only of people but also of institutions. Immature societies have the same immature behavioral effect on its participants. At the same time it proves much more difficult to move a society from immature to mature than from mature to immature. For individual human beings the evolution between immaturity and mature behavior is a natural process, triggered by existential values that gradually break through into our consciousness as we grow up. At societal level this is not just an evolutionary process, nor one of hierarchies and power. It is a conscious, collective, self aware choice and commitment.

In 2009 the small STIR research foundation started to experiment with a set of self defined essential human values in its surrounding environment, the city of Eindhoven in the Netherlands. The foundation was not yet relating its actions to the psychology of change, or mature and immature behavior. It got motivated to introduce a new societal story due to worries about a degenerative, inhumane culture that was increasingly showing anthropocenic symptoms. STIR based its approach on experiences of human behavior in mature family based values and the transformative effects of existentialist choices experienced by the founder himself. Now, after 14 years of experimentation with core human values driven shared responsibilities, academic links can be suggested with the complexity of behavioral psychology. This paper is an attempt to open a dialogue towards mature societal functioning for the benefit of sustainable human development in harmony with ourselves and our natural environment.

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## Our Behavior is Conditioned by our Environment

Psychological research has revealed that our individual behavior is conditioned by the functioning of our environment. Neurobiologist Robert Sapolsky [1,2] states that we have “no free will”. Our lives are conditioned by the heritage of our parents and grandparents, the education we receive and the cultural expression of the society in which we grow up. This makes behavioral changes very difficult to produce in any mainstream society. We tend to adhere to a common story, our comfort zone, a naive sense of realism, even

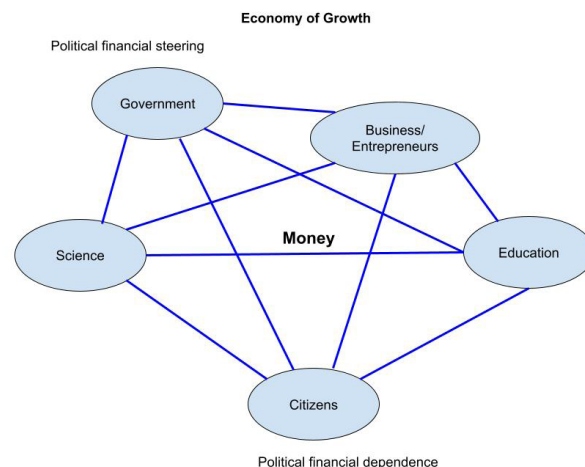
if the entire world is falling apart in an Anthropocene. As long as things don't affect us directly we will conduct our lives as if nothing is happening. This to a large extent is also true for people in hierarchical leadership positions. Introducing transformative change that affects an organization or society as a whole tends to be nearly impossible for the same reason. The difficulty is further enhanced by the fact that our current society has fragmented itself into silos of financial interests and dependencies that have their own behavioral patterns.

- **Political Environment:** In a parliamentary democracy those who have been elected form a coalition around certain societal actions that they decide to focus on. The societal environment of their influence has grown over time from infrastructural planning to the complexity of a few hundred societal environments that tend to show conflicting interests. Making decisions is always subject to political compromise. Such a political environment has two main concerns: to avoid upsetting too many of its areas of influence (to be reelected is an art of satisfying), and to manage the financial income and cost of its societal presence for best contextually defined impact (according to the coalition agreements).
- **Business Environment:** tends to be financially profit oriented (1 x WIN).
- **Education:** is financed to feed the labor structure with new and young, well prepared talent.
- **Citizens:** Equally active in the financial ecosystem, trying to develop in an environment of performance, financial rewards, inflation, covering basic needs and consumer desires in a socially competitive environment.

Each of these islands have developed into societal silos that interact financially through trade, rewards, taxes and regulations. The overall pressure on society is referred to as “the economy of growth”, a psychological condition that gives all participants the illusion of progress. Reality however shows that this structure of financial interdependence is developing all the known anthropocenic symptoms such as social inequality, discrimination, environmental pollution, destruction of biodiversity, increase of societal costs due to bureaucracy, development of anchored financial hierarchies, increase of societal debt, expensive remedial healthcare systems, etc. Behind the societal system we can detect a degenerative spiral that leads eventually to recessions, crises and even the potential of self-destruction.

*The financially driven hierarchical doctrine sees nature and human beings as resources. Its sense of responsibility is limited to keeping these resources active to comply with its financial self-interests.*

The tendency is to address the anthropocenic issues remedially through more financial investments, new bureaucracies, thicker layers of government, institutionalized self-interests around the problems, more impediments for change, more control instruments and an even stronger push for financial speculation and growth. The psychology of “an environment that conditions our behavior” shows such symptoms while each of the silos deepen their self-interest through the instruments at hand. None of the silos have means, motivation or insights to change their interconnection, or to look at themselves from another overarching position than their financial dependence. Each tries to make the best of it, within the circumstances and the behavioral attitude proper of each of the silos.



**Figure 1:** A fragmented societal reality that develops its own Anthropocene.

*Charles Eisenstein states that symptoms, such as illnesses, climate issues, pollution, social inequality, etc. rest on top of societal systems [3]. These systems rest on top of the stories that we tell ourselves as society. So if we want to address the symptoms we need to change the story.*

But how do we change a collective story that has deep historical roots? It is not the first time that our common stories have changed. Let us try to get a grip on the way it tends to work.

### **New Stories that Change Everything Happen All the Time**

Some three hundred years ago, people started to get massively attracted to urban development due to labor opportunities in upcoming industrialized structures. It was not just the job opportunities that were attractive. The standardization of rewards through financial means allowed people to gain access to their basic needs through financial transactions, rather than on survival based competitive theft, charity or forced dependence on rural land owners and elites. A new societal story developed based on financial objectives and dependencies. It disconnected people from their rural origins and the related survival mechanisms. It made cities into financial clusters with productivity and usages of products and services in an environment of financial and physical growth. It equally gave people a sense of freedom, control and purpose in life. We became representatives of our own financial doctrine.

### **Eindhoven (The Netherlands), also Cities have their Stories**

In the late 90's of the 19th century, the small city of Eindhoven in the Netherlands was confronted with the impact of growing industrial multinationals in its municipality. The city had developed historically just like many other cities, as a crossroad of material, people and military movements, marketplace and religious worship. Its territory was very small, enough for the

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early development of small textile and tobacco industries. When the Philips brothers chose to set foot in the territory, with their lightbulb manufacturing intentions, the overall local story changed. The explosive growth of the company put enormous stress on urban development. In 1920 Eindhoven annexed five surrounding villages in order to accommodate the industrial facilities and the housing of the enormous influx of personnel from different regions of the Netherlands. The city grew instantly from a mere 4000 inhabitants to more than 100.000 in just a few decades. The story that was being told was that of the needs of growing industries. The city was forced to react, expand and develop, with all the stress that goes with such endeavor.

*World War II impacted the world with the atrocities of political polarization, creating a social story of deadly differentiation, social discrimination, aggression, persecution and mass murder. The origins of the blind local societal support to Hitlerian manipulative storytelling were researched. They were attributed to the effects on the German population of the financial pressure put on Germany after World War I. Poverty, unemployment, multicultural development, emotional damage and powerful political promises became the ingredients for a worldwide genocide. Post war political hierarchies in Western economies decided that avoidance of repetition required the introduction of financial cushions against financial poverty. This further impacted the financial pressure on the system, motivating many other related decisions. It did however announce a long period of peace in Europe.*

The story of Eindhoven changed again one hundred years after the arrival of Philips. The big industries were under pressurized stress of financial growth, cost optimization and global expansion. Some could not cope, went bankrupt and were taken over in bits and pieces by other global players. Others decided to leave and invest in low wage countries. The city was abandoned and left with over one million square meters of empty industrial space, a polluted environment and a very large percentage of unemployment. The municipality was challenged in the late 90's of the 20th century to define a story of its own. In psychological terms we refer to this as the "I am revelation", a critical existential process of recognizing one's own characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, meaningfulness and purpose in life.

The city was still a logistic crossroad but wanted to distinguish itself in authenticity from mainport Rotterdam, industrial German Ruhr area and other regional well defined conglomerates. Its high tech profile was still a remainder from the old industrial and automotive presence. The financial pressure produced by post war social securities placed the city close to bankruptcy. Multidisciplinary strategic engagement between the key local institutional players: local government, business development and education, became known as the 'triple helix'. Together they defined the concept of Brainport, a technology driven regional identity. This triggered the (financial) recovery of the region through the redevelopment of employment with a healthy (from a financial ecosystem point of view) mix of small, medium and large enterprises. It also redefined

the city's characteristics from industrial workplace to a social, consumer and intellectual meeting environment.

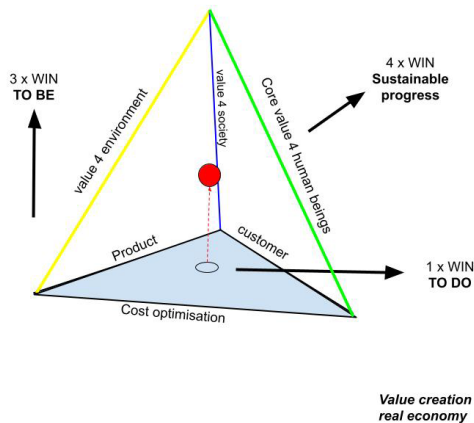
*A commonality in all these stories is that it affects everybody, people and institutions together, and all at the same time. Another commonality is that the stories are introduced by external factors making the community react in an existential way to the new circumstances. So if we wish to change a story, it needs to involve all, we need an external factor and address the existential reality to produce a new "I am revelation". In the past such an external factor used to be a recession, a crisis or an aggressor. Can all this have provided humankind with enough lessons to arrive at an awareness breakthrough for peaceful societal transformation?*

With the knowledge of today we can avoid such painful situations by addressing the existential questions well on time. The STIR foundation decided to experiment with this understanding.

The anthropocene is showing its consequences. The development of the city of Eindhoven so far was based on a finance centered mindset in a global, finance driven reality. It defined its existentialist choices and its own storytelling within the overarching finance driven contextual reality. In 2011 the region was declared the smartest in the world, based on the amount of patents registered statistically per population numbers. At the same time it was located in the center of the most polluted region of Northwest Europe. Air pollution has a negative impact on local health, health care demands, productivity, future growth perspectives, societal costs, bureaucracy, etc. In 2009 the STIR foundation had started to address existential human ethics based on a set of essential human values (Figure 3). STIR declared those values as a shared responsibility for citizens and local institutions alike. The story proposed by STIR was to develop "a healthy, self-sufficient region together". Addressing the government layer of the region the feedback at the time was "we want that too, but don't know how" and "we don't have health in our executive portfolio".

*The STIR story became known as the City of Tomorrow and Sustainocracy (Sustainable human progress in a real time democracy) [4,5].*

Before 2009, the predecessor of STIR, the 5K consultancy group, had addressed the entrepreneurial business world with the 4 x WIN philosophy (Figure 2) of values driven business development. This was very different from the common 1 x WIN (financial goals only) approach that was leaving impactful consequences to people, planet and society. The 1 x WIN approach had developed into the overall financial reality of society as we know it today. This included all the costly remedial activities that addressed the symptoms of the 1 x WIN story of our collectively developed society. These remedial activities had the tendency to develop themselves again as 1 x WIN organization with its self-interest based on the problems they were supposed to solve.



Jean-Paul Close  
Entrepreneurship 21st century

Figure 2: The 4 x WIN philosophy.

The 5K consultancy group had gradually arrived at the conclusion that such a values driven 4 x WIN business philosophy needed a 4 x WIN environment to develop itself optimally. Such a 4 x WIN commonality hence required the involvement of government, education, business, citizens and science, all together. Before 2009 none of these environments were accessible for such new storytelling, hooked on the thirst for money as means for everything. When in 2008 the financial crisis hit and shocked the world, the doors and minds opened for new stories. Such a new story development was not a consultancy issue. It was to be a commitment, shared by all. That is why a research foundation seemed a better option to work with than a consultancy group.



Figure 3: The existential human values introduced by STIR as a new societal story referred to as a Sustainocracy.

The five essential values (Figure 3) for sustainable human existence and development deposited in STIR are based on natural mature family values. This represents the mature commitment that parents intuitively deal with for the upbringing of their children. STIR started to present these values publicly through meetings and presentations. It extended a positive invitation to all silos of society to engage.

All the five values together were sensed as too abstract and confrontational to the financially based structure of society. It required the convergence of all societal silos around these values as a shared responsibility. Many of these responsibilities (such as food, energy, water, health care, education) had been translated into tradable and competitive commodities, with their own local and global structures of control and dependencies. They are firmly fixed into the societal format of financial 1 x WIN interdependencies. Despite the obvious contribution to the anthropocene, these structures show strong adhesion to their functioning. STIR's proposition was not just rejected, it was hardly ever taken seriously. Meanwhile STIR looked for early pioneers to develop a new reality together. At the same time the foundation was looking at ways to find a new story that would get everyone involved.

*In 2020, the well known naturalist David Attenborough [6], stated publicly that if these essential values are neglected and disappear, our societies will collapse.*

Experimenting with its insights and proposition, by some lucky chance STIR arrived at the idea to address local air quality and health. To its own surprise the proposition was gradually supported and accepted by all silos.

### Health and Air Quality as A Common New Story

In 2011 STIR had finally managed to gather the four pillars of society around the table to discuss how to develop this healthy region together, focussed on environmental quality as a shared commitment. These four pillars are:

- local citizens - culture and behavior
- local government - public investment, infrastructure
- local entrepreneurs - value driven innovations
- science and education - applied and new knowledge



Figure 4: Existential human values as a shared responsibility (people and institutions together).



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The new regional story to be told was not directly based on usual financial growth parameters with the introduction of new technological investments (Kondratiev waves [7]), or the registration of patents. It was human centered around the core natural values of integral health, a healthy environment, health driven leadership and behavior. If one wished to be referred to as the smartest of the world, this should, according to STIR, also revert to local regional vitalization through health and wellness, not just finance. In 2011 the story of regional health and air quality managed to get all pillars together for the first time. It got a name: AiREAS (Figure 4), as in Air and Area..... It also became known as the “quadruple helix”, the “awareness driven co-creation level of society” (Presencing Institute, Harvard) and even “Brainport 2.0”.

### **AiREAS, Regional Health and Environmental Quality**

AiREAS was founded as a cooperative association [8,9] with broad interdisciplinary, project driven participation. AiREAS had no resources of its own and was purely based on commitment based partnerships. The first issue that was discussed as a community was the invisibility of the problem of air pollution. When something is not visible it tends to be neglected by people, policy makers and others. The only historical visibility of environmental pollution was through the build up of the consequences it produced. This had led to costly policies, regulations and remedial initiatives that tended to get institutionalized around financial self interests again themselves. But this was not enough for a truly healthy environment, lifestyle and societal functioning. Therefore, the multidisciplinary AiREAS table decided to wish “to make visible the invisible”.

The community started to develop a local measurement system and called it the ILM (intelligent air quality measurement). The measurement was to be done close to the citizens for two reasons. The first was to look into the cumulative exposure of people to air pollution instead of looking into the fragmented origins of pollution itself. The second reason was to engage citizens into awareness development about their own options for health driven behavioral adjustments. The data gathered through the measurement system had to be open and accessible for analysis and interpretation by all that desired to engage.

AiREAS was not just a citizen initiative. In the tradition of societal storytelling the condition of “citizen” is already part of a particular story. AiREAS was positioned as a human centered initiative, with the understanding that we are all natural (biological) human beings, irrespective of our function in society or the different collective stories we tell. We are all equal and share the same existential responsibilities. “The right to monitor our own environment” (Citizen Sensing) had even become the subject of PhD research at the Tilburg University of Law [10].

### **The Psychology of Change**

With the new AiREAS story inserted into society things started to happen. The older stories, such as the industrial and technological

local push, the logistic crossroad and the Brainport financial collaboration, that had evolved into TDK (Technology, Design, Knowledge) city marketing, polarization risks, the costly social securities, and the population growth of the municipality, were of course still active. But the new integral health story gradually started to infiltrate into all the institutions, politics, city and regional design, citizen’s activities, education, scientific research, entrepreneurship, etc. Making visible the invisible became much more than visualizing the composition of the air at any time of the day. It also made painfully clear how our daily lifestyle affected our own contribution and exposure to pollution, in most cases more than 50% [11,12]. Our first individual health improvement clearly was an issue in our own citizen’s hands and daily actions.

*It also showed the impact of traffic, wood stoves, fireworks, bbq’s, etc. on ourselves, our families and our environment, affecting also our neighbors, especially in the densely populated neighborhoods. Such insights are confrontational, often leading to denial, denegation and conflicting situations. Many of such usual habits, that are related to our daily behavior or seasonal rituals, were sensed as basic human rights, an essential part of our cultural comforts, luxury and wellness achievements. They had hardly ever been associated with any health deterioration, climate impact or a motive for regional conflicts among neighbors. Such contrasts in the interpretation of our daily reality lead to a whole series of reactions. It became easier to blame government, industries, traffic or the neighbors, than our own selves.*

*Another essential human value introduced by STIR was “safety”. This was interpreted in a much broader sense than the absence of theft, violence or disciplined behavior in traffic. It started with respect. Respect for the integrity of life in general, of oneself, the neighbors, people and our natural environment. It also referred to the need for care, compassion, empathy, social inclusion and shared responsibilities towards each other.*

At the level of intersilo relationships the invisible became visible too. Our finance driven, fragmented societal, institutionalized reality interacts through financial transactions, regulations, taxes and, when necessary, develop remedial actions. These silos are not at all used to converge in proactive areas of shared existentialist responsibilities, developing innovative crossover strategies together for overall human vitality. As citizens we are used to leaving responsibility to the institutional hierarchies. We tend to disconnect our professional engagement with our private life. The same denial and denegation gets institutionally augmented due to the justification of the institutional DNA around financial interests. “I just do my job”, was often heard as an excuse. In our private life there are circumstances that force us to break through this denial. For instance when we are confronted with the negative impact on ourselves, our family or close friends. Only then do we recognize the overarching reality of denial that brought us to the level of the anthropocene and in conflict with each other.

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*Bringing all the silos together at the same time and at the same table, suddenly we become aware of the impact of our professional life on our human values. Combining our professional functions with the vitality of our societal environment, including ourselves, motivates us to make valued, innovative decisions in favor of this vitality.*

The political reality was challenged to accept the shared responsibility of air quality and health, above its traditional functioning of seeking compromises in conflicting situations. This added a new dimension to the political reality, one that could only be justified optimally by joining the AiREAS storytelling. But this was not easy for those involved. In all silos there was a natural psychological tendency to try to work their way back into their old comfort zone of fragmented self interests. But the story of existential human and natural health based cooperation is strong. Anyone against it suddenly had to develop arguments why they would oppose it. This is confrontational, leading to all kinds of reactions. This included the rejection to join AiREAS commitment with the argument “we do it ourselves”, whatever interpretation this was given within the old contextual comfort zones. This would be legitimate if the storytelling of essential, existential human values would be unified and unique throughout society. But in a reality in which all the older, conflicting historical stories of humankind are still interacting, the only way to overcome this is by togetherness.

Analyzing such psychological impact of convergences between citizen and institutionally shared existentialist insights, suggests the transition towards a mature societal experience. From a psychological point of view, such evolutionary steps at a regional level, where institutions and citizens interact proactively for societal balance, show behavioral similarities with the growing up of human beings from childhood to adult behavior. It suggests that the global existential crises, as experienced through the painful anthropocenic symptoms of inflation, sickness, deterioration of biodiversity, pollution, etc., triggers the gradual acceptance of levels of social cohesion and sharing responsibilities, as invited by STIR, away from pure competitive human and institutional self-interests. None of the local silos of self-interest could take such an initiative by itself as their existence was largely determined by the overarching financial conditioning. On the other hand, the aspect of existential human values such as health and healthy air are an overarching responsibility, sensed by all people active in society. The different silos could only join such an initiative effectively and successfully if the others did too.

### **Voluntary and Involuntary Change**

STIR looked into two levels of change: the involuntary and voluntary change. Both levels are relevant for citizens and also institutions, such as government, business or education. When we look at the variety of stories that affected the region of Eindhoven over time, as briefly described in this article, we can distinguish both these levels. The arrival of Philips for instance produced an involuntary imposition of change. The city was forced to react to

circumstances beyond its own control. The people, from nearby and far away, that got attracted by the call for personnel by these multinationals did so largely voluntarily. Often they reacted out of financial need, accepting the fact that the move to a new environment can be emotionally impactful.

*When Philips decided to leave, it forced the city to define its own reality, its own existential authenticity. The latter was still done contextually within the usual, overarching, financially dominant ecosystem [13].*

When STIR started to address the contextual issue of integral health, as a commonly shared responsibility for environmental air quality, a new element was introduced. This was the element of Existential Human Ethics [14]. This provoked both the combination of involuntary (pressure on a new common level of ethics versus finance) and voluntary aspects (human centered acknowledgment) of change. Five levels of participation in the new story were detected, both at the level of citizen and institutional participation:

1. No participation: This was not due to denial or denegation. It was more due to ignorance, disconnection and blind activity in the older unconsciously prioritized stories of (financial) self interest.
2. Passive participation: Here denial and conscious prioritization into self interest prevailed. People and institutions knew about the new story but acted passively for different reasons.
3. Active participation: These are the citizens, professionals and executives that acknowledge the new story, doing their best to adapt their lifestyles and daily decisions accordingly. They serve as an active stimulus for the passive layer to also take steps.
4. Entrepreneurial participation: Such people and professionals start adding value to the new story themselves through innovative creativity, engaging with the passive and active layers for growth.
5. Integrated participation: These individuals and professionals look for crossover participation and co-creative cooperation. This is typically the AiREAS cooperative environment.

Even though at first the layer of “no participation” is dominant, the impact of the layers 3, 4 and 5 is key to develop a new mainstream reality of overall participation. Human psychology defines the conscious and unconscious levels of behavior. A large part of the layer of “no participation” eventually engages without knowing consciously that they do. They tend to blindly follow the new patterns of society as it evolves without their own moral justification. At the political level the voluntary and involuntary participation part is personal. Some were grateful for the way out of the political controversy, others preferred to use it to create barriers out of self interest or mental conditioning to the old story of political financial dependence.

Another risk detected was the lobby at level 5 to create the

impression of cooperation, with the avoidance to take real action by “buying time”. This was especially relevant when “the invisible had become visible” and the need for action became apparent. Then the old denial, blaming others, false justifications and the environment of political compromises started to interact again. Everyone went through this, without exception. It showed to be more difficult to convince one’s own silo to make changes than to ask others to do so. Even impositions by the local government, for instance prohibiting fireworks, were negated massively by local citizens, ignoring their own health and safety. They represent a passive and silent majority, in each of the silos, that only reacts when their own interests are affected.

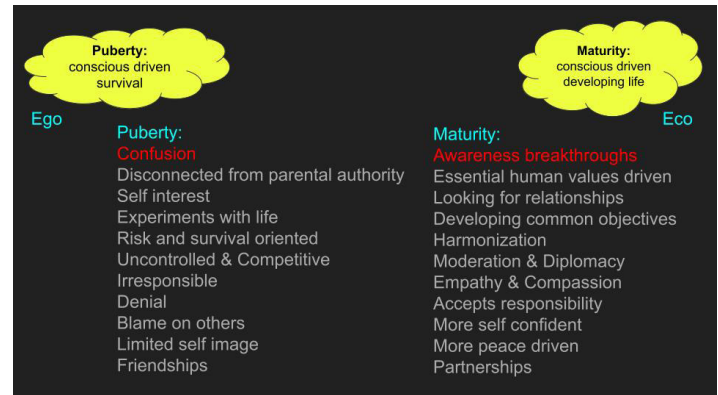
From a change perspective, the invitation to the new story has to be positive, innovative, constructive, motivational and connected to the self interest of those that sense the story. The latter normally have an existential motive as new age pioneers. The new story strengthens itself as it develops, attracting more and more people and institutions to take it further. Initially it is vulnerable due to overarching remains of old stories, even the spontaneous uprising of obsolete old stories with conservative mentalities, their impositions and differentiated blinded mindsets around self interests. As the new story evolves and strengthens itself with its arguments, it becomes part of a reality that people and professionals deal with in a positive way.

The existentialist part of the story adds another dimension to the participation. It powerfully places a mirror in front of the old, in this case the financially driven story of fragmented self interest that produced the need to define the health story due to its anthropocenic symptoms. It puts moral pressure on voluntary participation, as well as on those that stick to the old anthropocenic behavior. Integral health is not a choice, it becomes a recognized shared and existential responsibility that also requires the mature convincing power over those that are blinded by immature self interest. The latter still find justification in the old mainstream reality, even often at executive level. Blind ignorance can justify behavior, but this is only temporarily the case. As the new story grows with participation, the level of ignorance is often changed into denial, emotional resistance to change, or manipulation out of narcissistic self interest.

### Mature and Immature Behavior

It was Freud who stated that “denial is a state of immaturity”. Immature behavior in a mature environment tends to get corrected and stimulated to learn to behave maturely. Mature behavior in an immature environment tends to get overruled by aggression. It then has the tendency to isolate itself from the mainstream. When all pillars of society assume a shared and mature role of responsibility, the ones that oppose tend to get the choice to adapt or disappear. The old political financial reality has the tendency to divide while the one based on shared existential ethical responsibilities shows strong signs of converging attraction.

Many more behavioral aspects of the fragmented financial based silos can be defined as immature, even though the people captured professionally in the financial ecosystem and hierarchies do not sense it that way. This is okay, as long as the overarching leadership dynamics are mature in the holistic harmonization attitude and societal, core human values based cooperation.



**Figure 5:** From immature self interest to mature shared existential (not just financial) responsibilities.

The engagement of citizens and institutions in areas of shared existential natural and human responsibility is one of the elements of maturity. Another is the transformation of institutional hierarchical positions of forced, fragmented dominance out of self interests, into professional authenticity that participate in values driven innovations and integration. All take and share benefits together, each in their own way.

*Vitalized regions have the potential to reduce costly bureaucracy to a minimum, maximizing local productivity and social adaptiveness, regional regenerative self sufficiency and converting competitive conflicts with other regions into values driven cooperations. Inflation is kept to a minimum while wellness is shared, eliminating poverty, social inequality, loneliness, burnouts and other negativity through the meaningful interaction between all as a values driven local ecosystem. Self interest remains a strong motivational element. However, once connected to the common existentialist human and natural interests it delivers a positive societal impact that feeds the authentic image of the partner involved.*

At an individual human level we see immature behavior by people who consciously or unconsciously stick to their egocentric self-interests. Typically, immaturity is present during adolescent puberty. This is justified by the learning process of the youngster to define him or her own future adult self. It is referred to as the conscious competitive phase of survival in between parent dependent childhood and community active maturity. Normally this learning phase has painful and pleasant experimental, existential awareness development moments, including breakthrough insights that determine the future adult characteristics of the individual. Such mature characteristics of self-awareness are needed biologically to function with biological



partnerships, create a basis for new evolutionary offspring to be born and develop safely, and function optimally in herd based communities.

*The financial ecosystem however has fragmented our world into pieces of individual self-interest, lengthening and even applauding the pubertal, immature, egocentric behavior. It both institutionalized and individualized financial self-interests, connecting ego to financial self-realization and growth, stimulating our competitive drives and individualism. Even systems of law are built around this ego based reality, defending the financial hegemony above natural human values.*

When STIR started to invite individuals and institutions to take responsibility together for essential natural human values, it did so from its own intrinsic motivation. It had no idea yet about the psychology of maturity. It had gone through its own evolutionary learning processes, gaining insights on ways to get away from the anthropocenic behavior by establishing multidisciplinary communities. Only now we come across the academic definitions of maturity versus immaturity and can find the analogy with what we have experienced ourselves. Especially the warm nature of togetherness, the community spirit, as in AiREAS, had surprised us just as much as it did the other participants. It overarched the business like negotiations, sharing the interhuman warmth of creative, innovative, shared commitment towards each other and our common goals. As a research foundation it became only natural that we tried to find academic explanations that would help develop similar communities locally and elsewhere [15].

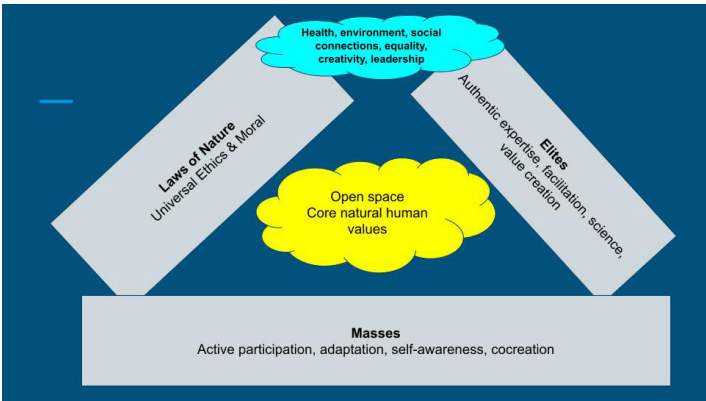
### Leadership Archetypes

Regional mature societal interaction is based on the human psychology of shared values and responsibility. This is what STIR had observed in traditional family partnerships that develop a common future with children. The attitude towards each other is not of competition or the financial taking from each other. It is contributinal, sharing and developing common objectives, based on equality, care and trust. With this analogy in mind regional development can be mature too, focused on harmonization through common natural values rather than the sum of fragmented growth and self interests. The leadership archetypes learn to interact constructively together, as role models for harmonic relationships:

| Leadership  | Immature                  | Mature                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Story:      | Political financial silos | Shared existentialist responsibilities |
| Government: | Regulatory dominance      | Facilitating with expertise            |
| Business:   | Financial self interest   | Creatively contributive                |
| Science:    | Dogmatic dependence       | Applied old & new knowledge            |
| Citizens:   | Blind domestication       | Participatory engagement               |

The change to maturity is psychologically characterized by letting go of blind silos of dogmatic self interest, positioning one's personal or institutional needs within the existential commons of harmonizing productive togetherness. The development of

vitalized wellness eventually benefits all, at human, societal, ecological and financial (4 x WIN) level. Money is one of many means, often a consequence of recognized authenticity, never a goal.



**Figure 6:** The open space of co-creation and the changing role of the elites.

Only if all leadership archetypes engage into the same mature story at the same time and together, the environment of result driven cooperation will develop around this mature societal experience.

### Final Remarks

The collective and overall acceptance of the contextual change towards shared responsibilities for our existential real values is key. We are all natural human beings, as citizens or acting in each of the leadership archetypes. We are not a resource! We are nature, a shared responsibility, a collective present and future, a living reality. A totally new world emerges when these archetypes constructively converge in the open space of core natural human values driven development. People and institutions that have experienced this contextual turnaround feel empowered, authenticated and recognized. They invariably wish to stay in the warmth of these values driven co-creation, non-competitive communities. Together they wish to tell the new story. AiREAS has made visible what has been invisible for a very long time. We still have a long way to go since AiREAS only covers part of the existential values. But it is a psychological, emotional and practical precedent, ready for further expansions for the benefit of all. The main difference maybe today, with the STIR experience through AiREAS and other initiatives, is that we can now also academically, instead of intuitively, define mature relationships and societal development. If so, we can and will further integrate it into education, our societal structures, even our constitutions, assuring that a maturely developed and structured humankind guides us into the recovery and development of the lasting and safe benefits of our sustainable existence, today and towards the future.

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