

## OPUS GLOBAL REPORT 2016

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### Abstract.

On or about 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016, under the guidance and coordination of OPUS, Listening Posts aimed at providing a snapshot of the societal dynamics of each country at the dawn of 2016, were held in twenty six different countries around the world (Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Faroes Islands, Finland, France, Germany (2 Reports), Greece, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy (4 Reports), Peru, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, South Africa (2 reports), Sweden, Turkey, UK, & USA). These were all reported in a similar format (see 'Britain and the World at the Dawn of 2003' in *Organizational & Social Dynamics* 3 (1): 165-169), researched and analysed by the authors, to produce this Global Report.

The authors self-defined their task as follows. To research and analyse the National Reports with a view to:

- (a) Identify common themes arising within the Reports from the twenty six countries;
- (b) Explore relationships between themes and to reduce these down to major or dominant themes;
- (c) Collate supporting information from the Reports for analysis of these themes; and
- (d) Formulate hypotheses arising there from.

For the sake of brevity this Report will only document the major interrelated themes identified, followed by an analysis and hypotheses regarding each.

### Key Words.

Listening Posts, Global Dynamics, Societal Dynamics, Social Defences Against Anxiety.

### **Introduction.**

Over the past decade and more, members of societies throughout the world have experienced this period in history as one of unprecedented and revolutionary social change. Much of this change began and continues with technological developments such as the availability of social networking. A further effect of technological change was to pave the way for globalization which, adopted policies of freedom of movement of people, freedom of movement of capital, and international outsourcing of manufacturing. This has led to massive immigration, the economic crisis, a widening of the gap between rich and poor; as well as changes in the ideas; including political, social, philosophical

and religious ideas. Taken together, members of societies have experienced the totality of change as a huge loss: what we have referred to as death of a way of life. This experience is shared by all societies, the used and the users; the rich and the poor; resulting in a clash of cultures where international and intra-national, fundamentalists have been mobilized to seize the opportunity to ferment conflict and fear.

There is continuing evidence that the experience of members of societies throughout the world is that this period is one of formative changes in the structure of the world economy, the shape of societies, and the framework of world governance. All societies are struggling to make sense of their world and finding it difficult to adapt to a new way of life. At this point it seems impossible for members of societies to imagine what a new way of life would be like or even begin to create one.

### **Current Dynamics.**

The current experience of members of societies throughout the world is that they are still struggling to make sense of their world. There is an underlying experience of corruption, social violence, aggression, and of natural disasters linked to climate change. These act as a sort of backcloth to other more specific experiences. Add to these the experience of global terrorism and migration and we can perhaps begin to understand the current dynamics.

However, it is considered important that to understand the current dynamics it is necessary to understand the experiences of the past decade or more, some of which is referred to above. The saying, 'today is decided by yesterday and tomorrow is decided by today', is a helpful way of viewing the current experiences. Change has been adversely experienced for many years now, indeed, the 2005 Global Report had as its major theme, 'Monumental Social Change'. It may, therefore, be somewhat surprising that 'massive change' is now the dominant theme here in 2016. Extreme change, overwhelming change and the pace of change, are still causing members of societies throughout the world enormous emotional conflicts as they try to understand what is happening.

It seems most likely, that previous attempts to gain understanding, led to extreme dependency and projections of a messianic nature, which was projected into politicians to act as saviours in a time of need. Because politicians and other societal leaders had no means of providing solutions, this was experienced by members of societies as one of unmet dependency and resulted in increased anxiety, increased helplessness, and hopelessness, massive insecurity, and fears for the future, even fears of annihilation. This led them to begin to seriously question the capacity of political and other societal leaders; and to begin to seek alternative sources of security from others who they, then, in desperation felt would provide for their extreme dependency and needs for leadership of a messianic nature. Those others who were promising to provide what appeared alternative solutions in a positive and knowing way were all alternative politicians from the extremities of the political spectrum, who had no previous experience of taking and managing political power.

In the belief that everything else had failed, members of societies, desperate as they were, believed that these people could do no worse and might do even better, by delivering them from their extreme anxieties. Regardless that these alternative people lacked experience or that they were extremists, members of societies turned to these sometimes charismatic groups, and truly regarded them as messianic figures. Faced with not knowing, members of societies opted for change, perhaps any change that they hoped would bring to power leaders who they could depend on to provide solutions: they voted for them to provide the political leadership that others had not seemingly provided. This has resulted in frequent and radical political and institutional change. (The most recent change of this nature is that of the established political parties in Ireland being outvoted by fringe parties. And of course, the massive support for the non-politician Donald Trump in the United States). An outcome has been even more complexity, as political upheaval from one ideology to another has resulted in splitting and polarization.

There is a growing realisation and experience of guilt that members of society have themselves contributed to the current anxiety and they are turning to the creation of communities to begin a process of recovery. However, this is a world where the identities of members of societies are still experienced as being threatened; a world that has become increasingly violent; a world where the often unbearable, thoughts and feelings are still projected into politicians and other societal leaders. Thus, a further outcome is that of political and other social institutions experienced as failing, corrupted, and collapsing. They are denigrated and regarded as failing to provide for the dependency needs of members of societies. This experience is further developed below in the first Analysis and Hypothesis '**Massive Change**'.

Alongside this major theme of change there exists other related change that exacerbates the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and creates threats to identity.

One other major theme is that of change in regard to the family and intergenerational experiences. Members of societies are still coming to terms with the ways the relations among generations is shaping in these unstable times. The experience is one of a growing generational divide played out in various ways. Young people are more ready to accept new political ideologies, and new technologies. Parents are more aligned with the old and familiar; young people are technologically competent, and the older unskilled generation, experience being excluded; young people are challenging the authority of parents and teachers, the older generations are respecting authority.

The old and the young do not share an interdependent relationship where a holding space allows for transference of knowledge, experiences, expertise, roles and power. On the contrary, an overall polarisation seems to put the generations onto a collision course. Society is still projecting hope into the younger generation who are seen as the saviours of the future. Indeed, in some respects the young generation can be seen to be doing so by creating, innovative solutions - in each and every way of life - that show the way out of the current mess. The family tends to be a weakened institution and to be represented more like a closed system where life is slower rather than a place of nourishment.

Alongside the family are the larger groupings of community. At this time, members of societies seem to use the term “community” not in itself but as a specification of particular groups or situation (e.g. “community of elites”, “communities of neighbours”) as if a community can be characterised by the specific and unique identity of its members. In this situation, community does not seem to embrace and encapsulate a whole, but simply a part, that is then given the status of a whole. Community, as collective space, seems to be a space between perceived and experienced fear and wishful hope. It is the place where tolerance dances with fear. The fear is very primordial: leading to internal and external destruction.

Members of societies experience communities as fragmented social entities that seem to be associated with severe hardships as a reaction to their “survival mode”. Films, books, poems are all portraying such experiences. Ambivalence seems to emerge where members of society experience the crumbling of the old way and everything is described as in flux. With eroded and porous boundaries, communities seem to carry a lot of unfulfilled and unmet needs for protection and dependency. It seems members of society are struggling to voice a stable identity both at individual and collective levels as result of this fragmentation and ambivalence. This experience is further developed below in the second Analysis and Hypothesis ‘**Family, generations and Community**’.

Technology, in the shape of news media, social media, and the written news media, continues to be a concern with overt or underlying fears that these are corrupt representations of governments and other large and powerful bodies. The use of social media is, on the one hand, seen as enabling communities to come together to unite against extremism; while on the other hand, it is seen as resulting in the loss of community, encouraging individualism, and excluding various others in society. There is also a considerable degree of generational conflict arising from a lack of digital understanding by the older generation. Virtual families that extend way beyond national boundaries, possibly results in a greater integration of peoples throughout the world. At the same time it enables fundamentalists to groom vulnerable young, would be converts, to travel to war zones to fight the evil other.

The ‘information age’, the frequent and near- addictive use of tablets and mobiles, results in children no longer playing in the playground; there is a lack of real connectivity leading to a loss of community; and individualism. Running alongside these developments the media is experienced as intrusive, members of societies being bombarded with news much of it negative, being overwhelmed by the volume of information, wanting to disconnect. They also question which version to trust; and the media itself is frequently not trusted to provide an honest, helpful reportage, believing they are influenced by politicians and big business. Members of societies feel desensitized by what they see as a toxic media.

Technological change has influenced the media. Internet and social media have affected the ways in which the news is presented. For instance the news can be presented even by an individual who captures an event on their phone and circulate it on YouTube: in this way, social media invites responses to activism. Members of societies experience media

as manipulative, forcing ideologies, purposefully forcing too much information on members of societies, distorting information, abusing citizens, brainwashing them, and not encouraging thinking. Instead of providing meaningful information, they are seen as fuelling the fire, spreading panic and terror, making people anxious, guilty, an experience of being overwhelmed, bombarded and flooded. The potential for activism in relation to the flood of news that is presented makes it impossible for one to feel able to take responsibility for what is happening.

The sense that the media is omnipresent, is encouraged by the fact that we can know what is happening almost anywhere in the world, at any time, and that we can influence the events in the most remote places (petitions, comments on twitter etc): one can become overwhelmed by the neediness, poverty, deprivation and injustice that occurs throughout the world. At a global level, this is terrifying, the overflow of highly emotional and seemingly unreliable information is overwhelming and leads to experiences and feelings of helplessness, being desensitised, dehumanised, detached, and isolated. This experience is further developed below in the third Analysis and Hypothesis '*Technology and Media*'.

These three themes are particularly prevalent and are further developed below in the three interlinked and progressive Analyses and Hypotheses that follow:

### *Analysis and Hypothesis 1. 'Massive Change'.*

#### *Analysis 1.*

As in previous years, there still appears to be a sense of overwhelming uncertainty about the future, about the changes that are taking place and pessimism about what the world is going to be like. Members of societies experience helplessness and despair and are struggling to find their way in this rapidly changing world. Past experiences of turning to the current authority figures and to leadership for answers did not seem to be an option; that leadership was not considered to be trustworthy, consistent and insightful - far from it. Members of societies felt that their dependency needs were failed and their rage and despair about that was profound. A result was that over the past few years members of societies made early attempts to 'do something' about the extreme discomfort of 'not knowing what to do'. Starting from a position of being highly dependent and fearful for the future, members of societies sought new, radical, solutions, being desperate to bring an end to the uncertainty, insecurity, despair, and fears for their survival. It seems we have now reached a point where we are beginning to see the effects of that behaviour.

It seems that the current experience of extreme and overwhelming change is largely influenced by a realization that the old and known ways of governance is not just changing, but crumbling; Members of society are left with a loss of the old and familiar. But they are also experiencing a splitting of ideologies. There is a dichotomy between existing and emerging political and social models; of what is and what was; the old order and the new order. Splits result in polarized thinking and behaving, making coexistence

highly problematical. Differences are experienced at a national and individual level. Members of societies struggle to confirm their identities at an individual, national and global level. This highly complex experience leaves members of society even more confused, helpless, and hopeless, than previously. They are still, not knowing how to respond, and are still unable to make sense of their world. They are massively dependent but living with the experience of further failed dependency.

Members of societies, having given their support for and mobilizing extreme parties, be they left or right wing parties, are left with the realization that those who they felt would be saviours are now simply adding to their problems. The simplistic responses seen by members of societies as a seemingly clear way of resolving the hardships and discomfort, the not knowing, that they constantly face in their daily lives are now resulting in further unmet dependency. The fragmented nature of communities reduces individuals to experiencing helplessness and isolation. Instead of owning their responsibility for themselves and their communities they continue to depend on politicians and institutions for 'doing something'; but they are now running out of options and the fear magnifies. Sadly, there is never a realization that these problems are simply not soluble; or that they are not soluble by 'quick fixes' or by those seen as Messiah's. A result is an experience where even more anger is projected into political and other institutional leaders. This is reflected in the following extracts from the National Reports:

**Argentina:** the presence of violence in political discourse and social relationships as well as with the preoccupation of having to learn to live without violence. The members reflected on the major political changes which took place in Argentina in the last three months (since November 2015) where a 12-year rule of the Peronist party ended with the election of a centre-right coalition. In particular, they reported the notable difficulty in debating political ideas and how political disagreement corroded personal relationships ("I didn't have any fights with friends because I avoided talking with anyone [about politics]") which made co-existence with friends (and in some cases, family) a very challenging endeavour. Members also mentioned feeling "attacked" for their political ideology and fearful of talking their mind. The group reported increasing concern about the impact of such prevalent, social attitudes (as described previously) on social institutions and society as a whole. It was reported that widespread attitudes and mentalities, like clientelism, have caused irreparable damage to important social and political institutions (such as, the judiciary and productive political discourse).

**Australia:** While global and political issues were mentioned throughout the session, they did not spark much discussion. The 'bigger problems' felt 'overwhelming' and individuals expressed feeling powerless to do anything about them. The group spoke of shifts in ways of doing things – old ways of organising society are making way for alternative solutions to institutional systems and ways of connecting. Existing and emerging models The group spoke of shifts in ways of doing things – old ways of organising society are making way for alternative solutions to institutional systems and ways of connecting.. There is a sense of society making the shift from an old order to a newer order.

**Bulgaria:** The combination of deprivation by abandonment and power over deprived leads to a vulnerable existential condition of quazi-institutionalization. De-institutionalization of social relations in Bulgaria is high on the current social agenda alongside with the ambivalent mixture of fear and hope, broken attachments and vulnerability within citizens and their group lives.

**Canada:** There seems to be a great deal of fear; participants wondered what it was that people seem to be afraid of. Was it related to violence, difference, or rapid change? Fear and misunderstanding has meant less common ground and less ways for building community. People in power are not looking for real solutions to societal or environmental issues, but implementing “quick-fix solutions” We experience an authority and mode of governance which is unresponsive and decidedly unaccountable in a democratized state in which democracy itself is in question. Everywhere we look, we are presented with images of violence, injustice, and despair. The experience is one of demoralization and terror, in which it seems that no action can reduce this. Our own physical and psyche survival seems at stake, hence members feel both frightened and seek protection, and at the same time resentful, that protection is constantly needed.

**Chile:** The collapse of institutions and their losses, citizens perceive and experience what they call the collapse of the institutions that are supposed to provide the framework, sustenance and meaning to life within society and to individual existence. This collapse refers to the fact that institutions, in their various expressions – political, economic, educational, social, cultural, and juridical, among others, consider a regulatory order that has little coherence with the problems and challenges that most people have to face in their daily reality.” Stagnation of society in its economic, social and political development causes anxiety and uneasiness in citizens because essential reforms aiming at the improvement of institutions that would allow solving the needs of the people, remain unfulfilled.

**Croatia:** The group proposed a hypothesis that the state of society is generally not improving and that its degradation is about to continue, with a large possibility of new wars due to the overproduction of firearms which could finally lead to the collapse of civilization. Modifications in labour rights that are rapidly changing have also been

mentioned and some members even expressed nostalgia for past socialistic times when there was a stronger feeling of job security and labour rights

**Denmark:** Many small outbursts of aggression pop up in the undergrowth of society. Hate mails flourish. Politicians must endure huge numbers of these mails. The complex responses in postmodern society create a yearning for a simple world with friends and foes, love and hate, and strong emotions. Sometimes, this yearning turns into aggressive outbursts; at other occasions, it mobilizes torchlight processions and community singing. Political visions are being missed which cope with the complexity, and at the same time mobilize us emotionally.

**Estonia:** The state of the society is currently very challenging for the individual. There are many simultaneous things happening that can make an individual begin to worry and not know what to do. One feels that it's impossible to influence these macro scale systems. Insecurity in society, insecurity in me. The theme of insecurity sprang up with almost every speech. There was worry about the future, one's own job situation, health, amount of money, children's health and future livelihood. The economic situation in Europe feels worrisome especially with "rescue plans" that don't seem to be working. The choices for our leaders are diminishing. At the same time the need and distress of people were seen and there was a wish to help. On the other hand there was fear over what will happen to one's own identity and religion.

**Faroes Islands:** Where are *mine* boundaries?? Both national and personal identity is under extreme pressure by the overstepping of boundaries. National language, traditions, fellow-feeling and common tales are on retreat and personal identity less embedded in near-by society. Outer boundaries are overwhelmed – inner boundaries are contracted. Therefore citizens comprehend the unknown and unfamiliar as an utmost threat against own way of life and norms of the society. Radicalisation and polarization, which become obvious with the contraction of inner boundaries, are seen as frightening and a threat against community and solidarity. The citizen therefore comprehends an outer AND an inner threat, which causes fear of being overwhelmed, destroyed and wiped out.

**Finland:** Great changes are simultaneously occurring in various sectors and at certain levels of Finnish society: internal economic reductions, severe renovations of the public sector, changes in legislation, structural changes in the health and welfare system, and the sudden influx of refugees. These transformations have destabilized people's basic feelings of safety, and everything is happening too fast. This rebirth has been accompanied by the breaking of familiar and safe boundaries. The new seems strange, frightening, and unpredictable. We should be willing to sometimes come up with solutions and make impetuous decisions on the basis of random information. It is difficult to predict future trends and the way our decisions influence the future. The changes are surprising both our citizens and our government ministers. The change is so great that it shakes our citizens' identity and brings the following question to the surface: *Who are we?* How can *Finnishness* be defined when citizens are divided? There is nothing wise, nor even is there an institution where one can go to ask. Not even the establishment have an answer.



**France:** These social issues have personal, family, professional resonances. From a psychic point of view, there are destabilizing eruptions of instinctual behaviour, because no one is prepared to face these new situations. This is the order of a psychic break, of a trauma which can't be mentally elaborated. Loss of confidence in institutions: A strong suspicion towards institutions dominates, and above all toward policies. The reaction of the latter facing doctors' demonstrations is unacceptable. People feel lost in the institutions. These situations are sources of heavy suffering. A sense of disarticulation or dislocation dominates. People do not know or can not say and develop these feelings because there is no place to say it. Therefore, the extremists use them for their own goals of destabilization.

**Germany (Frankfurt):** No attempt is made to comprehend underlying correlations. Politicians' responses appear as blustery rhetoric, solving nothing but fuelling this fire. The statement "We can do it" is superficially an appeal, yet it appears to have taboo status paramount to a ban on rational thought. Any aggressive impulses of self assertion must be suppressed and may not be worked through to structure and solve the problematic situation. Only available outlets are wide-scale anxiety, polarisations and violence.

**Germany (Berlin):** Escalation and polarization leads to helplessness. Participants expressed their views that things develop slowly but unmistakably apart. It was discussed about the possibility that processes tip over and rationality as well as cohesion disrupt. The attempt of individuals to overcome disruption fails. The escalation occurs both in the inner and in the outer world. It was mentioned that attitudes of friends and acquaintances radicalize. They become xenophobic. Suddenly, one finds hatred, exclusion and persecution, where tolerance and compassion was once. Polarization is also evident between European countries and in the national parliaments. Nationalist and authoritarian groups appear and become more influential. The European Union is as well not capable of maintaining solidarity and commonality. Incomprehensible and rapid changes induce a feeling of overflow. Results are bewilderment and increased requests for support and guidance. This leads to demands for political leadership and information by the media as well as to anxiety-driven safeguarding; examples are fundamentalism, calling for stricter laws, or the emergence of neighborhood protection groups (Bürgerwehr). Out of the wish for exclusion new fences are being built, that do not, however, change the porousness of borders.

**Greece:** As they realise that there is no way back to the lifestyle they used to have there is a tendency towards depression and despair. There is no going back solution, but at the same time there does not seem to be a realistic solution in the near future. This reality can feel as a punishment. When the guilt feels too big and acquires a paranoid quality of persecution members of the Greek society enter a mode of blaming, mistrusting and accusing others, to remove from their shoulders a responsibility, which feels too heavy to bear. This anxiety and guilt leads to conflicts and black and white thinking. On the other hand, when the guilt is absorbed and the blame of oneself becomes unrealistic members of society enter a mode of despair, helplessness and hopelessness. In both states, the

solution appears to be a Deus ex machina either with the characteristics of a fight leader or with the characteristics of a rescuer. This seeking of a messiah takes members of the society to endless circles of magical thinking based optimism and harsh disillusioned pessimism. This oscillation leaves members of the society in a state of mistrust with extreme fluctuations between feelings of hope and despair. Because of the dynamic processes witnessed in the political scene, involving conflict between parties, ideologies, hopes and fears members of the society have become disillusioned and disappointed.

**India:** Because of fear and anxiety members of the society are not ready to talk about social issues resulting in ignore of social issues. Some of the members in the group also expressed their anger towards the government for implementing new rules without considering the practicality

**Ireland:** We are disillusioned and disappointed with where we are and with the leaders we have. We feel that the political narrative that we have been listening to is untrustworthy at best and manipulative at worst. It seems valueless, split and without authenticity and integration Can we seek to trust discerningly rather than blindly, or not at all? Can we seek an ethical authority externally and internally? Closer to home the same information is used to illustrate different perspectives and the purpose seems to be to unseat the other side rather than reaching for any truth.

**Israel:** The current situation in Israel involves a high level of violence in the dialogue taking place between left and right. The Left tags the Right as non-democratic, anti-peace, fascist; the Right tags the Left as traitors, anti-Jewish/Israel. The scene is loaded with violent expressions and from time to time – actions. There is a sense of fear and distress in all parts of Israeli society. Also, a growing phenomenon of exclusion of certain parts of society (depending on their political agenda). Citizens that speak up their view may be silenced violently by opponents. Participants shared grave worries and desperation in relation to the current situation in Israel. It's as if a catastrophe is at our door step. There is a sense of silencing and fear especially on the left side of the political arena. Society is engaged in a violent dialogue with very little tolerance towards one another.

**Italy (Rome):** There is a feeling of unpredictable events determined by the absence of civic behavior. There is a fleeting reflection on the government of Rome which is corrupted and in the hands of mafia. *You cannot respect a system which doesn't respect itself.* Again the question of not understanding appears (*but what we don't understand?*) There are new models for politics, new ways of aggregation from grassroots and the example of the five stars movement is given ( a new 'grassroot 'movement which had nearly won the majority in Parliament at the last Italian political elections). There are many signs of social disgregation and deterioration of the quality of life; to be in control of one's environment is like a dream of the past. The tempo is fast, events are not intelligible, the capacity to link different events and understand their meaning is lost. Members of society can only respond by retreating into small fields of action where things become manageable and 'understandable'; where some sense of potency can still be established.

**Italy (North):** Time flies, the horizon getting shorter, tremendous upheavals, difficult to understand what's going on...confusion...system undermining. High competition, the innovation is not well implemented and based on previous old structures. We all assist, more or less powerless against the loss of sense of our life, this loss of memory that has to deal with the end of the chance to narrate in a cross-generational dimension (Alzheimer generational). Young people don't address to the adults or to the elderly to get a straight story and facts and give meaning to their life, existence and build their future. There aren't role models. What will the contemporary deliver to posterity? What legacy without a past?

**Italy (South):** There is a general absence of visions, society does not know where to go. The economic crisis, the wars in some parts of the world (Arabic counties and Africa), terrorism and the inability of the current leaders to make decisions, are producing anxiety and fear for an uncertain future. We are "bare", without an ideal project that allows us to create common ideologies – differently from the past; that's why we are falling down! We live in a state of suspension and dissociation that puts us in the "here and now" and does not project us into the future: not believe in anything (politics, society, culture, religion) leads us to not believe in ourselves. We are human being disenchanted, more oriented to the calculation and less willing to the comprehension of the world, of ourselves, of the "others" and of the our capabilities. Always waiting for a "Messiah", able to lead us out of this "empty space", this loss of identity.

**Italy (Milan):** People don't know what to think. There are no clear and definite certainties, everyone has their own view. In a world shaken by enormous changes we discover how fragile we are concerning the ideologies and values of our so-called Western culture. We're asking ourselves the question "Who are we?", "What is our identity?" The feeling of disorientation and powerlessness make us reflect on the theme of our identity, which has become even more relevant today in a moment in which we are so stimulated towards experience of encountering the other. How do we influence things that happen? It all seems so big and complex, and difficult. And if we can't influence things, then what remains for us but a self centered search for happiness, the desire to isolate ourselves from all the rest?

**Peru:** Group members expressed the loss of sense of personal authority over collective institutions which violently imposes its conditions. Given the growing insecurity caused by the failure of traditional political choices and the lack of clear leadership in the proposals of the presidential candidates, members of our society are looking for the emergence of a leader who cares about them and who has the enough power to change the status quo, that have the authority to reject what exists and also to lead everybody to a better future. In this image, the personal authority of the members is sacrificed, they reject individual responsibility in changing this status quo and stop assuming roles that make a difference in the context

**Poland:** New threats are emerging all around us, and we are uncertain how to respond to them. Europe used to be viewed as stable and safe, but now the safe places have suddenly lost their comforting nature. We are afraid of an armed conflict coming, we worry about

terrorist attacks, we feel we are being put under scrutiny by the government. There is a polarization within society, which causes us to engage in an us vs. them mentality. Because of the difficulty with taking part in meaningful social dialogue, people find it more and more easy to attach labels that help them organize and simplify reality. They don't understand what's happening in society, which makes acting in the role of a citizen a difficult task. Because of that there's a growing need for constructing detailed internal maps of the world around us. The polarization of today's society has caused the opposing sides to become blind to each other's value. Gone are the wise people, who wield authority. A lot of people feel guilty about letting things progress to the stage at which they are now. They feel that they've given up ground, that if they acted differently before, the world would be different today. Tensions are rising, because we lost our trust in the system. People feel powerless to change things on a national level, so they try to do it locally, where it is easier to rally around a common cause. We lack in basic knowledge about the state, and how it works.

**Portugal:** Insecurity, lack of trust in the system, justice is perverse. Having in mind that our education system is based a lot on science questions, is formatted, fragmented, incomplete, reduced and castrating. Instead of valuing art, creativity, and individuality and most of all critical thinking. Thus, it drives to an ill and self-destructive society, full of prejudice, intolerance to what is different, tyranny, violence and misjudgments.

**Serbia:** Participants wondered why they were so overburdened with time and asked if it was because it was a metaphor for passing of life. It was connected to discussions on meaning and or own abilities to make sense of what we do in our everyday lives. It is connected to fear of change and fear from those who are giving us tasks. There was a lot of discussion about dichotomy and the things that are on the opposite poles, Another participant wondered if we were ready for upcoming changes and to which extent we were paralyzed by fear.

**South Africa (Port Elisabeth):** There is a denial and suppression that we will reach a tipping point and we forestall that by appealing to the church or organization which is asked to carry our own weaker shadow to prevent it from tripping us up but there is also the possibility that the struggle will lead to maturational growth and a move to a higher level. We set up public figures or organizations to carry our duality and then we attack or denigrate them thus destroying the container and then end up feeling helpless and bereft

**South Africa (Pretoria):** This theme (hitting and violation of boundaries) contained many references to various boundaries in the country shifting, changing, being tampered with or being violated. . Participants described their experience of the boundary with the government as filled with suspicion and distrust. The above attack on boundaries creates free-floating anxiety in the country in all spheres - politically, economically and socially. Survival anxiety is experienced in terms of the uncertain and unsafe political scenario where the political authorities seem to be promoting their own power and financial agendas leaving citizens to ensure their own safety and survival Paranoid anxiety manifests in the vagueness around political agendas, corruption and self-enrichment. The national identity is under attack. Citizens feel isolated, lost, volatile and pressured to the

point of explosion. There is a yearning for rationality, togetherness as when we won the world cups and when Mandela acted as protector – or was that just a fantasy? We yearn for a new protector (or Messiah) in the face of a growing threat of disconnect, misunderstanding, racism and value difference

**Sweden:** It is hard to comprehend and understand what is going on right now and one tries to avoid going into black / white thinking. The complexity of the situation makes it more important than ever to "comprehend and understand" when you can hear the trample of boots in European political development. The loosening up of democracy for example through the "contempt of politicians" creating a gap between the electorate and their representatives. Complexity makes it hard to see connections between what goes on in Sweden and on the international scene. Lack of awareness of complexity leads to populism. In a situation where old solutions to new problems does not function and one seeks for guidance since it is hard to orient oneself and accordingly hard to "manage oneself" in the role of citizen. After a long period of ideal in society focusing on the individuals own responsibility is it unfamiliar and uncomfortable to find oneself in a situation where you wish to have a leadership that can deal realistically with the situation. At the same time one fears for leaders with simple answers for complicated questions that could attract people and drive society in an authoritarian and populist direction. Institutions have become weaker both in regard to how they can in fact manage their tasks and the confidence citizens feel for and invest in them

**Turkey:** Personalisation and politicization of institutions; ethical dilemmas and role paralysis; being lost and fear of losing identity; stuckness of 'not taking a side'. We are in the period where the laws and legal system is personalized, and is related with personal wishes of political figures. If you are not able to realize these wishes, you are threatening with losing your role (job). We feel stuck and we are afraid of this situation. We are in period of our history that never had witnessed before. We feel lost.' Why you are silenced, if you are not able to talk nowadays, when you think that you will be able?. Everything is getting confused. It is enough, enough.' We are angry to government not to take care for security to its own citizens.'? We are very angry? There is no state, no institutions which can do their roles. We don't know to whom we can trust? Government is just interested with accommodation and have a hotel role as if, but they are. Who we are? We lost our believe to ourselves. how many times these betrayal will continue? How many times citizens will feel these betrayals?'

**UK:** Persecutory anxiety could lie behind the severe programmes of austerity being enacted across Europe – Greece being the main object of persecution. Perhaps this is connected to the idea of post traumatic stress. We are learning that the body contains the trauma and continues to react when the original trauma is over. This may be what is happening in the body politic. Our government seems to be stuck between benefits and retentiveness. Can we move to the depressive position and accept a greater degree of reality?

**USA:** We are faced with the fact that a number of Americans have been split, torn between the nostalgia of the past and frozen in the complexity of the future, along with

being on the brink of uncertain forms of disaster in the present. These splits can stimulate isolation and everyone-for-him/herself dynamic, which can permeate our micro level of our existence. There was the thread of feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of the problems that society is facing accompanied with anger and disappointment towards leaders for not addressing the issues that are in urgent need of attention. As part of this underlying thread, issues about feeling passive, helpless, disillusioned and angry were discussed, particularly, are we disowning the feelings of helplessness and projecting them unto the leaders. We perceive our leaders as failing in their ability to serve as containers for our society's anxiety and vulnerability. This being a presidential year is a year where competencies of power may be projected onto the new presidential candidates. We are looking for the savior or "Messiah" who will us in this current society. The third main thread revolved around the loss of trust in our elected officials as they are seen as serving the best interests of lobbyists, corporations and not reflective in their votes in representing the voice of their constituency. We live in a complex world and uncertainty has become has become the new them of this century. When these three threads are put together, we become aware of the underlying uncertainty and turbulence in our time. We have a strong sense that the tools of the past do no not serve us anymore,

### ***Hypothesis 1.***

To understand the current dynamics, we need to understand the societal dynamics of the past ten or more years. Over that time, members of societies have experienced massive change, well described as 'death of a way of life'. The changes have encompassed every aspect of society and have been continuous. This has resulted in feeling overwhelmed, helplessness, hopelessness, insecurity, and fears for their survival: this leading to massive dependency on politicians and other societal leaders. Because of the nature of these changes, such as massive immigration, the economic crisis, global terrorism, changes in the ideas; including political, social, philosophical and religious ideas; both members of societies and politicians are left feeling impotent, not knowing what to do. In these circumstances, members of societies experienced their dependency as not met, as let down, confused, demoralized, despairing, pessimistic, paralysed. Thus, they lost their trust in the current, usually reliable, but now experienced as useless, hopeless, and impotent political leaders, who were no longer considered to be relied upon to provide a way forward to relieve their anxieties. Members of societies developed a search for a magic solution, seeking a messianic leadership that they could depend upon for their salvation. This was seen to exist in the extremists, the fundamentalists, on both sides of the political spectrum, who through their unrealistic promises, appeared to meet the needs of a highly dependent populace. The outcome was massive, near revolutionary change in the political landscape, with many political parties taking power with new ideologies, no experience, and little competence, to successfully manage a national economy. In addition, those elected come with extreme ideologies which seriously affect national and international relations. This has led to even greater anxiety, which is added to by feelings of guilt that members of societies have themselves participated in the creation of the current, even greater, confusion, bewilderment, and despair. They again feel hopeless,

emptiness, outrage, grief, fear for a loss of identity and of being destroyed. There does not seem to be a realistic solution in the near future. When the guilt feels too big and acquires a paranoid quality of persecution members of society enter a mode of blaming, mistrusting and accusing others, to remove from their shoulders a responsibility, which feels too heavy to bear. This anxiety and guilt leads to conflicts and black and white thinking. On the other hand, when the guilt is absorbed and the blame of oneself becomes unrealistic members of society enter a mode of despair, helplessness and hopelessness.

### ***Analysis and Hypothesis 2. Family, Generations and Community.***

#### ***Analysis 2.***

Over the years, youth have constantly been the subject of projections, either projections that see them as the saviours, those who will lead members of societies to a bold new future; or, they are seen as those who are denigrated for their wayward and risky behaviour. However, at this time, perhaps influenced by the past projections, youth and intergenerational issues have become a threat to the very important institution of the family. Much influenced by a societal environment evidenced by massive change at multiple levels, including technology, which is so readily embraced by the young, there is an omnipresent pressure to understand what is happening and how members of society can find a way forward. Young people are not isolated from this pressure and understand that their parents and other authority figures are feeling impotent. This increases pressure on them to provide some sort of leadership.

There are signs that the older generation and the younger generation are no longer in an interdependent relationship where a holding space allows for transition of knowledge, experiences, expertise, roles and power. The younger generations, being oblivious to the historical knowledge, tend to be excited by and support what they see as new or extreme ideologies. The older generations, knowing the historical dangers of extreme political parties, are more inclined to be appalled at the thought of an extreme ideology being the controlling factor. A result is polarized views, and as one member of society said, 'I no longer understand my child, we are so different'. Technology has also resulted in a considerable split between the generations. Young people who have lived with, and become highly adept, around all manner of technological development are totally different from their parents many of whom are not technically proficient and are, therefore, excluded. This has the affect of turning authority on its head with the young generation teaching the old or ignoring the old. It would seem that polarisation has put generations onto a collision course that threatens the very important developmental space that has prevailed. In this dynamic the family tends to be a weakened institution and to be represented more like a closed system where life is slower rather than a place of nourishment.

The younger generation relies on their parents for food and accommodation for much longer periods than was the experience of their parents; at the same time, the older generation are prolonging their youth. In spite of their growing differences, the family is experienced as a place of safety where family members can find refuge from the tensions

of daily life and the uncertainty, and insecurity, surrounding them. There is a need to affirm their identity somewhere and a lack of community brought about by a fragmented society does not provide an opportunity for exploring one's identity.

Members of societies experience communities as fragmented social entities that seem to be associated with severe hardships as a reaction to their "survival mode". Films, books, poems are all portraying such experiences. Ambivalence seems to emerge where members of society experience the crumbling of the old way and everything is described as in flux. With eroded and porous boundaries, communities seem to carry a lot of unfulfilled and unmet needs for protection and dependency. It seems members of societies are struggling to voice a stable identity both at individual and collective levels as result of this fragmentation and ambivalence. This is reflected in the following extracts from the National Reports:

**Argentina:** The group reflected on how society has also split in terms of generations, with usually young people being much more open and supportive of Peronist ideology... than were previous, older generations who tended to be more skeptical and harder to convince. One member described that divide as one between "hippies vs. spoiled little girls". The effort to keep up with the complexity of pluralism and of a productive debate was seen as impossible... In that sense, there was a notable frustration by members in the loss of, what was previously thought of as, "objective facts" and, more importantly, the loss of common consent upon the nature of those "facts". ("I didn't have any fights with friends because I avoided talking with anyone [about politics]") which made co-existence with friends (and in some cases, family) a very challenging endeavour.

**Australia:** If you have a family or belong to a community, the opportunities are great. 'Lack of care...for older people...Their level of loneliness is increased... Because of the overwhelming nature of big global and national issues...and the disillusionment/lack of faith in the big institutions...to deal with this, members in society are constructing and/or retreating to supportive communities formed around shared values, needs and concerns resulting in people being able to take up their personal responsibility and feel empowered to affect change; Young people finding it difficult to find accommodation, share with an older person by providing help. 'I put out pot plants (in the lane) and wrote 'enjoy'. My neighbour said they'll be stolen, but instead people are donating plants. 'Forgetting of family as an institution'. 'We were talking about abuse in families a few years ago, then attention diverted to institutions, Catholic Church, salvation army'

**Bulgaria:** The grand parents are experienced as powerful, manipulative and intruding. Parents travel abroad often and in their absence grand-parents take over the upbringing of the child. The boy whom she is taking care of already resists and exhibits signs of distress from the pressure over him to perform and to deliver expected results. The participant feels guilty at the idea of not being able to meet the needs of the boy for independence. These citizens (emotionally deprived social "outcasts") harbor deeply ambivalent feelings about their situation that are not been allowed space and form for communication and attendance from their closest relatives and society. There is, for example, an epidemics of



cheats who target lonely elderly people and take money from them on the false claims about medical emergencies concerning their grown children.

**Canada:** There is a growing sense of community disintegration and at the same time a deep need to cooperate with our fellow neighbours. Instead we are separated from our groups and our communities. And while there are a lot of people and groups working on these issues, they are working apart not together. At the same time, people in power not looking for real solutions to societal or environmental issues, but implementing “quick-fix solutions” over more sustainable planning (i.e. poor urban planning). One participant asked, “What if communities worked with communities”? What deeper change and connection could be created? . Differences between younger people's use of technology versus older persons lack of understanding of technology was also discussed.

**Chile:** The older citizens, particularly if they suffered the rigors of the Military Dictatorship, are prone to resistance, while the younger citizens have the emotional vigor to face, cope and engage in the natural upheavals and uncertainties of the momentum for changes. In these ambivalences, senior citizens tend to pass on to the younger generations the energy and responsibility for changes in society. In this respect, it may be seen that how the citizenship, in their resistance against change, encapsulates the political participation of new generations in only a few young members of parliament who represent new currents of thought and projects that will bring progress to society. Vis-à-vis the mistrust caused by institutions, citizens contemplate innovative initiatives of collective empowerment to carry out autonomous actions as alternatives to the ineffectiveness and restrictions of the established regulatory schemes.

**Croatia:** The group is convinced that this form of capitalism is causing a great fear for one's existence...that anxiety is growing due to the constant insecurity for workplaces. One of the members brought up the possibility of volunteering as a means of taking action and making some changes in the society. It has been noted that the depression can be strongly felt among people, as well as the presence of a certain tyranny forcing us to be happy. The question of raising a child in a degraded society arose again, as well as the question of future relationships between parents and children, disintegration of traditional families and lack of respect for parents. Inappropriate attitude towards teachers was also mentioned.

**Denmark:** Efforts to include children with learning- and social difficulties in school use pedagogical methods, which expose the weak performers and thereby create exclusion. One political party stands for being the protector of the elderly but on a nearer inspection, they vote for reductions in that specific area when the opportunity arises...terror is embedded in connections so complex that it can be difficult to combine your intellect with these clear, strong, and unambiguous emotions. If you dissociate yourself from one group, you are suddenly friends with another, which you do not really want to befriend. The complex responses in postmodern society create a yearning for a simple world with friends and foes, love and hate, and strong emotions.

**Estonia:** was worry about the future, one's own job situation, health, amount of money, children's health and future livelihood. The economic situation in Europe feels worrisome especially with "rescue plans" that don't seem to be working. The refugee topic divided opinions. At the same time the need and distress of people were seen and there was a wish to help. On the other hand there was fear over what will happen to one's own identity and religion.. Big changes continue to happen in large systems...and this forces smaller systems (for example families or individuals) to devise solutions in order to cope with these challenging times. Being alone is not wanted, one wants to be "we", part of a community. Sitting at the table had become a place to share experiences, worries and everyday occurrences as well as a place to laugh.

**Faroes Islands:** The ability to experience yourself – individual, group, organisation and society – as a part of a greater organism, seems to be markedly reduced. Joint responsibility has become "Self-responsibility". The citizen therefore comprehends an outer AND an inner threat, which causes fear of being overwhelmed, destroyed and wiped out. It affects the elder and mature part of the population with an experience of losing their ground, closeness and safety. The young citizens float around in the new order, where the presence of the inner universe in the global cyberspace is the foundation. "The individual in role" has overtaken "The Role in the system". An escalation of a "Selfie-culture" is taking place. Our memory becomes shorter, whilst traditions and the cultural roots decrease and become superficial.

**Finland:** On one hand, it is understood that refugees should be helped, but, on the other, there is fear about what will happen to us ourselves: how will the religions co-exist, should we meet the newcomers with a strange culture by preparing for "war", shutting our borders, throwing Molotov cocktails into reception facilities, refusing any social interaction, or "submerging firearms in the Atlantic" (as one participant had dreamed of doing), or by treating the refugees as people, without expectations and with love. As group phenomena, these possibilities are "inflammatory", as police try to keep the situation from getting out of hand with the use of daily reports.

**France:** Several participants report relationship problems within families or couples. Disruptions and tensions are also found in society and business. For companies, the pressure of the search for profitability is particularly destructive. These experiences are associated with feelings of dislocation and loss of humanity. The plight of migrants in camps in northern France, questions about the management of migration flows remind many participants to episodes of their personal or family history. There is no place for the human being in the business, there is a lack of space in a life too full of certainties, one wonders about the place given to others. People do not know or can not say and develop these feelings because there is no place to say it. Therefore, the extremists use them for their own goals of destabilization.

**Germany (Frankfurt):** When the refugee question is raised, anxiety is given a visual image, literally a face, a feat not immediately accessible for eg. TTIP. To enable us to envisage reality, we need orientation towards the future for the development of structures that can support long-term consequences. The members of the group realised that they,

too, had initially fallen into the trap of "hype priorities" and not tackled deeper mega-issues. In the group the atmosphere changed after grasping the opportunities that are opened up through constructive aggressiveness. Constructive aggression imply a sort of playfulness and cunning that serve creative facets of our actions.

**Germany (Berlin):** On one hand, we observe self-authorization in an unprecedented degree (volunteerism, helpfulness, hospitality, acceptance of responsibility, thoughtlessness, willingness to learn, culture of remembrance). On the other hand fears are growing and projected onto the strangers and the weak, which leads to violence, prosecutions of foreigners and those who stand up for them. Results are bewilderment and increased requests for support and guidance. This leads to demands for political leadership and information by the media as well as to anxiety-driven safe-guarding; examples are fundamentalism, calling for stricter laws, or the emergence of neighborhood protection groups (Bürgerwehr).

**Greece:** Although there are some encouraging indications in some important initiatives pursued by some groups (i.e. for supporting the immigrants), people's main efforts evolve around individual interests. We continue to not be able to act collectively in the present moment, despite being at the verge of the cliff. This was linked to the educational system that had not prepared young people to work together... and to parents who were also contributing to this mentality by encouraging their offspring to only take care of themselves. Another member suggested that although Greek people are a clever nation, we have learned to analyse in depth but not to synthesise. The big starts from the small. One needs to accept to be inferior and learn, to acknowledge their lack of experience. This evoked the idea that people resorted to starting their own company because there was nowhere else they could be employed.

**India:** We are at the state of young India where major part of the country constitutes of adolescent and young adults. They are coming up with creative and innovative ideas towards business and marketing and hence contributing towards the rise in Indian economy. Because of these young minds and their innovations technology has gained a lot of prominence. But however certain other group such as children, elderly people and technically unskilled people find it challenging due to the advancements of technology. Most children are getting involved into gadgets and social networks, which is reducing the number of kids playing in the playgrounds. Young adults apart from being creative are also becoming aware about different streams of work... are exploring their passion and getting into art and other fields. These days' educated adults are also pursuing to be a driver and do not consider such jobs with low profile.

**Ireland:** Ireland is emerging from a eight year recession but we find that we have limited capacity for a compassionate response to the pain of others caused by displacement and historical trauma. As a result we avoid the pain and displace the rage leaving us disconnected from our own power or authenticity. We understand that there is a deep social disconnection not just of territories but of mind - the disintegration of the certain. People are afraid and that fear splits us off to a place where we are more identified with conflict than with a wish to settle disputes, more identified with powerlessness than with

our own power, more inclined to react primitively than respond with compassion. Trust and vision are threatened, dependency is encouraged, leaving a lack of forms of identification that encourage the voicing of difference, compassion and connection in a conflicted world.

**Israel:** There is a sense of fear and distress in all parts of Israeli society. Also a growing phenomenon of exclusion of certain parts of society (depending on their political agenda). Citizens that speak up their view may be silenced violently by opponents. Is this a place I want to live in? Some decide to stay, some leave. Are we on a downward road back to the Jewish identity before World War II? One option is to sit in the living room and complain. Another option is to actively engage in something that supports my ideological agenda. A third option is to engage in personal, limited, projects that may have an effect, Nano-activism with Nano-effect; keeps complexity away, and translates the impossibility of understanding (Babel) into the preservation of no-change.

**Italy (Milan):** Everybody's attention is on dealing with the immigrants, on the enormous changes and the cultural exchange that is involved...not leaving space for other subjects (for example, very little attention is given to worries about the youngest generation of their sons difficulties regarding work.) We perceive the risk of letting ourselves be "encroached on by new cultures" but at the same time there is the awareness of not succeeding in standing up to this. The concept of identity is characterized today by a condition of indefiniteness. We need to re-educate ourselves to new values capable of re-creating a greater sense of community, free ourselves from the supremacy of the pleasure principle, move towards a greater collaboration and the management of conflicts, get away from the alternative that demands a choice: accept fully other cultures or fight till death.

**Italy (North):** The Western world is in crisis and young people cannot find work, there are no opportunities. "Old are not going to grow old" as rejection of external reality, in defending troubling invasions and intolerable emotions. The defensive system that refuses the approach of death invalidates thought development and the ability to transmit values. From the ballistic society to intelligent missile; from the memories to a continuous forgetting and reprogram. We all assist, more or less powerless against the loss of sense of our life, this loss of memory that has to deal with the end of the chance to narrate in a cross-generational dimension (Alzheimer generational). Young people don't address to the adults or to the elderly to get a straight story and facts and give meaning to their life, existence and build their future.

**Italy (Rome):** Both fear and lack of understanding seem to point out to the feeling of being completely out of control and impotent in a world where everything is too much, too complex to be managed...today, in a world where one's ecological niche becomes more and more fragmented, individualism seems to be the only avenue for hope. It appears that the only possible way is to take responsibility as individuals, who are choosing to be aware of the environment: they differentiate garbage, save on heating, water, use bicycles etc. and try to use resources in a more sustainable way. Individuals in this way can win back the feeling of making a difference.

**Italy (South):** One of the most important effect of such inequality is the lack of work, especially for the new generations; in this respect, the gap between generations in Italy it is incontrovertible. Young people have lost, unlike previous generations, the sense of possibility and the possibility to plan their future or make real their aspirations. School is experienced by children as a place of entertainment, where you can learn new things; for young it is perceived as something of heavy, oppressive, a place/an institution that answers at the current changeable socio-cultural environment with a profound lack of creativity and innovation. The common idea is that the way of teaching in the last few years is functional to its destruction, and consequently to the destruction of the democratic society - of which school and family represent the main socialization agencies.

**Peru:** With these thoughts in mind, emerged in the group the symbolic image of a familiar story: a group of monkeys idly watching a banana hanging under a ladder. When the arrival of a new monkey and in their attempt to take the banana, the groups of monkeys beat him until he stopped trying, then the beaten monkey become part of the group and start hitting another new incoming monkey trying to catch the banana. Because the distrust for the current political and socio-economic model, and in their quest to solve the problems they experience and anxiety related, members of our society chose to escape to the near past in order to survive, bringing to mind the violence as an option to generate changes in the status quo, or to escape the system itself as an alternative, abandoning the hope of making a change from within.

**Poland:** There is a persistent feeling of powerlessness in the face of threats that are too much for us to handle, but also in the face of ones we're incapable of even seeing or knowing about. People feel that fulfilling their roles as parents has become more challenging due to a lack of a safe and healthy environment to raise their children in. For many this is a wake-up call, a sign that they have virtually given up their democratic right to vote, and someone else just came and took it. New threats are emerging all around us, and we are uncertain how to respond to them. Europe used to be viewed as stable and safe, but now the safe places have suddenly lost their comforting nature. They feel as if they can make their own space more authentic, than the outside world.

**Portugal:** People don't have time to be with their children, and then we have a lot of children with hyperactive and Asperger syndromes, highly medicated. It's a vicious cycle. People are working too much, most of the times far from home, and far from families support, so parents end up spending most of their times in their jobs, and much less time with their children, this mean that children end up being in school and stuck in school activities too long, when they finally get home there's no time for family quality time. There is no more time for traditional transmission of knowledge, stories, and "grandparents wisdoms". Children had never been so medicated, there has been an outbreak of hyperactive, depression, asperger's syndrome and so on.

**Serbia:** A woman participant, mathematician by profession, shared her feeling of being robbed a part of her life. She continued by saying that it was true that we could find small

oasis of peace within ourselves, however that she felt that a robbery of time and life happened. Another participant remembered holocaust and how she heard a story that people used to survive also thanks to music and she said that salvation could be found if we managed to find peaceful parts within ourselves. The lack of social activism was noticed, and the participants were wondering if going back to villages was an active or passive position. In many changes around us we tend to go back to the past, however we should find maybe some new reference points and find compromise as well as accept the inevitability of events around us.

**South Africa (Port Elizabeth):** There is a denial and suppression that we will reach a tipping point and we forestall that by appealing to the church or organization which is asked to carry our own weaker shadow to prevent it from tripping us up but there is also the possibility that the struggle will lead to maturational growth and a move to a higher level. We imbue the church, organizations and individuals with standards which contain unrealistic images and values in order to escape the paradox of good and evil in the world and in ourselves and then attack the church or organization or icon (Hansie Cronje, Oscar Pretorius and Volkswagen)

**South Africa (Pretoria):** The youth and students are voicing the country's dissatisfaction on the boundary with the government and the drive to 'make things fall' or disintegrate. It seems that the authority figures are not listening or interested in taking up their roles as elected representatives, but are focusing on enriching themselves. It was mentioned that the younger (including children) are challenging and manipulating the authority figures and parents and that the older ones seem helpless. One participant said that 'I feel like a refugee in my own country' and another remarked that 'we are self-imprisoned'. Connectivity symbols are imploding.

**Sweden:** Some participants were affected by the deadly attack the same morning on a staff member at a home for refugee youth in Gothenburg. One formulation was "concerned citizen" which cannot have the same trust in institutions as before. This means that the space for personal reflections and standpoints is diminished also out of fear for doing or thinking wrong since the situation is so complicated and difficult to grasp. The fear of doing wrong and lack of engagement is deeper than the readiness to formulate an opinion and act in the role of citizen. The country has had a long period when the concept of the "Swedish Welfare State" has given security for citizens. When it now cannot help the country to handle international situations the national identity gets disturbed - especially since it is to be represented by a minority government experienced as completely powerless to ac

**Turkey:** There is splitting in between family members relating having different political views. Family members begin to afraid of sharing their thought and feelings in between. Some members fall into silence just because they don't want to have a conflict inside the family. Mixed ethnic and religious marriages are under the pressure of the politicized environment and everyday life.' Families are not attached emotionally with their children. New young generation mothers are not reading books to their children, even before sleeping. Ipad and computers are the big emotional attachments nowadays 'More than 25

years I am a practicing kindergarten teacher. I've never lived difficulties like my last 4 years. It is very difficult to have an eye contact with children. They have no interest.

**UK:** Girls were funneled into very narrow career choices. Do women not want corporate power? There is feminist frustration about continuing inequality. I heard the male head of a women's organisation say: "I want to throttle women for their lack of confidence"! Matriarchal power still exists in some families. Will there not always be leaps forward and then a fall back? Not steady progression. There doesn't seem to be much of a community now – perhaps because everyone is out at work. But now I don't know my neighbours. I've just moved to a small village. Recently I came to London leaving my door open with the key in the lock. I don't know my neighbours but I started to ask if anyone had noticed. All the women locally had noticed – but they didn't tell me! They were actually looking out for me.

**USA:** In spite of our deep need for community and connection and the resultant feelings are fragmentation. However, needing to turn our focus to our life, children and work and find and created community for nourishment and security, we are faced with the fact that a number of Americans have been split, torn between the nostalgia of the past and frozen in the complexity of the future, along with being on the brink of uncertain forms of disaster in the present. These splits can stimulate isolation. The increasing use of American children for sexual trafficking is the modern slavery of our time – human lives are becoming a commodity. "Youth today do not feel as crushed by fear as adults and look at future with a will of doing and taking an attitude of who cares...they are millennial and don't have the stick-to-it-ness to stay in one job" "Youth today attitudes toward sex, drugs are without consequences that generations before felt."

## **Hypothesis 2.**

Over the years, youth have constantly been the subject of projections, either projections that see them as the saviours, those who will lead members of societies to a bold new future; or as those who are denigrated for their wayward and risky behaviour. However, at this time, perhaps influenced by the past projections, youth and intergenerational issues have become a threat to the very important institution of the family. Because of rapid and massive, all-encompassing change, at multiple levels, especially in regard to technology, which is so readily embraced by the young, and political ideology experienced by the young as exciting and new, there is an omnipresent pressure to understand what is happening and how members of society can find a way forward.

Young people are not immune from this pressure and understand that their parents and other authority figures are feeling impotent. This increases pressure on them to provide some sort of leadership. Faced with failed political and other societal leadership, young people seek a brave new world, and tend to support 'new' or extreme parties who promise the world. The older generations tend to support the known and accepted ideologies that they have grown up with, and they become fearful because their children do not see what they see in regard to the extremist ideology. In some ways, we can see the behaviour of young members of society as exploration and discovery of their world; but it can also be

seen as a rejection of healthy dependency on parental figures, leading to a polarisation of positions.

In regard to technology, there are even greater differences emerging. Young people have the advantage of having been born into the 'information age, and never knowing anything else. They have lived with, and become highly adept, around all manner of technological development. This is in stark contrast to the older generation, many of whom are parents, who are inclined to be unskilled and even fearful of technology. One of the results of them being unskilled is that they become excluded and their level of loneliness is increased. This has the affect of turning authority on its head, a reversal of the traditional structure where parents teach their children, to one where the young generation teach the parents, or the older generation become ignored and excluded. This leads to the destabilization of the institution of family; a considerable threat to future generations and the way we have lived for many centuries: it raises questions over future relationships between parents and children, disintegration of traditional families and lack of respect for parents.

There is a sort of mirroring of the upheaval in the institution of family in regard to another important aspect of society, that of community. Because of the overwhelming nature of big global and national issues, and the disillusionment and mistrust of political and other societal institutions, it seems that members of societies are struggling to voice a stable identity both at individual and collective levels and they experience communities as fragmented social entities. They respond to this by constructing and retreating to supportive communities formed around shared values, needs and concerns resulting in people being able to take up their personal responsibility and feel empowered to affect change. Members of societies seem to be associated with severe hardships as a reaction to their "survival mode". They experience the crumbling of the old way and everything is experienced as being in flux. With eroded and porous boundaries, communities seem to carry a lot of unfulfilled and unmet needs for protection and dependency. Community groupings are experienced as pseudo families.

### ***Analysis and Hypothesis 3. Technology and Media.***

#### **Analysis 3.**

Technology continues to be seen as a major contributor to the change experienced by members of the world both as individuals, but also as members of the current network globalised society and industrialization process. Technology has entered every sector of life in what looks like an effort to make life more comfortable (online shopping, mobile applications etc). The world has shrunk; it is possible to connect with people across the world but at the same time involvement in social media has left us with lack of communication and connectedness within families and communities. There is an increasing sense of isolation and a tendency to replace attachments to people with virtual connections which can be addictive and consuming, as following other people's lives on Facebook or surfing on the Internet can be a process that absorbs one's conscious and unconscious mind in trajectories of very condensed meaning. Youths are massively



exposed to TV-series, youtubes, snapchats, twitters, FB-cuts, movies, documentaries and “celebrities” – every hour every day. They undertake a global identity through iPads, iPhone and an enlarged focus on “Me, Myself & I”. Personal boundaries blur, we are being invited into other people’s worlds, our identity becomes confused. How do we switch off? At the same time, due to the impersonal quality attributed to “virtual reality” individuals feel less inhibited to act in this world, which feels unreal. Even children are involved into gadgets and social networks and are no longer playing in playgrounds.

The boundaries of the human become extended providing a sense of omnipresence, omnipotence and even immortality: members of the global world can have access to what is happening to other continents and cultures and they can even influence the developments in these faraway places within seconds; unfairness in the most remote part of the world can be easily captured by a cell phone, spread worldwide and then invite activism and support from all corners of the world. Thus, time and space boundaries become collapsed and this contributes to an experience of high pace of living, where actions cannot be inhibited or modified by institutions. The speed spiral of our lifestyle results in frustration, inability to meet the needs in real time and find "method" and logic. For these functions we increasingly rely on technology at the cost of a real attack on our ability to think, to our memory, to our specific quality of our human distinction, to our identity. Because of the growing need for constructing detailed internal maps of the world around us, and discovering new cognitive skills and tools to cope with a new order of things, there is a belief that we no longer experience our world emotionally; we absorb it through smartphones and we experience it with our heads more than our bodies.

Alongside its positive, transformative impact on the ways of connecting with others and organising work, technology appears to be merged with the influence of the media and thus acquires a powerfully threatening and destructive quality that leaves members of societies feeling manipulated, invaded, flooded, poisoned by information, isolated, detached from reality and dehumanized. The technological and economic evolution and simultaneous disregard of ethics has convinced us to believe that we are increasingly more powerful. As a result, optimism about individual capacities coexists with pessimism of a progressive self-destructive, cancerous process for the humanity.

The world of media and new technology is described not only as lacking solid foundations, but also as undermining, for example: disintegration of family structures, traditions, values, ethics, humanities and even personal, national history and intergenerational inheritance. Elderly people and technically unskilled people can be socially excluded. In addition, the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation is getting lost: The Internet platform with constantly added information from the past (history) and the present (news) acquires width in space and depth in time; it goes back in history. It is considered to be a goldmine, an opportunity to dig into history and see it alongside what’s happening now. A result is that younger generations do not turn to the older ones for guidance. The psychic processes should be extended to the next generation, however it seems that the new generations acquire from scratch their approach to life, starting fresh. At the same time parents have less and less time for their children and it is getting harder to raise them.

In the growing information clutter many people feel lost and they experience the need to shut down certain channels of communication, because they feel constantly overwhelmed by the developments, the bombardment with too much information, and too many opinions. The media is experienced as not providing a meaningful account of what is happening and there is suspicion that media and politics withhold essential information, or even actively manipulate data. There is an idea that members of the society are left with feelings of guilt, anxiety, fear and worry. Lack of understanding and mistrust of the information provided make it even harder for members of societies to understand what is happening and to take up their role as citizens. There is a fear of becoming “brainwashed”, when uncritically swallowing flash-information and news. Making ‘likes’ on Facebook, or googling how a banana can be cut in ten different ways, is more comfortable than, for example, engaging with the refugees issue. There seems to be a collusion between systems and individuals for keeping ourselves in denial. This is reflected in the following extracts from the National Reports:

**Argentina:** An all-out war broke out between the government and the dominant media outlets. This mainly resulted in the existence of two separate, parallel narratives, at most times each contrasting the other, about the same political and social phenomena (e.g. corruption, crime, poverty, economic hardship, etc.). On one side, there was a part of society who firmly believed in the previous government as one which put social interests first and was constantly fighting under a torrent of negativity and misinformation from the power elites and their affiliated media.

**Australia:** Internet, goes back in history, goldmine, opportunity to dig into history and see it alongside of what’s happening now. Slowing down. I’ve got a family, got kids. Doing so many activities, can be consuming. How do we take the time to stop, slow down. Always on, the digital age. How do we switch off? We are becoming desensitised to catastrophes (in reference to the daily news headlines of events such as current bushfires).

**Bulgaria;** A big Facebook group of educational professionals with quite rigid rules for the topics allowed. This rigidity and authoritarian leadership turned against itself when one of this group’s administrators started to expel others administrators on her own will. This has been experienced as a sign of hope after some period of increasing pressure over free speech and deliberation in this particular social and public space.

**Canada:** As we are in the “Information Age”, it means we have access to information from around the world. Now unlike before, a national issue can become global one (i.e. Pussy Riot), which assists global and national activism. But because there is so much information and rapid change, we can become desensitized and perhaps indifferent. Differences between younger people's use of technology versus older persons lack of understanding of technology was also discussed. Aggressive media and advertising makes it impossible for citizens to understand or experience anything but the drive to accumulate. Constant images of what the good life ‘is’ shapes the idea of what is ‘normal’ that does not allow for reflection and a critical re-setting of community values.

**Chile:** The use of information technologies constitutes a useful resource for citizens to collectively empower themselves in order to articulate solidarity initiatives against certain events that require swift solutions. However, in certain circumstances, these empowerment initiatives lend themselves for citizens to incur in excesses, as is the case when they exercise justice by themselves with respect to individuals identified committing crimes and who are subjected to collective, severe and very violent punishments mobilized by the febrile wrath of a lynching. Those empowerments are recorded in cellular technology, providing testimony that citizens' initiative may be more effective than institutions that, with their parsimony and rituals, are very slow and provide delayed responses.

**Croatia:** The media extremely toxic and manipulative and they are wondering who is really standing behind them and what their real purpose is. Some of the members repeated that they rather avoid negative news dominating the media and they prefer to read culinary articles. The group points to the fact that it is very difficult to find more positive news...Readers' comments on certain news and articles which can often be extremely negative and offensive and reveal the personality of a person commenting. The internet generally disintegrates the world, the families, and can make us empty, unsympathetic and self-involved. Parents have less...time for their children and it is getting harder to raise them. The humanistic dimension of the society is continually decreasing as the use of modern technologies is getting larger.

**Denmark:** The media convey a general picture of increasing poverty, of everything getting worse, even though things actually progress steadily on a global scale: less violence, more education, less hunger, less illness. On one hand, technological development leads to huge progress; on the other, much energy is being spent on built-in obsolescence. Uncertainty characterizes life in the Information Age: which information can be trusted and which information has been constructed in order to cover yet other information, the message of which the sender wants to conceal. The mediation of information about the globalized society appears to be entangled in wrong proportions, concealment, substitution, and distortion. People miss solid foundations and reliable bases of action.

**Estonia:** The choices for our leaders are diminishing. Some "stunts" are made and there are reports in the TV about their failure, and thus the worried feeling will not leave. There was worry of criminal activity increasing. In addition, people pondered things like what the relationships between refugees are like at the reception centre as well as TV and radio coverage about any related events and politics. There were no actual personal experiences with refugees, only thoughts and opinions.

**Faroes Islands:** The youths undertake a global identity through iPads, iPhone and an enlarged focus on "Me, Myself & I". It seems like the system is attacked by itself, in the same way that cancer is a cell-attack on other cells in the same organism...many are not able to manage the overflow and thereby get overloaded...Is it dangerous, when "somebody else" do the sorting and segregation for you? Who is serving what kind of

information to us? Don't we become "brainwashed", when we uncritically swallow flash-information and news? Many have become intolerant, less flexible and more fearful. It's safe to make "likes" on Facebook...It's far easier to Google "how a banana can be cut in 10 different ways", than relate yourself to the discussion about refugees and boundaries.

**Finland:** The media constantly reports on new developments every other hour. A picture of a drowned child has become an icon and raises sympathy for refugees and creates a wish to help, but it does not eliminate the reason for the problem. How does one stand the feelings of guilt amongst one's own well-being or lack of action in such circumstances, when refugees do not receive help in their own countries...And it is remembered that the world has never had to feed so many people, nor has there ever been so little war as nowadays. One participant told how, every night after listening to the evening news on the TV, she was "forced" to think about her own values, ethics, and humanity in relation to others.

**France:** Expressions and manifestations after the attacks, after the photo of this young child stranded on a Greek beach, confirm hopes in the individuals and their ability to block solitude. The will and the need of society are expressed by acts.

**Germany (Berlin):** One feels overwhelmed by the developments and needs orderliness and orientation. It was formulated that media and politics do not meet these needs, but on the contrary "betray the better". In this context it was argued that uncertainty is triggered not by too little, but by too much information and too many different opinions. Feelings of helplessness and distrust were expressed. Several participants recalled experiences in the GDR, where information was systematically manipulated. The suspicion was formulated that nowadays, media and politics withhold essential information or let them disappear in the mass, especially in the social media.

**Germany (Frankfurt):** There was emphasis on the increasing climate of nervousness and fluster as reaction to media reports. One big headline topic is constantly hammered into people's awareness, then switched for the next big flurry - avian flu, Greece, refugees - that then disappears from the public eye, as if people are habitually addicted to a stream of constant emergency alerts. No attempt is made to comprehend underlying correlations. Politicians' responses appear as blustery rhetoric, solving nothing but fuelling this fire.

**Greece:** The topic of bureaucracy was taken up by another member who reminded the group of the issue of computerisation of the banks. A group of retired volunteers had been mobilised through their association: they appealed to the most senior and experienced members of the association, inviting them to offer their services voluntarily to the state in order to help with the task of computerising the Bank's data. The system was organised in a way that prevented flexibility. Bureaucracy mobilised action from the citizens, which was then turned down. And this in turn was raising mistrust in citizens.

**India:** Advancement in technology has resulted in the world to shrink and made it possible to connect with people across the world but also has left with lack of communication among members who are at their proximity due to involvement in social

media. Emergence of new mobile applications has made life easy for people but also made them lazy and hence do not take efforts. Because of these young minds and their innovations technology has gained a lot of prominence. It is been used in every sector of life such as paying bills, shopping clothes and groceries, booking tickets that life has become easy in this busy world. But however certain other group such as children, elderly people and technically unskilled people find it challenging due to the advancements of technology. Most children are getting involved into gadgets and social networks which is reducing the number of kids playing in the playgrounds.

**Ireland:** We are being manipulated by fear. My daughter is working in London and has been told where to go if ISIS attacks; we are told not to go to Marrakesh; we are pushed into nasty, aggressive responses. Fear touches us at a primitive level but it is now global and out of control. I find myself resisting being frightened because it will polarise me and I want to stay in a place of compassion.”...“It is only when we experience fear that we protect ourselves. I feel isolated and alienated with my fear in Ireland.”

**Israel:** In the prevailing unholy equilibrium, action is almost impossible, non-action is fueled by fear exclusion and silencing while action is substituted by activity in the social internet networks.

**Italy (Milan):** The attitude towards technology is ambivalent (more problematical among older people). We waver between the optimistic idea of an increase in individual capacities and the pessimistic one of a progressive de-humanization and detachment from reality. Things go on, offering glasses for a virtual reality, the world goes on, the blind can use the techniques used by bats to move around (...). So many things happen so quickly. The reality of men who are half men-half machines is getting closer. Are we doing anything about this? The dimension is dramatic but the society can't breathe.

**Italy (North):** "...Apple "Logo", maybe it's the unique symbol recognized as value... the technological and economic evolution have convinced us to believe that we are more and more powerful. Progress, indifferent to ethics, could take us straight to self-destruction...The acceleration...speed spiral should also implicitly result in frustration, short-circuit, unable to meet in real time the needs and find "method" and logic. The psychic processes should be extended to the next generation, however it seems that the new generations acquire from scratch their approach to life...The "Remember" which has always been an individual and social process that we share with others is now entrusted to "network": a real attack on our ability to think, to our memory, to our specific quality of our human distinction, to our identity.

**Italy (Rome):** Inside our own country cancer manifests itself with the nearly illegal manipulation of sensitive data and with the much worse situation where a woman in her own house gets beaten up to death during a robbery.

**Italy (South):** The mass media play an important role in feeding high level of anxiety and powerlessness in people's lives...There is a collapse of the "critical capacity" due to the new technologies, which are so fast to destroy us mentally. We live in a state of

suspension and dissociation that puts us in the “here and now” and does not project us into the future: not believe in anything (politics, society, culture, religion) leads us to not believe in ourselves. We are human being disenchanting, more oriented to the calculation and less willing to the comprehension of the world, of ourselves, of the “others” and of our capabilities. Always waiting for a "Messiah" able to lead us out of this “empty space”, this loss of identity.

**Peru:**

**Poland:** The fading away of dialogue is caused by the rise of modern technologies, experiencing social contact through a virtual medium lacks in reality. The rise of social media causes blurring of personal boundaries, we are being invited into other people’s worlds. In the growing information clutter many people feel lost, they experience the need to shut down certain channels of communication, especially those providing them with a negative view of the world. They don’t understand what’s happening in society, which makes acting in the role of a citizen a difficult task. There is a belief that we no longer experience our world emotionally, that because of absorbing it through smart phones, we started to experience it with our heads more than our bodies.

**Portugal:** Our society is full of technique, of science, of internet, of receipts “how to conquer in 10 steps...”. There’s a great lack of art, creativity. We lost the magic of knowledge transmitted by generation, by word, by being in relation. We invented things because things frustrate us, with the beneficence principle, but then it’s dangerous; Loneliness vs virtual society. Things only exist if they become public, if not they don’t seem to be important or matter. What doesn’t happen on TV doesn’t seem to be resolved, people are losing their abilities and their tools to resolve problems.

**Serbia:** A participant said that it was so common to hear only bad examples that hearing this time a good one was really comforting. Participant shared with the group that she decided not to watch TV anymore, because it was bombarding us with bad, crime related news. Another one said that we were very selfish as regards sharing our own space, however we were behaving very freely as regards the use of somebody else’s space.

**South Africa (Port Elizabeth):** Reference was then made about the Pope who is compassionate with people and who spoke about people fearing priests who are too rigid.

**South Africa (Pretoria):** Other matters referred to were the surfacing of racism expressed in social media and the social persecution of suspects. Participants expressed being overwhelmed, helpless and shocked at what they see and hear in the daily news. Examples were given of irresponsibility in big corporates, other organisations, government and in families.

**Sweden:** One example could be that the task to reduce unemployment is unrealistic in a harder international competition where both employees and workers are replaced by modern technology. The space for dialogue is restricted between people in society and on workplaces. "The corridor of opinion" is a concept used in media.

**Turkey:** Every day we are witnessing different kinds of death. The uncertainties relating our country situation have affects on us. Change is rapidly and so fast, it is not possible to follow. I feel lost into the social media, I lost my trust. I prefer not to watch TV.

**UK:** I was reading about an idea of transplanting the brains of highly educated people into robots – successful people who will gain a form of immortality. We will lose history if we rely on IT. I miss getting to know people's handwriting – its all email and phone messages now. But I know more about people, even though we do not meet. When I had a fall, I was able to keep in touch by email and Facebook. But not on Twitter. Has there been a study on children and their use of iPads and tablets? Think about how facts get recorded. In museums you have the hard evidence of the past. Will IT be as reliable? Biography of London can draw on data to show us how we were 1,000 years ago.

**USA:** Technological advancements and instant communication results in precedence over deep, solid and real communication making authentic face to face contact more infrequent and difficult and contributing to feelings of isolation. The rise in technology contributes to the process of industrialization, this along with the rapidity and flux of change that makes connectedness in communities more difficult. Because of increasing technology and virtual connection and increasing...resulting in replacing attachments to people with chemical (alcohol and drugs) and process addictions including food, internet, sex, work, gambling....” “What has technology done to our foods? There is a significant increase in child obesity, adult obesity and diabetes...

### ***Hypothesis 3.***

The promising developments in the domain of new technology and social media have given rise to our greed to know more, to access more comfort, speed and power. Members of societies placed their hopes on technology in an unrealistic way, submitted children to the technology breast, and their personal information on Facebook. They were seduced to believe that we could be omnipotent, omnipresent and even immortal. In other words as technology progressed we regressed and were not able to use it from a thoughtful position. The cost was that we lost our boundaries in relation to our private space, devalued and rubbished close contact, and believed that this global world had something better for us, but now we feel robbed. We were engaging with an idealised 24 hour provider of comfort, denigrating all relationships of real dependency (institutions, family, community).

The inevitable failure of the idealised media and technology, to solve all problems, has led to feelings of dependency. Our disillusionment has created guilt for our crime of wanting to transcend nature, ignore the damage we have caused to the environment and to others with our self-interested demands and sense of self-entitlement. There seems to be a hubris that needs to be punished by a harsh attack on the mental apparatus which conceived these wishes, ideas, and yet there is not enough desire to take responsibility for them. Guilt then becomes persecutory and linking, comprehending, thinking, connecting, and feeling is avoided and even attacked. At a personal level we continue to project our

dependency needs on others, or take flight away from them and turn towards individualism and the virtual world.

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### **Publication of National Reports.**

It is appreciated that readers may be interested in having access to the full National Reports. These have been published on the OPUS Web Site at [www.opus.org.uk](http://www.opus.org.uk) where they can be found under **Listening Posts**.

### **Concluding Remarks.**

The instability continues at a seemingly faster pace and greater depth than previously, the threats to a way of life continue unabated. History, tradition and social anchoring are losing their footing and personal identity is much less embedded in national society. It seems like the system is attacked by itself, in the same way that cancer is a cell-attack on other cells in the same organism. This either results in aggressive or violent actions and reactions, or in passivity and stagnation. The ability for individuals to identify with themselves, as an individual, group, organisation or community, or as a part of a greater organism, seems to be markedly reduced. Joint responsibility has become individual responsibility, with accompanying fragmentation. Members of societies therefore comprehend an outer and an inner threat, which causes fear of being overwhelmed, destroyed and wiped out.



Community only exists in the form of groupings of like-minded individuals, formed around shared values, needs and concerns, which provide a modicum of relief from the threats to their survival. Members of societies experience the crumbling of the old way of life and everything is experienced as being in flux. Constant change, especially in regard to technology and political ideology create splits in families and severe challenges to parental authority. The older generations not only feel helpless but also excluded from society. This raises questions about the future of relationships between parents and children, disintegration of traditional families, and lack of respect for parents. Some of the community groupings are experienced as pseudo families.

Technology and media is experienced as a sense of invasion by a toxic other. Members of societies feel overwhelmed and bombarded by the multiple sources of news and information overflow. They have lost trust in the reliability of the information provided fearing that corrupt and manipulated information is a deliberate attempt to influence them. They end up feeling that they are hugely interfered with by an evil agenda, exposed to toxic, abusive material in order to be controlled, paralysed, and forced or blackmailed, into a particular ideology or direction that serves the interests of powerful elites and corrupted governments.

Having, for the past decade or more, been in this same position of not knowing what to do and how to change the experience of threats to their survival, the outcome is one of a magnified experience of failed and unmet dependency. In the current situation this is accompanied by guilt that they have contributed to this painful experience through seeking salvation in the form of extreme politicians, who in offering something different were seen as messianic figures. The sad realisation is that these groups with their extreme ideologies have created even greater concerns for the future.

As has been said before, this period of world history truly is one of formative changes in the structure of the world economy, the shape of societies, and the framework of world governance. Who could possibly predict what will happen next? However, we can continue to explore and try to understand current dynamics in societies throughout the world.

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