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Mass Mobilization Now

Contribution to GTI Forum [Interrogating the Anthropocene: Truth and Fallacy](#)

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In his eloquent essay "[Interrogating the Anthropocene](#)," Paul Raskin argues that the concept of the Anthropocene leads to "depoliticized responses" at a time when we need to embrace "the teleology of social vision and the impetus of social struggle." However, he finds grounds for hope in the material realities of global interconnectedness: "Our shared fate in the Planetary Phase underwrites the expanded identity, solidarity, and citizenship that makes us fit for the task."

As Raskin also notes, material realities alone cannot create the mass mobilization required for a Great Transition. We all have to play our part, and to start, we need to reflect on what such a mobilization would look like; what an "expanded identity, solidarity, and citizenship" would look like; and how to make them all into realities.

An inquiry into what we have done so far would reveal the fragmentation that exists across societies and social movements. The Anthropocene that has linked our fates in an endangered Earth system has also guided even the most intellectually skilled and financially empowered into a state of fragmentation, oriented more towards competition than compassion and co-creation.

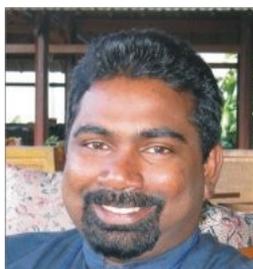
Has the shock brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic led us towards a mindful inquiry into a New Normal? Or have we been guided by human instincts for survival? Now that the race for vaccination has been begun, we can expect politicians to revert to promoting greed-driven economic strategies that facilitate privatization and the concentration of wealth. In such a scenario, what would be the right response for a mass mobilization for a Great Transition?

A mass mobilization has been triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the reality should frighten rather than reassure us. We can see its results in the centralization of state power and a diminished role for subsidiarity. While a New Normal had briefly led the more thoughtful to relate to ecosystem-services-driven prosperity modeling, the absence of an inclusive or shared prosperity program keeps the future more bleak than transformative.

A movement for mass mobilization is begging for attention. Our focus must be on strategic foresight for co-created and collective action. The realities of diversity and tendencies for fragmentation will remain, but we can learn from past successes and failures. The most important question, though, is what form this mobilization would take. The lack of mindfulness-driven mass mobilization efforts thus continues to keep us stuck in a state of dialogue rather than action. Three strategic interventions could help steer us in the right direction: (i) reimagining mobilization towards a Great Transition, (ii) reorganizing mobilization towards a Great Transition, and (iii) reinvesting in pathways towards a Great Transition.

As noted by Raskin, if human activity has catapulted Earth out of the relatively benign Holocene into a hostile new geological epoch, then a Great Transition will depend on recalibrating the context of the Anthropocene. A Great Transition could be a conscious movement of action, if reimagining leads to recalibrating the approach to prosperity systems, reorganizing leads to recalibrating the approach to governance processes, and reinvesting leads to recalibrating the approach to unsustainable behavior.

About the Author



Uchita de Zoysa is an author and strategist on the global sustainability transformation. He has served as Sri Lanka's Chief Negotiator for the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Advisor to the Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife. He is Chairman of Global Sustainability Solutions, Executive Director of Centre for Environment and Development, and Principal of the SDG Transformation Lab. He holds a PhD from University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

About the Publication

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