



HOW TO CHANGE A SYSTEM

THE NEXT SYSTEM TEACH-IN, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

BY MYRA L JACKSON



REFORM

REVOLUTION

HOW TO CHANGE A SYSTEM



PEOPLE and
PLANET FIRST



How to Change a System

“Deep change requires three conditions: first, the old system must suffer what the philosopher Jürgen Habermas calls a “legitimation crisis.”

In his book, *After Capitalism*
Mathematician and Philosopher, David Schweickart

after capitalism



david schweickart

Two, Deep change also requires an agent: a movement, often long in the making, dedicated to fundamental change, which suddenly gains mass appeal.

Third, the movement must be animated, at least in part, by a vision of concrete institutional change.”

WHAT BRINGS ABOUT LASTING CHANGE

- ▶ ...is a topic that is hotly debated and the answers are not totally clear.
- ▶ What do we know about the kind of system we'd like to institute? It is tough to create substantive change and plot a path forward, if we do not know what system will serve us best.
- ▶ Let us begin our exploration briefly considering a few systems being promoted, and then, let's learn from one another...

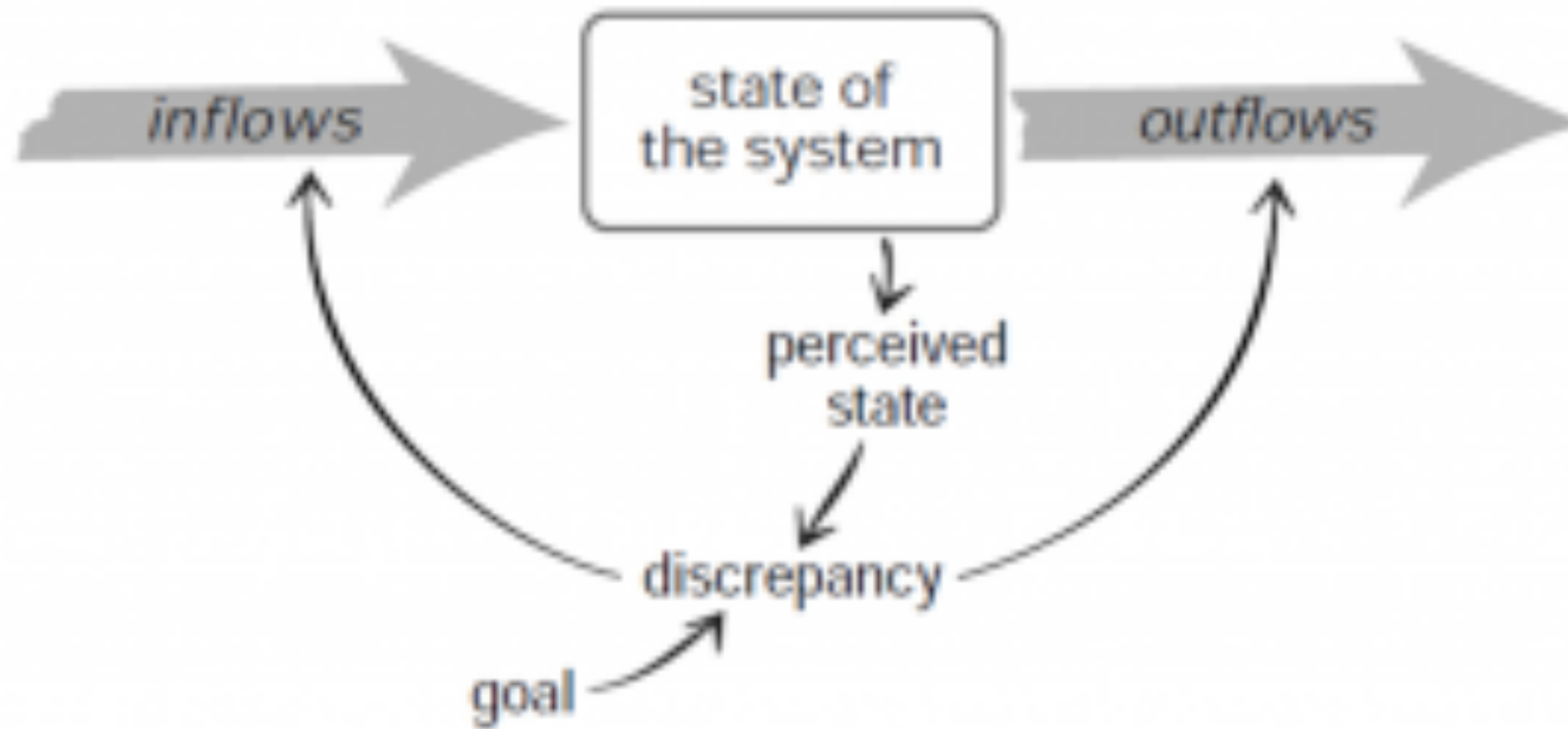
DONELLA MEADOWS – POINTS OF INTERVENTION

- ▶ Explores 12 Distinct Points of Intervention capable of generating lasting change in system.
- ▶ Leverage points or places to intervene in a system.
 - ▶ (in increasing order of effectiveness)
- ▶ 12. Constants, parameters, numbers (such as subsidies, taxes, standards).
- ▶ 11. The sizes of buffers and other stabilizing stocks, relative to their flows.
- ▶ 10. The structure of material stocks and flows (such as transport networks, population age structures).
- ▶ 9. The lengths of delays, relative to the rate of system change.

POINTS OF INTERVENTIONS, CONT'D

- ▶ 8. The strength of negative feedback loops, relative to the impacts they are trying to correct against.
- ▶ 7. The gain around driving positive feedback loops.
- ▶ 6. The structure of information flows (who does and does not have access to information).
- ▶ 5. The rules of the system (such as incentives, punishments, constraints).
- ▶ 4. The power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize system structure.
- ▶ 3. The goals of the system.
- ▶ 2. The mindset or paradigm out of which the system – its goals, structure, rules, delays, parameters – arises.
- ▶ 1. The power to transcend paradigms.

Meadows, State of the System Chart



SEE FULL ESSAY AT: [HTTP://DONELLAMEADOWS.ORG/ARCHIVES/LEVERAGE-POINTS-PLACES-TO-INTERVENE-IN-A-SYSTEM/](http://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/)

IN ENVISIONING REAL UTOPIA'S BY ERIK OLIN WRIGHT

- ▶ Method for evaluating strategies for major-political transitions, divided into three categories:
 - ▶ Interstitial Transformation
 - ▶ Symbiotic Transformation
 - ▶ Ruptural Transformation

ERIK OLIN WRIGHT'S THREE MODELS OF TRANSFORMATION: RUPTURAL, INTERSTITIAL, SYMBIOTIC

		POLITICAL TRADITION MOST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH LOGIC OF TRANSFORMATION	PIVOTAL COLLECTIVE ACTORS FOR TRANSFORMATION	STRATEGIC LOGIC WITH RESPECT TO THE STATE	STRATEGIC LOGIC WITH RESPECT TO THE CAPTIALIST CLASS	METAPHORS OF SUCCESS
VISION OF TRAJECTORY OF SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATIONS BEYOND CAPITALISM	RUPTURAL	Revolutionary socialist/communist	Classes organized in political parties	Attack the state	Confront the bourgeoisie	War (victories and defeats)
	INTERSTITIAL METAMORPHOSIS	Anarchist	Social movements	Build alternatives outside of the state	Ignore the bourgeoisie	Ecological competition
	SYMBIOTIC METAMORPHOSIS	Social democratic	Coalitions of social forces and labor	Use the state struggle on the terrain of the state	Collaborate with the bourgeoisie	Evolutionary adaptations

ADAPTED FROM *ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF TRANSFORMATION*
BY ERIK OLIN WRIGHT



WHAT ABOUT POWER RELATIONSHIPS?

WHAT ABOUT POWER RELATIONSHIPS?

- ▶ The National Peoples Action, NPA is a network of grassroots organizations who are charting what they feel is a Third, more powerful path forward to completely re-imagine what is possible.
- ▶ They have in place **Principles for a New Economy** and a **Long Term Agenda** that points toward the potential for structural reforms that can lead to structural transformation. Reforms to laws, policies, and reforms that change power relationships that allow for large-scale shifts toward a deeper democracy and equitable economy.
- ▶ More than 300 grassroots organizations across the nation.

IMMIGRATION REFORM
REVENUE
FUTURE OF WORK
BANK ACCOUNTABILITY
PEOPLE'S NEW ECONOMY
DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF
CAPITAL
RACIAL JUSTICE
CORPORATIONS FOR THE
COMMON GOOD
ECOLOGICAL
SUSTAINABILITY
REAL DEMOCRACY



COMMUNITY CONTROL, DEMOCRATIC
CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC
CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY,
STRUCTURAL EQUITY, GLOBAL
SUSTAINABILITY

AMERICA *beyond* CAPITALISM

RECLAIMING OUR WEALTH,
OUR LIBERTY, & OUR DEMOCRACY

GAR ALPEROVITZ

WITH A NEW FOREWORD BY
JAMES GUSTAVE SPETH

Gar Alperovitz explains another pathway, between reform and revolution, for transformational change in his strategy of evolutionary reconstruction. Hallmarks are: Institutional innovation, democratization of capital, beginning first at the community and state level moving to larger scale strategies, as time goes on...

**WHAT IS
MISSING?**

LINDSEY HALVORSON

INNER REFLECTION

JOHN HANSEN



Citizens' Climate Lobby



AUDREY & MOIRA

FOSSIL FREE AU

SHIFTING GEARS

We hope that the above explorations, while far from the last word on any of these subjects, are helpful in getting you started in your own conversations on system change and a search for pathways to a future beyond the failed and failing systems of the past and present!