

Preface

‘Planetary Passport: Re-presentation¹, Accountability and Re-generation’ explores the implications of knowing our place in the universe and recognising our hybridity. It is a series of self-reflections and essays drawing on many diverse ways of knowing. To this end I spent time in Japan, South Africa, United Kingdom and Indonesia where the widening gap between rich and poor is evident in Yokohama, Cape Town, Gauteng, Bristol and Jakarta.²

Most of the chapters for this book were written during a sabbatical and a series of short field trips from 2014 to 2016. The sabbatical enabled me to spend time comparing and contrasting social, economic and environmental challenges and to reflect on what unites us. The first part enabled me to complete some reading whilst the second part enabled me to develop and map out the next stage of my program of research on representation, accountability and regeneration³. Challenges for both

¹Re-presentation is used in the sense that views of stakeholders are presented as their perceptions of truth (see Hesse-Biber 2010).

²The chapters expand upon field trips to Indonesia and South Africa, as honorary professor at the Universities of South Africa, Adjunct Professor at the University of Indonesia, the State Islamic University, visits to Universitas Nasional and Padjadjaran as well as on visits to institutes in the United Kingdom such as the Schumacher Institute and Future Worlds Centre in Cyprus (founded by Yiannis Laouris). Other inspiration is drawn from my links with Global Agoras, a network that prefigures and tests alternative forms of democracy and governance.

³Most of the chapters for this book were written during a sabbatical and a series of short field trips from 2014 to 2016. The sabbatical enabled me to spend time comparing and contrasting social, economic and environmental challenges and to reflect on what unites us. The first part enabled me to complete some reading whilst the second part enabled me to develop and map out the next stage of my program of research on representation, accountability and regeneration. The articles and papers given at conferences such as the International Systems Sciences and the invited plenaries have been referenced in each chapter. In particular, these include papers for Systemic Practice and Action Research and Systems Research and Behavioural Science. The volumes in this series build on and extend the ideas developed in an earlier Contemporary Systems Series, entitled ‘Wall Street to Wellbeing’ and ‘Systemic Ethics’. The prologue and Chaps. 1–3 were written entirely for this volume. Chapter 4 extends papers delivered at International Sociological Association and several meetings of International Systems Sciences as well as symposia at universities and institutes. It

South Africa and Indonesia include urbanisation and a growth in city environments where 65–75% of the population will live by 2030.

Expanded Pragmatism dedicated to sustainable social and environmental justice is more important than ever. In the wake of the elections in UK, Europe and USA people have demonstrated the depth of their dissatisfaction that Rorty (1998) summed up in ‘Achieving Our Country’. He stressed that ‘something will crack’ as follows:

“The non suburban electorate will decide that the system has failed and start looking around for a strongman to vote for—someone willing to assure them that, once he is elected, the smug bureaucrats, tricky lawyers, overpaid bond salesmen, and postmodernist professors will no longer be calling the shots.”

Rorty said ‘nobody can predict’ what such a strongman would do in office, but painted a bleak picture for minorities and liberal causes. ‘One thing that is very likely to happen is that the gains made in the past forty years ... will be wiped out...Jocular contempt for women will come back into fashion’.” (Rorty 1998: 87–91 and cited by Helmore 2016).⁴

Rorty criticises the lack of agency in academia and the tendency to emphasise criticism rather than contributing to practical transformation. This is summed up in the pithy statement by Whitman (1998) when reviewing ‘Achieving our Country’, as follows:

“Old Leftists sought to effect a just distribution of wealth and opportunity. New Leftists ‘specialise in what they call the ‘politics of difference’ or of ‘identity or of ‘recognition’ (citing Rorty 1998:76–77). Old Leftists worry about minimum wages, adequate housing, and universal health care. New Leftists worry about how to ... recognize otherness. (79)”

Policies of recognition and identity whilst very important need to be applied in the practical transformation of praxis to protect country and the people living in the run down city areas or isolated regional areas. Thus the book makes a plea for:

- Making a difference and to demonstrate in coalitions spanning social and economic sectors how we can support social and environmental justice.
- Demonstrating transformation through practical interventions in ‘hands on’ demonstration projects that bring hope.
- Providing the basis for learning what works why and how.

Pragmatism and agency remain important ways forward for the future of democracy. The volumes in this series propose agency for both social and

(Footnote 3 continued)

cites sections from ‘Wall Street to Wellbeing’ and the chapters sketched in volume 1 of this series. Chapter 5: extends a paper delivered at the Annual Islamic Studies and a version published as part of the Participatory Education Research Journal.

⁴Helmore, E. 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/19/donald-trump-us-election-prediction-richard-rorty>.

environmental justice through practical interventions⁵ that support so-called Blue Economy initiatives (Pauli 2010, 2016)⁶ and that focus specifically on social and environmental justice for the voiceless, in response to the votes of ‘no confidence’.

When democracy fails to enable credible candidates to stand then voluntary voters do not bother to vote. Hannah Arendt also predicted this in ‘Crisis in the Republic’ (1972). Perhaps if the Democrats had not silenced Sanders there may have been a different outcome?

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⁵The ideas in this book prefigure the founding of a centre. The focus is on the development of a social and environmental justice approach and addresses a closed development, production, construction and evaluation cycle to underpin social, economic and environmental decisions. And results from a recent meeting of minds with David Stanley (a visionary thinker and practitioner) and Rudolf Wirawan (CEO of Wirasoft and President of the Indonesian Diaspora).

⁶https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=SGcol_4nqyU Accessed 28/01 2017.

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