

# Identities, animality and odd reactions in the crises of Earth's mega systems

## Abstract:

We detail a single intervention that the think-and-do-tank PlanWe did for the Finnish society of psychologists and psychotherapists. The intervention's major focus was a two-and-a-half-day workshop, in which 25 psychologists or psychotherapists took part. We also describe the potential systemic effects before and after the workshop. We conclude by reflecting how a change that takes place in a group such as the national society of Finnish psychotherapists and psychologists is interdependent on the surrounding society, and how a single workshop can break down silos.

Keywords: workshop, conflict resolution, large-group identities, neuropsychanalysis, environmental crisis

## Introduction

The extent of how much one harnesses one's agency in relation to existential challenges (climate change, pandemics, degradation of nature, habitat and species loss, the loss of societal stability and wellbeing) has an effect on how meaningful, ethical and authentic one's existence can be in the year 2022.

Many highly educated and privileged people feel deep helplessness and chronic inability in harnessing their own agency in order to help society to collectively organize around these existential challenges. This is very human and understandable - yet intolerable.

The think-and-do-tank PlanWe decided to create a single intervention that was aimed towards Finnish psychologists and psychotherapists, who were thought to be suffering from the inability in harnessing their own agency as mature citizens (see Shapiro & Carr, 2017) and were willing to be consulted on the subject. The intervening workshop used as its guidelines the mindsets of conflict resolution specialists (Staub, 2014; Volkan, 2021), neuropsychanalysts (Solms, 2019; Hoffman, 2018), zoologists (Panksepp & Biven 2012) and climate emotion researchers (Weintrobe, 2020; Pihkala, 2020a). The Tree Model (Volkan, 2020) by International Dialogue Initiative was used in building the workshop. The contents of the three inspirational presentations in the workshop (large group dynamics, odd and difficult reactions, the problems in the Global North with primary affective systems) were gathered by using participant observation and field work in various social contexts among the people in the Global North.

## Theory behind the intervention: conflict resolution

The resolution of violent conflicts (physical or structural) is one way to interact with the dynamics of organizational and social life. It comes in many forms, and below we briefly introduce the general principles. These principles are based on the case based work in Rwanda (Staub, 2006), Northern Ireland (Volkan, 2021), Cyprus (Fisher, 2007), the Middle East (Kelman, 2008), former

Soviet countries (Volkan, 2020), South Africa (Gibson, 2004; Haupt & Malcolm, 2000) and former Yugoslavian countries (Galtung, 2001).

Conflict resolution finds the best momentum for reconciliation after a so-called critical event (Hawdon & Ryan, 2012) when

- a) violence has obviously taken place, or its risk is obvious;
- b) when the power relations and motivation are such that all important parties can become participants in the reconciliation process;
- and c) it is realistic to believe that conflict resolution can lead to actual changes in the society (Staub, 2006; Galtung, 2001).

PlanWe hypothesised that after two years of the COVID pandemic and after the news reports on the latest climate and biodiversity loss, the three principles would be fulfilled at least among Finnish psychologists and psychotherapists. PlanWe didn't know that a war was about to start in Europe. Planning, inviting and registering of participants to the workshop happened at a time just before Finland's neighbouring country started a war in Ukraine. The workshop took place when war was already happening, but the participants chose to either participate or not before knowing there would be a war in Europe.

The knowledge of biodiversity loss, climate crisis and the suffering of human societies are known to be so-called wicked problems (Long, 2015) and hyperobjects (Boulton, 2016). This means that the citizens in the zone of proximal development of achieving mature citizenship (by the standards of Shapiro and Carr, 2017) were not likely to realize the destructiveness and structural violence or means to contain these as easily as in simpler direct physical conflicts for which the resolution methods have originally been created.

In seemingly simpler conflicts, every individual in a society occupies one or several of the four roles in relation to conflict resolution: 1) victim, 2) perpetrator, 3) passive bystander and 4) reconciliator. The simple goal of conflict resolution is to add the number of individuals having also the role of reconciliator - even if their personal past or tendency (victim, perpetrator, passive bystander) cannot be forgotten or completely switched off (Nadler & Shnabel, 2014). In global wicked problems all individuals are not equally perpetrators or victims; however, no one can avoid these roles altogether.

The central task is the strong containment of destructiveness instead of the advancement of productivity or creativity. In practice, this point of view includes the advancement of constructive and sustainable productivity through creativity and versatile psychosocial development. The concept of positive peace has been created to describe how psychosocial development contains destructiveness and violence (Staub, 2014).

In the resolution of violent conflicts, the lack of interaction (not enough workshop groups, too short workshop processes) prevent the change in permanent habits of thinking and acting; instead, too little interaction threatens to retraumatize the victims, to wound the perpetrators and passive bystanders that participate in the workshops, and frustrate again the groups that have been perpetrators (because the intervention does not go deeper than frustration) (Staub, 2014). Moreover, the resolution between completely opposite groups should begin only when there has been enough preliminary intra-group work on both sides of the conflict (Abu-Nimer, 2001).

Theory behind the intervention: the significance of different roles and identifications

Who are the opposite groups in global existential challenges (climate change, pandemics, destruction of nature, habitat and species loss, the loss of societal stability and wellbeing) that the intervention in question was trying to influence? The obvious answer is: we all are part of this conflict. Based on the fieldwork by PlanWe, people have been divided into the following opposing groups: pair no. 1) "We have to give up on economic growth" vs. "It is impossible to give up on economic growth"; pair no. 2) "I cannot/I do not have to do anything about these common existential challenges" vs. "Let's start working with as large a number of volunteers as we can because there is so much to do"; pair no. 3) "We have to hurry / get serious / be confrontative" vs. "We have to be tactful and cautious in our communication / use positive language / avoid causing panic"; pair no. 4) "I see the future optimistically" vs. "I see the future pessimistically"; pair no. 5) "We should focus first on international actions" vs. "We should focus on national radical actions immediately".

The list continues: pair no. 6) "We should advance following the ways and pace of the older generations" vs. "We should advance following the ways and pace of younger (and unborn) generations"; pair no. 7) "Western nations are responsible and they should make immediate unilateral sacrifices" vs. "Undemocratic nations are responsible and they should make immediate unilateral sacrifices"; pair no. 8) "We will not give up any national interests" vs. "Our nation will volunteer as an example on how to make difficult and sacrificing solutions"; pair no. 9) "The answer lies in technology and effectiveness" vs. "The answer lies in holistic change of culture and psychosocial being and lifestyles"; pair no. 10) "Freedom will make it possible for agents to solve existential challenges with their autonomous solutions" vs. "We will need a lot of rules and regulations, otherwise the solutions are ineffective". Naturally, many individuals can identify with many of these groups in various combinations. Overall, it is more difficult to see which groups are more perpetrators and which represent the victims or passive bystanders that allow the destructivity of the conflicts to go on.

A certain large group, for instance Finnish graduate engineer men born in the 1950s or American vegan women born in the 1980s can settle homogeneously at one end of these questions – only to disperse into heterogeneity in another question. In that way the PlanWe intervention for 25 Finnish psychologists and psychotherapists partly represents the preliminary intra-group work. However, it also partly represents conflict resolution between opposing groups. In the case process description below, the reader will find out what opposite groups needed conflict resolution between themselves in this workshop.

Because we all belong to many large groups, and have loyalty for each large group we identify with, often large group identification is felt most strongly in some of the 10 pairs described above; this loyalty forces us to support a given idea in very stereotypical and non-reflective way (Volkan, 2021).

The question of the length and number of workshops is important in existential challenges such as these. The challenges are complex and thus every individual is part of the victim group and perpetrator group to varying degree. The "pandemic" of environmental anxiety can be seen as adequate identification with the victim group when the scale of destructivity becomes visible and tangible. Individuals from various large groups also begin to see the people we love as being part of the victim group. If at the moment it would appear that the workshops (or other interventions) are too short and too few, the retraumatization is threatening individuals from all large groups, and requires psychological work and identification with the reconciliator group.

The part of us that identifies with the perpetrators or passive bystanders feels the wounding effect when the typical defences that have disavowed the destructivity are no longer working as they used to. As the change of workshop intervention creates movement and new communication

between the 25 psychologist/psychotherapists and their social networks, it frustrates those individuals who are disengaged from the fact that they and their loved ones are victims in this destructivity. At the same time, the still too little but constantly growing momentum of workshops and other interventions around the world act as sheltering and containing forces against this wounding, retraumatizing or frustration. Using a metaphor from economics: even though we would still have more social “expenses” than social “income”, the continuing, expanding work with growing prospects keeps the activity worth investing in.

When it comes to violent conflicts, researchers have found that passive bystanders have had similar corruptness in their consciousness as the actual perpetrators. Research indicates that passive bystanders also have similar feelings, attitudes, defences and thoughts as the actual perpetrators – albeit in milder versions. (Passini, 2017; see also Weintrobe, 2020). This was something to keep in mind when PlanWe conducted their intervention on the group in which the majority probably identified with the passive bystander group. A better understanding of the shades of grey (every perpetrator is also a victim and vice versa even when the asymmetry of violence would be evident) helps motivate all parties to a shared co-operation to develop a shared society (Auerbach, 2009).

The group that has done more perpetrating has usually had more power (and so more possibilities to use violence in the conflict). It is an important systemic phenomenon to keep in mind so that during conflict resolution the same group does not get more power again (Rouhana, 2011; Thiessen & Darweish, 2018).

The perpetrators and passive bystanders shield themselves as a defence against guilt, shame and the traumatizing force of their own actions. This shield is composed of various elements: group support, ideologies, inflexible habits (that they have internalized in a learning-by-doing way), the reduction of empathy towards the victims, distancing oneself from the victim groups, giving justification for violent actions by blaming and devaluing the victims and broadening the perpetrating larger than the original victim group. (Bar-Tal, 2000). The inability to see the scale of destructiveness by the perpetrators and passive bystanders disturbs the advancement of conflict resolution process and causes retraumatization for the victims (Rouhana, 2011; Gibson, 2004).

There are several general aspects in these conflict resolution processes. The goal is to share understanding about how natural the escalation of conflict has been for structural-cultural reasons, and how natural the psychological changes are that have happened because of the conflict in the individuals’ emotional life, thinking and acting. (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015).

As the conflicts escalate, the “group identity” inside the individuals takes power over their individual ability to think, and many able individuals are “regressed” into thinking strictly according to their own large groups’ distorted beliefs, and also because the social pressure for conformity inside groups has grown as the conflict escalates. (Volkan, 2020.)

The act of harming has been a group process (the perpetrators have shared empathy to each other while doing the harming); thus, the reconciliation process should also involve group processes. In workshops, common people, the elite, the leaders, the journalists, the researchers and the NGO workers get to face and share understanding to the critical events and the feelings, actions and thoughts that followed it. (Staub, 2006).

This brings us to the hot topic of greenwashing: it means an act of misleading people that certain products or actions by companies or nations would be environmentally sounder than they actually are. Greenwash can be compared in this conflict resolution point of view to a situation where the perpetrator group (because it has had more power) has created a pressure for a “too easy”

resolution. In these “too easy” resolutions the feeling of justice doesn’t appear: the victims cannot start their healing, the perpetrators guilt is not easing, and the circumstances that drove the perpetrators to harm do not change enough – thus, the same can happen again. (Rouhana, 2011; Dixon et al., 2005).

In this section, we have discussed conflict resolution so that the reader can use it as a lens to observe the intervention that took place. Other theories that influenced the intervention are described as they appear in the process of the workshop.

### Some systemic events before the workshop

Inviting participants to the workshop was an important part of the systemic intervention. The facilitators and organisers began by sending personal invitations through their personal networks. They also reached out to small, already existing groups: amongst therapists and psychologists these are usually a group of friends, a class that graduated together as therapists, a group of teachers in an institution or a group of colleagues from the same workplace. If possible, the organisers encouraged these groups to discuss whether they would participate in the workshop together.

Receiving an invitation was anxiety-laden for many psychologists and psychotherapists. The direct quote from the article of Shapiro and Carr (2017, p. 286) on mature citizenship, “Why me? Why do I have to do this?” was repeated almost verbatim from various sources. The inviters tried to keep the conversation going from that starting point in order to get people to really think through why they were having second thoughts or refusing too automatically.

Some got excited, but when they noticed that their everyday small groups did not show similar excitement, some of them became suspicious or reserved and turned the invitation down. Some automatically refused at the beginning, but after a few exchanges of messages, they realized the importance of the subject and signed in. The tempo of the messaging was many times fast and impatient. We also put invitations through general training mailing lists or webpages to therapist communities and some Facebook groups. The reactions to the invitations were similar to the odd or difficult reactions that was one important subject of the workshop itself. We will discuss these reactions in more detail below.

### Some systemic events during the workshop: the beginning

The workshop took place on a Friday and a Saturday in May 2022, and a follow up half-a-day session in early June 2022. Four small groups of 5-10 individuals participated in the workshop. They worked separately, but had the chance of meeting the entire 25-person group in the evenings; there was also an informal cocktail event on the Saturday. Three groups met in person and one met on Zoom. The facilitators had recorded 6 inspirational speeches that were part of the workshop, as well as free discussion in between the inspirational speeches. The advantage of the recordings was that the anxiety that was sometimes quite tangible inside the group meetings did not affect the inspirational speeches. In every group there was a well-prepared facilitator familiar with the theoretical point of views and with a training psychotherapist’s background.

The opening speech was meant to set the frames for the workshop. The speaker (Luhtavaara, 2022a) told that the workshop was strongly influenced by the conflict resolution of violent conflicts. The speaker talked about how important it would be that, in the workshop, the participants would give room for that side of them that is anxious, vulnerable or shaken. At the

same time, the facilitator and participants would together make sure together that “trauma does not capture us” – meaning that the group would not get too stuck in this perspective or in a single detail or difficult reaction. He continued by saying that it would be good if we would give space to those functions of the mind that are classically categorized as ‘right hemisphere functions’: associations, mental images and surprising thoughts. Naturally, facts and logical conclusions are allowed if the participants feel it suits the situation at hand. Finally, the speaker crystallised the purpose of the workshop: the goal is to add understanding of the thoughts, images and psychological phenomena connected to the environmental crisis. This understanding could be of use to researchers who study the climate, the environment and sustainability. Thus, we can see that even though the conflict resolution perspective was the implicit mindset for the facilitators, the outspoken shared goal was more ‘cognitive’.

After this, the facilitators of each group asked the participants for wishes and expectations for the workshop and a brief introduction of themselves. The wishes and expectations of all four groups can be placed within the theoretical framework of “Three dimensions of balance in environmental activity” (Pihkala, 2022; see also Pihkala, 2020a; Pihkala 2020b). These dimensions are: mourning, action and wellbeing. Wellbeing includes distancing oneself every now and then from the immediate involvement of the environmental crisis.

Here we have placed the answers from the participants into Pihkala’s (2022) framework: Some participants wished for a process that would help them overcome discouragement (mourning). Others wished for a better understanding of people’s irrationality (wellbeing, action). Some participants had no expectations for the workshop, and said they just decided to join in an unclear way (mourning). Many named their goal as understanding realistically where the humankind is going, and what the environmental crisis is like in the year 2022 (mourning). Transforming the intolerable into tolerable was mentioned (wellbeing, mourning). Some participants hoped to find a meaningful personal role in environmental action (action).

Pihkala (2022) suggests that an individual is well if he has these three dimensions (wellbeing, mourning and action) in balance. If the individual focuses only on action and wellbeing, the realities do not get updated into knowledge. If the individual focuses only on mourning and action, she has a strong danger of burn out. If the individual focuses only on mourning and wellbeing, humankind will not get existential problems into better control. The beginning of the workshop planted a seed for this balance with the help of multivocality in small groups.

Some systemic events during the workshop: large group identities

The first of the three longer inspirational speeches dealt with large group identities in the way International Dialogue Initiative (Volkan, Fromm & Scholz, 2021) see it. The speaker (Kivikkokangas, 2022) described in down-to-earth language how large group identity is actually internalized social pressure. He described his own large group identities from being a family man to a basketball player to a teacher to a psychotherapist to a Finn to a car owner. A large group shares a certain “psychological DNA”. When we look at it, we can ask: What do we identify with? What are we made to think, to act and to feel?

He described how the large groups that we do not identify with are suitable targets for externalization. We can project those sides of humanity into outgroups that we do not want to face in ourselves. He used Vamik Volkan’s imagery of a large group inside a large tent, with several tents next to each other. How to communicate with neighbouring tents when it comes to environmental issues? How to notice when an individual yields considerable privileges to his or

her own large group which they do not allow members of other large groups. This aspect connects psychosocially to the history of large groups. To avoid the workshop participants from becoming too critical to their own groups, the speaker cited Volkan: "Go out there, enjoy your large group identities!" One cannot give up on large group identities; however, the problems in collaboration between members of different groups can be lessened by realising the social pressures in thinking and acting in a particular way.

This speech evoked various new thoughts on environmental crisis issues among the participants. Oppositions and the phenomenon of communication getting stuck because of large group pressures were dealt with in small groups; this time, however it was done in a way that helped to see reflectively behind the actions of each group. Part of the mourning is realising that large group phenomena are that part of the crisis that is not going away, one participant summarised. Still, we do not have to feel hopeless, at least not in those goals that are deep down beneficial to all parties. There is a possibility of practical compromises. For example: the majority of the individuals in every large group want to take care of their grandchildren's future; furthermore, the majority of most large groups do not want the society to turn into chaos when making changes in the society.

Next, the facilitators showed a video of three intergenerational pairs having a dialogue. All six were psychotherapists, and there were two mother-daughter pairs. In the video, there was a sense of being around a new experience (none of them had talked about environmental issues together before the videotaped dialogue) and of a deep connection and trying to find a contact. The participants saw these dialogues as examples of excellent role models who also provided valid substance thinking on environmental issues by sharing their thoughts in the dialogues.

After this, the groups discussed how to tolerate difficult aspects of interacting with the groups they do not belong to: the annoying, the irritating, the aggression and the conflicts. Both understanding and aggression are agents of systemic change, the participants brought up. The metaphor of "Aunties and ass-kickers" was created by the participants in one group. The groups mourned the mistakes of their own large groups (among these was their generation as a large group). The groups thought about the forms that guilt takes inside large groups. The window of tolerance of guilt was an important subject: when is the individual or large group guilt tolerable enough that hope and reparation are possible? And when is this not the case? In the workshop itself there was a tension between more moderate and more hasty individuals (with group identifications). This tension lasted the duration of the workshop. The participants played with the images and projections around the more moderate and more haste groups.

It became obvious in the discussion with participants that communicative activity that aims at seeing and tolerating the seriousness of the matter is more fruitful than arguing about details. For one group, eating meat is more important than having a full wardrobe and vice versa. For another group, traveling abroad is more important than a cottage in the countryside and a nice car to drive there, and vice versa. The wealthy can lower their carbon footprint without lowering their standard of living; however, these habits cannot be scaled even to involve the majority of people from the Global North, not to mention people from developing countries. One participant concluded: there is a risk of a status battle in which environmentally friendlier habits that are easiest for oneself and one's own groups (family, friends, colleagues) are seen as the most important. Some of these carbon footprint lowering methods become important symbols inside one large group that create false security and irritate those in another large group. All on all, as the reader can see, the discussion within our groups was deep and creative the first day onwards.

Some systemic events during the workshop: odd and difficult reactions

On the second day, the longer inspirational speech was about odd and difficult reactions that occur when a human being is trying to communicate about the environmental crisis to other human beings. The speaker (Luhtavaara, 2022b) tried to motivate the participants into having more and wider communication on environmental issues. He pointed out that the wider the constructive communication in democratic countries is, the better humankind is equipped for preparing future systemic problems.

The speaker underlined that it is precisely the odd and difficult reactions that we do not know how to relate to in conversations. When an odd or difficult reaction appears in a conversation outside the consulting room – particularly if it has to do with the environmental crisis – many individuals do not really know how to continue the conversation. Often a person stops the conversation and thinks that something went wrong. The workshop speaker evaluated that we most likely are afraid of the odd and difficult reactions in ourselves and in others. He then went through a summary of problems that humankind would face in Earth's megasystems.

Next, the speaker introduced a hamburger model of good and bad news. The Good: we might still have time to prepare for many of the worst consequences. The Bad: as time goes by, the standards of "planetary services" (see Ferretto et al., 2022) will drop continuously. The Good: negative correlation is possible: As the standards on "planetary services" and decline of biodiversity are lowered, it is possible that the standards of how we treat each other and the environment can improve, particularly if we can slow the pace of declining 'planetary services'.

The speaker used Adam Phillips' thoughts (2022) to describe how difficult and odd reactions affect the emotional atmosphere. They lure us to seeing change as burdensome, development as threat and giving up as tempting. They make us more timid, more anxious, more vulnerable and more aggressive in protecting ourselves. We feel like we cannot innovate, improvise or surprise ourselves in a good way. Conversely, even a shocking reality can improve us if our mind does not become paralysed. Can we digest the shocking reality, and let the experience develop us instead of falling into a passive victim role? (See Phillips, 2022). Like in psychotherapy, in environmental communication we can make obstacles into instruments for discussion: projection, defences, resistance and childish moments can be instruments. It is actually a part of openness to speak out a distortion or prejudice in a workshop style discussion and then try to reflect on it together.

The speaker then described 15 specific difficult or odd reactions that PlanWe had categorized from the fieldwork prior to workshop. 1) Avoiding the subject or withdrawing from conversation. 2) Downplaying realities. 3) Knowing realities without actually realizing them. 4) Defending oneself socially. 5) Space invading (see Lawrence et al., 1996) / being a know-it-all / mansplaining. 6) Hopelessness. 7) Anxious, tormenting guilt that does not stay inside the window of tolerance. 8) Anxious, pressured hurry (not to be confused with a healthy sense of urgency) 9) Fatalistic fear of catastrophe. 10) Bitterness ("I cannot talk because that would make me want to scream!") 11) Meaninglessness because of dark predictions. 12) Unfiltered "blah blah blah" of self-evident and hackneyed thoughts. 13) Bad intuition in what the individual says or does or who the individual relates with and who the individual does not relate with. 14) Forcing oneself to become a saint. 15) Forcing others to look at the realities.

The speaker suggested how individuals could live as mature and communicatively active citizens with these 15 difficult or odd reactions. First of all, it would be good if individuals could show their own vulnerability in the discussion (this can happen verbally or nonverbally). This is easy because all human beings living in the 2020s have some of these reactions. They cannot be deleted from the discussions. Furthermore, people having these conversations should be kind and supportive towards other participants' vulnerabilities. At the same time, social playfulness should



be an essential part of the conversations. And people should do not give up on ambition in these discussions. Moreover, people should have existential self-reflections of whether they are trying to become mature environmental citizens (see Wood & Kallio, 2019) out of duty, or whether our motivation is true development as a human being.

The speaker also brought up how a minority can change the mindset of the majority. The minority first assures some part of the group that accepts the new mindset privately. The assured rarely are willing to express this change in public. If these invisible changes happen more and more, it might still seem like the old mindset's hegemony is in place, even though privately the tables are turning. Brave acts from individuals can reveal how the mindset is changing. (Torry, 2016.)

Then it was time for conversation in small groups. Some brought up the experience of minority stress when being alone representing the new mindset. Participants brought up that it also brings a disturbing crack to the majority's consensus. Various odd or difficult reactions were thought-provoking, and groups digested them with their own experiences.

Here we categorize some of these moments in the workshop: Sometimes it was felt that power is totally somewhere else (helplessness). Sometimes it was felt that one cannot communicate without a PhD in Environmental Studies (being a saint). Sometimes it was felt that participating in the workshop is equal to not doing anything efficient (pressured hurry; bad intuition). Sometimes a small group got stuck into believing there is nothing one can do except change one's personal carbon footprint (avoiding the subject). So the communication in the workshop got stuck momentarily to odd and difficult reactions, and then the communication was released from them and the moment was reflected upon.

Projections were drawn out, and the slight moments of timidness or aggression were tolerated and worked through. The conversation in all four groups was innovative and open. A positive working-group mentality was kept in all four groups during the workshop. Sometimes there was a lack of space for the "right hemisphere mental images". Nevertheless, the conversation was engaged, respectful, considerate and integrating. Obstacles turned into instruments in a way that no obstacle kept its potential delusional omnipotent status. The distortions that some participants had of animal lovers or businesspeople or Extinction Rebellion or Formula One fans were brought into discussion and neutralized.

Some systemic events during the workshop: a mammal's primary affective needs

The last long inspirational speech (Nissinen, 2022) discussed the ideas of Jaak Panksepp (Panksepp & Biven 2012) and Mark Solms (2019), but in a down-to-earth language. The speaker described that there are seven primary affective need systems in every individual mammal. Their function is to help the mammal sense if its affective needs are being met or not. And if they are met, they help sensing in what intensity they are met. Primary affective needs should be separated from physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, sleep or physical warmth. Primary affective needs should also be separated from highly complex emotions such as nostalgia or guilt, even though the primary affective needs stir up a whole range of emotions.

1 SEEKING (regular emotions: excitement or becoming interested) is a system that gets activated and gives satisfaction when a mammal directs itself towards aspects of the world that it has not yet comprehended or experienced. This system gets connected to other six systems, and this system gets more space when all other systems have calmed down. In psychosis, this system is in

overdrive and in depression this system might have difficulties in activating, so that meaningfulness is lost and closed down.

2 PLAY (regular emotion: joy) is a system that gets activated and gives satisfaction from the pleasure of company and one's place in the herd. It activates with two mammals, but gets more active when there are more mammals involved. It makes a mammal consider how it fulfils its own affective needs and other aspirations considering others as well. It makes a mammal evaluate its status. Playing, negotiating and the ability to tolerate wins and losses are essential to this system.

3 PANIC/GRIEF (regular emotions: loneliness and sadness) is a system that gets activated and gives satisfaction from mending the situation where a mammal has not been taken care of or not being attached. But when these lacks are noticed, the SEEKING system gets deactivated, and the individual often experiences complex emotions of depression and meaninglessness.

4 RAGE (regular emotions: hate and anger) is a system that gets activated and gives satisfaction when a mammal gets to fix a situation where it has not received what it aimed to get, or it had to defend itself. The imbalance in the system PANIC/GRIEF can shut down the system RAGE: anger is sacrificed to have an attachment and does not lose an important other or get a mental breakdown. Conversely, system RAGE can turn inside so that the mammal feels of lower value, self-destructiveness, guilt or bad conscience.

5 FEAR (regular emotion: anxiety) is a system that gets activated and gives satisfaction when there is a concrete physical threat, but in a more complex human brain this system might get activated in paranoia: dangerous system RAGE in oneself is projected into others and they are then seen more dangerous than they really are.

6 CARE (regular emotion: tenderness) is a system that gets activated and gives satisfaction when the mammal is able to help smaller ones or other mammals in need. This activates more sufficiently if the mammal has received caretaking in its life. It can also be a means in a complex human mind to get care by overcaring others.

7 LUST (regular emotion: lust) is a system that gets activated and gives satisfaction on full blast only after puberty in humans. If system PLAY is not balanced, forcing, humiliation or redrawing disturb this system which in most times is dependent on cooperation (except e.g. masturbation).

After representing the seven systems, the speaker stimulated the participants of the workshop with questions. If our culture were the patient: a) What primary affective system problems does the culture suffer from? b) What culture lures us to do (with false promises) to solve the problem of unmet affective needs? c) How does the problem become tangible in the distorted images of one self and others - and in the cultural history? d) what defences and structures does the culture have so that the problem does not have to be faced and actually try to get seven systems into balance?

Many interesting answers came up in the discussion with workshop participants. Answers to a): CARE is the system that seems to get ignored. When one faces shocking realities, PANIC/GRIEF and FEAR are in danger of overstimulating, and SEEKING does not work any more. The demands for efficacy in everyday life makes people neglect their primary affective needs, as if people of the Global North were wild animals locked up in too small and unnatural spaces, with too few possibilities to play with other individuals from our species.

The "too small zoo" -treatment makes people angry (RAGE) but there is not any satisfactory route to channel this action: should people sacrifice anger for the attachment from our own large group or should people attack for not getting what they want? In the overly competitive business culture

play suffers in seriousness. People are not allowed to be animals because people have to be money making machines. Everyone is afraid (FEAR & PANIC/GRIEF) of losing their source of livelihood (because of lack of safety nets). And the more central the role the pursuit of financial benefit is in one's life, the more threatening the social environment is (RAGE, PLAY): losing one's reputation is fateful for one's status, one's job is not safe, and if the management of possessions is connected to the investment world, the size of possessions (or means to get it) can enlarge and reduce dramatically in the blink of an eye (FEAR). There is too much loneliness in the Global North nowadays (PANIC/GRIEF). People today feel that they cannot participate in democratic process effectively (PLAY).

Participants' answers to question b): The demand for success is how culture tries falsely to solve these problems in the seven systems. Today's culture drives people to stay silent, passive and uncommunicative if one has any environmental sins (perfectionism). Culture drives the scarcity of rules and regulations with a promise: "More freedom for your emotional needs", even though the anarchy created by this scarcity prevents people from actually fulfilling their primary affective needs.

Participants' answers to questions c) and d): The unsatisfactory side of the culture and the fear of losing status are not properly realised. Fake social performance of self-satisfaction covers these realities. There is complicated mourning that people defend against with ruthless consumption. Untouched perpetrator's guilt hardens individuals and groups. We see an escapist drive for entertainment. A specialisation delusion is created where people believe we actually would have enough people who get a salary for solving the environmental crisis. Our culture also gives us permission to stay passive: "I don't have to think or participate in solving common problems - it is enough that I pay taxes, do work that increases the GDP and vote." Some groups also talked about performing and not having time. Not having time is part of culture's providing shield: when one is engaged in being in a hurry, one can feel safe. This creates magical safety when a realistic safety could be created by ending the hurry in "the business and life as usual" and making time for three things: mourning, wellbeing – and the activities of a mature citizen!

Some systemic events during the workshop: life in the future

At the end, the four small groups talked both separately and together about the future. What would happen if we would truly consider a combination of rules and regulations (in logistics, packing, saving environment, food production, world economy, circular economy, caring for vulnerable humans)? We could consider what we would be willing to have if it would help get the environmental crisis in better control. Politicians need support for making regulations possible. It is vital to advance the everyday discussion of why regulation is needed.

Could workshop activity that takes into consideration the seven primary affective needs start "spreading like the Spanish slug", one participant pondered, when another told about picking the members of this foreign species from her back yard. Can one feel healthy pride when one lets go of the compulsive need of "fairness" towards oneself for greater good: "I don't mind if the sweets are not evenly distributed." Everyone should have the ability to be both the agent of change and the object to be influenced. We need more Mary Poppinses who come to group situations with a pleasant surprise - and lure people away from being just money or career making machines.

Furthermore, could we learn to enjoy the need that every large group has to enjoy their own identities. What if we would learn to do "birdwatching" of large groups enjoying their identities: we could have the same excitement as a birdwatcher finding new bird species.

We should work together with the doubt (as in psychotherapy): a) that there would be nothing one could do that would matter; and b) that all activities would be useless because the destruction is inevitable. Let us give all people experiences of being heard, appreciated and met. Let us find abilities to free ourselves from some social pressures. How could we get those who are 1-2 steps away from our own social network ("A friend of a friend") but who have 5% to 10% more power than we have into constructive environmental communication? These were the final thoughts in the workshop by the participants.

Some systemic changes after the workshop

After the actual workshop in May-June 2022 we have had one unofficial continuation meeting with 12 participants. 6 of the participants told us that they have already been fully engaged in environmental action, and came to the workshop just to get more tools. 5 participants said that they would attend to the second follow up meeting even though they missed the first. A professional systemic visualist has begun to draw a systemic picture from the ideas created in the workshop. The workshop participants can join and develop this systemic picture. As a result of the workshop, PlanWe has received invitations for training, representing and publishing.

The organisers made the mistake of choosing the easiest way, and asked only psychoanalytic psychotherapists to make the intergenerational videos. For perhaps that reason, the majority of the participants in the workshop came from that large group and only a minority were psychologists or psychotherapists with another mindset (e.g. cognitive). However, because Finland is a small country, the substantial number of psychoanalytic psychotherapists made it possible that a few Finnish psychoanalytic psychotherapy foundations have included parts of the workshop in their 2022-2023 training schedule.

An international contact of ours sent us information of the "Call for Papers" for this journal. However, when it comes to systemic change, eventually one never knows how the change starts radiating outwards. Have the participants told their groups about the good experiences they had in the workshop? Are those who declined the invitation to participate to the workshop continued to think about the subject and perhaps gotten to know the subject better via different routes? Is there a crack on the silo of problematic passivity in the society of Finnish psychologists and psychotherapists? Playfully one could say that systemic thinking and wishful thinking are sometimes difficult to separate from one another. However, it is more motivating to write papers, organise workshops, send emails and have discussions if one thinks that these may lead to unpredictable, perhaps invisible, constructive systemic changes.

Research indicates that Finnish people are relatively skilled in systemic thinking (Ratinen & Linnanen, 2022). There is lot of work still to be done that we could get constructive systemic thinking and systemic acting spreading in Finland and the rest of the world. We started this article by describing how the conflict resolution method was developed in case-based work in e.g. Rwanda and Northern Ireland. Another important step for the sake of problematic large group phenomena would be to create a workshop where sessions from live meetings with same nationalities would be combined with sessions on Zoom with an international small group in the same two-and-a-half-day workshop.

This way, we could have workshop with people meeting in person in Rome, in Kigali, in Berlin, in Belfast, in London, in Nicosia/Lefkosia, in New York, in Tangier, in Kolkata, in Tallinn and in Rio de Janeiro etc... For some of the time, the small groups would take place physically, in the participants' mother tongue, and for the rest of the time internationally online. There would be two

small group processes advancing side by side. Perhaps the publishing of this article can make constructive systemic changes so that this sort of workshop could be possible.

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