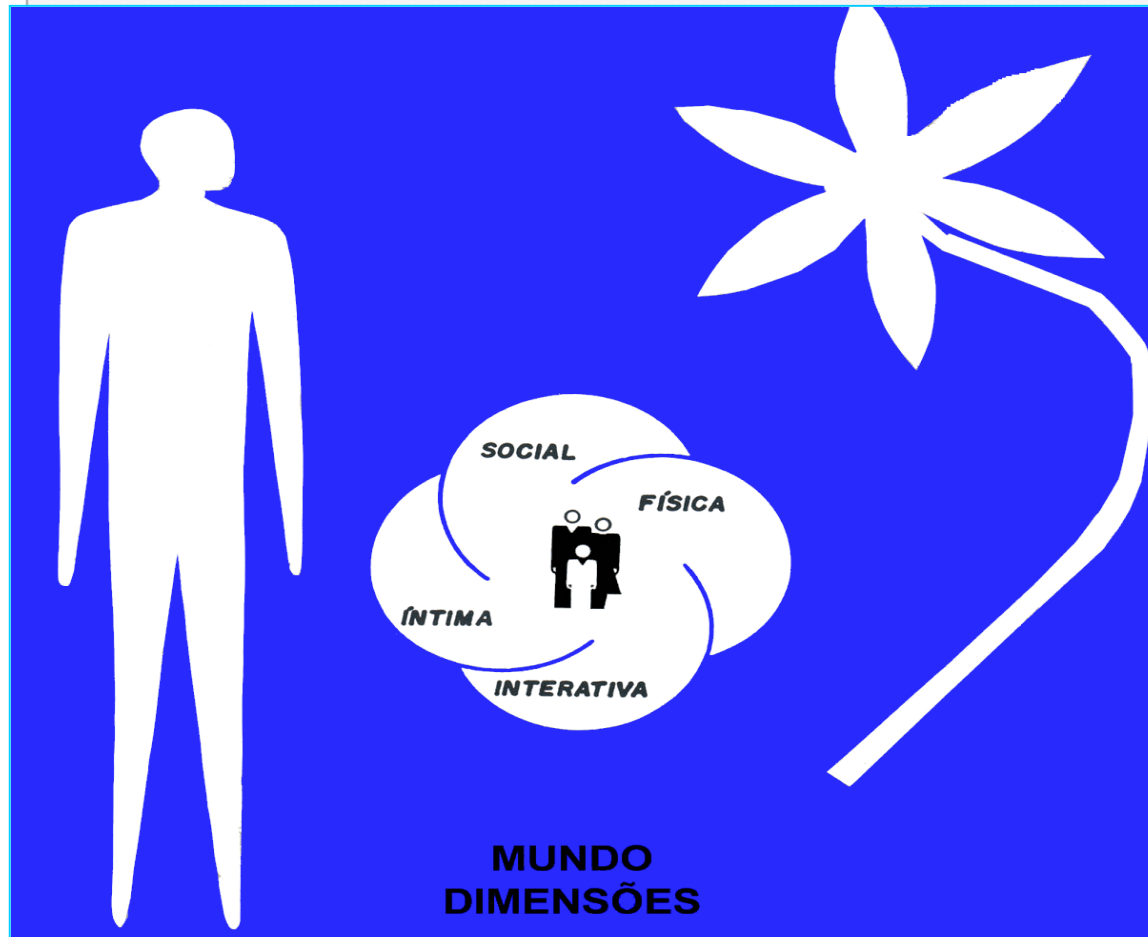


Reframing Relationships Between Humans and the Earth: An Ecosystem Approach



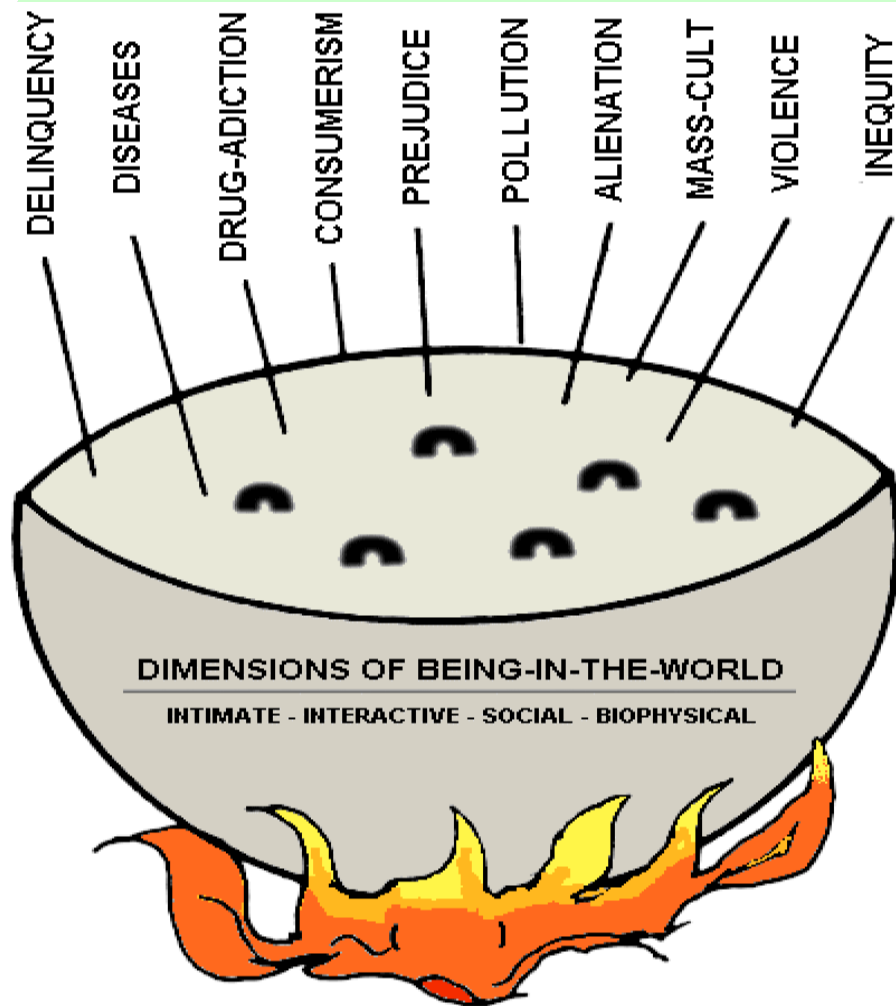
André F. Pilon

University of São
Paulo

Academy of
Science, Health &
Ecology

UNCCD / SPI
Committee
Member

The Bubbles or the Boiling Pot? Dealing with the Real Problems

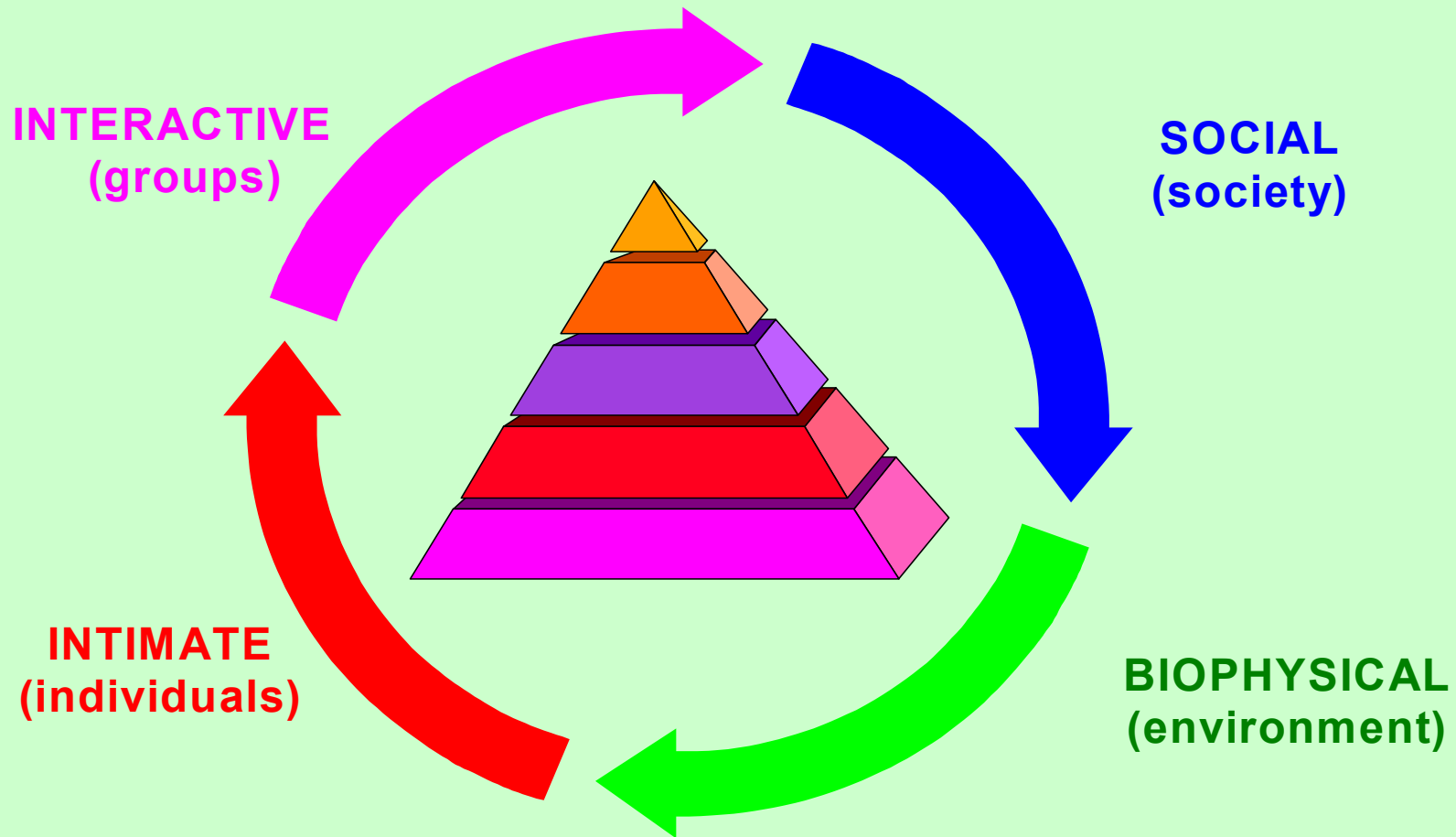


The problems are not in the surface's 'bubbles' (object of market-place, mass-media headlines or academic formats), but arise deep inside the boiling pot, object of the entanglement of environmental, cultural, political, economic and social counteractions.

Reframing Relationships Between Humans and the Earth

- How could recover of Earth (regeneration, retrieval) uphold the recover of humans?
- How could recover of humans (regeneration, retrieval) uphold the recover of Earth?
- How to engage people as political, economic and social actors to trigger change?
- How to preserve biodiversity, biomes and land to live better in a better world?

Triggering the Events in the Four Dimensions of Being in the World



The Four Dimensions' Interplay in the Fabric of the Events

Bulding a Cathedral
Going to the Moon / A Soccer Game

Intimate: Subjectivity
+
Interactive: Relationships
+
Social: Institutions
+
Biophysical: Environment
Technologies



Dimensions' Interplay in Poor Livelihoods Conditions

INTIMATE
Lack of
Resilience
+
INTERACTIVE
Group
Marginalization
+
SOCIAL
Cultural
Vulnerabilities
+
-BIOPHYSICAL
Unhealthy
Environments



Combining the Four Dimensions (Deficits / Assets / Goals / Outputs)

- To *elicit* the events (deficits/assets);
- To *cope* with the consequences (desired/undesired);
- To *uphold* the changes (potential outputs).
 - Intimate: motives, values, capabilities
 - Interactive: relationships, allegiances
 - Social: political, economic, cultural
 - Biophysical: natural/built environments

Aspects to Consider when Dealing with Lock-ins and Barriers to Change

- Prevailing paradigms of growth, power, wealth, work and freedom embedded into the social, economic, technological, political, cultural and educational systems.
- Institutional capacity, judicial neutrality, informational transparency and social spaces for civic engagement.
- Equilibrium, balance standing between the different dimensions of being in the world.

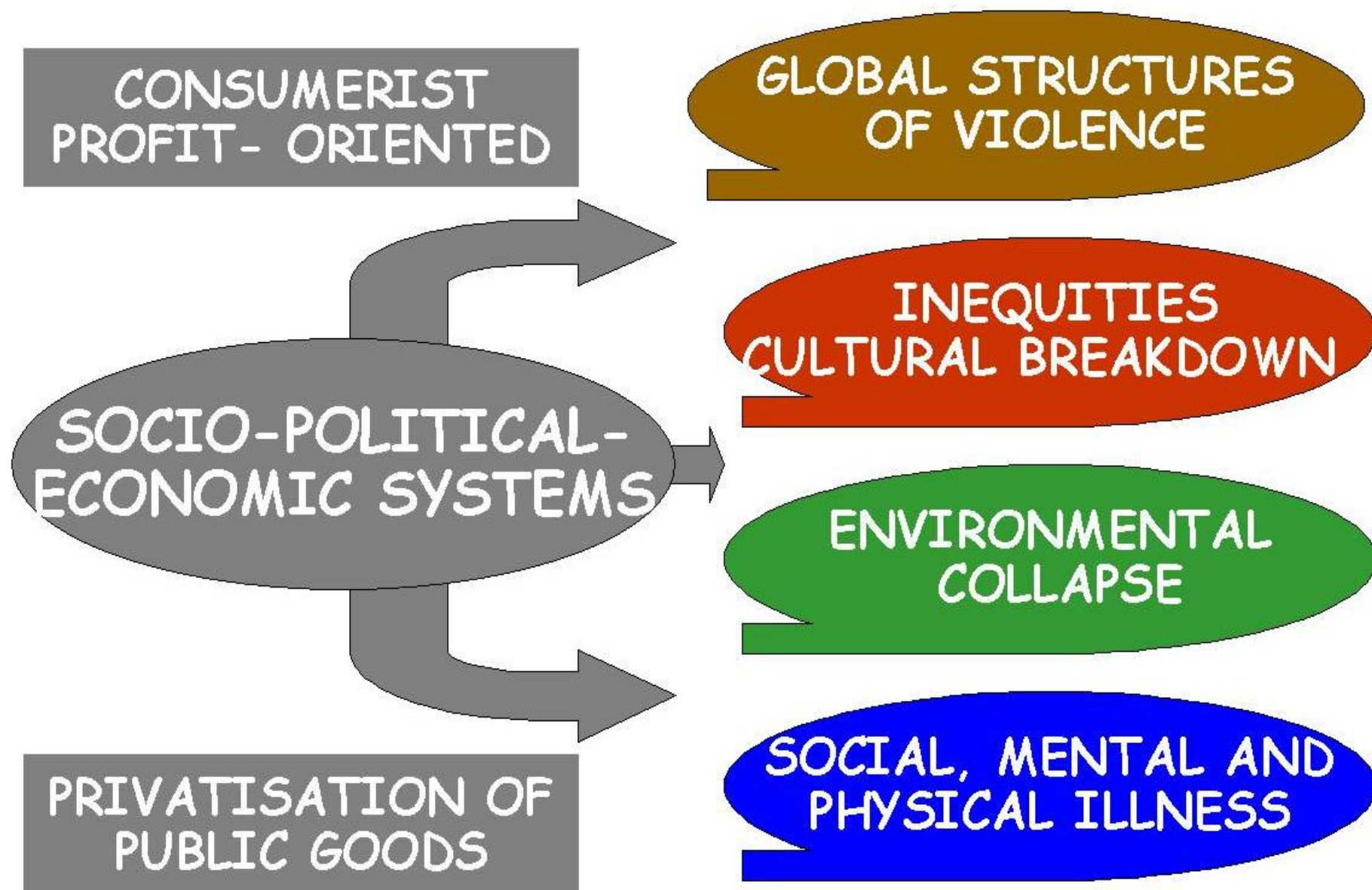
Effects of Technologies and Social Institutions on Quality of Life

- "To build a sustainable society we need to redesign technologies and social institutions to bridge the gap between human design and the sustainable systems of nature".

UNESCO-EOLSS Joint Committee Warning

- "Three to five percent of elites at the top of influence (military, economic, political, educational and cultural in the media, arts, entertainment, would be enough to shift the mindset of the larger population".

Collins and Makowsky



THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

SPOLIATIVE
NON-ECOSYSTEMIC
DEVELOPMENT
POLICIES

MEGACITIES
AGROBUSINESS
DEFORESTATION
POLLUTION

GOVERNMENTS
COMPLIANCE TO
BIG BUSINESS
CORPORATIONS

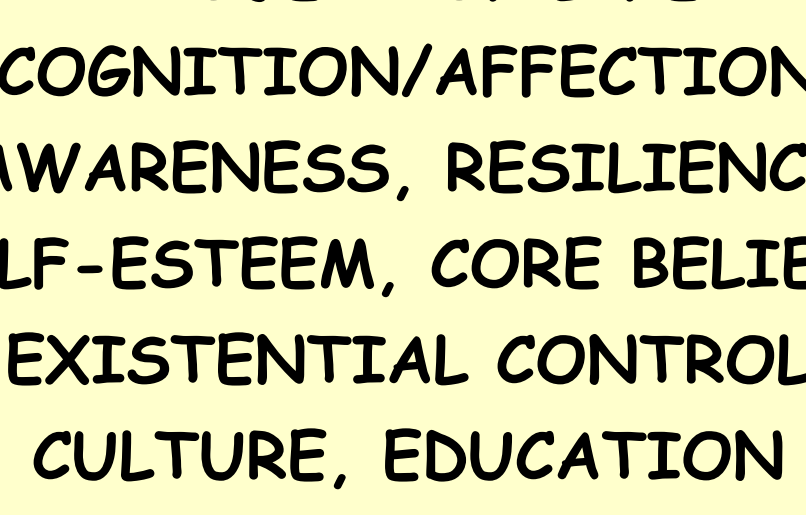
CORRUPTION
CRIMINALITY
CULTURAL DECAY
CONSUMERISM

"Development" and "Progress" on Man-Environment Relationships



"Primitive" Versus "Civilised" Environmental Impacts

Intimate Dimension

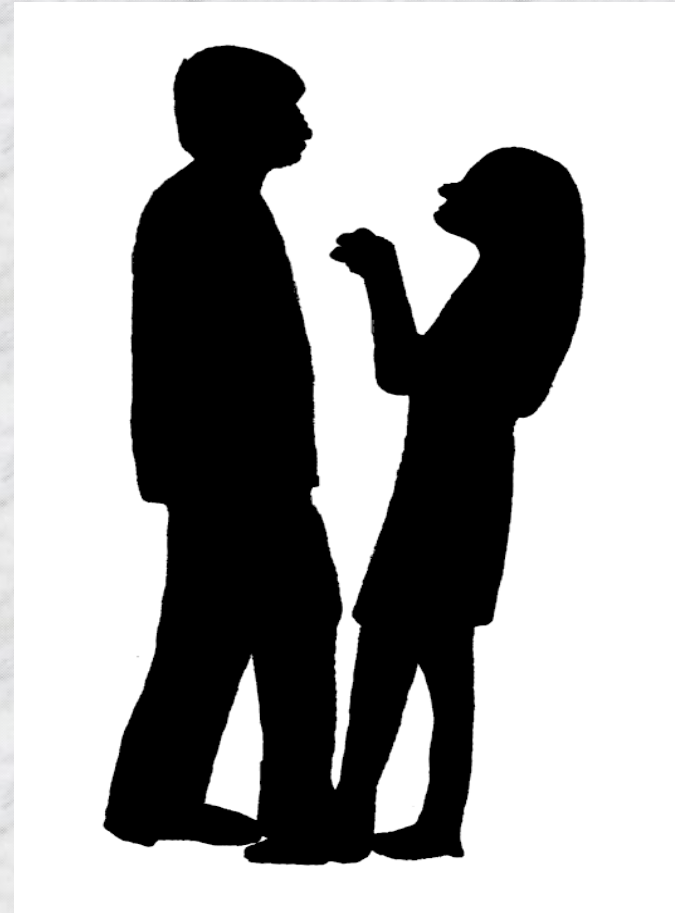
A large yellow circle with a black outline, centered on a light gray background with a subtle grid pattern. Inside the circle, a list of psychological factors is written in bold, black, uppercase letters, stacked vertically. The factors are: PROJECT OF LIFE, COGNITION/AFFECTION, AWARENESS, RESILIENCE, SELF-ESTEEM, CORE BELIEFS, EXISTENTIAL CONTROL, CULTURE, EDUCATION, and COPING ABILITIES.

PROJECT OF LIFE
COGNITION/AFFECTION
AWARENESS, RESILIENCE
SELF-ESTEEM, CORE BELIEFS
EXISTENTIAL CONTROL
CULTURE, EDUCATION
COPING ABILITIES



Interactive Dimension

**AFFILIATIONS
BINDINGS AND GRIDS
GROUPS, PEERS, NETWORKS
SHARED VALUES, BELIEFS
FAMILY, FRIENDSHIPS
ASSOCIATIONS
COMMUNITIES**



Social Dimension

**LAW
INSTITUTIONS
PUBLIC POLICIES
CULTURAL PRODUCTS
PUBLIC PLACES, HEALTH,
EDUCATION, SECURITY,
WORK, LEISURE
MASS-MEDIA**



Biophysical Dimension

LAND,
WATER, AIR
LIVING ORGANISMS
MATTER AND ENERGY
BIOLOGICAL ENDOWMENT
LANDSCAPES, ARTEFACTS,
NATURAL AND BUILT
ENVIRONMENTS
TERRITORIES



Dealing with Problems in the Ecosystemic Approach

- Problems are assessed inside the “boiling pot”, and not reduced to the “bubbles” or fragmented representations of reality,
- Problems are defined in view of the dynamic configurations intertwining the four dimensions of being-in-the-world.
- Dimensions are analysed as mutual donors and recipients, in view of their connections or ruptures along space and time.
- The singularity (identity) of each dimension and the their mutual support (reciprocity) are concurrent and complementary aspects.

A Four-Dimensional Ecosystemic Framework for Planning and Evaluation

	INTIMATE	INTERACTIVE	SOCIAL	BIOPHYSICAL
DIAGNOSIS OF THE EVENTS	SUBJECTS' COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE ACTUAL STATUS	GROUPS ' AND COMMUNITIES' DYNAMICS AND COHESION	PUBLIC POLICIES LAW ENACTMENT CITIZENSHIP PARTICIPATION	NATURAL AND MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENTS BEINGS, THINGS
ELICITING NEW EVENTS	DEVELOPMENT OF SUBJECTS' EXISTENTIAL SELF-CONTROL	DEVELOPMENT OF GROUPS AND PRO-ACTIVE COMMUNITIES	DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND CITIZENSHIP	PROMOTION OF NATURAL AND MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENTS
IMPACT ON EACH DIMENSION	ENHANCEMENT OF SUBJECTS' WELL-BEING	ENHANCEMENT OF GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES	ENHANCEMENT OF POLICIES AND CITIZENSHIP	ENHANCEMENT OF OVERALL ENVIRONMENT

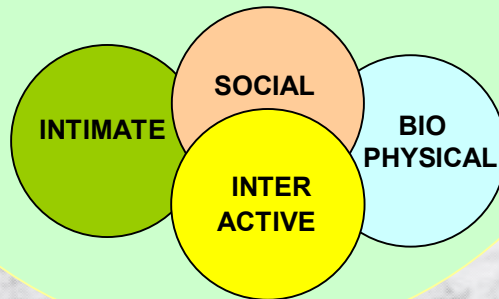
Role of the Four Dimensions in Health-Related Problems

Health Problems	Intimate <i>Subjective Well-Being</i>	Interactive <i>Group Dynamics</i>	Social <i>Collective Well-Fare</i>	Biophysica <i>Milieu and Beings</i>
<i>Exogenous Depression</i>	Broken Project of Life	Lack of Social Bonds	Cultural Economic Difficulties	Built and Natural Hazards
<i>Sexually Transmitted Diseases</i>	Education Existential Control	Fidelity or Defiance (Boasting)	Public Policies Mass-Media	Physical Protection (Condoms)
<i>Adolescent Pregnancy</i>	Self-Esteem Maturity	Family Cohesion Companio n	Education Schooling Exclusion	Spaces Settlement Facilities
<i>Drug-Addiction Violence</i>	Emotional Balance Resiliency	Group Values and Pacts	Inclusion Cultural Models	Dwellings and Settlement

Equilibrium Versus Disruption in two Models of Culture

ECOSYSTEMIC

Dimensions are
Intertwined



NON-ECOSYSTEMIC

Dimensions
Drift Apart

INTIMATE SOCIAL
DISRUPTION
BIOPHYSICAL INTERACTIVE

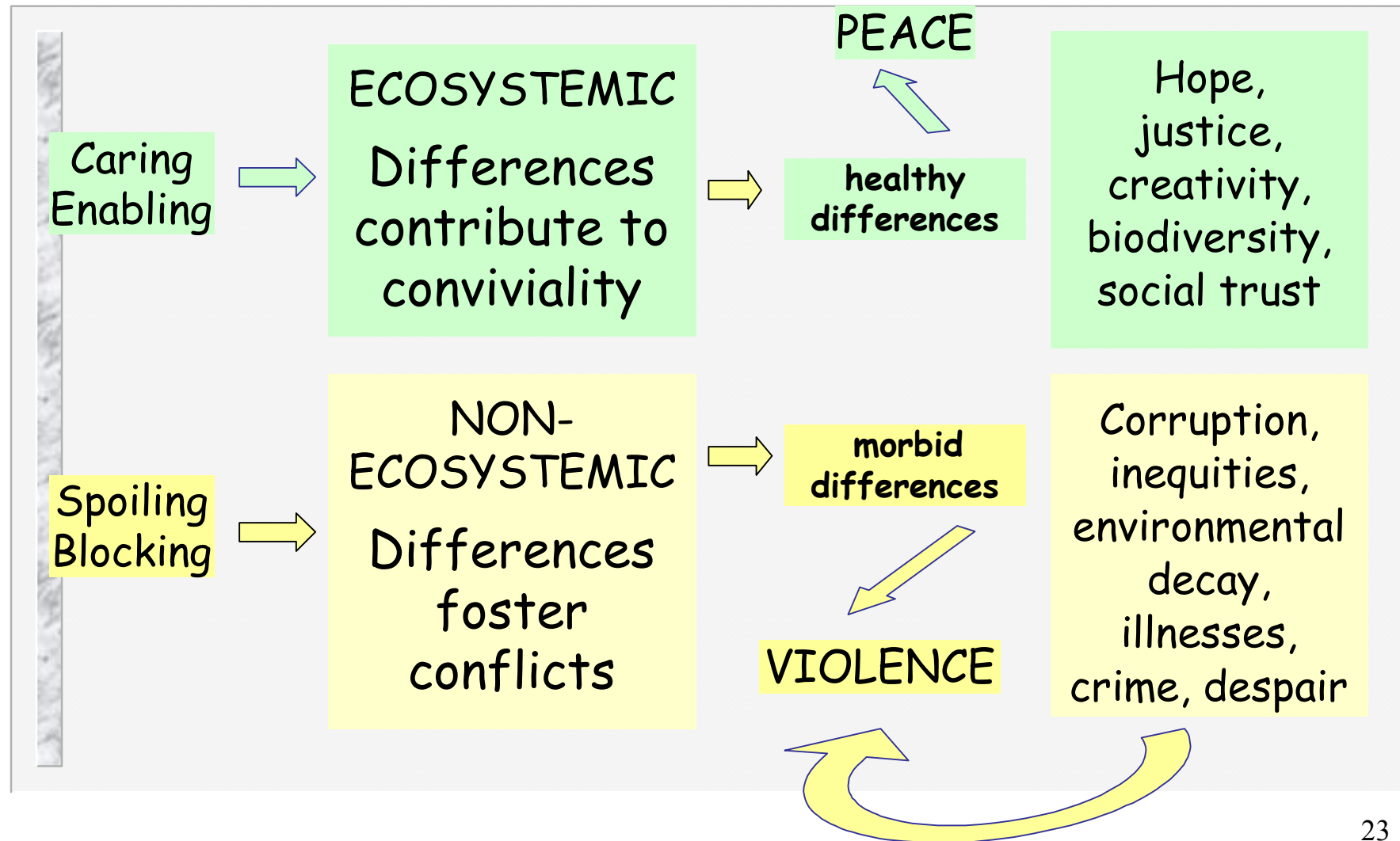
Dimensions' Reciprocity in the Ecosystemic Model of Culture

	Dimensions as Donors			
Recipient Dimension	<i>INTIMATE</i>	<i>INTER- ACTIVE</i>	<i>SOCIAL</i>	<i>BIO- PHYSICAL</i>
<i>INTIMATE</i>	<small>Creativeness</small> creativity	<small>Support</small> support	<small>Services:</small> services	<small>Vitality</small> vitality
<i>INTER- ACTIVE</i>	altruism	team- work	alliances	<small>Niches</small> niches
<i>SOCIAL</i>	citizen- ship	partner- ships	<small>Organisation</small> equity	<small>Spaces</small> spaces
<i>BIO- PHYSICAL</i>	<small>Care:</small> care	<small>Preservation</small> defence	sustain- ability	<small>Equilibrium</small> balance

Dimensions' Disruptions in the Non-Ecosystemic Model of Culture

	Dimensions as Inflictors			
Suffering Dimension	<i>INTIMATE</i>	<i>INTER-ACTIVE</i>	<i>SOCIAL</i>	<i>BIO-PHYSICAL</i>
<i>INTIMATE</i>	<small>Creativeness</small> solipsism	<small>Support</small> subjection	<small>Services:</small> neglect	<small>Vitality</small> harm
<i>INTER-ACTIVE</i>	egotism	fanaticism	<small>Diversity:</small> co-opting	<small>Niches</small> dispersal
<i>SOCIAL</i>	abuse	corporatism	<small>Organisation</small> tyranny	<small>Spaces</small> extinction
<i>BIO-PHYSICAL</i>	<small>Care:</small> injury	<small>Preservation</small> damage	spoliation	un- balance

Violence and Peace in two Models of Culture



Working with the Socio-Cultural Learning Niches

- Niches are “new structures”, protective spaces for “path breaking innovations”, having three functions in the transition processes: “shielding, nurturing and empowering” (Smith and Raven).
- A small core of agents emerges within the system as the incumbent for innovation, emergent structures form around niches for their development and the emergence of niche-regimes” (Frantzeskaki and Loorbach).

Enabling Awareness in the Socio-Cultural Learning Niches

- By participatory, heuristic-hermeneutic processes, alternative configurations for being-in-the-world are elicited as people reflect about their own reality (internal/external) and develop new capabilities to understand and influence the course of the events.

Creating Sustainable Changes in the Socio-Cultural Learning Niches



The forms of being in the world can be unveiled by intermediary objects, things, images that catch the eyes.

Subject-object relations
are disclosed, world
visions are unveiled and
shared.

Intimate Dimension Unveiling Subject-Object Relationships

- Current forms of being-in-the-world, world visions, epistemic positions, can be unveiled by presentation of intermediary objects.
- Participants can write in non-identified pieces of paper whatever comes to their minds (subsequently exchanged within the group).

Interactive Dimension

Sharing Perceptions in the Group

- The participants share the content of the written statements (distributed out of sort), by reading them aloud.
- The process goes beyond individual initial experience, it is enriched by the participants different perceptions, now aware of what others pointed out.

Social Dimension

Creating New Forms of Being-in-the-World

- Ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic forms of being-in-the-world are unveiled.
- Economical, political, cultural, social and environmental consequences are analysed.
- Paradigms of work, power, wealth, growth and freedom are confronted in view of the environment and the state of the world.

Biophysical Dimension

Reassessment of Concepts and Actions

- The natural and built environment is perceived as the result of the entanglement of all dimensions of being in the world.
- Vital processes and needs, relationships between all forms of life, consequences of humans activities and life experiences are examined and evaluated.

Epistemic, Thematic and Pragmatic Analysis of the Participants' Outputs

- Outputs are analyzed from an *epistemic* (subject-object relationships), a *thematic* (explicit content) and a *pragmatic* (strategies) standpoint.
- *Epistemic* analysis ("how") refers to the structure of thought; *thematic* analysis ("what") to the emphasis and inclusiveness of the dimensions of being in the world; *pragmatic* analysis (actions) to the embedded outputs.

Epistemic Analysis

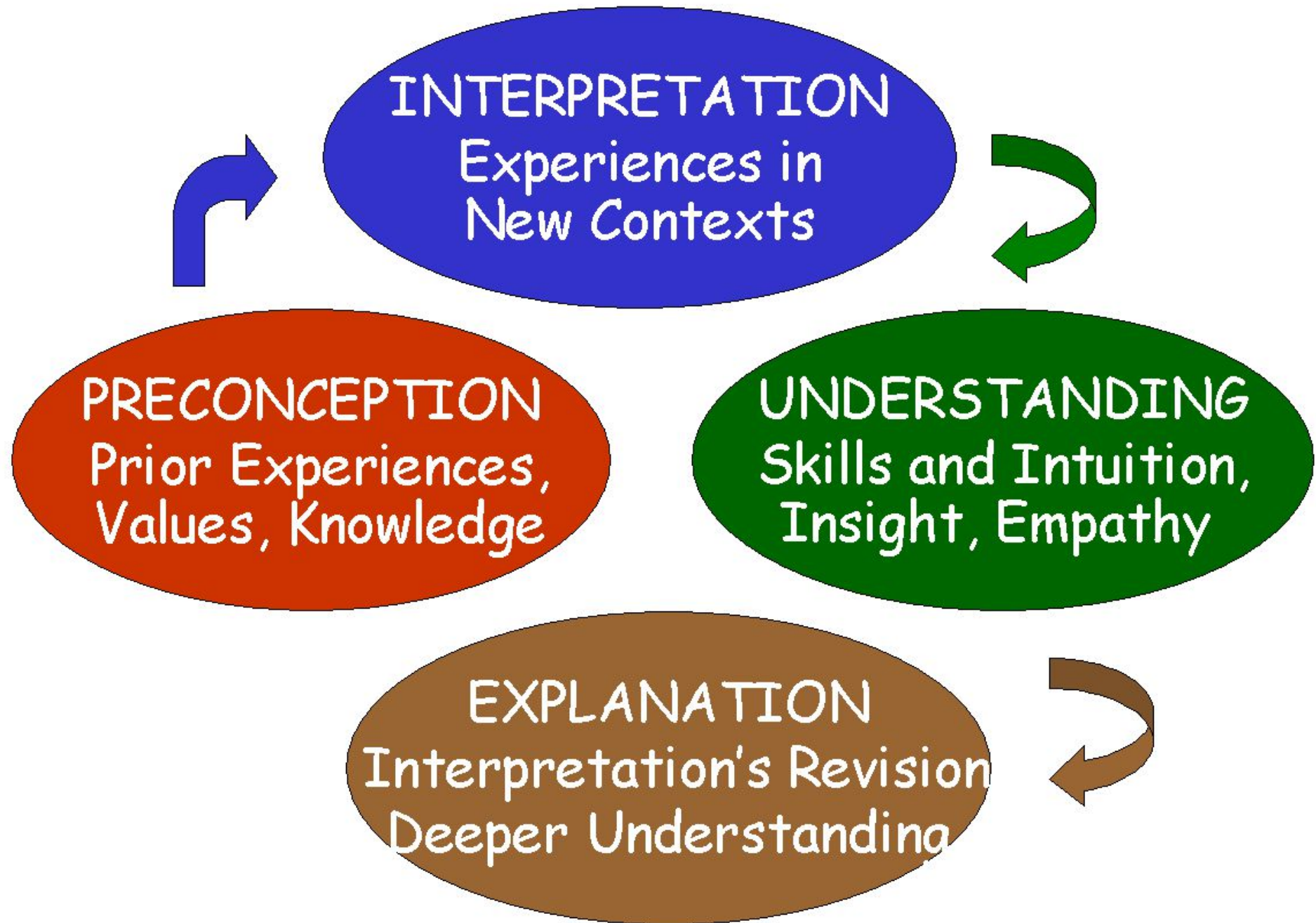
Subject-Object Relationships

- *Common-sense*: Adherence to established, stereotyped preconceptions.
- *Academic*: reduction to logical categories, describing to achieve closure.
- *Dependency*: Trust on exterior authority to qualify own experience.
- *Resistance*: Refusal to being involved, failure to see meaning in the experience.
- *Dogmatism*: Compliance to fixed paradigms for being-in-the-world.
- *Appropriation*: alteration of cognitive, affective and conative processes.

Thematic Analysis

Contents in the Four Dimensions

- ▶ *Intimate* Description of the experience in view of own expectations and desires.
- ▶ *Interactive* Description of the experience in view of the relationships with other people.
- ▶ *Social* Description of the experience in view of political-economical-social aspects.
- ▶ *Biophysical* Description of the experience in view of the natural and built environments.



Selected Statements in a Socio-Cultural Learning Niche

- 1) "Three black seeds, three elastically connected bottle caps, three white river stones and a heart shaped, dried, open seed pot lay in a white rectangular open top plastic container; remains of living plants, time worn rocks and man-made metal objects represent earth materials"
- 2) "Box having within: 3 bottle caps tied up by an elastic string (it may suggest interaction, integration, inter-personal communication, horizontality); a seashell, 3 pink stones (it may suggest compartment, non integration between parts); a ribbon of paper with the inscription: how many parts have a grain? (it may suggest the type of information discussed, interaction)."
- 3) "I wonder what type of music these items make; was/is the heart-shaped thing good to eat?; what are the little "black beans"? , how were the holes drilled in the pop tops?; what kind of soda are the 2 unfamiliar?"

The Ecosystemic Approach: Conclusions and Policy Lessons

- ☐ Development of public policies, community projects, research and teaching programmes must combine all the dimensions of the world.
- ☐ Individuals, groups, society, natural and built environments should be considered in view of their singularity and reciprocity.
- ☐ Quality of life, physical, social and mental well-being, natural and built environments, are by-products of ecosystemic models of culture.
- ☐ Current concepts of power, growth, wealth, work and freedom must be changed to face the problems of difficult settlement in the world.

Selected Publications

Pilon, A. F., Returning Earth to Mankind and Mankind to Earth: An Ecosystemic Approach to Advocacy, Public Policies, Research and Teaching Programmes: <https://week.openrecognition.org/2018/09/27/returning-earth-to-mankind-and-mankind-to-earth-an-ecosystemic-approach-to-advocacy-public-policies-research-and-teaching-programmes/>

PILON, A. F., Is your own house on fire? Research Gate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335797149_Is_your_own_house_on_fire

PILON, A. F., Governance, Science-Policy Interfaces, Societal Organisation and the Transition to an Ecosystemic Model of Culture, Univ. Lib. of Munich, MPRA Paper 85783, 2018: https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/85783/1/MPRA_paper_85783.pdf

The author welcomes contributions to develop new approaches to environmental problems, quality of life and the state of the world.

How to face blockages and barriers and develop 'loci of hope' for achieving an equitable future?

Thank you.



André F. Pilon
E-mail:
gaiarine@usp.br