

What social contract for a finite world?

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Planetary boundaries and the urgency of the environmental crisis mean that we must mobilize all possible levers of action to transform our relationship with natural resources and to adapt. The sufficiency of our lifestyles and technical systems that make them possible, must be included in this transformation. The challenge is immense because the issue requires immediate action in several ways and at different levels, to move towards greater sufficiency in a society that is built on the promise of material and energy abundance. Many studies have explored the social conditions compatible with these boundaries, proposing visions of the future and social changes that can move us towards this sufficiency.

In the context of ecological urgency, however, there is a risk of proposing to modify only one aspect of our social functioning—the individual reduction of consumption—without clearly calling for a renegotiation of other factors (political rights, the sharing of effort and value, organization of work, etc.). There is also a risk of overemphasizing an approach based on individual responsibility to the detriment of a collective renegotiation of the common frameworks that organize our societies. Furthermore, these social functions are themselves in crisis without even raising the issue of sufficiency. This crisis of the post-war social contract, but also of the liberal reforms introduced since the 1980s, is linked to the phenomena of mistrust, inequality and economic insecurity, a striking illustration of which was provided by the Yellow Vests protests in France. Thus, without proposals for broader objectives for redefining social progress, efforts to convince people to move towards greater sufficiency might remain vain, or create social and political conflicts delaying us on the path to transition.

At a time when sufficiency has come to the forefront of the political agenda in connection with the energy crisis, and in addition to the thoughts in a recent blog post ([IDDRI, 2022](#)), this *Issue Brief* proposes to mobilize the social contract notion to better understand the current crises in our societies, and the counterparts that must be mobilized for a new prosperity, starting from today's society and the findings of human and social sciences.

KEY MESSAGES

The different visions of a desirable future have led to numerous proposals for making lifestyle sufficiency compatible with well-being, implicitly and partially defining new social contracts (e.g. carbon quotas) based on ecological limits.

These supply-side approaches to social change should be complemented by a better understanding of the current crises facing our social contracts, which are leading to gridlocks for society in general and for the transition policies aiming to achieve a sufficient society, which could otherwise appear to be the cause of social problems.

The social contract concept is useful for considering the diverse aspects involved in understanding the promises at the heart of our societies and the dependencies between social (emancipation, dignity), political (rights) and economic (value sharing, redistribution) spheres, and to identify pathways for policy action.

The intention is not so much to define a theoretical new social contract as a precondition for the transition, but more about working on new forms of social contract, the method and space for thinking through the conflicts and organizing the negotiations and arrangements necessary for its implementation, in addition to other frameworks and visions for organizing a sustainable future.

1. FROM PLANETARY BOUNDARIES TO THE DEFINITION OF COMPATIBLE SOCIAL CONDITIONS

A wealth of scientific output

Scientific advances in understanding the planet's ecological boundaries are accompanied by growing efforts to translate these findings into terms of compatible social space,¹ in the sense of the minimum socio-economic conditions for prosperity: what consumption levels and lifestyles would enable us to combine sufficiency—which is necessary to stay within these boundaries—with well-being or the "good life"? In other words, how, for example, can we ensure that everyone's needs are met while keeping on track with the carbon budget?

In line with the many works of ecological thinkers, Tim Jackson's work on pathways to prosperity that would not depend on resource-intensive economic growth has reopened the field of possibilities and launched a research dynamic. In his 2017 book,² he describes the limitations of current materialism in bringing happiness and explores the possibility of an "alternative hedonism" that would value non-material sources of well-being more highly. Together with Raworth's "doughnut" economics,³ this allows for the visualization of alternative indicators of prosperity beyond economic growth, which is far from perfect. In this vein, quantitative studies are assessing the capacity of countries to remain within planetary boundaries while satisfying social needs (O'Neill, 2018 ; Fanning *et al.*, 2021) and seeking to understand how to satisfy human needs with the minimum amount of energy (Vogel *et al.*, 2021; Millard-Hopkins *et al.*, 2020).

Complementing these quantitative assessments of a social space that would be compatible with planetary boundaries, work in other fields is exploring how our social systems should and could evolve to stay within these limits. Several collective works by researchers (Newell *et al.*, 2021; UNEP, 2020) enable us to describe all of the psychological, social, economic and political mechanisms that can change our lifestyles and consumption patterns. Other key references⁴ also make it possible to examine in greater depth the lifestyle changes required for this transition, with some of these works being reviewed by the recent IPCC report and its new chapter dedicated to these issues, thus increasing the emphasis on solutions involving changes in "demand".⁵

This body of work enables us to move beyond approaches opposing individual responsibility to collective responsibility and approaches on a single level (individual behaviour, responsible consumption, etc.) and to bring together very diverse interpretations: mechanisms of daily choices enlightened by cognitive sciences, psychological mechanisms linked to values and identities, mechanisms linked to social practices and norms and to power relations in a capitalist society, etc. The "responsible consumer" approach, centred on the individual, is thus gradually giving way to a "lifestyle" approach which is better able to

describe the collective and individual limitations and responsibilities in the transition.

A partial offer of a new social contract?

Most of these works do not simply analyse the mechanisms in operation or quantify the current situation, but they also propose an action programme and thus provide a social change agenda based on environmental concerns. And to address the urgency of the environmental crises, certain proposals that may be perceived as radical have been formulated: the principle of sufficiency, personal carbon credits, the implementation of consumption caps, the deployment of a much broader framework of efficient public services, the modification of important societal structures such as the political economy of mass consumption (Newell *et al.*, 2021; Akenji *et al.*, 2021; Lorek *et al.*, 2021). These proposals, based on scientific analyses, necessarily contain an element of political choice: for example there are different ways of defining well-being (Lamb and Steinberger, 2017) or of setting acceptable thresholds of inequality (WIR, 2022). These works also propose visions of the future of a sustainable and equitable society, thus opening up diverse areas for political debate—which is crucial (prosperity without growth, doughnut and wellbeing economies). In so doing, they propose—often implicitly and partially—the building blocks of new social contracts, i.e. new ways of organizing our economic and social functioning: modification of the importance of consumption, new forms of collective organization, new ways of defining progress, major reductions of inequalities, etc.

Improving connections with the current social context

It seems fundamental to accompany this work on social change proposals with a look at the social and political context in which such proposals should be implemented. The issue is about improving understanding on how such proposals cannot only respond to the ecological emergency, but must also make sense in relation to other demands, tensions and crises that are taking place in our societies. Indeed, attempts to transform towards more sufficient societies are not the primary threat to issues of justice and prosperity, but the threat comes first and foremost from the crisis of the social contract itself, as we discuss below. Moreover, the scale of the changes required, if we are to take planetary boundaries seriously, means that we must move away from perspectives based solely on the environmental crisis: a broader social and political response must be formulated.⁶ In other words, in addition to these promises for the future, we must consider the situation from the perspective of the promises for the present made in our current societies and the tensions that arise when they are not fulfilled.

2. A SOCIAL CONTRACT IN CRISIS

A useful concept for ecological thinking

The term “social contract”⁷ refers to a concept used by a branch of political philosophy since Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau to consider the social and political order within societies. Partly fictitious, i.e. used as a model for thinking, this rationale of a contract between individuals in a society, which inspired the American and French revolutions, is interesting in that it emphasizes the need to reconcile the rights and autonomy of individuals with the need to find political arrangements for living together (e.g. agreeing to exchange an amount of freedom to ensure collective security). In our considerations, we use this term more broadly to refer to the implicit or explicit pacts that unite the social, political and economic aspects of our lives over time. For example, we speak of “Fordist” social contracts made after the Second World War, based on mass production and consumption, combined with welfare state systems financed by taxes on labour, in exchange for a highly hierarchical organization of work and politics (Vaillancourt, 1995). This example illustrates the idea that the social game has rules, with rights and duties distributed to the different actors (citizens, state, companies, etc.), and where a space is created in which everyone can seek a “good life”. Dubuisson-Quellier (2022) describes the central role of consumption, which connects public policies, business models and individual social practices. She shows that changing consumption towards greater sufficiency cannot be left to individuals because it forms the core of a type of social contract.

This notion is important for the ecological issue, because our lives and our thinking about progress and success are framed by an implicit contract⁸ linking access to material abundance,⁹ political rights, effort sharing and economic and social value, and the capacity for emancipation within society. Today, this contract is undergoing a double crisis. Firstly, because material abundance is no longer a sustainable source of human progress in developed countries (Jackson, 2017, chapter “Prosperity lost”) and because this contract (which is not currently being fulfilled, as has been the case for several decades) is generating an increasing number of social problems and tensions, as we describe below. And secondly, because basing social harmony on (the promise of) ever more material abundance is simply no longer possible within planetary boundaries. We believe that this impasse must be better identified and understood to enable clearer thought about the future, and in particular the magnitude of the social and political change entailed by the transition (Charbonnier, 2019).

Promises and crises

Many tensions exist in society, and we have not set out to provide an exhaustive list of these issues. We have instead focused on the consequences arising from the failure to keep several social promises that form the heart of our Western societies.

The promises of economic autonomy and security and shared prosperity have been undermined by the phenomenon of

globalization (Giraud, 1996; WIR, 2022¹⁰) and by the so-called “neo-liberal” reforms that have been implemented in recent decades, giving too much power and autonomy to the market (Fleurbaey *et al.*, 2019¹¹; Hewlett Foundation, 2018, 2020¹²; Polanyi, 1944¹³). Growing income and wealth inequalities are threatening the goal of social justice and putting our democracies under strain (Chancel, 2017), the rising sense of job insecurity¹⁴ is having negative impacts on well-being and health for many working people, and access to middle-class consumption behaviours has been undermined for a significant proportion of society¹⁵ even though such lifestyles have been presented as a social norm, along with the promise of economic growth since *Les Trente Glorieuses* (Trentmann, 2016). In a society designed around meritocracy (Sandel, 2020)¹⁶ and mass education, the “losers” in the economic game also suffer from a lack of recognition and respect¹⁷ and promises of social mobility are no longer fully met.¹⁸ In connection with this socio-economic context, many researchers are alarmed by the levels of mistrust in society (Algan *et al.*, 2019),¹⁹ the loss of a sense of belonging²⁰ and the level of abstention in elections.²¹ Finally, the promises of gender equality, an end to racial discrimination and discrimination against LGBT communities have also not been kept. These observations are also valid at the sectoral level: for example, agricultural modernization, which was intended to provide quality food for all and a decent income for farmers, has broken some of its promises (food insecurity, social inequalities in health, difficulties in paying farmers, etc.).²²

The origin of the Yellow Vests

The Yellow Vests protests have undoubtedly been a major manifestation of individualistic rationales²³ within society, of the questioning of participatory democracy and of these unfulfilled promises for a proportion of the middle and working classes.²⁴ Dependence on individual cars combined with tightening budgets has meant that rising fuel prices have threatened their lifestyles,²⁵ while the loss of places to socialize and local public and private services has fuelled discontent.²⁶ Altogether, this is an indication of a social contract in crisis, as D. Guilbaud,²⁷ a senior civil servant, wrote: “Our system of government was based on a tacit pact, whereby the vast majority of citizens agreed not to actively participate in the political decision-making process, which was de facto the preserve of the most privileged social categories, in exchange for which the latter took action to increase the material comfort of these passive citizens, while creating the conditions for social mobility that would enable their children to be better off than they were. This pact has now been broken.” Among the demands of the Yellow Vests, it is important to observe that a crisis initially conceived around purchasing power has led to strong support for demanding political rights in the form of a citizens’ initiative referendum²⁸, thus illustrating the passages between the diversity of dimensions that must be held together to understand what underpins our social contract and the fact that the solutions to the situations created by the transition are not solely economic (e.g. response to a carbon tax based solely on economic compensation). By following this

logic, the changes associated with greater sufficiency can and must also be of multiple types.

3. WITHOUT A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT, SUFFICIENCY IS A DEAD-END

This reality constitutes a particularly perilous context for implementing proposals for action towards greater sufficiency and argues in favour of placing them within a broader proposal for the renewal of the social contract or the exploration of potential new social contracts. It should be noted that it is not only the effort to achieve sufficiency for the long-term mitigation of the ecological crisis that is causing tension within our social system, but also the effort to adapt in a context of environmental (drought) and geopolitical (Ukraine) crises. The next part of this *Brief* examines the importance of connecting sufficiency objectives with i) the interdependencies and obstacles linked to the existence of a social contract based on abundance (e.g. the importance of consumption) and ii) the social and political consequences arising from the crisis of this social contract due to broken promises (e.g. mistrust), to fully measure its political economy.

Individuals are locked into consumer societies

We are social animals: our desires, needs and representations of what is desirable and worthwhile are part of a framework that binds us together. And in our modern states, this collective framework is the promise of access to material abundance, a promise that is shared, encouraged, and maintained by economic actors. Given the existence of this framework, the rationale of moderation is therefore not self-evident—it is even a contradictory demand placed on individuals²⁹—since mass consumption has been organized and positioned at the centre of our lives and economic models (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2022). Moreover, the requirement for sufficiency cannot be shouldered by individuals alone, which is particularly true in the case of poorer households, for whom consumption (beyond the satisfaction of their essential needs) is a means of belonging to society—and one that is constantly being questioned due to the constraints on purchasing power and the arrival of new needs. Establishing sufficiency therefore requires a huge collective effort to change our relationship to abundance (social gratification, dependencies on our business and welfare state models, etc.). This work can begin by drawing from: i) the numerous public policies that frame consumption and its role in society; ii) the reinvention of our preferences that are constantly ongoing³⁰ and the way we organize and socialize social and technical innovations in our societies (see the two blog posts by F. Flipo³¹); iii) the fact that this rationale of sufficiency has never totally disappeared from society, maintained by different ideologies (withdrawal from consumer society, adoption of so-called alternative lifestyles),

different beliefs (religious, spiritual) and different practices (anti-waste, recycling). The issue is not therefore about setting up rationing as a new model, as some detractors would have it, but of building a new collective movement built on these different foundations.

The challenge of mistrust and the need for solidarity in the transition

In the current context of crisis and the call for sufficiency, the issue of the greater responsibility to act resting with those who have the greatest means and leeway remains a blind spot in political discourse and action. Yet it is urgent to address the issue of solidarity in change (Saujot and Rüdinger, 2022).³² In a sufficient society, we will have to know how to embody equality and solidarity in a new social contract that will be considered equitable and will thus cement new bonds of belonging. This will require questioning what is obvious in our social contract (wealth is associated with the right to unlimited consumption) and changing our public policies to give greater incentives and responsibilities to those who have the greatest means to change. This process of finding institutions and rules that ensure equity, however, faces the obstacle of mistrust.

The level of trust³³ in a society partly determines the acceptability of public policies. Thus, [Algan et al. \(2019\)](#) show that citizens with a low level of trust (interpersonal and towards institutions³⁴) are on average more hostile to social redistribution mechanisms, even though these people are often among those that would benefit from such mechanisms. The authors explain this phenomenon by the fact that these population categories lack confidence in the capacity of public authorities to deliver a level of equity in this redistribution, and also in the integrity of their fellow citizens who will receive this support. The practices that must be adopted to increase the sufficiency of our lifestyles (flying less, eating less meat, living in smaller houses, etc.), i.e., in the context of today's consumer society, to restrict oneself in the name of the collective good, also appear to be futile when interpersonal trust is absent: why should I change when I don't believe that other individuals and institutions will do the same?³⁵ There is no single answer to this issue of mistrust³⁶ but one way of approaching this political process aimed at equity certainly entails accounting for the inequities raised by citizens, in strong symbolic actions demonstrating solidarity, and in a major effort of exemplarity and accountability on the part of the public authorities and major private actors (Saujot and Rüdinger, 2022).

Developing and disseminating a vision of inclusive ecology

This context of tension and social fragmentation contributes to the risks of stigmatization and political manipulation, which are obstacles to lifestyle transition³⁷ Take the example of food³⁸ the less affluent can perceive nutritional recommendations for health and the environment as stigmatizing due to limitations that are both budgetary (buying fruit and vegetables is

expensive) and cultural (the narrative around sustainable food borrows mainly from the reference system of wealthier classes). While actors who favour the status quo can play on these social divides and preconceived ideas about food (the perceived importance of meat, "hipsters vs. blue collars") to intensify debates and prevent the search for a constructive compromise on how to collectively change our food practices. **Valuing the practices and values of less affluent classes that are already sustainable** (waste reduction, home grown food, etc.) to enrich the general discourse on lifestyle transition is therefore crucial (Brocard *et al.*, 2022). This can go hand in hand with ambitious mechanisms for citizen participation such as the Citizens Convention for Climate, which enable the building of transition pathways that include the diversity of reference points and experiences of various social groups.

The future of employment and the financing of public services

Several studies highlight the need to combine lifestyle changes with a broadening of the scope of public services to develop "universal basic services" (Lorek *et al.*, 2021; Akenji *et al.*, 2021). This means redefining the governance and provision of services so that they are more equitable, affordable and at the same time more sustainable and thus more consistent with the concept of maintaining our consumption within "corridors" that are compatible with planetary boundaries (Fuchs, 2019; Coote, 2019)³⁹ and limit the need to provide financial support to overcome inequality issues (Gough, 2020)⁴⁰. This means, for example, extending the scope of public transport, developing public food services⁴¹ and energy renovation, and ensuring that these developments are genuinely shared by as many people as possible.⁴² This could also make more sustainable solutions accessible, but which would be, at least in a transitional phase, more expensive or require investment that a proportion of the population would not be able to afford.

However, the crisis of our social contracts poses an important obstacle to the financing of such services: it is the triple crisis of the welfare state described by Rosanvallon (1981)⁴³ and, more generally, the fact that it is challenged by neo-liberal thinking (Fleurbaey *et al.*, 2019).⁴⁴ And this is all the more true in a context where a social movement such as the Yellow Vests has highlighted more the untenable level of taxes than it called for an increase in salaries and a better redistribution of the value created.⁴⁵ This calls for a joint approach to the development of carbon taxation and the financing of public services (Combet and Jolivet, 2022)⁴⁶, and to invest in rebuilding the very principles of our services and in particular our forms of social protection (see Palier, 2022)⁴⁷ and at the same time investigate ways to reduce the cost of our welfare states. This could be through the successful implementation of the transition (healthy and sustainable food for all and more active transport would also constitute significant preventive health policies⁴⁸) or by changing their organization to reduce incentives for cost increases (Walker *et al.*, 2021).⁴⁹ For example, we can see the significant impact of the different ways in which health insurance systems are organized in the United States and

Germany or France on current health expenditure⁵⁰ and management costs⁵¹

Efforts for sufficiency also raise practical questions concerning employment: how can we ensure employment for all (and therefore social opportunities and, in our current society, social recognition) if we reduce over-consumption and therefore the associated activities? This is obviously a burning question in a context of concern for the middle and working classes that have been hit by precariousness and social uncertainty.⁵² It should also be noted that the disappearance of jobs today is less related to constraints imposed in the name of the environment than to the consequences of international competition and above all to the productivity gains resulting from robotization and digital technology. The status of work and employment in our societies, its centrality to our social contract, is therefore inexorably changing, and rapidly. Beyond predictions of "green" jobs and the debates on the capacity to organize a fair transition in this respect, what practical and convincing promises can be given to populations accustomed to seeing the power of political decision-makers increasingly weakened in the face of employment markets in a globalized economy, and where only the private sector really has the prerogative to create jobs? It is this state of affairs that is being questioned by experiments with employment guarantees and "zero long-term unemployed territories" by creating new rights and duties, for individuals and for the public authorities, with regard to employment issues.

This brief analysis of these obstacles argues in favour of considering a sequence of actions starting not only from a positive, theoretical vision of the finish line, but also from the start line and its social and political bottlenecks, to explore the types of solutions yet to be discovered.

4. AN OPPORTUNITY TO ORGANIZE DEBATE AND ACTION

A complementary concept

The aim is not to make the development of a new social contract the prerequisite for transition, which would be daunting given the importance of the task. But rather to use the conceptual and deliberative work of exploring new forms of social contract that are compatible with planetary boundaries as a framework for thinking about and organizing action, and for identifying the negotiation paths necessary to lead the transition. It is then complementary to existing frameworks. Both the doughnut economy and the concept of the wellbeing economy are compasses that point towards a goal to be achieved with a positive and inspiring narrative: staying within planetary boundaries and above social thresholds; reorienting the economy and its governance towards well-being. They set a direction for society as a whole and describe new economic-society relationships,⁵³ new ways of conducting economic policies,⁵⁴ notably beyond the single indicator of economic growth. The concept of the social contract highlights the conflicts and tensions and the

issues of compromise, exchange and balance between several dimensions of our lives in society and different actors, elements that must be considered to carry out the necessary negotiations to implement the transition towards the goal indicated by these compasses. It must allow us to think about the necessary rearrangements on the path of the transition.

In a preliminary way, we note that talking about the social contract in all its dimensions (political rights, economic mechanisms, social promises of emancipation) could thus enable a better demonstration of the need to move from a narrative that puts the promise of increasing material consumption or meritocracy at its centre, to one that renews the promises of dignity,⁵⁵ emancipation and satisfaction of essential needs. More ambitiously, it is about reviving the project of social progress, aiming at true human fulfilment based on social, scientific and cultural achievements and real collective progress through equity in the distribution of rights and achievements, a form of progress compatible with planetary boundaries (Fleurbay *et al.*, 2019).

The social contract also enables the linking of sectoral transformations to an overall change in the functioning of our society, without being limited to macroeconomic variables (macroeconomic models struggle to account for the necessary structural changes and to represent new types of promises in other potential social contracts). For example, the administration of food and agricultural issues has historically had an important place in our social contracts (Ramel, 2022)⁵⁶ and mobility can be seen as "a generic right from which many other rights derive" as it is so central to our modern societies (Ascher, 2006)⁵⁷: food and mobility policies must also be seen through the prism of our social contract.

Finally, this concept refers to the nature of the political space in which solutions are sought to solve the challenges of the transition. Economic science⁵⁸ clearly dominates our vision of the world and the "economization" of problems and solutions is seductive (grants, subsidies, incentives, etc.), paradoxically reducing economic science to a science of monetizable compensations, whereas the fundamental project of this discipline is indeed to explore the paths to well-being in all their diversity provided by the different versions of the social contract. The

concept of the social contract reminds us that living together is based on different terms, and that the space for solutions for thinking about its role in the transition does not solely rest on the rationale of financial compensation.⁵⁹ Political rights, respect and dignity, and access to basic services are all variables to be mobilized in the difficult transition equation.

Experiments and initiatives to be linked

Far from being theoretical, this new social contract is in fact already being discussed, imagined or tested, piece by piece. The Citizens Convention for Climate for example, which in itself represents a democratic building block of this new social contract, has addressed it through the proposal⁶⁰ (not retained following the final vote) to reduce the number of hours worked, which was presented in a rationale of sufficiency, social justice and citizenship. Although politically inaudible, it is the very principle of putting on the agenda a systemic proposal on all the dimensions of the social contract that constitutes the core benefits of this proposal. Proposals for social security for food, experiments with "zero long-term unemployed territories" in France or reduced working hours in Spain, the local level "doughnut", or coalitions between trade unions and environmental NGOs are all practical explorations of new arrangements that can be used to inform the discussion. This work of reviewing initiatives and pooling the lessons learned needs to be deepened, just as it is necessary to explore how this analysis, which is partly anchored in the French context, resonates and is enriched in a European context.

Organizing this work to explore new forms of social contract compatible with planetary boundaries does not mean finding a solution to the big picture right now, but guaranteeing the conditions for these questions to be put on the political agenda, and bringing the lessons of the experiments presented above into a framework in which they make sense in relation to each other, each time drawing up possible options, even if they are partial, for future social contracts towards which our societies could move.

- 1 For example, as mentioned later in the text, D. Fuchs and his co-authors propose "consumption corridors" as an approach to reinterpreting needs and translating planetary boundaries into high and low consumption limits. Through participatory democracy, this concept places the definition of what is "enough" to lead a good life at the centre of strategy for change.
- 2 Jackson, T. (2017). *Prosperity Without Growth*, Routledge, 2nd Edition.
- 3 Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics*, Penguin.
- 4 See for example the 1.5°C lifestyles (Akenji et al., 2021) study, the Consumption corridors proposal by Fuchs et al. (2021), the Zoe Institute's analysis of equity issues (Lorek et al., 2021) or Chapter 6 on lifestyles in the UNEP 2020 Emission Gap Report, <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/34432>
- 5 IPCC (2022). WG3 -Summary for Policymakers, C10. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_SPM.pdf
- 6 See Charbonnier, P. (2019). *Abondance et Liberté*, La Découverte; see also his articles in *Le Grand Continent*: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/staff/pierre-charbonnier/>
- 7 See for example <https://www.cairn.info/revue-cites-2002-2-page-159.htm>
- 8 In *Abondance et Liberté*, P. Charbonnier traces the shared construction of our political systems (freedom, equality, etc.) and our economic system based on the consumption of material resources. If we are to radically change our relationship with the latter to remain within planetary boundaries, then our political systems must necessarily evolve: "the transformation of our political ideas must be of a magnitude that is at least equal to that of the geo-ecological transformation."
- 9 "by one route or the other, all modern regimes ended up promising more goods to their subjects" writes F. Trentmann in *Empire of things* (2016), Penguin.
- 10 P.-N. Giraud predicted with great acuity that a proportion of the middle classes in developed countries would fall out of step with globalisation, <https://journals.openedition.org/lectures/42327>; see for example Figure 2.5 of the recent World Inequality Report <https://wir2022.wid.world/chapter-2/>; see also Figure 2.10 describing the distribution of income growth between social classes.
- 11 The crisis of social democracies and the limits of the neoliberal model are one of the starting points of this Manifesto for Social Progress, which aims to provide a set of tools and proposals for thinking about alternatives to the current variant of capitalism.
- 12 This American foundation, learning lessons from neo-liberal crises, provides massive support for research and civil society to create alternatives. See these two notes on historical analysis and positioning: <https://hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Economy-and-Society-Grant-making-Strategy-12.2020.pdf> and <https://hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Beyond-Neoliberalism-Public-Board-Memo.pdf>. Also in this field see the recent overview of actors working on these new economic systems (Demos, 2021, *Turning the tide*).
- 13 In *The Great Transformation* (1944), with the advent of the Industrial Revolution and economic liberalism, Polanyi describes market empowerment and its negative impacts on society and in particular the condition of the working class. The need to "resocialize the economy" that arose from these problems led to violent movements to "re-embed" the market, such as fascism, and to the post-war model of market administration. This historical analysis is highly useful for understanding the current neoliberalism crisis.
- 14 Job insecurity refers to both an objective (observed change in employment status) and a subjective dimension (feelings, fear of tomorrow). In a 2011 survey, 13% of employees felt at high risk of losing their job within a year, while 20% were unsure of their risk, which is also a source of insecurity. Moullet, S. & Salibekyan, Z. (2019). *The Perception of Job Insecurity in France: Between Individual Determinants and Managerial Practices*. Économie et Statistique. See also https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/1-3_algava_def.pdf and https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/de_no_214.pdf
- 15 J. Fourquet speaks of a "permanent rise in the threshold of entry into the middle class" and identifies a fear of "demoyennisation", which is very present among the Yellow Vests, for example. More broadly, L. Chauvel, in *La Spirale du déclassé* (2016), analyses the crisis of the middle class, threatening our model of society, and makes the link with the Yellow Vest protests: <https://www.science.lu/fr/mouvement-social-en-france/dou-vient-frustration-des-gilets-jaunes>
- 16 See <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/sep/06/michael-sandel-the-populist-backlash-has-been-a-revolt-against-the-tyranny-of-merit> and *The Tyranny of Merit* (2021). For example, Sandel observes that "the meritocratic belief that individuals deserve the rewards that the market allocates to their talents turns solidarity into an almost impossible project."
- 17 See the work of Destin Commun, particularly this survey: <https://www.lafranceenquete.fr>
- 18 The recent INSEE study on intergenerational income mobility shows that although some mobility still exists, it has limits: for example, a child from a less affluent family (the bottom 40% of the income scale) is three times less likely than a child from a higher income family (top 20%) to find themselves in the top 20% of the income scale; having working-class or employed parents reduces the chances of moving up the income scale. Furthermore, it should be noted that this study does not take into account wealth inequalities, which are known to be important, particularly in a context of high housing prices (Insee Analyses, n°73, May 2022).
- 19 This quote sums up the logic at work: "The economic security provided by economic growth and the development of the welfare state has created aspirations that will be shattered by the return of economic risks. In return, a strong disillusionment has set in among the working classes who have not gained equal benefit from the massification of access to higher education. They have become the losers of globalization and the technological revolution, more so than past generations" (p30-31).
- 20 See the work of Luc Rouban, who analyses and highlights the risks linked to anomie, i.e. "the fact of losing one's social reference points, and of not feeling that one belongs to any community." https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipof/sites/sciencespo.fr.cevipof/files/NoteBaroV12_LR_lafrance_fevrier2021_VF-1.pdf and <https://www.franceinter.fr/emissions/L-invite-du-week-end/L-invite-du-week-end-du-dimanche-16-janvier-2022>
- 21 See the analysis and proposals of the Council for Economic Analysis: <https://www.cae-eco.fr/staticfiles/pdf/cae-focus085.pdf>
- 22 See <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/blog-post/healthy-and-sustainable-food-all-mission-impossible>
- 23 Bendali and Rubert (2020) explain, for example, how the rationale of individualization under way in the labour market (subcontracting, self-employment, etc.) and in management explains the form taken by mobilization, which is well outside the traditional channels of collective bargaining. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politix-2020-4-page-177.htm>
- 24 See A. Delpirou on the socio-territorial characteristics of the phenomenon, with a detailed analysis beyond simplifications: <https://lavedesidees.fr/La-couleur-des-gilets-jaunes.html>; see R. Lefèvre on the rejection of political representation and the rationale of disintermediation at work, and C. Patriat on the challenge this poses for the production of the common good: <https://lavedesidees.fr/Les-Gilets-jaunes-et-les-exigences-de-la-representation-politique.html> and <https://theconversation.com/gilets-jaunes-le-des-interet-general-108844>
- 25 <https://lavedesidees.fr/Le-tour-des-ronds-points.html>
- 26 <https://www.cae-eco.fr/staticfiles/pdf/cae-note055.pdf>
- 27 <https://aoc.media/opinion/2018/12/19/egoistes-imbeciles-illuminés-poujadistes-vulgaires-gilets-jaunes-vus-haute-fonction-publique/>
- 28 https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2018/12/07/qu-est-ce-que-le-referendum-d-initiative-citoyenne-demande-par-des-gilets-jaunes_5394287_4355770.html
- 29 Praise for sufficiency during the first lockdown (March-May 2020) was followed by a call to spend any savings put aside to revive the economy the following autumn. On a more general note, listen to the podcast by S. Dubuisson-Quellier for *Le Monde*: https://www.lemonde.fr/podcasts/article/2022/07/05/climat-peut-on-sauver-la-planete-avec-des-petits-gestes_6133404_5463015.html
- 30 See our article "10 misconceptions about lifestyle changes": <https://bonpote.com/10-idees-recues-sur-la-sobriete-des-modes-de-vie/>
- 31 <https://www.iddri.org/fr/publications-et-evenements/billet-de-blog/changer-les-modes-de-vie-un-peu-de-theorie-avant-la> and <https://www.iddri.org/fr/publications-et-evenements/billet-de-blog/changer-les-modes-de-vie-lexemple-du-numerique>
- 32 See our recent analysis on this issue <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/issue-brief/urgent-need-combine-sufficiency-and-solidarity>
- 33 See our blog post on this issue: <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/blog-post/ecological-transition-and-inequality-democratic-challenge-part-0>
- 34 It should be remembered that national democratic institutions and their political staff enjoy a level of trust of only 30-40%: <https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipof/fr/content/le-barometre-de-la-confiance-politique.html>; on this subject of trust, also see the work of A. Spire, who analyses more specifically the various state institutions (justice, police, tax administration, etc.) <https://www.cairn.info/crises-de-confiance-9782348065866-page-37.htm>
- 35 On these questions of conditions for change, see the Ademe study https://librairie.ademe.fr/cadic/6939/feuilleton_modes_de_vie_transitions2050_ademe.pdf
- 36 It should not be considered essential: one is not born with it, but it results from interactions with institutions and life in society.
- 37 Highlighting the risks of inequality is one of the discourses of inaction identified by Lamb et al. (2020), which is all the easier to activate in this social context.
- 38 See our article on the subject: <https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/CatalogueIddri/D%C3%A9cryptage/202202-IB0122-sustainable-diets.pdf>

- 39 Fuchs, Doris (2019). "Living well within limits: the vision of consumption corridors", In Routledge Handbook of Global Sustainability Governance, edited by A. Kalfagianni, D. Fuchs, and A. Hayden, 296-307, Routledge. Anna Coote (2021). Universal basic services and sustainable consumption, *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy*, 17:1, 32-46, DOI: [10.1080/15487733.2020.1843854](https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2020.1843854)
- 40 Gough, I. (2020). The Case for Universal Basic Services. *LSE Public Policy Review*, 1(2), p.6. DOI: [http://doi.org/10.31389/lseppr.12](https://doi.org/10.31389/lseppr.12)
- 41 See in France, for example, the proposals for social food security, which make it possible to think about a just transition in agriculture and food beyond food aid or food voucher approaches (Brocard, 2002: <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/other-publication/sustainable-food-voucher-analyses-and-proposals-reinforce>).
- 42 Like social security, which is both accessible to all and used by all. Another example, the challenge of high service-level buses is to become a mode used by all and not only by those left standing on the pavement by the car system (no driving licence, high costs, etc.)
- 43 A crisis of funding, a crisis of effectiveness in solving social problems, and a crisis of legitimacy due to the combination of perceived cost and effectiveness.
- 44 See p. 195 and onwards.
- 45 See this analysis: <http://econoclaste.eu/econoclaste/130858-2>
- 46 Combet, E., Jolivet, P. (2022). Pour un contrat social de transition, propositions pour une réforme équitable de la valeur du carbone. Ademe, Expertises.
- 47 Op Ed "Miser sur une protection sociale qualitative", *Le Monde*, 9/09
- 48 See for example this recent parliamentary report: https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/rapports/cec/115b4400_rapport-information.pdf
- 49 C.C. Walker, A. Druckman, T. Jackson (2021). Welfare systems without economic growth: A review of the challenges and next steps for the field, *Ecological Economics*.
- 50 See <https://drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2021-01/9%20Comparaisons%20internationales%20de%20la%20d%C3%A9pense%20courante%20de%20sant%C3%A9%20et%20du%20reste%20%C3%A0%20charge.pdf>
- 51 See <https://drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2021-09/Fiche%2024%20-%20Syst%C3%A8mes%20de%20sant%C3%A9%20et%20finance-ment%20%C3%A0%20perspectives%20internationales.pdf>
- 52 <https://www.nouvelobs.com/idees/20220216.OBS54567/pierre-charbonnier-une-culture-ecologique-minimale-est-aussi-importante-que-la-connaissance-de-moliere.html>
- 53 <https://doughnuteconomics.org/about-doughnut-economics>
- 54 See for example: https://wellbeingeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/Well-being-Economy-Policy-Design-Guide_Mar17_FINAL.pdf; an important part of which is dedicated to the design of governance and policy processes (e.g. to move towards a well-being economy, policies must be "goal-oriented, participatory, contextual, experimental, holistic, evidence-based, strength-based").
- 55 In this article, the German politician J.-W. Mueller describes how during the campaign of the future chancellor O. Scholz, he distanced himself from the principle of meritocracy and talked more about respect: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/social-democrats-and-working-class-voters-by-jan-werner-mueller-2022-02?barrier=accesspaylog>
- 56 Ramel, M. (2022). *Le droit à l'alimentation et la lutte contre la précarité alimentaire en France*, Doctoral thesis in public law, University of Tours, <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-03639344/document>
- 57 Ascher, F. (2006). "Le mouvement dans les sociétés hypermodernes", conférence à l'Université de tous les savoirs, 4 January 2006, <https://laboratoireurbanismeinsurrectionnel.blogspot.com/2011/10/francois-ascher-droit-la-mobilite.html>
- 58 It should be noted that economic science has historically been interested in the question of welfare satisfaction as an overall objective, but its academic translation tends to restrict it to financial and material sub-objectives.
- 59 See L. Tubiana's analysis of the European Green Deal, which discusses how to ensure that it is truly a new social contract: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2021/09/28/laurence-tubiana/>
- 60 The work could not be completed due to its much wider ramifications than the roadmap given by the Prime Minister.

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