

NEW VERSION AVAILABLE: CAPITALISM 2.0

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NUEVA VERSIÓN DISPONIBLE: CAPITALISMO 2.0

**Hacia un contrato social inter-generacional
para un uso sostenible de la naturaleza**

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When you step back and look at a problem from a distance, it's easier to focus on it and understand the reasons and catalysts for the problem.

If we want to achieve a more sustainable development, the economy must be seen in its own perspective as a sub-system of a larger and more important parent system: the *natural system*. Human beings should be seen as *part of*, not apart from, nature. This is the basic tenet of [social-ecological systems science](#) which studies how [redirect complex systems](#) (such as our society) towards sustainability, and thus avoid their collapse.

Unsustainable development is the most persistent, structural and dramatic problem facing our global society and economy today. On the one hand, the owners of capital dominate the economy, depleting and polluting the natural capital on which we depend; on the other hand, governments are not capable of coping with this unsustainable inertia. The reason why capitalism distorts and finds it difficult to establish a fair, democratic and sustainable system in the long term is simple: democracy is an open system, in which capital and economic powers can easily enter and accommodate themselves; capitalism, on the other hand, is a hermetic system, and its bastions are not easily accessible. The supremacy of the power of capital and its negative impact on environmental sustainability is not an accident, nor is any multinational to blame for this situation. This is simply what happens when capitalism inhabits democracy.

As a result, society is increasingly *disconnected* from nature, and therefore we need to reconnect again. A *new version of capitalism (2.0)* is needed that values and accounts for the natural capital on which we depend. Just as we receive natural capital as a shared *gift* from past generations, we have a duty to pass it on to future generations under at least the same conditions in which we received it. If we can improve their condition during our lifetime, all the better; but, at the very least, we must not degrade it, and of course we do not have the right to destroy it.

How to convince current generations to prioritize the sustainable use of natural capital and care about the next generations, even at the cost of reducing, in part, their own well-being? Edmund

Burke (1792), British writer, philosopher and politician, gave us a clue in this regard: "*Society is indeed a contract...between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born*".

Past historical events have illustrated successful examples of structural changes in our society that provided intergenerational benefits. An example is *Social Security*. This was imagined, designed and installed at the beginning of the 20th century as a response to one of the biggest emerging crises of that time: the impoverishment of millions of people too old to work. The generational contract that was carried out, and that is still maintained, was simple: active workers collectively maintain and help those retired workers (retired) through pensions, and, in return, these former ones will be protected and supported, in their old age, by the next generation of workers. And so on.

We need a similar *inter-generational contract* to create a society that makes sustainable use of nature. One that fixes the contempt and neglect that the current capitalist system has towards natural capital with future generations; We are talking about the forests that provide the oxygen on which we depend, and the oceans that regulate global temperature and prevent natural catastrophes.

Reaching said contract will be a challenging journey. Does this mean there is no hope? The window of opportunity is small, but it exists. It will be a path of no less than 30, 40, 50 years, where the objective must be to create a *capitalism 2.0* that encourages the connection and harmony between our society and nature. This new capitalism will likely require a [Faust">Faustian](#) compromise of some sort: if we want a positive, we must accept the negative. But, if we understand how to reach a better agreement than we currently have to create a capitalism 2.0, we will achieve it. After all, the next generations and millions of living beings are counting on us.

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