



# Faster and Inclusive Development: Towards A Sociological Approach Of Human-Society Sustainability

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**ABSTRACT:** Since the beginning of the millennium, societies, economies, and the Earth itself have been subject to disruptions of increasing frequency and severity. Each evolves differently from the others, but many disruptions have overlapping consequences that can be long lived and are not completely understood at the time of impact. Disruptions are not new, and societies have developed sophisticated ways of managing them, using institutions to create stability against extreme events. The context within which these disruptions occur, furthermore, is an ever-present climate crisis, whose effective mitigation will require a global transition to a low-carbon economy. The human displacement and economic cost this entails could become disruptors of historic proportions in their own right. The current era is increasingly defined by the interplay of complex disruptions, with their disparate origins and long-term consequences. Institutions are not fully prepared for the new reality, often reacting separately to each disruption. This position is untenable and organizations are finding that their current risk management practices must evolve to suit this new environment. Leaders are now discussing resilience as the essential condition. How can public- and private-sector organizations arrive at a resilient stance, alert to what is over the horizon, ready to withstand shocks and accelerate into the next reality? Resilience has been described as the ability to recover quickly but recovery alone is not an adequate goal. Truly resilient organizations bounce back better and even thrive.

**KEYWORDS:** disruption, society, resilience, environment, faster, inclusive, sustainability, human

## I. INTRODUCTION

The issues that trigger crises, and the public- and private-sector responses to these primary issues, have initial effects and produce secondary and tertiary effects. These can give rise to a new primary issue. To navigate these rapid interactions, organizations need to respond with sets of correlated solutions that can be adjusted as conditions evolve. The extent of networks within the global economy, societies, and industries is only partly visible. In a disruption, hidden interdependencies can emerge, unexpectedly accelerating the impact. Supply chain disruptions affect production, availability, and prices more quickly. A poor response can easily magnify the damage directly caused by a crisis. An effective response, on the other hand, can significantly limit the damage. Decisions are crucial, and past crises have certainly produced their share of bad ones. Even highly successful organizations make decisions that, in hindsight, were all wrong. However, few probe more deeply about why bad decisions are made. It may seem obvious, but the reason is usually that the decision was not well thought out. Under pressure, leaders tend to favor action that can be implemented quickly, eschewing a slower, more thoughtful course. Decisions made under pressure and at speed can entail unintended consequences. The resilience framework will necessarily provide space for thoughtful decision making. Organizations will need to create the means for deciding when to move quickly and when to slow down, and test decisions in a given crisis with people outside of the core network. Low-income countries rely on development assistance and emergency loans from international financial institutions, increasing the risk of sovereign debt vulnerabilities. The stimulus measures in richer countries magnify demand, putting further pressure on supply chains. This dynamic has resulted in higher commodity prices and consumer inflation, which, in turn, have hit lower-income countries hardest. Other global developments, positive as they are for richer countries, could cause hardship in poorer countries, including the accelerated shift to the digital economy and pressures to reduce carbon emissions.

## II. DISCUSSION

Exposed populations must not be left behind on a shared planet. The disruptions should be seized upon as opportunities to ramp up collective efforts to improve habitats, food and water security, public health, and social and technical infrastructure where these are most needed.



The rise in fragility and decrease in resilience among some populations or in some country contexts pose additional risks of spillover effects, including deeper supply chain disruptions, increases in extreme poverty, and the potential for conflict. A resilience muscle must ultimately serve the broader goal of sustainable, inclusive growth. Growth is sustainable insofar as it supports the health and repair of the natural environment; it is inclusive when it meaningfully improves the livelihood of wider population segments. At a company level, questions of equality and fairness are directly linked to an organization's purpose and values discussions.

Optimal crisis preparedness includes defensive measures such as buffers and financial reserves but equally important are active response capabilities. These allow organizations to quickly adapt, grow into the new conditions and move fast on new opportunities. Crises have accelerated the growth of the digital economy, with more organizational and societal buy-in for remote meetings, cloud computing, and digital banking. In the automotive industry, vehicle electrification is expanding as governments set emissions targets, offer subsidies, and install charging infrastructure.

In the public and governmental spheres, many national healthcare systems and programs are overstressed. Success in applying existing emergency plans has varied from country to country and within states and departments. The difficulties underscore the importance of combining defensive buffers (stockpiles of supplies and financial resources) with flexibility and less centralized approaches. Certainly, geopolitical crises can have serious implications for supply chains and energy supplies. Buffers will provide only partial, temporary solutions. Response capabilities and adaptability therefore matter as much as preparedness. In crises, half the impact arises from the crisis itself, while the other half, good or bad, is determined by the response.

### **III.RESULTS**

Resilience is a broadly used term covering many aspects of organizational health and operations within governments and public foundations as well as corporations and financial institutions. The World Economic Forum Resilience Consortium endorses the strategic view of resilience and emphasizes the long-term ability of organizations and economies to create the capabilities needed to deal with disruptions, withstand the shocks, and continuously adapt as disruptions and crises arise over time. It is the strategic prerequisite for long-term, sustainable, and inclusive growth. Resilient organizations and economies accelerate from inflexion points. Crises and disruptions expose weaknesses, separating the resilient from the unprepared. McKinsey's research has shown that companies evaluated as more resilient generated greater shareholder value than less resilient peers across the entire life cycle of the major economic shocks of the past two decades. In the world financial crisis of 2007–09, resilient companies generated around 20 percent more shareholder returns, an advantage which accelerated to around 50 percent in the turnaround years of 2009–11 and 120 percent during the stable period of 2011–17. Two equally important dimensions of resilience emerged: financial strength (cash reserves, a flexible cost base, and profitability) and decisive adaptations to the business model through divestments and reinvestments. In recent years, there has been a growing global recognition that stronger economic growth and increased foreign investment as a means towards sustained poverty reduction must take into consideration a variety of social and environmental factors that affect whether national wealth and opportunities are distributed in an equitable, balanced manner. Multi-dimensional challenges such as poor public health, climate change, environmental degradation and socially irresponsible business practices threaten to interfere with human development and undermine the basic human rights of entire populations. These problems often have a distinct legal aspect, and solutions require laws and legal institutions that ensure the effective and fair delivery of social services, the equitable distribution of resources and the efficient and just resolution of disputes. Yet, within the development field, rule of law is too often an after-thought in efforts to address these issues, with little attention paid to developing and integrating relevant law and governance-oriented strategies.

ABA ROLI strives to change this view by broadening the development community's appreciation of the impact of law and justice on human development. We believe there is a fundamental connection between rule of law and human rights, on the one hand, and public health, climate change and environmentally sustainable and socially responsible business, on the other. The promotion of rule of law, especially when founded on a human rights-based approach, can significantly advance objectives in each of these fields. Laws and public institutions that can promote accountability and transparency, combat corruption and protect local populations are critical to fostering sustainable and inclusive development. A stable legal system, with courts and judges capable of interpreting and enforcing the law in an informed, open and predictable manner, is also crucial to achieving confidence of both domestic and foreign investors. A holistic, cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach that encompasses the legal and regulatory environment is, therefore, key to any effective response strategy.



In line with this philosophy, ABA ROLI engages with local communities, civil society organizations, businesses and governments to develop rule of law and human rights-based solutions to multi-faceted development problems. As part of our Inclusive and Sustainable Development program area, we work to:

- improve environmental governance and mitigate environmental costs associated with economic development, through increased transparency of environmental information and cutting-edge public interest litigation;
- integrate legal strategies into efforts to address public health concerns, such as HIV-related discrimination and the health effects of environmental pollution;
- improve land and natural resource governance and work to reduce high social, environmental and economic costs often associated with large-scale extractive exploitation, by enabling mining communities to become informed and active stakeholders and ensuring tenure security and access to land;
- promote appreciation for human rights, rule of law and development challenges among local businesses, encouraging them to design corporate social responsibility programs and anti-bribery compliance strategies in accordance with international standards; and
- reform commercial laws and practices to promote the use of alternative dispute resolutions, strengthen enforcement of commercial contracts, improve protection of intellectual property rights and create equal economic opportunities for small businesses, women and other disadvantaged groups.

ABA ROLI's programming relating to these complex human development challenges is premised on a set of core human rights principles, which include active and meaningful participation of affected communities in policies and programs; substantive gender equality; non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups; and accountability. We believe these principles set an important framework for orientation of programs concerned with inclusive and sustainable development, and therefore integrate them into design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our programs. Entry points for our programs in these areas are familiar to rule of law practitioners and include approaches such as:

- developing national strategies through an inclusive and participatory process;
- legislative and regulatory reform;
- enhancing access to justice and legal empowerment through civil society capacity building, civic education and legal literacy programs, and mobilizing the legal profession to advance relevant rights;
- developing administrative, judicial and quasi-judicial claims and accountability mechanisms;
- training judges, lawyers and government officials on relevant subjects; and
- anti-corruption programming, especially in the area of public access to information.

#### Researching and evaluating reform efforts

ABA ROLI published a guide on Integrating Rule of Law and Global Development: Food Security, Climate Change and Public Health, which serves as a primer on issues that development practitioners may not have previously considered and is intended to spark conversations and ideas for programming among practitioners, donors and local stakeholders. The guide makes specific recommendations for rule of law programs and provides case studies that demonstrate the value of legal strategies in these multi-dimensional contexts.

Additionally, our HIV/AIDS Legal Assessment Tool is a mechanism for assessing a country's de jure and de facto compliance with international legal standards on the protection of human rights of people living with, perceived to be living with and affected by HIV. It is uniquely equipped to both uncover the incidence of HIV-related discrimination and address such issues as whether a country's legal system is sufficiently strong to protect people living with HIV from discrimination or whether the state has committed appropriate resources and taken concrete steps to reduce HIV-related discrimination and to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms for vulnerable populations.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

During, particularly, the past years, which first involved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000–2014 and now the SDGs much progress has been made in cultivating new economic thinking. The eight goals of the MDGs were expanded to 17 goals under the SDGs. Economic sustainability and reducing economic inequality has been at the forefront of the agenda. In this context, institutional economic theory aids in explaining that market deficiencies



germinate from diverse interactions between individuals, firms, states and social norms. Furthermore, neorealist economic theory brings into perspective here the distorting effects of bounded rationality (economic choices limited by information availability, time, etc.) and dominant role players (especially usurpers of power). Since the matter of “exclusion” (of both people and nature) is arguably the root issue in dealing with sustainability, the real vacuum has been the absence of a proper “inclusive” economic framework. Limited literature—both theoretical and empirical—exists on this topic, of which the majority is narrowly focused on inclusive growth. This leaves a gap in the literature in terms of the broader understanding of inclusive economics. The latter’s focus is on how to include more people in productive processes (countering inequality) and how to include better management of natural resources in the economic cycle to ensure not only sustainability but also genuine economic progress. Gradually an inclusive economic framework evolved (and is evolving) that can add significant value to the implementation of the SDGs and their country-specific effectiveness (i.e., their ability to ensure real economic development) . This is an important topic given the growing need for the SDGs to be more successfully implemented than the MDGs were. A key question is, thus: what would a more integrated framework of combined sustainability priorities consist of, which would increase their effectiveness and result in increased adoption of the SDGs by countries? In answering this question, the study becomes a qualitative assessment—following a theoretical literature review approach—of a possible symbiosis between inclusive economic criteria, the SDGs and sustainability indicators towards addressing global inequality.

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