

Essay

# The hard problem of society

## Supplementary note

*If your convictions mean something, you must be prepared to stand up for them and make sacrifices if necessary.*

*And if you're not ready, then you have no convictions. You just think that you do. But those are not convictions and principles; they're just thoughts in your head.*

- Aleksey Navalny.

*Do the best you can within the limits of your abilities and understanding without relying on external authorities.*

– folk wisdom

*If I could give only one piece of life advice, it would be this - 'Don't be afraid'.*

– future me

## Introduction

The original essay on the hard problem of society, accessible from <https://blog.anatolykern.com/the-hard-problem-of-society/> (DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.18884.19845) has been significantly trimmed for the sake of avoiding being read using LLMs, the purpose of covering foundational principles only and against the recommendation of the co-author, who does not wish to be named as such.

This supplementary note serves the purpose of covering this gap and correcting my mistakes with plans to have supplementary examples of the societies of different levels with transition paths.

The original essay can be equally seen as consensus model creation, a phase transition solution to emergent properties for any non-equilibrium organized complexity of the 3rd degree, with base principals equally applicable to any of these systems.

## Terminology

There are wide range of cross-used terms in various disciplines for the same meanings and I have made an attempt to compile and clarify them below:

**Agent** - decision center of any kind, e.g. ego as being a central part of human nature, aligns with needs and desires.

**Model of 'i'** - agent's alignment of principles.

**Consensus model** - agreement of agents for roles, responsibilities and rewards within society.

**Principles** - internal models, convictions, operating principles, something an agent does or does not no matter what. Align with goals and wishes, desires of motivation centers.

**Society** - union of agents, markov blankets. Can make a phase transition to operate as an agent of a higher level with all agents having individually synchronized consensus model.

Examples would be any symbiotic system from bacteria to organs, human bodies, families, clans, nations, countries, civilisations, etc.

## Scope

It is important to understand the scope of consensus model building, a model for cooperation. For limited interaction, mutualism and commensalism it can be handy to have a limited model of the interacting agent focused on understanding the operating principles to avoid any kind of parasitism.

At the same time any long term cooperation, symbiosis requires a consensus model of this limited society. Any complex system could consist of a range of societies of different scopes and levels and they could be intersecting. Agents do not need to give up any internal models to create consensus models of the cooperative society, nor there is a need to try to create consensus model for non-intersecting agents.

Not fully synced models of 'i' of the societies are the source of conflicts, preventing appearance of emerging properties of the next level.

Any synchronized society passed over the phase transition would be operating much more efficiently compared to individual sum of actions or non-transitioned society of the same size.

## Human agent

For any individual agent on the level of the human body it is beneficial to be in sync with lower levels, have an internal consensus model of 'i' before trying to build any society above (e.g. family). Early participation in society interactions helps to understand self and build self-model during early stages of development.

Main goal of the individual society is to fully understand itself, take full individual responsibility for its own actions, tending to all needs and goals, fully understanding its own weaknesses and strengths, develop skills and obtain knowledge useful for participation on a higher level.

From a personal level it means having a clear and full understanding of one's own needs, wants, wills and cans.

When planning participation in societies beyond self, each agent should be aware of their own physical and information processing limitations reflected in dunbar limits, allocating focus of attention accordingly. Current information technology development allows one-to-many interconnectivity to planetary levels.

## Roles

The key concept of the essay on 'The hard problem of society' is in the need of expansion of the model of 'i' of society participating agents by taking responsibility to have emergent properties of the new level.

It is common for the agents to associate themselves with society without building consensus model, or thinking that it is possible to enforce non-synced models on others.

This comes to the question of power, as it is impossible to take power or manipulate others into the power, without causing inevitable conflicts.

The main mistake in power games is in seeing it as 'giving the power' or 'taking the power', while it should be seen as 'taking individual responsibility' for the specific role in the consensus model of the specific limited society.

On individual level it can be taking responsibility for body needs, on family level - for all needs of family members, on country level - individual responsibility for the agents and ecosystem within the territorial borders.

Any attempt to build a cooperative society without a consensus model inevitably creates conflict.

Key role for the phase transition with the society belongs to the attractor, initiating the spread of consensus model, suitable for phase transition with attractors appearing widely within the system on synchronization of consensus model within the agents.

## Existential risk

Technological progress and development without matching societal progression creates complex, unpredictable and unmanageable existential risks linked to the individual agent conflicts, modeled through the concept of the Great Filter, with various scenarios predicting evolutionary crises in the mid-21st century.

Technological advancement and knowledge accessibility on an individual level creates a possibility of risks going beyond existential for humanity and even planetary systems as whole, meaning any unresolved conflict could end up with extinction.

Any form of violence in societal organization from direct violence to manipulation will inevitably result in retaliatory violence with the possibility of individual agents making a decision of

self-termination as result of this violence on the society scale. Current double digit statistics per 100000 on such individual events could provide the basis for estimation of the risks (as well as show the extent of lack of responsibility within them for individual agents).

Society has to go via phase transition to the next level, to cooperation on all levels to survive this evolutionary crisis. Phase transition requires a balanced advance of every individual agent.

Additional risks are arising from the lack of full responsibility within the current society models for future generations and non-human agents/societies.

## Needs and Ego

Needs arise from the agent societies of lower levels in the body, required for survival.

They are often identified as sins in religions due to simplification of the models, but result in negative focus on driving factors, subduing their positive motivational function.

Any human agent with a synchronized model of self can take full responsibility and control over the motivation drives, utilizing their positive function without subduing.

It seems that the emphasis on the balance with the ego, usually the strongest human motivation part, mentioned twice, wasn't clearly communicated in the essay.

To clarify the balancing role of the ego, every agent before deciding to participate, before investing any significant amount of time, the most valuable resource of any individual in any society, should ask simple questions:

- What is in it for me?
- Is it a fair share?
- What is my role?
- Are they clearly defined in a form of complete and consensus model?
- Do I have knowledge, skills and availability for fair contribution?

Unclear answers would mean that there are high chances for parasitic behavior and hidden intent from any side. Using the 'rule of three' could be beneficial in any interaction role for revealing hidden intent, culturally adjusted (increased for eastern higher polysemy societies, decreased for high risk).

It is the individual agent's responsibility to make a decision on initiation and continuity of any agent interaction, including the decisions of participating in symbiotic societies of higher levels based on the internal consensus model of 'i', including needs and responsibilities.

## Principles

Every agent on the individual level should take responsibility for defining his own model of 'i', including base principles and understanding of needs and desires (motivation drives).

It is also important to fully understand the difference between 'what i think i am' and principles. They are principles if you are ready to die for them, they are needs and desires otherwise.

In the same way any society needs to define their consensus model of its own principles, roles, and rewards (distribution of resources), sourcing ideas from the existing political and historical knowledge from manifests to religions and beliefs.

This consensus model has to include responsibility on individual agent level for each society's action role to avoid the transformation of model's recommendations to formalities and social parasitism in following the form without essence.

Additional comments on some of the base and universal principles originating from the game theories and provided below as an example for initiation of discussions on consensus models:

### be nice

It is evolutionary beneficial for the society to avoid conflict and provocations, which requires understanding of the other agent internal models on a level sufficient for cooperation, e.g. on principals and state of the internal 'i' model.

It is tempting for agents to use violence or manipulation for resource redistribution, but it is evolutionarily clear that there is always going to be an agent with superior intelligence, defined as the ability to recreate the complete internal model of 'i' of any agent, including ability to clearly see through any model with hidden intent above any imagination.

In a similar way, it is naive to think that superior intelligence won't have unimaginable ways to prevent use of force or initiate a rollback to preserve the ecosystem from collapse.

It is essential to understand that while agents/societies on kids level are allowed to be naughty, adults are going to be fully accountable.

Due to consciousness differences resulting in significant neurodiversity within the human population it is necessary for every agent to develop intellectual empathy and emotional intelligence of sufficient levels with self-control.

### be forgiving

Triple delay response forgiving could be a good basis to start to account for potential misunderstanding and recovery.

Potential penalty could be in a form of reverse onus of proof, e.g. treating everything as a lie in communication for three times before it can be reversed again.

### be retaliatory

Justice is essential for any successful consensus model to avoid being used by bad actors, preventing spread and misuse of societal image by social parasites.

Triple response in penalties of damage caused is a good simple start.

'The rule of three' could be a simple framework to use for intent detection in a complex ecosystem filled with societies of all kinds and levels.

Failure to prevent social cancer in a form of ego-centric drive of resources away from advertised society model will lead to imminent failure.

Avoiding parasitic behavior within the society is crucial for survival and adaptability with every agent within the society having a responsibility to track and eliminate it.

be clear

It is mandatory to adapt honesty and openness in communication excluding misinterpretation. Presence of multiple agencies with interconnected interests/societies in complex ecosystem mean it is impossible to prevent conflicts due to proxy violence.

Key component of the society with the consensus model is localized trust, resulting in lower security and resource management costs which could be achieved with every agent understanding and participating in maintaining consensus model.

## Conflicts

The key conflict of the evolutionary crisis lies within the bad actors, social parasites who do not understand the societal evolutionary transition, continuing violence and manipulations instead of choosing the path of cooperation and symbiosis, delaying phase transition and making the extinction inevitable for everyone. Exclusion from participation in phase transitioned society is the most optimal form of response.

There would be other conflicts, even in societies of material abundance and a synchronized consensus model, especially during the transition phase, so it should include a conflict resolution model from the point of defining roles based on mandatory individual principles and abilities.

Resource distribution as the main source of individual conflicts should be prioritized on covering essential needs first, accounting for needs of future generations. Society level can be judged by the accessibility of basic needs for every agent in it.

## Conclusion

The original essay could be mistakenly seen as a manifesto advocating any kind of specific system, and I want to highlight that the originating essay was intentionally trimmed to exclude any such leads. I apologize in advance for not doing the best job in making it absolutely clear.

Finally, there is no fixed solution with adaptive evolution of agents, a dynamic system with everyone's individual role to progress it further and further on levels of complexity with phase transitions to overcome each evolutionary crisis.

Societal progress should be going on taking in account physical limitation of the implementations on the local levels, allowing adaptability of the societies to the new paradigms and preservation of the old ones during transition stages.

Laws of technological and moral advance require this evolution to create societies on non-aggression and volunteer cooperation, symbiosis to avoid otherwise inevitable extinction.

And if someone wants to create a society where he would be a king living in a castle on the top of the hill then why not? Someone just needs to create a consensus model of the society where it would be viable on volunteer and non-aggression principle, clearly stating responsibilities for this role and responsibilities, for which other members would be happy to participate. Famous Robert Sheckley novel could be a starting point for the inspiration.

I would like to thank Bard, a large language model from Google AI, for their invaluable feedback and support in the development of this essay.

Latest pdf version can be obtained from: <https://blog.anatolykern.com/static/ego-s.pdf>

**Disclaimer: I am not associated with any of the organizations.**

Contacts:

twitter: <https://x.com/anatolykern> (preferable)

email: [anatolykern@gmail.com](mailto:anatolykern@gmail.com)

Initial version: 2024 Jan 18

Last updated: 2024 Jan 18

Revision: 0.5