

Overcoming Psychological Trauma-Induced Bureaucratic Oppression

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Abstract

The macro trend, from political myths and authoritarianism to decentralized cooperation and the rebirth of human rights and personal freedom, is unstoppable. However, traditional institutions – from families and small businesses to entrenched industries and nation-states – share a similar subordination model, a dominant hierarchy of ingroup members. Eliminating bureaucratic oppression is desirable regardless of one's political orientation or religious beliefs. We owe our children and their children a future free from violation and injustice and a culture that learns from mistakes and handles inevitable change in a compassionate and unbiased manner. Unfortunately, the traditional practices for overcoming bureaucratic oppression show some promise and significant limitations. This research article introduces the reader to common manipulation tactics and the victim-perpetrator mindset that plague modern societies. The article then offers a path for shedding a perpetual victimhood mentality for a more solution-oriented approach using critical and independent thinking. Next, the paper presents an everyday example of bureaucratic oppression, so there is no mistaking what it looks like, followed by an examination of how such harmful bureaucracies form in the first place. The research article then answers the question: *can we overcome tyranny and authoritarianism and make our complex, modern technological society more just and humane?* The answer is yes!

Introduction

The sources of bureaucratic oppression and dysfunction overlap remarkably with narcissistic personality disorder and other mental health issues. Therefore, before we can examine how harmful bureaucracies form, let alone how to dismantle them, we must first explore the origins of mental and personality illnesses and disorders.

Almost every mental health condition originates in childhood experience as a coping mechanism (Gabor Maté, 2021). Psychological abuse, often called emotional abuse, is characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to a behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. For example, parental alienation is an insidious form of psychological child abuse that inflicts lasting psychological harm on children. In addition, early exposure to abuse-related childhood trauma, including impaired emotional attachment to a primary caregiver, is a risk factor for personality

disorders (Ken Magid, 1987). For instance, chronic social anxiety is an attachment alarm from fear of loss or abandonment (Arlin Cuncic, 2021).

Psychologically speaking, narcissism is a personality trait everyone possesses to some degree. However, the exact cause of narcissistic personality disorder – narcissism as a pathology – is unknown. It is most likely a mixture of genes, early childhood experiences, and psychological components. Factors that promote pathological narcissism traits that commonly occur during childhood in modern societies include the following:

- Excessive admiration
- Excessive praise and criticism
- Praise for physical appearance and abilities
- Trauma caused by abuse
- Unpredictable or unreliable parental caregiving
- Learned behaviors of psychological manipulation from parents or peers.

The psychological manipulation tactics most used by narcissists and learned by their children, from our personal and work experience and research, are as follows:

Common Manipulation Tactics

	Blame	Betray	Deceive	Suppress
Shaming	✓			
Guilt-tripping	✓			
Gaslighting	✓			
Smear campaigning		✓		
Backstabbing		✓		
Denying			✓	
Projecting			✓	
Silent treatment				✓

Gaslighting uses psychological manipulation to cause another person to second-guess themselves and even question their sanity. The silent treatment – a favorite tactic among pathological narcissists – is refusing to communicate verbally with another person or even refusing to acknowledge the other person's existence. They use silent treatment to avoid or suppress another's point of view and to let others know that they are upset, if not why. In addition, pathological narcissists use the silent treatment to punish or exert control or power over the other person, a form of psychological abuse. Signs that the silent treatment is psychological abuse include the following (Jayne Leonard, 2020):

- There is an intent to hurt the other person
- The silence lasts for long periods, often years

- Silence only ends when the abuser decides it ends
- Talking to other people but not the abused target, even in the target's presence
- Forming alliances against the abused target (see smear campaigning)
- Using silence to blame the abused target (see shaming and guilt-tripping)
- Using silence or the threat of silence to manipulate the abused target

Using the silent treatment is, at best, an unproductive way to communicate. But unfortunately, when the silent treatment is part of a larger pattern of abuse rather than a form of temporary self-protection, there is not much an abused target can do about it.

Mental health conditions are transgenerational (Landstedt & Almquist, 2019). However, information on the long-term course trajectories of childhood trauma-related personality dysfunction is still scarce (Swart et al., 2017). Nonetheless, personality defects and addictions resulting from abuse-related childhood trauma do not make an adult child unvalued or unwanted. On the contrary, targeted parents are generally willing to extend their love to nurture their children's spiritual growth and mental health, no matter how they behave.

Pathological narcissists seem to believe they are better than everyone else. However, beneath their arrogant exterior, they often feel deeply insecure. In some cases, narcissists will feel very entitled, but they can grow out of it. Unfortunately, pathological narcissists look excessively to others to boost their self-esteem, cannot feel empathy, and have trouble forming authentic relationships. Sadly, they cannot simply grow out of it. However, psychotherapy – talking to a therapist and developing a mental health care plan – can be a helpful treatment approach for creating a realistic self-image and positively relating to others. Unfortunately, a parent who will brainwash a child and substitute drama for reason, for the most part, is a poor and reluctant candidate for psychotherapy.

Pathological narcissists have a wildly exaggerated sense of self-importance with the following selected symptoms; at least five of the top eight symptoms indicate pathology (Healthdirect, 2020):

- Feelings of grandiosity (1)
- Fantasizing about power, beauty, success, and intelligence (2)
- Believing themselves to be extraordinary and only understood by other exceptional people (3)
- Inflated sense of entitlement (4)
- Expecting constant praise and recognition for achievements (5)
- Taking advantage of others (6)
- Envy others or believing that others envy them (7)
- Lacking empathy (8)
- Obsession with class and status
- Excessive pride in the accomplishments of children or family.

Pathological narcissists have problems with relationships for the following reasons:

- Inability to listen to others
- Exploiting others for personal gain
- Lacking empathy, especially for perceived weaknesses
- Asserting dominance over business and personal relationships
- Ability to quickly write off friends and relatives permanently over minor or imagined slights.

When Otherwise Good People Act in Bad Faith

Experiencing trauma shatters our assumptions about the world as a just and moral place. While experiencing trauma and victimization does not mean a person has a victimhood mindset, some people see themselves, talk, and behave as perpetual victims. They constantly seek recognition for their victimhood, see themselves as morally elite, lack empathy for the pain and suffering of others, and obsess over past victimization (Scott Barry Kaufman, 2020).

A sense of moral elitism. Although perpetual victims may not suffer grandiose narcissistic delusions, they often see themselves as having immaculate morality and view everyone else as immoral, unfair, or selfish. They perceive others as threatening but see themselves as persecuted, vulnerable, and morally superior to protect their fragile self-image from further damage.

Lack of empathy for the pain and suffering of others. Perpetual victims, like pathological narcissists, are so preoccupied with their victimhood that they are oblivious to and do not care about the pain and suffering of others.

People who see themselves as perpetual victims and pathological narcissists alike feel entitled to act in bad faith. As a result, they readily violate the spirit of their relationships and agreements, including fundamental standards of decency, fairness, and reasonableness. They also make excuses, use specific agreement terms in isolation, and fabricate non-agreement language as if it were part of the agreement. In addition, they use sneaky, shifty, or underhanded behavior that destroys the right of the other party to receive the relationship or agreement benefits. For example, they may attempt to sidestep or "game" the relationship or agreement to undermine the other party in a breach of good faith.

A perpetual victim mentality does not make a person a pathological narcissist. However, research suggests that people high in narcissism also see themselves as victims of interpersonal abuse more often than people not living with the disorder (McCullough et al., 2003). Furthermore, in a recent qualitative study, relatives of people with narcissistic personalities reported that their loved ones often showed a victim mentality (Day et al., 2020). Nevertheless, although there are varying prevalence reports, only 0.5 to 5 percent of the general population in the United States are pathological narcissists (Mitra & Fluyau, 2022). Yet, when we add up all the ingroups that consider themselves victims or otherwise oppressed, their membership totals almost four times the entire population (Charles Skyes, 1992).

Overcoming Victimhood and Entitlement

Validation of experienced trauma is essential for therapeutic recovery from the trauma and victimization. Disastrously, moral elitism stunts growth and development and hampers the ability to see the self and the world in all its complexity. Without empathy, a perpetual victim misses opportunities to help those perceived to be in their outgroup. Unfortunately, individuals and ingroup members involved in victimization tend to deny and are unwilling to empathize with the suffering and pain of outsiders. Instead, they obsess over past offenses rather than thinking about or discussing possible solutions.

Perpetual offenders tend to downplay the severity of their transgression, while perpetual victims perceive the perpetrator's motivation as arbitrary, cold, immoral, and dreadful. As a victim or perpetrator, the mindset one develops naturally affects how each party perceives and remembers the same situation. The three main cognitive biases that characterize the tendency for interpersonal victimhood are interpretation (exaggeration, anticipation), attribution (harmful, malicious intent), and negative memory bias (recalling only betrayal, anger, and disappointment). All three biases contribute to an unwillingness to forgive others for their perceived transgressions.

Perpetual victimhood offers the anxiously attached person a practical framework for constructing their insecure relationships with others to garner attention, compassion, and approval. At the same time, they experience and express complicated negative feelings within their relationships. Anxiously attached individuals tend to depend on the acceptance and continual validation of others. They seek reassurance continually, stemming from doubts about their social value, and rely on others to validate their self-esteem and worth. However, they also anticipate rejection from others.

Victims can leverage their victimhood as a power play, whether or not they have unjustly suffered. Perpetual victims are less willing to forgive their perpetrators after an offense and have an increased desire for revenge rather than mere avoidance. A strong sense of *collective* victimhood is also associated with a low willingness to forgive and an increased desire for revenge. Thankfully, multiple perspective-taking and intentionally emphasizing different viewpoints can break the cycle of perpetual victimhood.

From victimhood to growth: a paradigm shift. We live in a culture where many political and special interest groups and individuals compete in a Victimhood Olympics with a sense of entitlement for happiness and fulfillment. As a result, social change struggles are more likely to set an aggressive, disparaging, and condescending tone. Fortunately, our traumas don't have to define us. Is it impossible to experience trauma without making victimhood the core of our identity? Is it possible to become a better person by instilling hope and possibility in those suffering from abuse-related trauma? What if we learn to have a healthy pride for our ingroup without having outgroup distrust and hate? Does it not pay to be kind if we expect kindness from others? What if no one is entitled to anything, but we all are worthy of being treated like valuable human beings?

Not everyone in our outgroup is evil. Nor is everyone in our ingroup perfect. But we are all humans with the underlying need to belong, to be seen, heard, and matter. Seeing reality as clearly as possible is essential for learning and adapting to change. One of the crucial steps on that path is to shed the perpetual victimhood mindset for something more productive, constructive, hopeful, and conducive to building positive relationships with others.

Thinking Critically and Independently

A population of truth-seeking, aware, and well-informed people capable of critical thinking threatens perpetrators everywhere. Wishful thinking attributes reality to what one wishes to be accurate or is the tenuous justification of what one wants to believe. On the other hand, critical thinking is a manner of reasoning that employs curiosity, creativity, skepticism, analysis, and logic as follows (IADQGA, 2022):



- **Curiosity** wanting to learn with an openness to multiple points of view
- **Creativity** imaginatively combining information from multiple sources and perspectives
- **Skepticism** thinking critically when engaging with new content, ideas, or perspectives. NOT a victimhood mindset.
- **Analysis** systematically examining and evaluating evidence and information sources
- **Logic** reaching fact-based conclusions that are justifiable by reason.

Truth-seeking tends to occur in communities emerging from a period of prolonged strife or authoritarian rule. Truth-seeking processes allow societies to examine and come to grips with past crimes and atrocities and prevent their future repetition.

Improving Bureaucracy

Violence, knowledge, and charisma define the possibilities for social dominance. The modern state and the variety in which power can expand result from sovereignty, bureaucracy, and competitive politics. Certain freedoms – to move, disobey, or create and transform social relationships, are taken for granted by anyone who has not been taught and brainwashed into

obedience. The first two freedoms set the stage for the third, most creative one (Graeber & Wengrow, 2021).

The overall direction of our civilization is a broad movement away from overlords toward constitutional structures that distribute power so that autocratic tyranny can never return and tyranny of the majority is impossible. Intentional projects for reshaping societies according to the fabric of reality have occurred throughout human history and are possible now. Technology – material or social – is any application of scientific knowledge to the practical aims of human life. What is true of material and technological creativity to curtail inflation is even more true of organizational and social innovation to reduce coordination costs.

Traditional households and governments shared a standard subordination model – a dominant hierarchy of ingroup members. Temples, the first factories, were charitable institutions. Kings and enslaved people inhabited different ends of the same power structure. If someone attempted to create a new way of life, a new temple, or a new vision of social relations, their perpetrators instantly marked them as provocative and insurrectionist. War is waged between two sides where one group treats all members of the other group as equal targets. It takes a combination of ritual, drugs, and psychological techniques to convince members of either side to kill each other.

However, complex systems are not all centralized in the natural or social world. What is the purpose of new knowledge if not to reshape our conceptions of who we are and what we might become? We have the freedom to create unique and different forms of social reality as proponents of the old models eventually die. Assuming civilization and complexity always come at the price of freedom, and that participatory democracy cannot possibly scale are persistent political myths. Bureaucratic oppression can be tamed to serve rather than strangle those in its clutches (Jim Paterson, 2014).

An everyday example of bureaucratic oppression (Schuelke, 2017). At the street level, America's entrenched multi-billion-dollar divorce and child support industry has taken on a life of its own, a grotesque abuse of power shielded by legal profession self-regulation. An air of intimidation discourages family lawyers from advocating zealously for their targeted clients for fear of being blackballed by state family courts. The enforcement techniques and propaganda methods, first installed in families undergoing the stress of separation and divorce, have been applied scientifically for decades. Moreover, these techniques – starting with unmarried welfare families and later expanded to non-welfare families – have been improved on an ever-widening scale for potential rollout to perhaps every American family.

Judges and general magistrates shape public policy as front-line bureaucrats within the divorce and child support industry, with its many federal-state, public-private, and international partnerships. They seem inundated with hearings and conferences and have tremendous autonomy and discretionary power in deciding the fates of parents, children, and families. For example, a general magistrate may stereotype a middle-class parent as – an ordinary, self-employed, noncustodial, child support debtor who cannot afford expert witnesses and full-scope legal representation for years in family court. A judge then rubber-stamps the general magistrate's impetuous recommendations for the targeted parent.

The judge and general magistrate may withhold vital information from the self-represented parent to restrict access to the family court and reduce their respective workloads to higher-profile, more lucrative cases. In this example, the judge and general magistrate are little more than detached bureaucrats, pressed for time and showing a startling lack of care and empathy. For instance, the judge may sever all physical, phone, and text messaging contact between the children and their targeted parent for months and years while processing the case.

The child support and family court system is a means to convert unmarried parents to conform to what powerholders deem acceptable for their family's social class and status, which is assumed to be permanent. The system counts on greed within the legal profession and the effectiveness of federal subsidies and incentives to drive state government behavior. In theory, power holders establish control with a standardized and uniform model enforced by an authoritarian government bureaucracy. But, in truth, the sheer complexity and continually changing circumstances of even one family are far beyond a bureaucrat's comprehension and control. "I've been through capital cases that have been less complicated and burdensome than this one," moaned one judge about a simple child support case at one point in time.

A marital settlement agreement between parents and the final judgment ordered by a judge lacks full disclosure to the parents that the agreement cannot be readily changed or amended by both parents unless the court agrees. Also not disclosed is systemic corruption encouraged by conflicting incentives, discretionary power wielded by low-level bureaucrats, lack of transparency, and judicial immunity. Through nothing less than fraudulent misrepresentation, the agreements and court orders permanently trap parents in the divorce and child support industry for private gain. Therefore, the agreements and court orders are void even when unwary parents sign their settlement agreements.

The mainstream media and academia are accomplices to the divorce and child support industry. One of the most crucial roles that the local and national media plays is to ensure that the American public never sees the long-term impact of family court and unmanageable support debt on families. We see instead judges scolding noncustodial parents. We hear slogans, stereotypes, and half-truths if we hear anything at all. Media reporters, politicians, professors, and bureaucrats have adopted each other's points of view to manipulate public opinion and manufacture consent for this corrupt and dysfunctional system.

Judges and general magistrates create extraneous adverse effects on the major life decisions of parents and the long-term health and success of their children. These front-line bureaucrats violate parents' inalienable right to self-determination, including the right to gain a living and provide for their families by work they freely choose. They also discourage business ownership and traditional employment by placing parents under the constant threat of incarceration for unmanageable child support debt on the pretext of contempt of court.

Judges and general magistrates often discourage a noncustodial parent's involvement in the children's upbringing. Instead, they may suggest that the parent move away or have little contact with the children to earn more money to satisfy a state-imposed support debt. In addition, general

magistrates disregard noncustodial parents' direct support and the cost of maintaining a second home for the children to visit. Therefore, judges and general magistrates routinely contradict and reverse core principles recommended by an advisory panel, resulting in the Family Support Act of 1988, which created their high-paying jobs in the first place.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16(3), the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society. No one is more committed than parents to their children's physical health and safety, financial security, spiritual growth, and mental health. However, divorce is a game-changer. When parents divorce, they remain central to the family's needs and well-being, albeit now from two different worlds. Unfortunately, our society attempts to destroy the unmarried family nucleus and siphon off the family's energy to benefit the few.

Eliminating or reducing bureaucratic oppression is desirable regardless of one's political orientation or religious beliefs. Of course, we can dismantle any harmful bureaucracy. However, we must start by closely examining how it formed in the first place to prevent it from happening again. Bureaucracies are practices and endowments that create harm for the many while benefiting the few. They are built and subsidized in response to a fear of loss, resulting in attempts to regain local control, notwithstanding overall policies or human rights and needs. The consecutive missteps into silos and bureaucracies are 1) parochialism, 2) territorialism, 3) empire-building, and ultimately 4) self-regulation.

Parochialism: rules that protect an ingroup from outsiders. As responsibilities grow for each ingroup, so does the pressure and accountability to meet local goals. Out of necessity, in response to traumatic stresses and demands, ingroup leaders focus on their narrow purposes in isolation from the legal entity, public institution, or society's overall goals. When this happens, ensuring they don't mismanage their part of the process becomes all that matters, even at the expense of mission success. The ingroup may even stop caring altogether about what happens outside its silo.

Parochialism develops when an ingroup views the world strictly through the lens of its narrow scope and goals. The ingroup judges the relative importance of other activities and outgroups by how they affect ingroup objectives. As a result, people fiercely protect their silos to avoid the possibility of failure or loss – of time, respect, resources, or power over practices and preferences. They perceive the risk of failure as due to the interfering demands of outsiders, even if those requests and suggestions would result in tremendous success for the corporation, institution, or society. As a result, parochial managers create rules, policies, and procedures that prevent outsiders from infringing on them and impeding their processes and parochial goals. These rules protect the silo but make intergroup work inflexible and unnecessarily hazardous.

Territorialism: controlling ingroup resources. Another result of growth and increased complexity is resource scarcity and risk aversion. Resource competition becomes intense when a corporation, institution, or society already suffers from parochialism. Loss aversion creates a natural tendency to protect and maintain control over resources. Territorialism means exerting power over one's turf to the extent that it harms others in the same corporation, institution, or society. Members effectively become prisoners of their ingroups.

Empire building: gaining control over the resources and responsibilities of another group.

Each ingroup begins to focus more on its narrow view of success, which does not match the view of the corporation, institution, or society. The ingroup moves toward self-sufficiency to maintain control, assert authority, or fend off a loss of time, respect, resources, or power. Empire builders either claim control over another group or if they cannot subsume the outgroup covertly or overtly, create a duplicate internal group. Overt attempts involve reorganization to subordinate one group to another. Covert control is achieved by instituting rules, procedures, and approvals that guarantee the empire-building group has the final say over what the outgroup does. What may seem like a way to increase efficiency by working around a stifling bureaucracy adds costs, complexity, conflict, and more bureaucracy.

Self-regulation: dominating a higher-ranking executive, board of directors, or independent oversight agency. The ultimate in empire-building, self-regulation, is when a powerful ingroup dominates a corporation, institution, or entire society. For instance, regulatory capture is when a regulatory agency created to act in the public interest becomes dominated by an ingroup that controls the industry or sector they are responsible for regulating. Or the industry or sector is altogether unregulated.

The sources of bureaucratic oppression, with a striking overlap in pathological narcissism and perpetual victimhood, include the following:

- ***Status differences.*** A sense of superiority carries substantial opportunities for oppression and unequal benefit distribution, disclosure, and protection through scorn, overreach, ruthlessness, systemic bullying, and dehumanization.
- ***Stranger relations.*** Dealing solely with distant, unknown individuals or with whom one is unfamiliar and who are relatively easy to dismiss.
- ***Bureaucratic pathologies.*** For example, rewarding police officers for making arrests and obtaining confessions rather than reducing crime or awarding sole custody to one parent for making false allegations against the other.
- ***Divergent incentives.*** Ingroup members don't directly benefit from providing effective or gracious service to outgroup members. Instead, they establish and maintain cordial ingroup social relationships while treating the outgroup members they serve as perpetrators. Therefore, the prevailing sentiment is to erase or minimize one's dealing with outgroup members rather than communicating meaningfully and providing needed services.

It is as if everyone in a dysfunctional bureaucracy shares a perpetual victim mentality. Traditional practices to overcome bureaucratic oppression on any scale include the following:

Traditional Practices to Overcome Bureaucratic Oppression

- **Due process** – The United States Constitution prohibits the government from taking or denying Americans' right to fair treatment through the established judicial system in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. In addition, due process was first provided in administrative settings by the 1970 Supreme Court of the United States (*Goldberg v Kelly*), granting citizens an oral or written hearing before their benefits can be terminated or reduced.
- **Ombudspersons** – An independent individual, office, or agency that stands apart from the administrative bureaucracy and is authorized to intervene in the bureaucracy's procedures on behalf of individuals.
- **Service-centered administration** – This management approach strives to modify or eliminate the procedures that produce oppression and instill an ethos of leadership and service. A prevailing attitude is that not only corporations but also institutions and societies provide benefits or services for what are, in essence, clients and customers.
- **Market mechanisms** – Determining budgets by the leadership and services successfully provided.

All these practices show promise and limitations. For example, *due process* can immerse the average person into a foreign world where strange, barely comprehensible rituals and remote and inaccessible authority can lead to disastrous results. In addition, *ombudspersons* can be overly aggressive with bureaucrats or lose their independence by becoming absorbed into the bureaucracy. *Client-centered administration* often amounts to little more than appeals to be nice. Finally, *market mechanisms* often undermine the purposes of such regulatory programs and may require a massive restructuring that can produce more problems than it solves. Even though *innovation* is risky, fighting and defending the past can be far more dangerous than building the future.

Conclusion

We need imaginative and entrepreneurial leaders external to bureaucracies whose role is to respond to suggestions and opportunities rather than complaints – who design new entities and institutions and fundamentally transform existing ones. Making our complex, technological society more just and humane. We owe our children and future generations a future free from class exploitation and unjust inequality and a culture that learns from mistakes and handles inevitable change in a compassionate and unbiased manner. We accomplish this by addressing the sources of bureaucratic oppression in new ways as follows (Tom Rieger, 2010):

A New Approach for Overcoming Bureaucratic Oppression

- **Parochialism** – Revamp corporate, institutional, or social goals and contracts. Audit rules, policies, and practices – look for ways to meet human needs without bureaucracy.
- **Territorialism** – Audit accountability and decentralize decision-making authority to increase productivity and efficiency. Develop guiding principles to allocate resources that align objectives and priorities with human rights and needs.
- **Empire building** – Develop improved awareness of human rights, freedoms, and needs, and establish corporate, institutional, and societal priorities and performance expectations to protect and fulfill them. Allocate resources based on those expectations. Implement guiding principles based on human needs and overall mission as a final arbiter of resource allocation, planning, and decision-making authority. Establish a feedback mechanism to identify situations where resource constraints prevent accomplishing strategic goals promptly.
- **Self-regulation** – No ingroup is left to regulate itself without oversight, checks, and balances. On the other hand, people want open and responsive solutions to socioeconomic and political challenges, not more laws and government. Collaborative solutions increasingly come from sources outside existing bureaucracies. Regulation should encourage organizational and social innovation investment and promote and protect fundamental human needs and rights.
- **Organizational and social Innovation** – Shifting attention and redeploying resources away from struggling with bureaucratic oppression toward building new entities and institutions that acknowledge and safeguard human rights and freedoms and better meet human needs.

It is easier to build bureaucracies than to dismantle them. Experimental learning on any scale takes boundless will, consistency, and courage. It requires early wins, a strong commitment, and dedicated effort from everyone affected to counter institutionalized resistance. Yet, learning from our mistakes and embracing change is essential for our society if we wish to thrive and adapt to human needs and well-being. It means solving for tyranny and authoritarianism with new thinking, picking up where we left off in 1776 and 1788 as a rapidly growing fledgling country with 2.5 and 3.9 million citizens, respectively. It means the United States ratified a human rights treaty signed by President Carter in 1977 (ICESCR, 1966). It means protecting everyone's rights and freedoms, not just the wealthiest one-tenth of one percent, and removing barriers to situational awareness and change for enormous performance gains. We cannot afford to waste the crisis we are experiencing today.

The macro trend, from political myths and authoritarianism to decentralized cooperation and the rebirth of human rights and personal freedom, is unstoppable. A structure that fosters experimental learning and sustainable, inclusive growth can unleash the creative potential of everyone, from families and small businesses to industries and societies. We can (again) overcome tyranny and authoritarianism, after all!

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