

Resonating Corrupted Coin: How a Poor, Divisive, and Passive Majority Arose, Contrary to Periodic (ILO) Pledges

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Abstract : *Human dignity is the basis for human rights and is central to “decent work.” However, a lack of decent work, which causes job stress, (mental) health complaints, productivity loss, and inequality, is spreading worldwide. Decent work considers employees’ aspirations, and therefore, stimulates psycho-synthesis, which promotes authentic self-worth, inner freedom, empathy, trust, and prosocial attitudes and behaviors. In other words, decent work promotes human dignity or humanization, including equality. Humanization then allows employees to develop sound paradigms that enable them to internalize and practice human rights and establish social trust and order, leading to an equitable, peaceful, and loving coexistence. Conversely, a lack of decent work neglects employees’ aspirations and disturbs the psycho-synthesis process, creating the opposite effect. Corruption contributes to a lack of decent work and cripples the ability of national and international governing authorities, such as the ILO, to execute good governance. Thus, the corrupted coin resonates globally and periodically renders proclaimed beliefs of governing authorities to unjustly inspire hope for change and regulate the rising poor majority, giving rise to divisive and passive behavior. In this transdisciplinary study, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used while meta-interpretations were conducted.*

Keywords: *Corruption; Decent Work; Hermeneutics; Paradigms; Transdisciplinarity; UN*

1. Introduction

Human dignity is the basis for human rights and is central to decent work [1-3]. Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrated its 67th anniversary on 10 December 2015, most of the world population continues to suffer from a lack of decent work and, consequently, unsound paradigms [4, 5].

This constructivist psychological study investigates a) how the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) concept of decent work humanizes employees and allows them to create sound paradigms, thereby cultivating their capacity to internalize and practice human rights and establish social trust and order, leading to an equitable, peaceful, and loving coexistence; and b) how a lack of decent work dehumanizes employees and produces unsound paradigms, complicating employees’ ability to internalize and practice human rights and eroding social trust and order, leading to the rise of a poor, divisive, and passive majority, all of which form the basis of the twofold research question.

Constructivist psychology emphasizes human participation in constructing knowledge and can be characterized as follows: a) the perspective of the observer and the object of observation are inseparable; b) the nature of meaning is relative; c) phenomena are context-based; and d) the process of generating knowledge and understanding is social, inductive, hermeneutical, and qualitative.

In addition, constructivist psychological studies stress the viability of, not the validity of, knowledge claims when examining epistemological issues [6, 7]. Epistemologically, the notion of value-free research has been challenged [8, 9]. Therefore, the term “methodology” rather than “method” is used here because method focuses on exact knowledge and procedures, whereas methodology emphasizes good judgment and principles [10, 11].

Within this constructivist paradigm, a transdisciplinary study was conducted. Transdisciplinarity addresses the present world across the different disciplines and beyond all disciplines, aiming for the unity of knowledge [12].

2. Research Methodology

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used in this transdisciplinary study. Hermeneutic

phenomenology is based on the notion that people create meaning (the hermeneutic aspect) in lived experiences (the phenomenological aspect) through dialogue, taking the perspective that cognition is a product of particular circumstances of time and place [13]. Cognition (i.e., the underlying mental processes involved in generating knowledge and comprehension) involves both epistemology and ontology. Hermeneutics integrates epistemological and ontological perspectives [14-16]. From an epistemological perspective, researchers are more concerned with how people know what they know and what can be known. Ontology is concerned with the form and nature of reality, and therefore, what can be known. Consequently, the methodological question is the following: "How can a researcher discover whether whatever he or she believes or theorizes can be known (true)?" Thus, the epistemological and ontological perspectives are integrated because the former addresses whether or not the latter can be realized [17, 18] or is viable [6, 7].

To answer a research question, hermeneutic phenomenology engages in understanding texts to create a rich and deep account of phenomena, including through the use of intuition [19]. A fixed set of procedures to structure the hermeneutic process cannot exist because interpretation arises from a dialectical movement between pre-understanding and texts [10, 11, 20]. Hence, an interpretive framework (including pre-understandings) can be revised during data analysis after being defined [21]. An interpretive framework provides a basic perspective on what the researcher theorizes with regard to the phenomena studied, how they relate to each other, and how they link within the model, which requires methodological choices (including the procedure) to guide the entire research process [19, 22, 23].

3. Procedure: An Interactive and Iterative Process [24]

1. First, I determine an interpretive framework for the following phenomena: paradigms, human dignity, decent work, lack of decent work, corruption, and good governance and I address how these elements are interconnected.
2. Next, the concept of decent work is compared to the conditions and practices of working people to investigate how these conditions and practices impact paradigms.
3. Subsequently, any discrepancy between the aforementioned theory and practice is explored, and explanatory models are derived.

4. The issues that surface are then summarized and conclusions are drawn that partially answer the twofold research question.
5. Finally, I conclude by articulating the next step for sanctioning the creation of decent work and demonstrate the viability of the complete answer to the twofold research question.

To generate the findings in this transdisciplinary research, a hermeneutic approach was also used in conducting the literature search and review [24], while meta-analyses were conducted of published interpretations of qualitative data or meta-interpretations [25]. These meta-interpretations are intended to compensate for the failure of mainstream psychology and the social sciences to establish sound paradigms and to globally combat social injustice.

4. The Interpretive Framework: Paradigms, Human Dignity, Decent Work, Lack of Decent Work, Corruption, Poor Governance, Good Governance, Social Trust, Social Distrust, and Limitations

4.1. Paradigms as Key Factors

The governing paradigms are the key factors in how humanization and dehumanization effect internalization and the ability to practice human rights; further, they partially define how the brain works. Paradigms are mental models that color our modes of (self-) perception by filtering information; these filters are continually conditioned by life experiences. Our modes of (self-) perception, in turn, help sort, organize, and classify information; they guide expectations and incorporate acquired knowledge, experience and beliefs—all of which are also subject to one's moods—to interpret the world [26]. Many components of one's personality underlie one's perceptions, such as motives, attitudes, preferences, aversions, biases, and general orientations toward life [27]. Therefore, paradigms can also be viewed as perceptions that influence both attitudes and behaviors [28] and, as a result, affect our ability to practice what we believe is self-fulfilling and fair [29]. *Thus, our practical choices largely result from our paradigms, which constantly interact with new information and undergo changes.*

Changing our practical choices, then, requires corresponding changes in our paradigms, and the ability to change our paradigms presumes a sense of inner freedom [30-34].

For centuries, the mind-matter dualism paradigm dominated Western thinking. This paradigm considers the ways in which humans perceive reality and respond to that perception. Within this paradigm, reality was viewed as external, absolute, and independent of the observer [35]. Approximately a century ago, the mind-matter dualism paradigm was refuted by the wave-particle complementarity principle in quantum physics. This complementarity principle was derived from the observation that the observer substantially affects the observation's results because the observer chooses what to look for. In other words, reality involves both the observer and the observed [36-38], which can explain the interconnectedness between people's paradigms and their perceived environment [12]; in this paper, the interconnection is between people's paradigms and decent work or the lack thereof.

4.2. Decent Work, Human Dignity or Humanization, and Sound Paradigms

The term "decent work" was officially introduced and substantiated by the ILO in 1999 and comprises the following:

- considers people's aspirations in their working lives;
- offers fair income, security in the workplace, and social protection;
- indicates better prospects for personal development and social integration for families;
- implies freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and
- entails equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

These attributes refer to the following conditions: freedom, equity (fairness), security, and human dignity [1, 2]. Furthermore, human dignity is the basis for human rights as enshrined in the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [3].

By *considering employees' aspirations* (a combination of unconscious and conscious signals and processes) such that they can balance the demands of work and home life as well as have opportunities for growth and advancement, decent work stimulates a smooth unconscious-conscious relationship from a true self-perspective or psycho-synthesis [39]. Psycho-synthesis promotes authentic self-worth, inner freedom (including the exercise of free will), empathy, trust, and creativity [33, 34, 40-43]; it enhances employees' cognitive-affective functioning and produces sound paradigms. In other words, this form of humanization generates sound paradigms [44, 45]. These positive frames of

reference, especially free will and empathy (i.e., sensitivity to the needs of others), cultivate one's capacity to internalize and practice human rights. Assagioli [30] emphasized the essential function of (free) will in the psycho-synthesis process, asserting that empathy positively affects attitudes and behaviors, whereas a lack of empathy negatively affects them [46-48].

4.3. Lack of Decent Work, Dehumanization, and Unsound Paradigms

Dehumanization robs people of their basic human rights, such as freedom, equality, autonomy, and growth (due to a lack of decent work), and thus of their dignity, in turn eroding trust and fairness in the workplace [49]. By *neglecting employees' aspirations*, a lack of decent work disturbs the psycho-synthesis process, producing a faulty self-perception and restricting inner freedom, empathy, trust, and creativity [29, 33, 34, 40, 41, 50-52]. Such neglect diminishes employees' cognitive-affective functioning and produces unsound paradigms [5, 53, 54]. These negative frames of reference, especially a lack of free will and empathy (i.e., insensitivity to the needs of others), which negatively affect attitudes and behaviors as noted, complicate one's ability to internalize and practice human rights.

4.4. Corruption, Poor Governance, and Lack of Decent Work

Corruption, bribes, and bribery [55-57] contribute to a lack of decent work and exacerbate poverty and inequality [58-60]. These negative effects are due to poor governance.

4.5. Good Governance and Decent Work

In contrast, good governance follows the rule of law and is transparent, responsive, equitable, inclusive, and accountable [61], which contribute to the creation of decent work.

4.6. Social Trust as a Common Link

More specifically, democratic procedures that offer fair income distribution and freedom from the corruption of public officials and private actors enhance social trust. Social trust is closely related to empathy and is one of the most important

integrative forces in society [62-64]; it links sound paradigms, human dignity, decent work, freedom from corruption, equality, and good governance, which generate positive frames of reference. *These observations refer to the first portion of the twofold research question that investigates how the ILO's concept of decent work leads to an equitable, peaceful, and loving coexistence.*

4.7. Social Distrust as a Common Link

Income inequality and corruption create social distrust [64]. Social distrust links unsound paradigms, dehumanization, a lack of decent work, corruption, inequality, and poor governance, which generate negative frames of reference. *These observations refer to the basis of the twofold research question that investigates how a lack of decent work leads to the rise of a poor, divisive, and passive majority.*

4.8. Limitations of this Transdisciplinary Study

Frames of reference incorporate personality components and other schema-like structures, such as schemata, frames or scripts, and reside within paradigms, which color perceptions and affect both attitudes and behaviors. However, the exact cognitive dynamics that promote the manifestation of such attitudes and behaviors are not fully understood. We could use intuition or approach problems from different perspectives by employing alternate paradigms (i.e., including other frames of reference) for exercising free will (which is also subject to moods) [26-28, 65]. The dynamic coalitions of brain-area networks, which produce cognitive-emotional behaviors, cannot be conceptualized as specifically affective or cognitive; therefore, the affect-cognition distinction is thought to be more of a phenomenological issue than an ontological question [66, 67].

5. Decent Work, the Practices of Working People, and the Impact of these Practices on Paradigms

5.1. Vocational Training, Decent Work, and Impact on Paradigms

Although the term “decent work” was coined 16 years ago, as noted earlier, the concept was first created in 1919 under the umbrella term “humane conditions of labor.” An integral part of humane conditions of labor or the concept of decent work is vocational training, which facilitates the implementation of decent work. The right to vocational training is an essential part of many of the most prominent universal and regional declarations and agreements on human rights, such as the ILO Constitution (Preamble 1919, the Philadelphia Declaration 1944) and the Social and Labour Declaration of the Mercosur (1998). According to the International Labour Convention (ILO) 142 (1975, entry into force 1977), vocational training and guidance policies and programs should be aimed at advancing people’s aptitude for understanding their work and social environment and effectively influencing people individually and collectively. This notion indicates that, the right to vocational training aids in shaping decent work. Vocational training is, educationally speaking, a formative element in people’s lives as well as an instrument for enrichment, self-fulfillment, and personal development and, through people who work, the development of society [68, 69]. Thus, vocational training promotes a positive frame of reference and can add meaning and joy to work, life, and society; *this supports the notion underlying the first portion of the twofold research question that decent work leads to sound paradigms and consequently to an equitable, peaceful, and loving coexistence.*

Employees deserve fair treatment at work (*or decent work*), including basic human rights such as equality, autonomy, growth, and freedom. Workplace practices that uphold these rights and freedoms promote a trusting atmosphere. Many American employment practices, for example, generate distrust and injustice in their organizations because they neglect basic rights and freedoms [49]. Moreover, the “fairness explanation” argues that democratic procedures, which offer fair income distribution and freedom from corrupt public officials and private actors, will develop norms of trustworthiness and enhance social trust [64]. Trust is the foundation for social order within and beyond organizations and is an integrative force in society; this is especially true in an increasingly complex and fast-paced global environment [63, 70].

Research has shown that organizations with high levels of trust are more successful, adaptive, and innovative than organizations with pervasive distrust [71]. Indeed, the most productive work relationships are based on trust [72], and a meta-analysis found positive and substantive correlations between employee satisfaction and business productivity [73]. Fostering employee satisfaction involves attending to employees’ true emotional and physical needs [74], i.e., *engaging in decent work*. Productivity is a win-

win for employers, employees, and society [75] alike and adds meaning and joy to work, life, and society.

Together, these observations indicate that vocational training programs, decent work (humanization), basic human rights and freedoms, democratic procedures, fair income distribution, freedom from corruption, social trust and order, employee satisfaction, productivity, adaptability, innovativeness, and sound paradigms all nurture each other. These positive effects of vocational training and decent work on paradigms are due to good governance [61].

5.2. Lack of Decent Work and the Impact on Paradigms

Periodically, the ILO has emphasized the importance of vocational training and established vocational training and guidance programs that should have contributed to creating decent work, sound paradigms, and fairness. However, the availability of decent work remains a worldwide problem. Corporate abuse and job stress are becoming increasingly prevalent globally, and job-related stress is a concern for a large majority of the European workforce [76]. Similarly, more than eight in 10 employed Americans report that they are stressed at their jobs [77], while nearly half of working Canadians say that work is the most stressful part of their lives [78]. According to a survey by *Business Consultancy Regus*, half of working professionals worldwide are today more stressed than a year ago. China features the largest number of stressed workers: 75 percent of the respondents who were polled reported a rise in stress levels. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents in Germany, 52 percent in Belgium and South Africa, and 51 percent in India reported increased stress levels. For businesses, the greatest issue with job-related stress is productivity loss because stressed workers are more likely to suffer from physical and mental health problems [4]. Between 10 and 15 years ago, mental health complaints due to work problems exceeded the number of complaints caused by any other life stressor, including financial or family problems [54]. Further, job stress-related suicide rates have become alarming, particularly in wealthy countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, China, Japan, and South Korea [79].

Evidence shows that corporate abuse (*lack of decent work*) has many different guises and that an abusive corporate culture generates fear and dependency in employees. These lead to job stress and (mental) health problems [5], and furthermore, fear and mental disturbances are likely to produce destructive beliefs and feelings as well as

maladaptive responses [80, 81], *all of which support the notion underlying the twofold research question that a lack of decent work leads to unsound paradigms.*

Together, these observations confirm the notion that negligence of vocational training programs and basic rights and freedoms, corporate abuse (lack of decent work or dehumanization), fear, dependency, job stress, (mental) health problems, destructive beliefs and feelings, maladaptive responses, suicide, and productivity loss are all positively interrelated. The development of decent work and its predecessors, such as the ILO term “humane conditions of labor,” as highlighted previously, were meant to combat such negative effects.

5.3. ILO, Corruption, Poor Governance, and Inequality

The ILO was created in 1919, approximately 100 years ago, and, judging from its preamble, it was inspired by the notion that “the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labor is an obstacle in the way of other nations, which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries” [68]. To illustrate the foregoing, one could imagine that in 1919, when the forerunner of the United Nations (UN), the League of Nations, was established, it planted the conceptual seeds (humane conditions of labor) in all member states and designated the ILO as a specialized agency to help nurture and grow these seeds. The term “humane conditions of labor” was subsequently changed to “decent work,” and the goal of the ILO was to fertilize the seeds of decent work so they would grow into mature trees, bearing fruits that we could enjoy today. Unfortunately, most of these seeds did not develop; in fact, they are dying, and often when they try to recover, they are linked with cost inflation. Thus, the humanization process has been saddled with accusations of contributing to cost inflation, which is used as an excuse to continue exploiting cheap labor (including women and children) in the so-called interest of competition, which is supposed to serve humanity, *the prototype of an antithesis*. For example, approximately four out of every 1,000 people worldwide are currently living as slaves; India features the highest number of people (more than 14 million) living in slavery [82]. Similarly, one in every six children worldwide between the ages of five and seventeen is exploited as cheap labor, excluding 10 million children who are involved in the sex industry [83, 84]. Approximately one in seven people worldwide suffers from chronic hunger, and approximately one in three people lives in avoidable poverty [58, 59]. Poverty is not limited to developing countries. For

example, 46 million Americans of all ethnicities and backgrounds are living at or below the poverty line, and 23 percent of the EU population is poor or socially deprived [85]. In contrast, the richest 10 percent of adults holds 85 percent of global wealth [86], and 737 corporations control 80 percent of the global economy [60]. Income inequality and corruption erode social trust and order [63, 64, 70]. *Based on these circumstances, the aforementioned prototype of an antithesis clearly indicates that the real cause of so-called cost inflation is productivity loss due to poor governance, corruption, inequality, eroded social trust and order, and dehumanization.*

Many governing authorities appear to have surrendered their power of oversight in return for bribes that serve narrow corporate interests, all of which lead to the unfair distribution of resources that are essential to life. Useful institutions have turned into unscrupulous market instruments that destroy livelihoods, displace people, and stimulate an insatiable quest for money. These disguised market instruments seduce many persons into acting in ways that are destructive to themselves, their families, and their communities [55, 56, 87]. Meanwhile, according to the European Parliament's Special Committee on Organized Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering (CRIM), corruption costs the European Union (EU) €120 billion per year: twenty million cases of corruption were recorded in the public sector alone [57].

The foregoing observations support the notion that corruption, bribes, and bribery destroy the ability of many governing authorities worldwide to execute good governance, which stimulates a lack of decent work and engenders (child) slavery, poverty, inequality, social distrust, and productivity loss. Thus, corruptive political decisions, i.e., poor governance, give rise to job stress, (mental) health problems, and unsound paradigms, which disturb the social trust and order despite pledges inspiring hope for change, as highlighted earlier in the preamble of the ILO Constitution (1919), the International Labour Convention (ILO) 142 (1975, entry into force 1977), and the official ILO creation of the term "decent work" (1999). Strikingly, worker exploitation and neglect continue even though the International Labour Conference adopted the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work on June 18, 1998, and its follow-up (revised 2010, June 15). The ILO Declarations automatically apply to all Members and are not subject to ratification. This Declaration commits member states (including their local governing authorities) to respect, promote, and realize, in good faith and in accordance with the relevant Constitutions, the principles and rights relating to the following ideals:

- the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor;
- the effective abolition of child labor; and
- the elimination of discrimination with respect to employment and occupation [88].

However, these ideals have not been realized. It is difficult to imagine that money, superiority or any other form of power could have been more essential over the past century than abolishing every form of (mental) slavery and dehumanization. These human rights violations produce (mental) health complaints and erode social trust and order; meanwhile, the constitution of each member state in the United Nations (in each state's own words) *places people first.*

6. Discrepancy between Theory and Practice as well as Explanatory Models

The basic question that arises is the following: What might have led to the lack of free will and empathy as well as the inability to practice proclaimed beliefs while large-scale corruption, worker exploitation, (child) slavery, and the increasing gap between rich and poor are condoned? To explore the discrepancy between theory and practice and to provide explanatory models, this basic question will be addressed from different perspectives, beginning with psychoanalysis.

6.1. Psychoanalytical Perspectives

Approximately one century ago, the Swiss psychotherapist and psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung [40, 41] concluded that people who deny unconscious signals and processes can be trapped by "social consciousness," which implies blind adherence to the standards and expectations of others. People who protect their true selves against the unconscious in this manner do not develop their own talents or pursue aspirations, which are a combination of unconscious and conscious signals and processes; instead, they may become socially worthless and develop a *false sense of self*. These negative frames of reference disturb the smooth operation of the unconscious-conscious relationship, prevent a *true self-perspective* or the psycho-synthesis process [39] and diminish cognitive-affective functioning, producing *unsound paradigms*. Jung's conclusion and prediction can be empirically

verified, judging by the global exploitation of women, children, and cheap labor.

6.2. False Self and Lack of Decent Work

Although one's self-perception or self-image may or may not correspond with one's true self, expectations, aspirations, and demands of the self are still established [50]. Given the possible dissonance between one's self-perception and one's true self, acting on the dictates of a false self or a faulty self-perception diminishes cognitive-affective functioning and can complicate discovering and realizing one's true aspirations and vocation. *These notions also apply to a lack of decent work that neglects employees' aspirations.*

6.3. Cognitive Social Learning Perspective

Similar to Jung's [40, 41] conclusion, from a cognitive social learning perspective, blindly adhering to cultural standards or expectations of others and thereby neglecting one's true self can lead people to feel that they lack control over forces that determine their behavior [52]. Thus, *such people experience a lack of free will.*

6.4. Humanistic Perspectives

From another perspective, the American humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers [34, 89-91] similarly observed that indiscriminate adherence to conditions of worth (i.e., "dos" and "don'ts") detrimentally affects operation of the self. Such conditions create a faulty self-perception and undermine authentic self-worth, inner freedom, and empathy. By integrating inner and outer experiences from a true self-perspective, a fully functioning person experiences a sense of self-determination or inner freedom. This sense of inner freedom enables one to see oneself and one's surroundings as they are and to choose a direction for growth, which leads to trustworthy, constructive, empathic, and creative behavior. These positive frames of reference enhance people's cognitive-affective functioning, which produces *sound paradigms*. A sense of inner freedom (including free will) enables humans to take charge of their lives and change their knowledge, emotional reactions, desires, and even interpretations of the past [32], including life insights. *This sense of inner freedom (including free will) and empathy enables one to cope with conflicting needs, aspirations, and*

demands; discover one's true self; and realize vocational goals.

Abraham Maslow [42, 51], another American humanistic psychologist, arrived at a similar conclusion from a different perspective. Maslow distinguished between deficit needs and growth needs. Deficit needs include physiological, safety, love and belonging, and esteem needs. To fulfill growth needs (self-actualization or meta-needs), and thus to pursue aspirations, people seeking self-actualization require a vocation (i.e., a mission or calling outside of themselves) to create sound paradigms.

Maslow ([43], p. 142) noted the following:

In adjusting to the world, one might fail to integrate his personality, turning his back on much in himself, because it was experienced as dangerous. However, these depths were also the source of all his joys, and his ability to play, love, and laugh. By protecting oneself against the hell within, one also cuts one's self off from the heaven within, distorting his imagination, creativity, intuition, softness, and emotionality.

6.4.1. Intuition, True Self, and Decent Work.

Higher unconscious intuition enables one to discover in oneself previously unknown abilities, sources of inspiration, true vocations, and higher potentialities [39]. *These notions also apply to decent work that considers employees' aspirations and stimulates smooth operation of the unconscious-conscious relationship from a true self-perspective or through psycho-synthesis; this promotes authentic self-worth, inner freedom, empathy, and trust.*

6.4.2. Meta-Pathology and Lack of Decent Work.

Maslow's words [43] describe how disturbing the psycho-synthesis process can lead to unsound paradigms and negatively affect psychological health. The inability to fulfill growth needs produces a meta-pathology with symptoms such as a lack of social feeling, considerateness [51] or empathy. Consistent with these observations, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [54] has drawn attention to the fact that job stress and related mental health problems occur when job requirements do not match the capabilities or growth needs of employees; this observation empirically validates Maslow's [43] meta-pathology description. Other studies have shown that the absence of job satisfaction often leads to lethargy and lower organizational commitment, which negatively affect productivity [53], thus eliminating meaning and joy from work, life, and society.

These studies [53, 54] as well as results from previously highlighted studies [4, 5, 79-81] empirically confirm that a lack of decent work

diminishes one's cognitive-affective functioning and leads to unsound paradigms, thus producing negative frames of reference and productivity loss. *A lack of decent work neglects employees' vocational training programs, basic rights and freedoms, and aspirations; undermines authentic self-worth, inner freedom, and empathy; and generates distrust, fear, dependency, job stress, (mental) health problems, destructive beliefs and feelings, maladaptive responses, and suicide. These effects generate unsound paradigms, disturb social trust and order, and lead to job dissatisfaction, meta-pathology, lethargy, lower organizational commitment, and productivity loss in the workplace.* These negative effects are due to poor governance, corruption, bribery, and inequality.

6.5. Psychological Health and Decent Work

In contrast, employee satisfaction is a valid indicator of employees' psychological health [44, 45], and positive correlations have been found between employee satisfaction and productivity [73]. Productivity adds meaning and joy to work, life, and society [75], as noted earlier. In addition, employee job satisfaction positively correlates with an inclination to adopt pro-social attitudes and actions that help coworkers [92]. These studies [44, 45, 73, 92] empirically confirm that decent work yields employee satisfaction, pro-social attitudes, sound paradigms, and thus positive frames of reference and increased productivity.

Together, the results from the previously highlighted studies confirm that vocational training programs, decent work, basic human rights and freedoms, democratic procedures, fair income distribution, freedom from corruption and bribery, discovery and realization of one's growth needs or aspirations, authentic self-worth, inner freedom, empathy, employee satisfaction, psychological health, prosocial attitudes and actions, social trust and order, sound paradigms, productivity, and creativity all nurture one another. These positive effects are due to good governance and equality.

6.6. Critical Theoretical Perspective

Through the same reasoning, German philosophers and critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno observed that animism breathed life into businesses, whereas industrialism commercialized the soul [93]. Today, practically

every organization uses a mission statement to assert its values and principles. Ironically, employees who desire greater meaning and personal development from their work fail to recognize and realize their true vocation or mission and thus lack engagement with decent work.

6.7. Failure to Address Dehumanization

In his inaugural speech at the annual meeting of the United Nations in 2006, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed that the United Nations had failed to tackle the unfair world economy as well as to improve human rights and safety. In other words, the UN failed to address dehumanization or sanction the creation of decent work, contrary to ILO pledges as noted earlier.

6.8. Ethical Perspectives

The status quo of sound and unsound paradigms has also been explained from ethical perspectives. The German psychologist and philosopher Erich Fromm [29, 33] distinguished between authoritarian ethics and humanistic ethics. According to authoritarian ethics, external authorities, such as parents, teachers, cultures, businesses, and governments, as well as market demands, define the standards of ethics and color one's conscience, aspirations, and social relationships, including one's capacity to empathize. The authoritarian conscience consists of an internalized authority, which renders one insensitive to others' needs.

6.8.1. Paradigms Associated with an Authoritarian Conscience and the Practice of Human Rights. The paradigms associated with an authoritarian conscience hinder inner growth (or authentic self-worth), including inner freedom. Thus, the qualities of sympathy, trust, creativity, and internal values fail to develop or develop insufficiently, which *complicates internalization and the practice of human rights and supports the notion underlying the twofold research question.*

6.8.2. Paradigms Associated with a Humanistic Conscience and the Practice of Human Rights. Humanistic ethics, however, encourage the development of one's full potential. The humanistic conscience consists of self-imposed prescriptions, which render one responsive to the needs of others. The paradigms associated with a humanistic conscience promote inner growth (or authentic self-

worth), inner freedom, true self-esteem, trust, and empathy, which *enable internalization and the practice of human rights and support the notion underlying the first portion of the twofold research question.*

6.8.3. Empathy, Trust, Attitudes and Behaviors.

For paradigms associated with the humanistic conscience, the implication is that empathy positively affects attitudes and behaviors, whereas its lack negatively affects attitudes and behaviors [46-48], as highlighted previously. Further, both situational and dispositional empathy are related to prosocial attitudes and behaviors, whereas a lack of empathy has been linked to antisocial behaviors [94-101]. Similarly, empathy and interpersonal trust are closely related [62]. A chronic lack of empathy negatively affects mutual trust. Such effects are problematic because trust plays a key role in developing the psychological bonds between employees and their organizations; affects attitudes and behaviors at work [70, 102]; and promotes productive work relationships [72]. Without trust, employees become self-protective and assume defensive postures that inhibit learning [103]. They also tend to keep their thoughts to themselves rather than sharing, thereby inhibiting creativity [104].

Taken together, empirical evidence demonstrates that humanistic ethics (i.e., providing decent work) promote basic human rights and freedoms, authentic self-worth, empathy, trust, employee satisfaction, psychological bonding between employees and their organizations, prosocial attitudes and behaviors, and social trust and order. Such effects increase productivity and create sound paradigms.

In contrast, *authoritarian ethics (i.e., corporate abuse or lack of decent work) neglect basic rights and freedoms, undermine authentic self-worth, empathy, and trust, create job dissatisfaction, generate self-protectiveness, inhibit learning and creativity, produce antisocial behaviors, disturb social trust and order, and lead to meta-pathology. Such effects lower productivity and create unsound paradigms.*

6.9. Poverty and Diminished Cognitive-Affective Functioning

The notion that corporate abuse (*lack of decent work*) engenders poverty and cripples workers' capacity to foster sound paradigms has recently been corroborated by research at Princeton University: a person's cognitive functioning is diminished if he or

she must constantly attempt to cope with the effects of having little money. People with limited means are also more prone to mistakes and poor decisions [105] and *thus have a limited capacity to exercise free will.* Moreover, parental stress associated with poverty and the inability to provide basic needs or play with their babies may also negatively affect a child's brain [106]. Based on poverty facts and figures [58, 59, 82, 85], these brain research results likely apply to most of the global population and generate unsound paradigms.

6.10. Unsound Paradigms, Corruption, and Inequality

Given that the optimal exercise of free will depends on one's freedom from externally or internally imposed constraints [31], then regardless of whether unsound paradigms are caused by a lack of decent work or not, they create receptivity for and give rise to corruption and bribery. These two behaviors have incapacitated the abilities of many regimes as well as employer and worker organizations worldwide to execute good governance.

More concisely, people's unsound paradigms are due either to a lack of decent work and therefore to a lack of fair and dignified treatment, which creates job stress and (mental) health problems, or to associations between one's self or dignity (having internalized others' standards and expectations) and job status, social image, power, superiority, and/or wealth. For the latter, research has shown that people with money are more likely to maintain social distance from others than people without money [107]. The mere exposure to luxury goods causes people to be less concerned or considerate toward others and thus negatively affects their cognitive-affective functioning [108]. *Thus, money and/or luxury reinforces an individual's behavior through unsound paradigms regarding corruption and offering and/or accepting bribes and generates hunger, poverty, and inequality, which erode social trust and order* [63, 64, 70].

Paradigms affect our ability to practice what we believe is self-fulfilling and fair, and this in turn influences attitudes and behaviors [28, 29]. Therefore, people with these types of unsound paradigms allow global asymmetries to erode labor (human) rights, job security, and quality employment prospects for millions of people [1].

6.10.1. Rising Inequality and Global Collapse.

Moreover, if the current trend of rising inequality continues, the richest one percent of the world's population will own more wealth than the remaining

99 percent by the end of 2016. This inequality is the greatest enemy in the fight against global poverty [109] due to a lack of decent work. Similarly, a recent study showed that economic stratification or ecological strain can independently lead to the collapse of modern civilization and suggested that a global collapse will be difficult to avoid [110].

Indeed, claims that poverty rates are declining and that extreme poverty will soon be eradicated are *untrue* and have come from different sources, such as the World Bank, wealthy country governments, and most importantly, the UN Millennium Development Campaign. In fact, poverty is becoming significantly worse. Certain economists advocate for an international poverty line (IPL) of \$10, which has also been suggested by the World Bank. At this standard, nearly 80 percent of the world's population currently lives in poverty, and this number is rising [111]. The present IPL of \$1.25 only meets minimum nutritional requirements but does not consider other basic living expenses such as housing, water, electricity, clothing, shoes, transportation, healthcare, education, and internet access.

6.10.2. The Rise of a Poor, Divisive, and Passive Majority, Contrary to ILO Pledges. The irony is that *economic inequality* was the primary motive for creating UNCTAD (the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) in 1964, 45 years after the ILO was established. In addition, periodically the ILO advocates and/or prescribes the implementation of humane conditions in labor or decent work using different words. Examples include the following:

- The ILO Constitution (Preamble 1919, and Philadelphia Declaration 1944);
- The International Labour Convention (ILO) 142 (entry into force 1977);
- The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (1998, June 18, revised 2010, June 15);
- The official ILO creation of the term “decent work” (1999);
- The statement of former ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, which includes the assertion that decent employment is a crucial element in making globalization more inclusive and fair as well as a key factor in eradicating poverty and must be at the heart of (every nation’s) development policy [112];
- The new target added to Millennium Development Goal 1 in 2008 that decent work is central to addressing poverty and hunger [113]; and
- The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization [114].

In contrast to the ILO pledges, corruption, bribery, and a lack of decent work have increased. This increase has produced the rise of a poor majority [109-111], diminished their cognitive-affective functioning, and created unsound paradigms. As a result or due to the internalized standards and expectations of others, the failure to question paradigms has led to stagnation as usual, and it appears easier to rely on authority, slogans, or prejudices. This may be why people generally resist change [26], giving rise to divisive and passive behavior. In contrast, changes in working and living conditions (*including decent work*) can overcome biases in awareness, perception, and interpretation, even those due to dispositional traits [28], all of which affect frames of reference and influence both attitudes and behaviors.

7. Summary

In this transdisciplinary research, meta-interpretations [25] were conducted to investigate a) how the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) concept of decent work humanizes employees and allows them to create sound paradigms, thereby cultivating their capacity to internalize and practice human rights and establish social trust and order, leading to an equitable, peaceful, and loving coexistence; and b) how a lack of decent work dehumanizes employees and produces unsound paradigms, complicating employees’ ability to internalize and practice human rights and eroding social trust and order, leading to the rise of a poor, divisive, and passive majority.

Psychoanalytical, cognitive social learning, humanistic, critical theoretical, and ethical perspectives each aid in understanding the essence of these paradigms.

As noted, unsound paradigms can be produced within people coping with the effects of having little money, which diminishes cognitive-affective functioning [105], but they are also generated by

- Jung’s [40, 41] social consciousness, leading to social worthlessness and developing a false sense of self;
- ‘blindly adhering to cultural standards or expectations of others, thereby, neglecting one’s true self, [which] can lead to feelings of lacking control over forces, which determine one’s behavior’, according to Rotter [52];
- Roger’s [91] concept of an indiscriminate adherence to conditions of worth, creating a faulty self-perception and undermining authentic self-worth, inner freedom, empathy, and trust;

- ‘protecting oneself against the hell within, [which] ... cuts one’s self off from the heaven within and distorts one’s imagination, creativity, intuition, and emotionality’ [43];
- deprivation of growth needs, resulting in a lack of social feeling or Maslow’s [51] meta-pathology;
- ‘breathing life into businesses and commercializing the soul,’ which according to Horkheimer and Adorno [93] complicate employees’ ability to recognize and realize their true vocation or mission; and
- paradigms associated with Fromm’s [33] authoritarian conscience, which render one insensitive to others’ needs and unable to develop internal values.

The effect of unsound paradigms is the genesis of faulty self-perception, which restricts inner freedom, empathy, and trust as well as discovery and the pursuit of aspirations. Such conditions yield negative frames of reference and disturb smooth operation of the unconscious-conscious relationship from a true self-perspective or psycho-synthesis. Judging from poverty facts and figures, unsound paradigms appear to be relatively more externally based compared to paradigms associated with authoritarian conscience and are, therefore, due to a lack of decent work, poor governance, corruption, bribery, and inequality.

Vocational training and decent work, however, engender positive frames of reference, enhance cognitive-affective functioning, produce sound paradigms, and increase productivity. These positive effects are due to good governance, freedom from corruption and bribery, and fair income distribution.

7.1. Partially Answering the Twofold Research Question

Inner freedom and true aspirations should be discovered, developed, and realized through vocational training and decent work. Such conditions can correct disturbances in the psycho-synthesis process and thereby remedy faulty self-perception, repair diminished cognitive-affective functioning, promote free will and empathy, create prosocial attitudes and behaviors, produce sound paradigms, *cultivate one’s capacity to internalize and practice human rights, and establish social trust and order.*

More specifically, without decent work, meaning and joy are absent from work, life, and society, which diminishes cognitive-affective functioning, restricts inner freedom and empathy, creates antisocial behaviors, produces unsound paradigms, *impedes one’s ability to internalize and practice human rights, and erodes social trust and order.*

These negative effects are due to poor governance, corruption, bribery, poverty, and inequality.

Given the global rise of a poor majority that relies on authority, slogans, and prejudices due to diminished cognitive-affective functioning and therefore fails to question their individual paradigms, the ILO (*including their local governing authorities*) periodically proclaims beliefs that are paraphrased and designed to regulate such dehumanized people; these unjustly inspire hope for change. Thus, these actions generate *divisive and passive behavior in the rising poor majority, contrary to (ILO) pledges, while the corrupted coin continues to resonate as legal tender.*

7.2. Three Sides of the Same Coin

Corruption, bribery, and poor governance appear to be the counterpart to a lack of decent work, poverty, inequality, and eroded social trust and order; this is illustrated through the “two sides to the same coin” analogy. The edge of the coin represents the global collapse of modern civilization. Metaphorically speaking, the resonating, corrupted coin inherently reinforces the attitudes and behaviors of those with unsound paradigms (i.e., *largely associated with authoritarian conscience*) and, consequently, the corruptive tendencies of such people in many governments, employer and worker organizations, corporations, and multinational entities.

Thus, unsound paradigms, corruption, and bribery answer the previously posed basic question: What might have led to the lack of free will and empathy as well as *the inability to practice proclaimed beliefs*, while large-scale corruption, worker exploitation, (child) slavery, and the increasing gap between rich and poor were condoned?

Irrespective of causes, unsound paradigms created receptivity for and gave rise to corruption and bribery, which have incapacitated the abilities of many regimes worldwide to execute good governance.

8. Conclusions

The UN and the ILO have failed to “sanction the creation of decent work” that would render globalization inclusive, fair, and transparent. By not sanctioning the creation of decent work, human rights violations have been politically sanctioned with impunity. Sanctioning the creation of decent work would reverse the dehumanization process and

enhance cognitive-affective functioning in the rising poor, divisive, and passive majority.

8.1. The Next Step for Sanctioning the Creation of Decent Work

When job demands meet the criteria for decent work, i.e., when the UN and ILO decide to sanction the creation of decent work, the next steps may include the following:

- People's aspirations will play a central role in their upbringing and education and in employment policy, which will engender positive frames of reference and stimulate psycho-synthesis.
- Based on these circumstances, a paradigm shift will occur and positively affect people's ability to practice what they believe is self-fulfilling and fair, resulting in a reinterpretation of the relationship between economic growth and wealth distribution that creates social equality.
- Gradually, a corresponding reorientation will occur in how governments and civilians, governments and corporations, and employers and employees judge and treat each other such that corruption, bribery, and poor governance are discouraged.
- This process of practicing fairness will enable people to empathize with and dignify perceptual differences, particularly governments and nations, *cultivating their capacity to internalize and practice human rights and creating social trust and order, leading to an equitable, peaceful, and loving coexistence.*

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