

The background of the slide is a complex graphic. It features a world map with continents in various colors (yellow, pink, red, blue). Overlaid on the map is a grid of white circles. A white line graph with a downward-sloping trend is also visible, crossing the map and the grid. The overall color palette is muted and somewhat abstract.

Problematique, The Club of Rome, Limits to Growth, and Collective Wisdom

Unit One, November 2008

Prepared for Dr. Kenneth Bausch

Problematique

A problem is the gap between what is observed “to be” and what an observer feels “should be.” In a complex situation, a problem is a complex observation made in reference to a complex expectation.

Complex problems include the “pollution problem,” the “inner city problem,” the “poverty problem” the “starvation problem” the “nuclear proliferation problem,” the “population growth problem,” etc. These problems have many elements.

Elements of complex problems also are strongly interconnected. Changes to one element can change other elements. An understanding of such a system of connections is called a [Problematique](#).

The word *Problematique* was introduced in the Club of Rome’s first proposal.

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The Club of Rome

The origins of the Club of Rome can be traced to a New York City restaurant in 1969. Aurelio Peccei, Hasan Ozbekhan, and Alexander Christakis were discussing global trends and needs.

Aurelio was concerned with escalating technological chasm between the advanced industrialized countries and the third world countries.

Hasan was working on a “General Theory of Planning.”

Aleco was seeking processes for designing idealized human habitats within the Ekistics movement led by Constantine Doxiadis.

Aurelio, and Italian industrialist and philanthropist, was taken with the American notion of “clubs,” and so the trio decided to carry their dinner talk forward as “the club of Rome.”

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The Club of Rome

Aurelio, Hasan, and Aleco – and Erich Jantsch – assembled a view of problems of the world as a global *Problematique*. This “architectural” view was communicated as a product of the Club of Rome and was titled [The Predicament of Mankind](#) (1970).

To popularize an understanding of the predicament of mankind and to expand inclusive membership in the Club of Rome, Aurelio funded a project which sent Aleco on a global recruiting tour.

A year later, 60 progressive thinkers from more than a dozen nations had joined the quest to address complex problems on a global scale.

The Club of Rome had a global membership and about 50 Continuous Critical Problems (CCPs) to ponder. The key PROBLEM was that the Club of Rome lacked an appropriate method for attacking these challenges.

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Limits to Growth

In 1971, the Executive Committee of Club of Rome awarded a major grant to a team at Massachusetts Institute of Technology who had used systems dynamics in the field of industrial and urban operations management and who were convinced that the method could be used to describe global problems.

In 1972, the MIT group came forward with the world dynamics model which the Club of Rome published at the same time that Donella and Dennis Meadows and Jorgen Randers published a highly influential book called [Limits to Growth](#).

The descriptive power of expert-authored system dynamics overshadowed the original intent of the Club of Rome to discover a methodology to engage stakeholders in constructing a problematique expressing their own understanding of their cultural situation. Hasan and Aleco left the Club of Rome to continue the pursuit of a bottoms-up planning methodology.

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Collective Wisdom

Hasan joined the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

Aleco joined the Academy for Contemporary Problems (which was funded by the Battelle Memorial Institute, one of the original funders of the Club of Rome)

Aleco teamed up with John Warfield at the Battelle Memorial Institute, and jointly developed a means of bringing John Warfield's "science of generic design" into social context that enabled average citizens to construct advanced plans based on established engineering principles.

In 2007, Aleco (and Ken Bausch) documented the history of the development and validation of "structured dialogic design" in a book titled [*Harnessing Collective Wisdom and Power*](#)

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