

Editor's Note

In his succinctly brilliant essay, Yuval Noah Harari debunks the “quest of identity” as dangerous. “Every human being is heir to the whole of human creation” (*Time*, January 30–February 6, 2023: 46). G.W.F. Hegel's idea of *Aufhebung*” still makes sense.

The backlash against decades of hyper-globalization, which spread wealth to new winners across the emerging economies while hollowing out the manufacturing base of more advanced countries, most notably the United States, is exhausting its first wave of reactive populism and entering the reconstruction stage of nation-building at home.

Nathan Gardels, Editor, *Noéma*, writes on “The Geopolitical Economy of Deglobalization.”¹

Nation-building continues unabated, rather fiercely. Ethnicity, territoriality, and new pugnacity redefine the contours of old trappings. Social development (SD) issues warrant reconsideration of present realities and new directions. As *SDI*'s editor, I make no pretention to have explored, let alone invented, any new pathways to define “developing” and “advanced” nations. The real issues—facets, problems, policies, and aspects—of development remain eclipsed under the fog of deferred visions, lost utopias, and obscure ideologies. From Ukraine, Europe, and the United States to Russia, India, and China, one finds specters of populism, polarization, and structural inequalities that thwart *every man's* dreams. Varied politics of “identity” have made things worse. I continue to believe: *my humanity transcends my identity*.²

¹ <https://www.noemamag.com/competitive-nation-building/> (February 3, 2023)

² Harari's words are precious: Harrari in *Time*, Jan 12, 2023: “Two thousand years ago the African-Roman playwright Terence, a freed slave, expressed the same key idea when he said, ‘I am human, and nothing human is foreign to me’. Every human being is heir to the whole of human creation. People who in search of their identity narrow their world to the story of a single nation are turning their back on their humanity. They devalue what they share

SD, like many liberal constructs, cannot escape the scrutiny that illiberalism and its forces have imposed on freedom and its assets. “Is liberalism worth saving?” *Harper* features an open forum on the subject (February 2023: 346; 2073: 23–36). The invited pundits proffer musings and insights on “The future of an ideal.” Ideas and ideals, like vision and ambition, manifesto, plan, and hope and reality often confound when base interests and needs confront each other. The future of *SD* is brightly bleak under the shadows of a distant war that endangers everyone today. It seems liberalism is its own nemesis. Modi, Netanyahu, Putin, and Trump constitute an axis that thwarts progress in the name of different chimeras: Mythologies of *Hindutva*, apartheid for Palestinians, despotism in Russia, and Trumpian idolatry in the United States.

Xi and Putin made an unsettling statement about *Global Civilizational Initiative*, which has wider implications for the whole realm of international cooperation and SD. Neo-global strategies in the wake of rising nationalism pose concerns that may belie easy answers. Intellectuals, in and beyond academia, ought to rethink and redefine contours and platitudes that strengthen the ideal of a civil society devoid of insane gun violence, maddening inequalities, and unspeakable horrors of terrorism and natural disasters. The state of the union where I chose to live is alarming: We have begun banning books for the kids; but, there is no ban on the weapons of war, which slaughter them ritually every now and then.

SDI and its disciplinarity (also, interdisciplinarity) call for continued explorations. Technology, science, humanities, and social sciences traditionally follow silos of knowledge. Hubristic triumphalism has always failed. We may have to debate and reconceptualize alternative approaches to universal needs. A few articles submitted in this *issue* may—or may not—manifest the zeitgeist of contemporary challenges.

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with all other humans. And, they devalue far deeper things. All the inventions and ideas of humans over the past few thousand years are just the upper crust of who we are. Under this crust, at the depths of our bodies and minds, we contain things that evolved over millions of years, long before there were any humans.” <https://time.com/6246269/yuval-noah-harari-quest-for-identity>; January 12, 2023 (Retrieved, March 28, 2023; *Time*, Jan. 30–Feb. 6, 2023: 46–47).

Shashi Tharoor makes a similar point: Shashi Tharoor: “Identity politics, which derives often from civilizational and cultural factors, remains ineluctably opposed to liberalism.” <https://www.noemamag.com/civilization-states-are-profoundly-illiberal/> (Retrieved, Feb. 2, 2023).