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Boundaries, Freedom and the Architecture of Trust

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A Me-We-World Reflection on an Emerging Trust Economy

Recent conversations between [Will Ruddick](#) , [Machiel Tesser](#) , [Dr. Chakradhar Iyyunni](#) , [Marc Diamond Sustainabilty Innovator](#) , and [Paul-martin MOONEY](#) opened a rich field of inquiry: What truly governs our capacity to make, hold, and sustain commitments?

From reinterpreting accounting identities to questioning trust boundaries, from psychological insights to capability thinking — each contribution touched an essential part of a larger whole.

And yet, something remained unspoken.

Beneath every discussion about credit, promises, limits, and community lies a deeper layer: the relational and developmental conditions that make trust possible in the first place.

This is where the Me-We-World (MWW) perspective steps in — not as a counter-argument, but as a *relational foundation* beneath the economic, psychological, and systemic frames being explored.

The Freedom Paradox: A Lesson From the Classroom

Years ago, when I taught art in the Schilderswijk and Transvaal districts of The Hague, I encountered something that permanently shaped my understanding of trust and freedom.

Many of the immigrant children I taught came from homes where rules were strict, punishment was immediate, and little explanation was given. These children were often told to focus on "real professions" — doctors, engineers, tradespeople. Creativity was seen as a luxury, not a human capacity. Their early artworks were sometimes thrown away at home.

When I gave them creative freedom in class, they struggled. Not because they lacked intelligence or talent, but because:

Freedom without inner or relational safety feels like chaos.

They had not been given the space to explore who they *were* or why their imagination mattered. Their behaviour reflected this: cautious, sceptical, often self-protective.

In contrast, many Dutch children were raised with more dialogue, explanation, and space to express themselves. They had stories. They trusted the teacher. They felt allowed to speak.

The classroom made something visible that theory often hides:

Freedom is not the opposite of boundaries — it is the result of safety. Safety creates trust. Trust creates awareness. Awareness opens imagination.

Chakradhar hinted at this with his observation about children occupying more space inside *bounded* environments. And he is right: boundaries do not restrict growth — they *enable* it.

This was not a lesson about pedagogy. It was a lesson about the architecture of trust.

Why This Matters for Trust Economies

The current debate around moving from an ownership economy to a trust economy often focuses on:

- How to measure promise-capacity (Will)
- How to understand the boundaries of trust (Machiel)
- How Psychology Shapes Collective Behaviour (Chakradhar)
- How Collaboration Creates Abundance (Marc)
- How capability differs from competence (Paul-Martin)

But these questions presuppose something that is rarely made explicit:

The ability to give and receive trust is not a technical skill. It is a relational, embodied, developmental process.

A community cannot pool commitments if its members have never learned how to navigate freedom. A system cannot sustain promises if people have not experienced

relational safety. A network cannot self-regulate trust if individuals have not cultivated awareness.

This is where the MWW lens becomes relevant.

A Me-We-World Reading of the Discussion

ME — Individual Relational Capacity

Each contributor brings a different cognitive lens — economic, systemic, psychological, and philosophical. But trust begins not with theory, but with the *inner architecture* of a person:

- Do they feel safe enough to express themselves?
- Do they understand the meaning of boundaries?
- Can they sense their own limits?
- Are they relaxed enough to collaborate?
- Can they imagine alternatives?

Without these qualities, promise-making becomes fragile.

WE — Collective Relational Dynamics

Groups, like classrooms, run on relational signals:

- What is allowed here?
- How do we treat vulnerability?
- What happens when something breaks?
- Is trust rewarded or punished?

A trust economy is not simply a ledger of commitments — it is a shared field of relational meaning. When that field is strong, commitments flow. When it is weak, commitments collapse.

WORLD — Structural & Systemic Implications

Economies are extensions of relational culture. If individuals and groups lack the relational foundations to hold trust, no technical architecture — not accounting identities, not DAOs, not governance protocols — will fix the issue.

This is why STUART (Safety, Trust, Understanding, Awareness, Relaxation, Togetherness) matters. Not as values, but as conditions for sustainable promise-making.

What MWW Contributes to This Conversation

MWW does not propose another economic formula, nor does it redefine accounting. What it offers is the missing layer beneath all formulas:

A relational grammar for understanding how trust, boundaries, freedom, and commitment arise between people.

- Safety reveals why boundaries are necessary.
- Trust reveals why commitments hold.
- Understanding reveals why misalignment happens.
- Awareness reveals where limits truly lie.
- Relaxation reveals why collaboration becomes possible.
- Togetherness reveals how communities scale trust sustainably.

Seen this way, the question shifts from:

"How much promise-capacity does an agent have?" to "Under what relational conditions do promises become credible, generative, and regenerative?"

This is the layer that allows all other perspectives — economic, systemic, psychological, philosophical — to align rather than compete.

An Invitation

For me, the real question is not merely how to account for commitments, nor how to set the boundaries of trust, nor how to scale collective promise-making.

The deeper question is:

How do we cultivate the relational and developmental foundations that make trust possible at all levels — Me, We, and World?

Perhaps the next step in this emerging dialogue is to explore not just what trust *does* in an economy, but what trust *requires* in a human being and in a community.

That is the conversation MWW would love to continue.

#TrustEconomy #SystemsThinking #RelationalLeadership #MeWeWorld

#PsychologicalSafety #STUARTModel #ComplexityThinking

#CommunityBuilding #MeaningMaking #FutureOfWork

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