

Issues with TZM in 2019 and my personal resolution

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Note (16 July 2021):

This text was written in early 2019. In 2021 I updated the links, but the text remains the same, typos and all. Since 2019 I have been working on my PhD and have not been involved with TZM. Things may (or may not) have changed since this text was originally published. However, it may still be interesting for people who want to know what problems TZM has had and why it has not progressed as much as it should have.

There is a lot that is good with TZM. It is a sustainability advocacy organization that understands strong sustainability and how to achieve it (although it is my view that TZM itself is not on a sustainable foundation). It is a non-violent movement and it supports non-violent communication, and most supporters live by that. It is also a movement that supports the scientific approach to problem solving and most supporters understand that method fairly well. I have found most active TZM supporters to be intelligent, logical and rational. TZM is a movement focused on educating people about the fundamental root problems of our current socioeconomic system and about the potential of humankind to build a sustainable future of abundance, and many if not most chapters and supporters are focused on that.

However...

I have witnessed first-hand the problems of a centralized global core group in TZM when I was a part of the global chapters administration (GCA), and I have seen how people can both understand and wholeheartedly support TZM and yet simultaneously be incompetent communicators, illogical thinkers or even scientifically illiterate. Maybe they will be in time, or maybe they think they already are and hence will not. Either way this has created problems in the movement.

After 10 years of following and studying TZM and 5 years of being active, I have been through many cases of people quitting the movement, and I've seen several attempts to make the movement better. I have also spent great amounts of time trying to improve the movement myself, both through leading through example with the Finnish chapter and through actively planning and promoting better practices globally.

I have found several issues with TZM. Because TZM is a volunteer movement that tries to educate "normal" people to understand the need for change, it is naturally composed of people who are somewhere on a spectrum between ignorance and cognizance. There exists a wide variety of pseudoscience and strange thinking in between, which TZM has never dealt with optimally. TZM is meant to educate, and those confusing early and middle parts in the spectrum of cognizance are something people should be helped with. This requires a lot of empathy and understanding, along with a solid public image plan so that the ideology of TZM is not confused to equal the views of its supporters. Instead of doing this, many have denied that these people are TZM supporters or that they could represent TZM in any way, which is untrue. The thing is, that even people who do not fully act according to or understand the principles of TZM can understand some aspects of it perfectly well and be of great use to our cause. They can help out a lot and do a lot of good. The

problem is managing the uncertainty that is associated with having less-than-optimal people helping.

TZM claims that it uses rational consensus to arrive at decisions, but often supporters – both active, passive and people of the global core – do not use it. TZM also states to support science but does not actively promote it. There even was a case of one core TZM person (one of the writers of the TZM Defined book) who tried to promote science actively but was eventually driven out of the movement entirely. This was instigated because the people in the lower parts of the spectrum of cognizance reacted negatively to the scientific claims, but the end result was mostly due to a lack of non-violent communication abilities within the core TZM people. In short, people of TZM (supporters, coordinators and the global core itself) do not always act in accordance to what they claim to advocate.

Problems arise when the most active core people happen to also be those exceptions that either do not understand science, do not use rational consensus, do not use non-violent communication or are not focused on creating educational content or activism. Each of these problems have contributed to the decline of TZM and I could (but have decided not to) give specific case examples of each.

I have also found issues with the volunteer-based chapter structure of TZM itself. Through my experience I have learned that all chapters are almost always absolutely reliant on the efforts of one (or a few) determined individual(s) who puts up great hours to coordinating and inspiring action, making plans for their chapter, hosting meetings and connecting the chapter to other chapters around the world. I have also learned that if these individuals do not immediately start finding and teaching new people to replace them, the chapter will eventually die out.

In early 2017 I performed [a global questionnaire study](#) which showed that TZM chapters have on average a 3-year cycle in which time all active supporters (excluding coordinators) leave and are replaced by new people. I have also noticed that coordinators seem to change every 3-5 years or so. This happened in Finland twice, with me replacing the previous coordinator after nearly 5 years and me being replaced after nearly 5 years of coordinating (due to changes in life circumstances).

Later in 2017 I also tried to help create a global coordination team (GCT) that would have been comprised of all chapter coordinators for the purpose of preventing the cyclical nature of chapters and instead help keep them active and growing. This team did not come to fruition as it was intended, because of problems with communication and rational thinking, once again. The team exists (www.tzmgct.com [*link no longer works in 2021*]) but has practically divided the movement's core and seems to remain closed both to new members (at the time of writing their website states that there is no recruiting to the GCT) and to attempts to communicate non-violently (based on personal experience).

If you want to know more about the original intention of the GCT idea (which was presented to Peter Joseph in late 2017), you can read that here: <https://1drv.ms/b/s!Av-nejxZG6Uvg-kbWKO4OEBNeDHfVg?e=NgcUJZ>

The many (unavoidable?) ineptitudes of the volunteers, primarily with communication and sometimes also with plain rational thinking, create internal conflicts and prevent the movement from fully focusing on outward directed activism and content creation.

Based on my experience, the biggest problem with TZM is that it is a volunteer movement that does not provide a sustainable and efficient working environment. TZM, as it exists today, cannot achieve sustainable and working global or local coordination in the long term. Sporadically yes, but not for

extended periods of time. It is my view that the only way to achieve a sustainable, efficient and durable working environment is by having funding and providing a wage for people who put in the hours to execute projects or necessary tasks. After all, wages are structurally required by the present socioeconomic paradigm for living. They are the only way people could contribute to TZM full-time. If people have to get money by doing other work, their time and energy are severely limited, and their activism will not be on a sustainable foundation. I will not go into detail on this subject here, but instead suggest the following text for those interested in reading my ideas for funding in TZM: <https://1drv.ms/w/s!Av-nejxZG6UvgswvGY0judfaq9ZBcQ>

We should enable people to get a living doing the activism we do, but as the worldview of TZM supporters inherently seems to reject this (as I did for a long time as well), it seems unlikely that many chapters would manage to survive, let alone grow, far into the future.

Peter Joseph has indicated that he does not support any kind of specific global organization or platform. He wishes the movement to be decentralized and chapter driven. After what I have witnessed, I think that is the future of TZM.

If chapters do not communicate together and seek help from each other, the lack of global organization will mean that the cyclical nature of chapters and the supporter base simply must be accepted. In addition, if chapters do not find ways to organize funding for their projects and remain wholly volunteer based, they will remain inefficient and unsustainable. The disintegration of the global organization presents an opportunity, but also a threat. My experience with the movement leads me to fear that the likelihood of TZM growing will only diminish.

I agree with Peter that it is up to chapters to create the movement. Chapters should do what they think is best, while actively helping each other and learning from the successes and failures of each other. I think the TZM Discord server is an excellent place where chapters and movement supporters can interact and share ideas, experiences, resources and collectively create the "TZM global".

Right now, TZM is at a low point with chapters and support diminishing. This is largely a result of the unsustainable structure and the many problems that has created. If chapters and supporters reorient their focus, TZM might survive and thrive. If not, it will slowly die out.

I have come to the conclusion that active TZM supporters need to focus equally on 1) researching RBE and creating new inspiring content, 2) spreading the TZM train of thought via local projects that reach as many people as possible, and 3) maintaining patient non-violent communication and rational consensus.

During the past 10 years I have learned a great deal being part of possibly the first ever social movement that was global from day one. Seeing it grow, seeing it diminish, working to spread the ideas while also analysing and fixing the issues.

I learned how to coordinate, how to communicate, how to plan and execute activism and how to think holistically and critically. I have learned so much... about empathy, sustainability, civil rights, economics, human behaviour, society, history, science, the list goes on. I got friends from all over the world, experienced how we are all one. I saw that a new consciousness is truly developing which sees the world as a single organism. And the first thing I learned was how to make the choice between fear and love. It would be a great loss to see TZM lost as yet another social experiment that did not achieve its goals. Both personally and societally.

In 2011, I chose TZM over TVP because TZM was the one that gave me awareness. I felt indebted to it, I wanted to contribute back to it, and I realized the power this movement had to change people

for the better. Lately, I have wondered whether I made the wrong choice after all. Maybe I should have used my time coordinating a TVP chapter instead, focusing on bringing people a positive vision of the future. I guess I will never know. I do not regret my choice because of all the wonderful things I have experienced and learned and because of the wonderful people I have met.

In addition to the wonderful people I have met, I have not quit TZM because I do not know if anything better exists out there and therefore it has seemed to me that the movement must survive if humanity is to flourish. I have therefore tried my best to repair TZM. Unfortunately, I did not succeed. For a long time, I also thought that perhaps the issues were due to people quitting and I did not want to contribute to that. I thought that we should follow Jacque Fresco's example and show the same everlasting determination. However, I have understood that there have been perfectly valid reasons, many outlined in this text, for people to quit TZM. Furthermore, Jacque did not show blind determination. He knew perfectly well that if something is not working it needs to change or be discarded.

From now on I will significantly lower my involvement with TZM and instead focus on building a better tomorrow through contributing to the scientific discussion about the structural socioeconomic issues, global change, strong sustainability and the changes that are needed to reach a future of abundance for all. I still support RBE and seek find flaws in it in order to help it develop. I think this is a much more efficient and sustainable use of my time and abilities. And above all, I will get to do it full-time.

I still represent and support the TZM train of thought and an RBE, but given that see TZM having diminishing potential and a number of serious problems, can or should I consider myself as a TZM supporter anymore?

My answer is not black and white. I support the core ideology because I find it to be solid and sustainable, but I do not support the existing global organization or activism because I find it to be unsustainable. I can attend chapter meetings and help if I have spare time and if I see that the proposed activities have merit. I may still attend events, give lectures or help with projects that spread the train of thought. I guess I will remain as a mostly passive supporter and someone who hopes for the best, but focuses their efforts more efficiently elsewhere.

I do not wish to harm the movement with this text. I think constructive criticism is helpful, necessary and should be happily received by all who understand the TZM train of thought. I wish all the success to anyone who wants to try to make TZM work as a movement. I do not wish to upset anyone or burn any bridges. I will continue helping out in small ways here and there, possibly give speeches and use this blog to write about things relevant and related to TZM.

I think that understanding the problems of TZM, as presented in this text, is an opportunity to learn how TZM could (potentially) be improved and/or an important source to learn what kind of problems can happen in global scale social movements, of which TZM is quite a unique example.

I remain open to hearing any comments or counter-arguments to the thoughts I shared in this text, via Discord, email or any of the platforms where I have shared this text.

Yours sincerely,

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