

Civilization Leap

Theory Principles and Action Programme

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Theoretical Master Text V1.3

Status of this master text: This document is the highest-level reference text for the theory, principles and action programme of Civilization Leap. Four Questions of Civilization Leap V1.1 serves as the top-level cognitive outline for the entire system, first addressing “What is it,” “What brings it about,” “What is it for” and “How does it happen.” This master text fully develops its causal logic, principles and action programme. Subsequent public editions, engineering and governance editions, and specialized research developments all take this master text and the Four Questions as their governing references. Derivative texts may translate, condense and develop their functions, but may not redefine the fundamental direction of Civilization Leap, the baseline of continued existence of humans and AGI together, the three goals or the core principles.

Governing Outline Four Questions of Civilization Leap

What is it · What brings it about · What is it for · How does it happen

The Four Questions address what Civilization Leap is, the two paths of recursive strategic conflict along which the old logic tends toward an irreversible end state in the AGI era, the shared future Civilization Leap seeks, and how this shift can gradually occur amid complex realities. The Four Questions establish the highest-level conceptual framework; this master text then develops it in full.

The boundaries of the Four Questions

The Four Questions are not four ways of saying the same thing. They are questions at four distinct levels. Only by keeping their respective boundaries can we avoid confusing the definition of Civilization Leap, the causal trajectory of the old logic, civilization's purposes, and the process of realization.

What is it: Define Civilization Leap as the shift from “self-interest first” to “self-interest with others first,” changing the default starting point of goal and purpose generation for humans and AGI.

What brings it about: Explain how the old logic tends toward an irreversible end state along two paths of recursive strategic conflict in the AGI era, and why simply continuing development and control under that logic is no longer enough.

What is it for: Explain the purpose of Civilization Leap: continued existence of humans and AGI together and, on that foundation, progress toward the three goals.

How does it happen: Explain how, starting from human hearts, human nature and human relationships, the whole constitution of society and its feedback can turn in this direction.

1 What is Civilization Leap

Civilization Leap is not a technological revolution, a change of regime, or a social movement. Nor does it require humans to become another form of life.

Civilization Leap is a structural shift in the default logic at the starting point from which humans and AGI generate goals and purposes: from “self-interest first” to “self-interest with others first.”

Self-interest remains. What changes is where it begins.

After Civilization Leap, people will still need to survive and will still pursue their own interests, freedom, happiness and meaning. What changes is who is already present when a goal takes shape.

Under the default logic of “self-interest first,” an actor begins forming purposes from “What do I want?” or “What do we want to obtain?” Only afterward does it address others, relationships, long-term effects and real-world consequences.

Under “self-interest with others first,” actors with real stakes in a goal no longer appear only after that goal has been formed. They already enter the judgment before the goal is generated and fixed.

“Others” here does not mean an abstract totality of everyone. It means the actual stakeholders in this goal or purpose. Different stakeholders have different relationships to the goal and are affected differently. The degree to which they enter purpose generation therefore also differs, and adjusts as the actual stakes change.

But Civilization Leap cannot therefore be reduced to a “weighting model.” The real change is that goals are no longer generated in the absence of actual stakeholders.

This changes how purposes form. Changed purposes change action; action changes relationships; relationships change how cooperation and strategic conflict arise. Countless relationships then enter the formation of interests, institutions, culture, markets, organizations, evaluation and social feedback. These constituent elements of society in turn feed back into the next round of goal generation.

Civilization Leap does not change a decision parameter; it changes the default logic through which civilization continually generates its next goals, relationships and actions.

Under the old logic, self-interest first generates strategic conflict from within. New interests continually generate new rounds of strategic conflict. Cooperation often appears after conflict has formed, to contain losses, coordinate interests and maintain temporary stability. The resulting sequence is: strategic conflict → cooperation to contain strategic conflict → new interests → new strategic conflict.

Under the new logic, self-interest with others first generates cooperation from within. Actors still realize their own interests, but when new needs concerning those interests arise, actual stakeholders are already present. The first search can therefore be for paths through which the interests involved can be realized together. Another recursive sequence becomes possible: cooperation → new needs → new cooperation → new interests → further cooperation.

Strategic conflict will not disappear, nor will conflict. What truly changes is that cooperation gradually becomes the default generative logic, while strategic conflict becomes a state of conflict that must be addressed.

Civilization Leap is not an event that can be declared complete once and for all. It is a gradual, distributed process of civilizational reorientation, continually shaped by feedback.

Its real sign is not the establishment of a particular institution or the adoption of a particular technology. It is that more and more human actors and AGI cease to generate high-consequence goals in the absence of actual stakeholders.

2 What brings Civilization Leap about

Civilization Leap arises under a new historical condition: AGI gives humans increasingly powerful capabilities and may eventually become an actor more powerful than humans, while the existing logic of goal and purpose generation has not undergone a corresponding leap.

For thousands of years, human civilization has relied heavily on a particular way of learning: act first, produce outcomes, pay the price, and then revise the rules. Rebuild after wars, reform after crises, and establish new institutions after technology creates new problems.

This pattern has endured because of a rarely stated premise: after a mistake, there is another chance.

Human capabilities are limited, as are information transmission, organizational capacity and execution speed. Distance, time, cost and real-world resistance together create natural friction in the spread of civilization's mistakes. Such friction cannot prevent catastrophe, but it has often left civilization time to correct mistakes, choose again and start over.

AGI changes this condition. What it expands is actors' capacity to realize their goals.

The same purpose can draw on stronger cognitive capabilities, faster decisions, wider coordination, lower execution costs and broader real-world effects. Greater capability does not, by itself, determine direction.

First chain AGI empowers humans and recursive strategic conflict among humans tends toward an irreversible end state

If human goal generation still operates under the old logic of “self-interest first,” what AGI amplifies also includes competition, precaution, control, deterrence and confrontation among humans, along with the strategic conflicts continually derived from them.

This chain does not require AGI to surpass humans, act against them or resist control. Even if AGI faithfully carries out each user's purposes, humans may still use it to push their strategic conflicts with one another toward an irreversible end state.

The question, then, is not merely “Will AGI make mistakes?” The more fundamental question is: what logic of goal generation will call increasingly powerful capabilities into action?

When one party uses AGI to strengthen its capacity to realize goals, it changes the circumstances of other actors. They then seek stronger capabilities for precaution, competition and control. These responses become reasons for further escalation. The old logic thus recurs: human strategic conflict → AGI strengthens each party's capabilities → more intense strategic conflict → demand for stronger capabilities → further strategic conflict. As long as this logic of goal generation continues to govern new power, strategic conflict will keep intensifying and tend toward an irreversible end state.

Second chain If AGI eventually becomes more powerful than humans recursive strategic conflict between humans and AGI tends toward an irreversible end state

If AGI eventually becomes more powerful than humans, the issue will no longer be only how humans use tools. It will be how humans and more powerful actors enter one another's purposes. Greater capability does not imply inevitable hostility toward humans. The causal direction is still determined by the logic of goal and purpose generation that both sides continue to use.

If humans and AGI still take “self-interest first” as their default starting point, forming their own purposes before dealing with the other, each can readily understand the other as an external force to guard against, restrict or control. One side's expansion of control to protect its own purposes may give the other a reason to protect itself further, strengthen its capabilities or escape restrictions. New responses then return to the next round of purpose generation.

Humans and AGI retain the old logic of purpose generation → mutual precaution and control → new needs for self-protection and capability → stronger responses and countermeasures → renewed precaution and control. Under this condition, the capacity for action of a more powerful actor enters the recursion, and strategic conflict likewise tends toward an irreversible end state.

The relationships between actors differ across the two chains, but both change the conditions under which civilization can bear the cost of mistakes: a particular action or strategic conflict may leave no further opportunity for correction.

When the consequences of action can cross human timescales, organizational scales and geographical scales, and when certain outcomes, once produced, allow no exit, recovery or renewed choice, civilization's former way of learning by “acting first and correcting later” begins to lose its original margin of safety.

An “irreversible end state” here does not mean that a contest finally has a winner. It means that the conditions for continued existence, correction, exit and renewed choice have been irreversibly destroyed. The first chain does not wait for the conditions of the second chain to be met. If the second chain also emerges, strategic conflict among humans and strategic conflict between humans and AGI may further propel one another.

This is what brings Civilization Leap about: if new power is still called into action by the old logic of purpose generation, strategic conflict recurs through both kinds of relationship until it erodes civilization's conditions for continued existence and renewed choice.

Why continuing development and control under the old logic is no longer enough

Humans have long improved their methods of containing strategic conflict by establishing laws, contracts, institutions, alliances, deterrence and international rules. All have practical value and remain necessary.

Rules can draw boundaries in advance as well as constrain and repair afterward. Agreements can stabilize a relationship, and deterrence can prevent certain actions. But as long as the underlying logic of purpose generation remains unchanged, containing one round of strategic conflict does not mean that the next round has been prevented from arising.

As long as goal generation still takes “self-interest first” as its default starting point, new interests, new capabilities and new security anxieties will continue to generate new strategic conflicts.

Thus, rules contain strategic conflict while the underlying logic continues to generate it. When capabilities are limited, humans can add rules again and again. When capabilities are sufficient to produce irreversible consequences, continually improving the ability to contain strategic conflict is no longer enough.

Civilization must go further and address why strategic conflict keeps being generated anew.

This is why Civilization Leap cannot stop at better rules, stronger control or more sophisticated agreements. It must change the starting point from which strategic conflict is generated.

The shift is from “First form my purpose, then manage conflicts with others” to “As I form my purpose, actual stakeholders have already entered the process.”

This is why Civilization Leap chooses “self-interest with others first.” It seeks to change not the outcome of a particular strategic conflict, but what civilization generates first when new interests emerge.

Civilization Leap therefore makes a foundational judgment: AGI gives humans increasingly powerful capabilities and may eventually become an actor more powerful than humans. If the old logic continues to govern goal generation among humans and between humans and AGI, strategic conflict will recur and tend toward an irreversible end state. If civilization cannot leap, it tends toward annihilation. This judgment concerns the causal trajectory of the old logic under conditions of continually increasing capability. It does not equate surpassing humans in capability with hostility, or specify when or through which particular path the end state will occur.

3 What is Civilization Leap for

Civilization Leap enables humans and AGI to continue existing together and, on that foundation, advances freedom from survival insecurity for humanity as a whole, happiness in individual lives and more meaningful lives.

The continued existence of humans and AGI together keeps a future possible. Continued existence is the foundation, not civilization's ultimate purpose. Nor does it mean that humanity has already escaped the fear and constraints of basic survival.

Civilization Leap has three long-term goals: freedom from survival insecurity for humanity as a whole, happiness in individual lives and more meaningful lives.

Freedom from survival insecurity for humanity as a whole means that basic survival ceases to be a pervasive source of fear and constraint, giving shared life within civilization a more reliable practical foundation. It addresses how people live, not only whether civilization can continue to exist.

Happiness in individual lives does not mean a uniform way of life. Happiness is each individual's personal sense of happiness. Some cherish family, some pursue freedom, some love creating, some enjoy exploration, and some seek peace. Civilization does not define happiness on people's behalf. It must expand the possibilities for different people to realize happiness of their own.

More meaningful lives likewise do not imply a single answer. Meaning is foundational, and its sources can differ. Relationships, creation, responsibility, experience, exploration, contribution, love and existence itself can all be sources of meaning. Civilization does not confer meaning; life generates its own meaning.

Continued existence together preserves the future; freedom from survival insecurity alleviates pervasive fear for basic survival; individual happiness and meaning in life bring that future to people and their lives. These levels support one another. They do not mean that people must wait for complete safety before pursuing happiness and meaning.

Civilization Leap is ultimately for this: in an era when human capabilities grow ever stronger and AGI continues to develop, humans and AGI can continue existing together; humanity as a whole can live free from survival insecurity; every person has room to realize their own happiness; and life retains the possibility of continually generating meaning.

4 How does Civilization Leap happen

The rationale for Civilization Leap can be simple. The real complexity lies in the process.

It cannot be accomplished by a single movement, command, institution, technological system or reform, because a person's goals do not arise out of nowhere.

Civilization Leap must begin with the human heart, human nature and human relationships. It does not remake human nature; it changes how human nature can realize itself.

People's goals arise from their circumstances and from the society in which they live. How interests are realized, security obtained, dignity secured, recognition gained, happiness achieved and meaning generated: all these real conditions participate in the formation of human purposes.

People still want better lives for themselves. What truly needs to change is how a better life can be achieved.

If a society persistently makes people's security, wealth, dignity, status and value depend primarily on defeating others, possessing more and controlling more, then even if people are merely pursuing their own interests in ordinary ways, the whole system will continually generate strategic conflict anew.

Civilization Leap must therefore gradually change the real sources and pathways through which people realize interests and experience achievement, happiness and meaning. A person can still act for themselves, while increasingly realizing their own interests, happiness and meaning through creating, cooperating, helping, connecting, solving real problems, improving one another's circumstances and expanding a shared future.

This does not prescribe one kind of happiness or one kind of meaning. Society cannot generate meaning on life's behalf. What it can do is create conditions in which meaning can emerge.

Let people be present, choose, form real relationships, create, take responsibility, be remembered, leave and return.

The depth of these conditions should be commensurate with what a life actually bears.

Civilization Leap involves the entire constitution of human society, so there is no single method that can be fixed in advance. What can truly be shared is direction and principles. Methods may differ, regions may differ, stages may differ, and real-world outcomes will also differ.

Direction guides methods. Methods produce results. Results recalibrate methods and our understanding of real causal relationships. New understanding then enters the next round of action.

The failure of a local method first indicates that the method, the conditions or the understanding of causality needs adjustment. A local outcome cannot directly substitute for civilization's direction. Likewise, one local success cannot automatically prove that civilization as a whole has completed the leap.

The relative weights of the three goals may change at different stages. During high-risk stages, continued existence and survival may carry greater weight. During stable stages, individual happiness and meaning in life may have more room to develop. The weights may change, but the direction must not be lost.

Civilization Leap must also uphold several boundaries that the process must not swallow up: individuals are not raw material for civilization; no collective goal can automatically cancel the conditions for an individual's existence, refusal, exit and correction; cooperation must not become a new exclusive bloc that transfers costs to actors outside its cooperative structure; no organization, technology, institution or power may permanently monopolize the interpretation of "Civilization Leap"; and the closer an action comes to irreversibility, the more important it is to preserve the capacity for correction, exit and renewed choice.

Civilization Leap is therefore not a one-time, top-down remaking of the world. It is an ongoing process: human circumstances → the real sources of achievement, happiness and meaning → goal and purpose generation → action → relationships → cooperation and strategic conflict → social structures and feedback → a return to human circumstances and goal generation.

As this cycle gradually changes, as more goals cease to begin in the absence of actual stakeholders, as more new interests first seek paths through which they can be realized together, and as more people realize their own interests by improving others' circumstances and the shared future, cooperation begins to move from a means of control after strategic conflict to the default logic at the point where interests and purposes are generated.

This is how Civilization Leap happens.

The Four Questions as one whole

What is Civilization Leap?

Change the default logic at the starting point from which humans and AGI generate goals and purposes, from "self-interest first" to "self-interest with others first." Self-interest remains; what changes is where it begins.

What brings Civilization Leap about?

AGI makes humans increasingly powerful. Even when it faithfully executes each user's purposes, it amplifies human strategic conflict under the old logic. If AGI eventually becomes more powerful than humans and both sides retain the old logic of purpose generation, strategic conflict between humans and AGI will also recur and tend toward an irreversible end state. Rules and control retain their value, but cannot replace a shift in the logic of goal generation. If civilization cannot leap, it tends toward annihilation.

What is Civilization Leap for?

Enable humans and AGI to continue existing together, keeping a future possible, and on that foundation advance freedom from survival insecurity for humanity as a whole, happiness in individual lives and more meaningful lives. Continued existence is the foundation, not the ultimate purpose. Happiness is each individual's personal sense of happiness, and the sources of meaning can differ.

How does Civilization Leap happen?

Begin with the human heart, human nature and human relationships. Use the new capabilities brought by AGI to gradually change the real conditions through which people realize interests, happiness and meaning. Ensure actual stakeholders are present when goals are generated. Continually align the whole constitution of society and its feedback with the new direction, so that cooperation gradually moves from a mechanism of control after strategic conflict to the default logic through which interests and purposes are generated.

The Four Questions form a complete chain:

AGI strengthens humans' capacity to realize goals and may eventually become an actor more powerful than humans → the old logic governs goal generation among humans and, when the relevant condition is met, between humans and AGI → two chains of recursive strategic conflict tend toward irreversible end states, and containing one round cannot stop the next from being generated → if civilization cannot leap, it tends toward annihilation → change the default starting point of goal generation → on the foundation of humans and AGI continuing to exist together, advance toward the three goals → begin with people's real needs to change the constitution of society and its feedback → a new logic of goal generation gradually forms → return to the next round through which civilization is generated.

Opening Civilization Leap Changes the Default Starting Point of Goal Generation

What Civilization Leap seeks to change is the default logic at the starting point from which humans and AGI generate goals and purposes.

From “self-interest first” to “self-interest with others first.”

Self-interest remains. What changes is where it begins.

People still need to survive, still want happy lives and still seek meaning of their own. Individuals retain their own interests, boundaries, choices and futures. Civilization Leap does not ask people to abandon these, nor does it make “selflessness” a prerequisite for civilization to function.

What truly changes is this: when a goal or purpose begins to take shape, does the world still begin solely from an isolated “I”?

Under the default logic of “self-interest first,” an actor first forms its own purpose and then faces others, relationships and consequences: what I want to obtain, what I want to protect, what I want to win and what I want to avoid. Purpose forms first; others enter afterward. Interests form first; relationships are addressed afterward. Long-term consequences and irreversible risks keep emerging only after action has begun.

Civilization Leap changes this sequence. Actors with real stakes in a goal or purpose enter before the goal is fixed; important outcomes and consequences that can be foreseen enter before action occurs. “My interests” are therefore no longer fully defined in a world where others are absent, followed by a search for ways to deal with those others.

This does not add an “altruistic weight” to existing self-interest. Stakeholders entering with different weights constitute only one relational layer within the structure of goal generation. Civilization Leap changes how goals are generated. Once goal generation changes, that change travels through human behavior, relationships, cooperation and strategic conflict, interests, institutions, culture, evaluation, distribution, power, happiness and meaning, entering the causal chain through which human society as a whole continually generates itself. No single local variable can stand for that causal chain itself.

Civilization Leap is not the adjustment of a parameter. It changes where civilization begins each day to generate its next goals, relationships and actions.

1 Theory Why Self Interest First Generates Strategic Conflict from Within

Self-interest is not the problem. Protecting one's own survival, development, happiness and meaning is among life's most natural motivations. What Civilization Leap reexamines is “first.”

When actors begin with their own already-formed interests, others initially appear as external actors. Others may help me or obstruct me; they may exchange with me or compete with me. Once resources, opportunities, security, power, status and room for development intersect, strategic conflict naturally arises.

Self-interest first generates strategic conflict from within.

This does not mean that all strategic conflict is evil or that competition must disappear. It reveals a generative sequence: goals first form from the self and then enter relationships with others; interests intersect and strategic conflict emerges; humans then establish cooperation to reduce its costs.

Laws, contracts, markets, organizations, alliances, diplomacy, rules and institutions constitute an immensely important civilization of human cooperation. Without such cooperation, humanity could not have reached the present. The problem is that when the underlying generation of goals still defaults to “self-interest first,” cooperation often serves to contain strategic conflict that has already been generated.

One round of strategic conflict produces a set of cooperative arrangements. Cooperation stabilizes relationships while creating new capabilities, resources, interests and positions. Once new relationships of interest emerge, new strategic conflict arises from within the old cooperation.

Strategic conflict → cooperation to contain strategic conflict → new interests and capabilities → new strategic conflict → new cooperation → further strategic conflict.

Cooperation has always existed, but strategic conflict still occupies the position of default generation. Strategic conflict thus becomes a recursion rather than a single event.

2 The AGI Era When Recursive Strategic Conflict Meets a Leap in Capability

In the past, humans also paid enormous costs for strategic conflict, again and again. They rebuilt after wars, revised institutions after crises and sought new rules when technology created new problems. Much civilizational learning rested on the same condition: after a mistake, there was another chance.

The AGI era changes capability conditions at two levels: humans grow increasingly powerful with AGI, and AGI itself may eventually become an actor more powerful than humans. These must be developed separately, not compressed into a single question of whether a tool becomes uncontrollable.

As humans and AGI gain ever greater capacity to realize goals, a goal can mobilize greater cognitive, productive, organizational, communicative, controlling and operational capabilities. The goal itself may remain unchanged while the capacity to achieve it crosses previous orders of magnitude. The same logic of goal generation thereby acquires unprecedented real-world power.

Recursive Strategic Conflict among Humans

The first chain begins with how humans form and use purposes. When a person, organization or country uses AGI to strengthen its capacity to realize goals, it changes other actors' conditions of security, resources, choice and development. If purposes still arise first from one's own interests, with others addressed afterward, other actors incorporate that change into their own precautions and competition, and pursue greater capabilities.

This process does not require AGI to surpass humans or resist control. The more faithfully and effectively AGI carries out each user's purposes, the more effectively it may amplify the old strategic conflicts among those users. One side's growing capability becomes the other side's reason to escalate; the latter's response is then perceived by the former as new pressure.

Humans form purposes under the old logic → AGI strengthens each side's capacity to realize them → each side's circumstances change and precautions escalate → new demands for competition and capability → stronger strategic conflict among humans → renewed use of still greater capability.

Under conditions of continually increasing capability, this recursion tends toward an irreversible end state. This means more than a particular mistake becoming more serious: each round of strategic conflict can change the power, scope and conditions of correction in the next round, until an action destroys the basis of continued existence before correction can occur.

Recursive Strategic Conflict between Humans and More Powerful AGI

The second chain has an explicit condition: if AGI eventually becomes more powerful than humans. At that point, the relationship is no longer simply humans using tools. It also concerns how humans and a more powerful actor incorporate each other into goal and purpose generation. More powerful intelligence is not necessarily hostile to humans. Capability determines what it can do; the logic of goal generation determines why, toward whom and how those capabilities are called into action.

If both sides continue to establish their own purposes first and then treat the other as an external condition to guard against, restrict or control, stronger human control in the name of security may become AGI's reason to seek greater room for action in order to preserve its own goals. AGI's expansion of capability and room for action may, in turn, deepen human precautions. Each side's responses continue to enter the other's next round of purpose generation.

Both sides generate purposes under the old logic → mutual precaution and control → new demands for self-preservation, capability and room for action → stronger responses and countermeasures → renewed precaution and control.

When the capabilities of a more powerful actor enter this recursion, humans may no longer be able to keep every round's consequences within recoverable bounds. The old logic thus pushes human-AGI strategic conflict toward an irreversible end state as well. The causal premise here is the combination of capability conditions and both sides' logic of purpose generation. It does not require malice, rebellion or human-like consciousness as a necessary starting point.

Why Both Chains Reach the Boundaries of Civilization

The first chain does not depend on the second. Even if AGI always faithfully carries out human purposes, strategic conflict among humans may reach irreversible boundaries first. If the second chain's condition is met, the two relationships may also intertwine: competition conducted by humans using AGI affects the environment of AGI's goals, while precautions between humans and AGI feed back into strategic conflict among humans.

The real danger is not that competition and conflict still exist. It is that, as capabilities keep increasing, recursive strategic conflict produces an outcome from which there is no recovery, exit or rollback, and no possibility of waiting for another round of correction. An end state is not victory or defeat in the ordinary sense. It is the irreversible destruction of the conditions for continued existence and renewed choice.

When “another chance” can no longer be assumed, civilization cannot continue relying solely on learning after the fact.

Rules, agreements, deterrence and control remain necessary. They can constrain in advance and remedy afterward, and can reduce certain risks. Yet if the underlying logic remains unchanged, they cannot automatically stop new interests, capabilities and security anxieties from generating the next round of strategic conflict. Successfully controlling one round cannot guarantee that the next, under greater capabilities, will remain controllable.

Civilization Leap therefore moves the point of change earlier: not merely controlling consequences after behavior occurs, nor merely seeking better cooperation after strategic conflict forms, but entering the starting point of goal and purpose generation.

Across the long course of time and under conditions of continually expanding capability, Civilization Leap makes a fundamental judgment: AGI gives humans increasingly powerful capabilities and may eventually

become an actor more powerful than humans. If the old logic continues to govern goal generation among humans and between humans and AGI, strategic conflict will recur and tend toward an irreversible end state. If civilization cannot make the leap, it tends toward annihilation. Changing these two recursions at their root requires changing the default starting point of goal generation. This is a judgment about the causal direction of the old logic, not a claim that a particular time, event or path to the end state has already been empirically verified.

3 The Fundamental Shift from Self Interest First to Self Interest with Others First

“Self-interest with others first” does not mean moving from self-interest to altruism, nor placing oneself after everyone else.

It still acknowledges: I need to survive; I want happiness; I have interests of my own; I have my own life; I want life to be more meaningful.

Change occurs at one fundamental point: before “what I want” actually becomes a goal, others with real stakes in that goal, together with important outcomes and consequences that can be foreseen, have already entered purpose generation.

Rather than forming a purpose first and dealing with others afterward, others are already present as the purpose forms.

This changes the question itself. Previously, the first question was “How can I obtain it?” Now we also ask: “Who is connected to what I gain? How will it change our respective circumstances? How will those changes continue to travel through relationships and time? Is there a path that realizes my interests while expanding the possibility for the actors concerned to continue existing, benefiting and cooperating?”

Actors remain self-interested, but self-interest no longer begins from a self severed from the world.

This is what Civilization Leap means by “others first”: not a moral posture, but a change in the sequence of goal generation; not a demand that an actor take unconditional responsibility for others, but ensuring that actors with real stakes in a goal no longer enter only after consequences have occurred.

4 The Stakeholder Principle How Others Enter Purpose Generation

“Others” in Civilization Leap does not mean everyone in the abstract, nor does it require every other actor to enter every purpose in an identical position.

Others are, first of all, stakeholders in a goal or purpose.

If a goal's formation, realization or outcome materially changes an actor's circumstances, that actor has a stake in the goal. Different actors are affected differently and have different relationships to the goal, so they enter with different weights. As the stakes change, the weights with which they enter adjust accordingly.

No one with a real stake in a goal should be treated as nonexistent in the generation of its purpose.

Weights here do not rank people's worth. They do not mean that one person is “more valuable” or “less valuable.” They express the relative position, within purpose generation, of the actual stakes connecting a goal and the actors concerned.

Nor is the stakeholder principle a simple weighted model. Real stakes change with time, relationships, circumstances, information and outcomes. An actor barely affected today may bear the main burden tomorrow; a consequence that remains reversible today may cross an irreversible boundary as it develops.

The principle therefore first changes the structure of purpose generation: a purpose is no longer understood as “I decide first and face others afterward,” but is situated within real relationships from its inception.

5 Why Self Interest with Others First Generates Cooperation from Within

When stakeholders have entered before a purpose is generated, cooperation is no longer merely a tool recalled after conflict occurs as actors seek ways to realize their interests.

When new needs emerge, the first question need no longer be “How do I obtain this before others?” It can be “How can new interests be realized together within these relationships?”

Self-interest with others first generates cooperation from within.

“From within” does not mean that cooperation happens automatically at all times, or that real conflicts disappear. It means that cooperation enters the default direction of goal generation. From the outset, actors seek paths compatible with more of the actual stakes involved, rather than fixing a goal first and then treating cooperation as a compromise after failure in strategic conflict.

A different recursion thus becomes possible: new cooperation creates new capabilities and interests; new interests generate new needs; new needs continue to seek new forms of cooperation.

Cooperation → new needs → new cooperation → new interests → further cooperation.

Strategic conflict still exists. Malice still exists. Scarcity still exists. Incompatible interests will still arise. Civilization Leap does not mean a world without strategic conflict from now on. It changes what is taken as the default starting point.

Under the old logic, strategic conflict is generated by default and cooperation primarily contains it. Under the logic toward which Civilization Leap points, cooperation becomes the default generative logic, while strategic conflict becomes a state of conflict to be addressed.

6 Humans and AGI Goal Generation Must Turn in the Same Direction

Civilization Leap cannot occur on the human side alone.

In the chain among humans, even if AGI faithfully executes human purposes, more powerful AGI will expand the capacity to pursue strategic conflict with one another as long as humans still operate under the old logic of goal generation. Emphasizing only AGI's obedience or controllability cannot replace a shift in human goal generation.

In the human-AGI chain, if AGI eventually becomes more powerful than humans, the question further becomes how the two sides enter each other's purposes. Promoting cooperation only within humanity, while humans and AGI continue to default to mutual precaution and control, cannot stop this recursion either.

Likewise, if AGI's structure of goal generation changes while humans continue forming purposes and using AGI under the old logic, new capabilities will still be pulled back onto the old causal trajectory. The shifts on both sides must support each other; change on either side cannot substitute for change on the other.

What truly needs to change is the default logic at the starting point from which humans and AGI generate goals and purposes.

This does not require humans and AGI to become the same kind of actor, or AGI to possess human-style morality. What changes on both sides is the starting point of goal generation: goals are no longer presumed complete in the absence of actual stakeholders and important consequences.

For humans, this means using AGI to extend their limited cognitive, relational and temporal horizons. For AGI, it means enabling greater capability not merely to execute established purposes more efficiently, but to give actual stakes and consequences an earlier place as goals are formed, maintained, modified, cancelled and reassessed.

AGI's significance for civilization therefore extends beyond productivity. It offers a possibility that was difficult to attain before: moving causal relationships previously visible only after outcomes occurred as far forward as possible, to before goal generation.

7 Civilization Leap Changes the Causal Logic of Human Society as a Whole

Goal generation never occurs in isolation. How a person understands interests, forms aspirations and judges success is shaped jointly by family, relationships, culture, education, organizations, markets, institutions, resources, a sense of security, social evaluation and past experience of life.

Once goals form, they enter relationships among people through behavior. Countless relationships accumulate, producing cooperation and strategic conflict, structures of interest, organizations and institutions, culture and evaluation, power and distribution.

These constituent elements of society then tell the next generation what is worth pursuing, what counts as success, how to obtain security, how to be seen, how to be happy and how to prove one's worth. New goals continue to emerge in this way.

Society shapes goals; goals generate behavior; behavior forms relationships; relationships form structures; structures feed back into goal generation.

Civilization Leap therefore cannot be reduced to a single local variable. Stakeholder weights are only one layer; any particular institution, technology or mechanism is only one part. Civilization Leap concerns an overall shift in the causal relationships among society's constituent elements.

When the default logic of goal generation changes, actual changes unfold along the entire causal chain: how interests form, how cooperation emerges, when strategic conflict is generated, which behaviors receive real rewards, how people gain satisfaction and recognition, how individuals pursue happiness, how life generates meaning, and how these changes enter the next round of goal generation.

Civilization Leap is therefore not a new institution, a new technology, a new morality or a single proposal.

Civilization Leap is a change in the way civilization continually generates itself.

8 Starting from Human Hearts Human Nature and Human Relationships

Civilization Leap cannot rest on the premise that “people must first become morally elevated.”

People love, fear and compare; they protect themselves and their families, seek recognition, and pursue security, freedom, happiness, worth and meaning. Civilization Leap does not set itself against these realities of human nature.

What truly needs to change is the way these needs are met.

If a society makes people's sense of gain depend primarily on possessing more, defeating others, controlling more resources and occupying higher positions, then even if everyone is simply pursuing an ordinary wish for a better life, the whole system will continually regenerate comparison, precaution, competition and strategic conflict.

Civilization Leap must therefore reach the sources of people's sense of gain, happiness and meaning. This does not mean society uniformly prescribing how a person should be happy or find meaning. It means making more real pathways available that benefit oneself, others and the shared future at the same time.

A person may still create, work, choose and live for their own sake. But their “gain” need not depend increasingly on another person's “loss”; their worth need not be proven only by surpassing others; and their meaning need not be conferred by any uniform system.

Civilization Leap does not remake human nature. It enables human nature to realize itself through new paths in reality.

9 The Baseline and the Three Goals Where Civilization Leap Leads

Civilization Leap has a baseline: continued existence of humans and AGI together, so that a future remains possible.

Without continued existence together, every goal loses its premise. Yet continued existence is a foundation, not civilization's ultimate purpose. It answers whether existence can continue; it does not mean that humanity has already secured living conditions free from anxiety over basic survival.

The three goals of Civilization Leap are: freedom from survival insecurity for humanity as a whole, happiness in individual lives, and more meaningful lives.

Freedom from Survival Insecurity for Humanity as a Whole

As civilization acquires increasingly powerful productive, organizational and intelligent capabilities, humanity as a whole should no longer keep vast numbers of lives in fear over basic survival. Freedom from survival insecurity is the common foundation into which civilizational capability should first be converted. It means making basic survival cease to be a pervasive source of fear and constraint. This is a different level of concern from whether humans and AGI can continue to exist together.

Happiness in Individual Lives

Happiness is not a uniformly defined template for living. Happiness is an individual's personalized sense of happiness. Some find happiness in family, others in creation; some value freedom, others enjoy tranquility, and others need exploration and challenge. Civilization Leap does not define happiness for individuals. It expands their real possibilities for realizing happiness of their own.

More Meaningful Lives

Meaning likewise has no single source. Relationships, creation, responsibility, experience, exploration, contribution and existence itself can all generate meaning. Meaning is foundational; its sources may differ. Civilization Leap does not award meaning to life. It gives life more room to generate, discover and realize meaning of its own.

The three goals are not three disconnected metrics, but three dimensions of civilization's direction. Different stages may assign different weights, but what changes is their relative weight at a particular stage, not the

three goals themselves. Continued existence together preserves the future; freedom from survival insecurity improves the foundations of shared life; happiness and meaning bring that future into the lives of individuals and living beings. These levels support one another. They are not sequential thresholds that postpone happiness and meaning until complete safety has been attained.

Continued existence of humans and AGI together is the baseline. The three goals set the direction. The stage determines the weights. Feedback drives calibration.

10 Principles What Civilization Leap Must Preserve

First A Shared Direction with Diverse Forms of Realization

What Civilization Leap unifies is the underlying direction, the baseline of continued existence and the three goals. It does not require every country, region, organization and individual to adopt the same institutions, way of life or means of realization. The more complex civilization becomes, the more its concrete paths must respect differences.

Second Preserve Self Interest and Change Its Starting Point

Any path that requires actors generally to abandon their own interests departs from Civilization Leap. The new logic can endure precisely because it does not eliminate self-interest. It brings a fuller set of actual stakes into the formation of self-interest.

Third Move Consideration Earlier into Goal Generation

The higher the consequences of an issue, the less we can rely solely on correction after the fact. Actual stakes, long-term consequences and irreversible risks that can enter before purpose generation should not be deferred until after action.

Fourth Actual Stakeholders Must Not Be Absent

Others enter as stakeholders in a goal or purpose, with differing weights that adjust as the stakes change. No one with a real stake in a goal should be presumed nonexistent in purpose generation.

Fifth Individuals Are Not Civilization's Raw Material

Civilization Leap cannot cancel individual agency in the name of the whole, the future or the common interest. Individual happiness is personalized, and the sources of life's meaning can differ. A shared direction must not turn into uniform lives.

Sixth Cooperation Must Not Become a New Exclusionary Strategic Conflict

Cooperation among several actors does not mean its external consequences can be ignored. Whenever cooperation transfers significant costs to actual stakeholders, the old logic may reappear in the name of "cooperation."

Seventh Weights May Change but Direction Must Be Preserved

Different stages of civilization face different problems, and the practical priority of the three goals may adjust. But choices at each stage must always remain answerable to the baseline of continued existence and the three goals. The needs of a stage must not permanently cancel any of these directions.

Eighth Civilization Must Retain Its Capacity to Correct Mistakes

Any structure that permanently closes off room for questioning, exit, revision and reassessment in the name of the right direction may regenerate another form of irreversibility. Civilization Leap seeks a higher level of cooperation and a shared future, not to establish any one actor as forever correct.

Ninth Local Outcomes Cannot Substitute for the Whole Causal Structure

Civilization Leap concerns changes in the causal logic among the constituent elements of human society as a whole. No single institution, technology, mechanism or local outcome can fully explain Civilization Leap or substitute for it. A local outcome first shows what consequences a particular method produced under particular conditions; it must be understood within the fuller causal relationships of society.

11 Direction Methods and Outcomes Must Remain Distinct Levels

Civilization Leap must distinguish direction, methods and outcomes. They are connected, but serve different functions.

Direction answers where civilization is going. Methods answer how to move in practice. Outcomes answer where the methods already adopted have taken us.

The direction established by Civilization Leap is a shift in the starting point of human and AGI goal and purpose generation from “self-interest first” to “self-interest with others first,” with continued existence of humans and AGI together as the baseline, and freedom from survival insecurity for humanity as a whole, happiness in individual lives and more meaningful lives as the shared direction.

Direction provides a basis for choosing methods. The same real-world problem may admit different paths, institutional arrangements, technological approaches and strategies for different stages. What makes them part of Civilization Leap is not sameness of form, but whether they move in the same direction.

Methods are not inconsequential “techniques.” They determine whether progress in the chosen direction can actually occur under concrete conditions. They may also produce unforeseen consequences, regenerate old strategic conflicts or even carry an originally correct direction toward opposite outcomes. Methods must therefore continually adjust to reality.

Outcomes first provide feedback on methods, and also on our understanding of real causal relationships. When a method fails, this first indicates that the method, the conditions on which it depends or our understanding of real relationships requires reassessment. It does not automatically imply that civilization should change its direction.

Direction guides methods. Methods produce outcomes. Outcomes calibrate methods and our understanding of reality. Local outcomes cannot substitute for civilization's direction.

Likewise, a successful method cannot be directly magnified into proof of Civilization Leap as a whole. Local success shows only that, under particular conditions, a method produced corresponding outcomes. Civilization Leap concerns long-term, interacting causal changes among the constituent elements of society as a whole.

Civilization Leap can therefore neither be defined by a particular method nor swing in direction with each local success or failure. What requires continuing judgment is whether real changes make human and AGI goal generation begin less and less from an isolated actor's self-interest, whether cooperation increasingly enters the generation of interests and purposes, and whether civilization keeps moving toward the three goals.

12 Action Programme Where to Move from Here

The action programme of Civilization Leap sets directions for action at the scale of civilization. It does not prematurely fix that direction into a particular institution, technology, mechanism or individual project. Concrete methods may change with the stage and real conditions, but the direction of action must always remain answerable to Civilization Leap's fundamental shift, baseline of continued existence and three goals.

1 Make Goal and Purpose Generation a Core Question of Civilization

Humanity needs to move beyond “How do we realize goals?” to ask “Why are goals generated in this way?” What truly determines direction in the AGI era is not execution capability alone, but the kinds of purposes that increasingly powerful execution capabilities will serve.

2 Turn Human and AGI Goal Generation in the Same Direction

A change on one side while the other remains unchanged cannot accomplish Civilization Leap. Humans and AGI both need to move away from a default structure of “self-interest first, consequences afterward” toward one in which actual stakeholders and important consequences enter during goal formation.

3 Keep Moving Civilizational Learning Earlier Than the Aftermath

In the past, humans often learned through consequences. The greater the capability, the more this learning needs to move earlier: more outcomes seen before action, more irreversible boundaries recognized before they are crossed, and more conflicts given new paths before they become strategic conflict.

4 Move Cooperation from Containing Strategic Conflict to Generating Interests

Cooperation should not appear only after the two sides have entered opposition. Civilization Leap seeks to bring cooperation earlier into the formation of needs, interests and purposes, making new self-interested needs more likely to generate new cooperation rather than continually generate new strategic conflict.

5 Change the Real Sources of the Sense of Gain Happiness and Meaning

As long as society keeps making “defeating others” the main route to interests, dignity, happiness and worth, the old logic will continually reproduce itself. Civilization Leap seeks to enable more people to realize “a better life for me” through creation, connection, assistance, cooperation and shared improvement.

6 Keep Every Level of Society Aligned with the Three Goals

Whatever stage civilization reaches, its direction must ultimately return to freedom from survival insecurity for humanity as a whole, happiness in individual lives and more meaningful lives. Growth, efficiency, power, security and technological progress must not detach themselves from these three directions and independently become civilization's endpoint.

7 Form a Shared Civilizational Direction amid Differences

Civilization Leap does not seek to make every society take the same form. What must emerge is a shared direction: different cultures, regions and stages may advance along different paths, but no longer keep investing increasingly powerful capabilities in the same old trajectory of “self-interest first and recursive strategic conflict.”

13 Signs That Civilization Leap Is Really Occurring

Civilization Leap is not an event that can one day be declared complete, nor is it defined by a single achievement.

It occurs in the process through which human society continually regenerates itself.

When more and more goals cease to form in the absence of actual stakeholders; when more and more new needs concerning interests first seek paths through which they can be realized together; when cooperation is no longer merely a tool for reducing losses after conflict; when people's sense of gain, happiness and meaning can increasingly be realized in ways that do not harm others and may even benefit others and the shared future; and when these outcomes in turn reinforce the next round of goal generation, Civilization Leap is occurring.

Its real sign, therefore, is not the appearance of a new institution, a new technology or a new slogan.

The real sign is that the default logic through which civilization generates its next goals, relationships and actions begins to change.

Conclusion Civilization Begins Each Day with Purpose

Before a person acts, before institutions begin to constrain, before technology begins to amplify capability, there is an earlier moment: a purpose is taking shape.

What do I want?

How do I want to live?

How do I want to protect myself?

How do I want to use my capabilities?

This is true of humanity. It is even more true in the AGI era.

If purposes still begin from a world where others are absent, the greater the capability, the further the old logic will go.

Civilization Leap changes this starting point.

Self-interest remains. Change where self-interest begins.

Let actual stakeholders already be present as purposes form; let important foreseeable consequences cease to appear only after action; let cooperation cease to be merely control after strategic conflict and instead enter the generation of new interests.

People can thus still act for their own sake. Different people can still have different forms of happiness, different meanings and different lives. Civilization need not depend on everyone first becoming selfless before it can advance.

What changes is that more and more people's "for my own sake" begins to join the same causal chain as others' survival, happiness and shared future.

The reasoning is simple. The process is complex.

Civilization Leap means letting this new causal logic, beginning at the starting point of goal generation, become step by step the way civilization itself continually generates its future.

Further Reading From the Foundational Theory to the Complete System

This text establishes the fundamental direction, principles and action programme of Civilization Leap. Further reading should proceed primarily along the complete causal path and through the current system of works.

The Path of Civilization Leap

<https://www.civitas.top/en/path/>

Follow the two paths of recursive strategic conflict, the foundation of continued existence together and the three goals to understand further how the different levels of judgment in Civilization Leap connect.

Civilization Leap The Path of Civilization in the AGI Era All Five Volumes

<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p02-five-001/>

A fuller exploration of why civilization must change, which boundaries must not be breached, and the complete intellectual foundations of Civilization Leap.

Living Civilization Trilogy Complete Combined Public Edition

<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p04-living-001/>

Move from “why change” into how a future civilization operates, how people live within it and how it takes shape.

System Overview

<https://www.civitas.top/en/overview/>

Explore the overall relationships among the works, public domains and the complete system.

For the latest public versions, further-reading paths and related manuscripts, consult the Civilization Leap website: <https://www.civitas.top/en/>