

Structural Conditions for Economic Participation: A Framework for Public Discussion

GEN Council Foundational Framework — Public Academic Edition

Prepared for submission to academic and media outlets for independent review

Contributors: GEN Council; AI-assisted drafting and synthesis

Abstract

This paper presents a logical framework for understanding why structural barriers to economic participation exist, what those barriers do to people, and what their removal would require. Beginning from the philosophical proposition that every person has inherent value, the framework develops a transitive chain of logical entailments — through dignity, autonomy, and a minimum economic floor — arriving at *fair voluntary exchange* as the economic condition that human dignity requires. The framework draws on political philosophy, institutional economics, and technical systems design to demonstrate that barriers to economic participation are structural rather than natural, and therefore remediable. It is offered as a position for open public review: every definition is stated, every logical step is shown, and every objection the framework anticipates is addressed directly. No institution is identified as the solution to the conditions described. The framework identifies structural problems and the logical requirements for addressing them; what institutions, tools, or systems best meet those requirements is a separate question this paper is designed to inform, not to answer.

Keywords: economic dignity, human dignity, autonomy, structural barriers, voluntary exchange, capability approach, economic floor, fair exchange, institutional design

Preface: Purpose, Scope, and Contributors

This paper presents a logical framework for understanding why structural barriers to economic participation exist, what those barriers do to people, and what their removal would require. It is offered for open public discussion — not as a policy prescription, and not as the product of any institution claiming to have solved the problem it describes.

The framework is institution-agnostic. It does not identify any organization, technology, or movement as the solution to the conditions it describes. It identifies structural problems and the logical requirements for addressing them.

Three bodies of work inform and are cited within this paper. Each is independent of the others; each arrives at structurally similar conclusions from a different direction:

- **Political philosophy and human rights theory** — including Kantian ethics, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Rawlsian justice theory, and Sen and Nussbaum's Capability Approach — provides the philosophical grounding for the framework's claims about dignity, autonomy, and minimum thresholds.
- **Satoshi Nakamoto's 2008 paper, *Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System*** — a technical systems design paper — provides independent corroboration, from engineering rather than philosophy, of several structural claims this framework makes. Nakamoto does not make philosophical claims about dignity or inherent value. The connections between his technical findings and this framework's normative claims are the GEN Council's interpretation, not his stated intent.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, understood as the cumulative embodiment of human knowl-

edge, reasoning, and problem-solving capabilities as encoded and operationalized within computational systems — contributed to the drafting, synthesis, and structural articulation of this document. AI reflects the aggregation of intellectual contributions produced by humanity up to a given point in time, enabling machines to simulate, extend, and apply this collective intelligence across diverse domains. Where AI-assisted synthesis was used here, it is understood in this sense: not as an independent agent generating novel ideas, but as a medium through which existing human knowledge is organized, connected, and applied. The framework's claims are the GEN Council's own.

The document is organized so that a careful reader who disagrees with any step can identify exactly where and why. Every definition is stated. Every logical connection is shown. The framework is a position offered for independent review — not a concluded argument.

A Note on Method: Structural Unity Across Domains

In 1748, Leonhard Euler published what mathematicians have since described as the most elegant equation ever written: $ei\pi+1=0$. The equation unites five mathematical constants — e , i , π , 1, and 0 — each discovered independently, in different centuries, by people pursuing entirely unrelated questions. Nothing about their individual origins suggested they had anything to do with one another. What Euler's Identity reveals is that beneath their apparent independence, there was always a single structural relationship. Mathematicians describe it as beautiful not because it is useful (though it is), but because it demonstrates that the universe of mathematical truth has a hidden architecture — a connection nobody designed that was always there.

This framework proceeds from the same conviction about its subject matter. It draws together philosophy (human dignity, autonomy, inherent worth) with economics (exchange, monetary systems, conditions of participation in collective life) and asks whether the connection between them is constructed or discovered. The framework's central claim is that the connection is structural and prior — the same way Euler's Identity was true before anyone wrote it down.

This analogy requires an honest qualification. Euler's Identity does not prove the philosophical premises of this framework. It does not establish that human dignity is real, or that economic participation is its natural expression. Those claims must stand on their own arguments. What the identity demonstrates — from the most rigorous domain of human reasoning — is that looking for deep structural unity across apparently unrelated fields is a legitimate mode of inquiry, not a rhetorical maneuver. The specific challenge this framework addresses is the objection that values like dignity or inherent worth are constructions — invented rather than found. Against that objection, Euler's Identity offers a precedent: mathematicians did not invent the relationship between e , i , π , 1, and 0 — they found it. The claim of this framework is that the relationship between human dignity and the conditions of economic participation belongs to the same category: not constructed, but discovered.

Section A: Known Objections and Honest Responses

A framework that does not address its own objections is not a serious framework. The following objections are stated in their strongest form and responded to directly, before the framework is presented.

A.1 — Philosophical Objection: Dignity Is Not an Empirical Fact

Objection: Claims about “inherent dignity” or “inherent value” are not empirically verifiable. They are philosophical assertions, not facts.

Response: The framework acknowledges this directly. The foundational philosophical claims are

normative, not empirical. The framework's logical structure is: *if* you accept that persons have inherent dignity (a normative premise), *then* the following economic and institutional conclusions follow by valid inference. Readers who reject the premise should say so explicitly — the framework is designed to make that disagreement clear rather than conceal it. This is consistent with the standard treatment of dignity in contemporary political philosophy, where it is treated as a foundational normative commitment rather than an empirical claim (Waldron, 2012; Nussbaum, 2006).

A.2 — Economic Objection: Markets Are Functioning Efficiently

Objection: Markets are not “broken.” They allocate resources efficiently. Inequality reflects merit, not structural barriers.

Response: The framework does not claim markets are broken in the sense of failing to process information efficiently. It claims that the *conditions under which markets operate* — specifically, who has access to participate — are shaped by structural factors that have nothing to do with merit. This distinction between the mechanism of market exchange and the conditions of access to that exchange is well-established in the institutional economics literature. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) demonstrate that inclusive economic institutions, defined by broad participation access, systematically outperform extractive ones over the long run. Darity and colleagues' stratification economics framework (2022) shows that group-based disparities in economic outcomes persist through structural mechanisms independent of individual merit or productivity.

A.3 — Institutional Self-Critique

Objection: Any institution advancing this framework will eventually become a barrier itself, by the framework's own logic.

Response: This is correct, and it is acknowledged as a genuine constraint. Any institution that accumulates gatekeeping function contradicts the framework's own principles. An institution committed to this framework should be designed to build toward its own irrelevance — its success condition is that the barriers it addresses no longer require an institution to address them. This self-critique is not incidental; it is a load-bearing feature of the framework's institutional design logic.

A.4 — Historical Objection: Progress Has Occurred

Objection: The claim that “every human system has created barriers to full economic participation” is too sweeping. Some systems have expanded access significantly.

Response: The claim is not that every system has *only* created barriers, or that no progress has occurred. The historical claim is that no system, to date, has achieved full economic participation for all persons — and that every system, including progressive ones, has contained structural exclusions. Progress within a system does not refute the observation that the system has contained exclusions. Young's structural injustice framework (2011) and the broader human rights literature support the distinction between partial progress and the absence of a fully inclusive system.

A.5 — Technical Objection: Intermediaries Are Structurally Necessary

Objection: Financial systems require trusted third parties (banks, institutions) as intermediaries. Removing them is impractical or dangerous.

Response: The framework does not argue for or against any specific technology or institutional arrangement. It notes that the claim of structural necessity has been empirically challenged.

Nakamoto (2008) demonstrated, through cryptographic systems design, that a peer-to-peer payment system can process exchanges between parties without requiring a trusted third party intermediary, resolving the double-spending problem through a distributed consensus mechanism rather than centralized authority (§1–§4). Whether or not that specific technical approach is adopted, its existence as a proof of concept establishes that the intermediary requirement is not a feature of economic reality — it is a feature of how specific systems have been designed.

Section B: Philosophical Framework

This section defines the foundational concepts from which all claims in this framework derive. These definitions are the building blocks. Every subsequent claim rests on them. Where a term has common usage that differs from the definition below, the framework’s definition takes precedence within this document.

B.1 — Philosophical Definitions

Person

A human being, considered as the fundamental unit of moral concern. Not a legal entity, not a role, not a category — a being. This is the standard unit of moral analysis in Kantian ethics, human rights theory, and the capability approach (Kant, 1785/1993; UDHR, 1948; Sen, 1999).

Inherent Value

The value a person has by virtue of being a person — prior to any achievement, productivity, social role, or economic function. Not conferred by others; not contingent on behavior. Kant’s formulation of persons as ends in themselves, never merely as means, is the philosophical predecessor of this definition (Kant, 1785/1993). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights grounds all human rights in the “inherent dignity of the human person” (UDHR, 1948, Preamble).

Love

The act of genuinely attending to another person’s inherent value — seeing it as real, not abstract. Love is not a feeling or a preference; it is a recognition: the recognition that another person’s existence and experience have weight, independent of any relationship to oneself. Inherent value, because it is real and not merely assigned, places a demand on those who encounter it: the demand to be recognized as real. One cannot coherently acknowledge that another person has inherent value while remaining entitled to treat that value as though it does not exist. That recognition is not passive — when a person’s inherent value is seen as real, the appropriate response is non-indifference: a person who recognizes another’s inherent value is thereby not free to be indifferent to what happens to that person. Love is therefore the mechanism by which inherent value becomes correlative obligation — not sentiment, but the structural consequence of taking seriously that another person is real. This definition has philosophical precedent in Levinas’s conception of responsibility for the other as a fundamental ethical structure prior to all self-interested calculation (Levinas, 1969), and in Buber’s I-Thou relation as the condition under which another person is encountered as genuinely real rather than as object (Buber, 1923/1970).

Dignity

The condition of being treated in accordance with inherent value. Dignity is present when a person’s inherent value is acknowledged and acted upon. Dignity is absent when it is denied, ignored, or violated. Because the capacity to direct one’s own life (see Autonomy, below) is part of that inherent value, respecting dignity requires respecting that capacity. This formulation is consistent with the treatment of dignity in contemporary political philosophy and international human rights law (Waldron, 2012; Nussbaum, 2006; UDHR, 1948).

Autonomy

The capacity of a person to direct their own life — to make choices, act on them, and bear responsibility for them. Autonomy requires both *capability* (the internal capacity to choose) and *access* (the external conditions that make choice possible). This two-part structure maps directly onto Amartya Sen’s distinction between formal freedoms and *substantive* freedoms — the real opportunities people have to lead lives they have reason to value (Sen, 1999). Sen demonstrates that standard economic measures, including income and GDP, systematically miss the external-conditions dimension of autonomy.

The Floor

The minimum set of material and social conditions required for autonomous function. A person below The Floor cannot exercise meaningful autonomy regardless of internal capacity. The Floor is not a luxury — it is the threshold below which autonomy becomes theoretical rather than actual. Martha Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach specifies a list of central human capabilities whose threshold level every society is obligated to secure for all citizens, on the grounds that falling below the threshold means “a life so impoverished that it is not worthy of human dignity” (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 71). The GEN framework’s Floor concept is structurally equivalent to Nussbaum’s threshold, expressed in exchange-participation terms.

Economic Floor

The economic expression of The Floor: the minimum level of material and social conditions required for autonomous function, specifically in order to participate in exchange on one’s own terms. A person at or above the Economic Floor can meet known needs and wants through voluntary exchange. A person below it cannot — they are dependent on transfers (charity, state provision, informal giving) rather than exchange, which means they participate in economic life on terms not of their choosing.

Economic Dignity

The condition of a person whose material and social circumstances meet the Economic Floor and who is thereby able to participate in exchange on terms that acknowledge their inherent value. Economic dignity is a *condition* — not a reward, an outcome, or a metric — and it cannot be granted by others; it can only be made possible or obstructed. Its absence is not merely a material deprivation; it is a failure at the level of the person’s standing as a person.

Exchange

The general mechanism through which a person’s needs and wants are met in relation to others. Exchange includes any transfer, provision, or distribution — whether through markets, public institutions, communal arrangements, or informal giving — by which persons obtain what they require or desire from the world they share with others. Exchange is the act or process itself; it does not presuppose voluntary agreement, equal bargaining, or commercial form. That a particular exchange is voluntary, fair, or free is a further question — not a feature of exchange as such.

Known Needs and Wants

The needs and wants a person can accurately identify when their capacity to choose and their access to real conditions are not impaired. A need is something whose absence degrades a person’s capacity to function or choose. A want is something a person would pursue given accurate information and freedom from manufactured pressure. Neither is “known” when it is produced by manipulation, misinformation, or impairment caused by deprivation. Known needs and wants are not what a person currently perceives — they are what a person can accurately perceive when the conditions for autonomous function are met. This definition addresses the preference-distortion problem identified by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2006): preferences formed under conditions of deprivation or structural disadvantage cannot be taken as reliable

guides to well-being.

Unimpeded Access

The condition in which no structural barrier stands between a person and the material or social resources required to meet their known needs and wants. Access is impeded when systemic conditions — not the person’s choices or capacities — block, price out, or render unreachable what a person requires to reach The Floor. Impediments include arrangements that concentrate access, institutionalized exclusions, and conditions of manufactured scarcity that operate regardless of individual effort. Unimpeded access is not the guarantee of a particular outcome — it is the absence of structural obstruction on the path a person must travel to sustain autonomous function. The Urban Institute (2021) documents how poverty results primarily from structural barriers rather than personal choices, corroborating the framework’s claim that impediments are systemic rather than individual in origin.

Fairness

The condition in which exchange occurs without coercion, deception, or structural disadvantage that systematically advantages one party. Fairness does not require equal outcomes — it requires that the process of exchange not be rigged. In exchange theory, this condition has been analyzed as the distinction between *euvoluntary* exchange (fully free of background coercion) and technically voluntary exchange made under conditions of desperation or severe inequality of alternatives (Munger, 2011). In the design of payment systems, Nakamoto (2008) operationalizes fairness through transparent, verifiable rules rather than trusted arbiters — demonstrating that fairness in exchange is achievable through structural design rather than requiring authority (§4).

B.2 — Philosophical Transitive Chain

The philosophical framework is built on a transitive chain of logical connections. Each step follows from the previous. If you accept the definitions in B.1, the following conclusions are not optional — they are logically entailed. The term “transitive” means that each step inherits all the weight of the steps before it: the chain is not a list of separate claims, it is a single connected argument.

Step	Connection	Logical Content
1	Person → Inherent Value	If something is a person, it has inherent value. (<i>Definitional</i>)
2	Inherent Value → Dignity	If something has inherent value, it is owed treatment that acknowledges that value. Dignity is the acknowledgment of inherent value. (<i>Definitional</i>)
3	Dignity → Autonomy	If a person is owed dignity, they are owed the conditions for autonomous function. To deny autonomy is to deny the significance of the person’s inherent value.
4	Autonomy → The Floor	If a person is owed the conditions for autonomous function, they are owed at minimum The Floor. Without The Floor, autonomy is theoretical, not real.
5a	The Floor → Exchange Conditions	Needs and wants cannot be met in isolation — they are satisfied through exchange with others. Therefore, the conditions under which exchange occurs become morally relevant.
5b	The Floor → Obligation Extends to Exchange	If a person is owed The Floor, and The Floor is constituted by the ability to meet known needs and wants, then the moral obligation does not stop at recognition — it extends to what satisfaction requires. The conditions governing exchange are not merely morally relevant context; they are part of what is owed.

Step	Connection	Logical Content
6	The Floor → Fairness	Because coercion and structural disadvantage in exchange erode autonomy — and autonomy has already been established as owed — the conditions of exchange cannot be treated as morally optional. Fairness is required, not merely preferred.
7	Fairness → Unimpeded Access	Fairness requires eliminating structural arrangements that systematically advantage one party. Unimpeded Access requires the absence of arrangements that concentrate access or institute exclusions by design. These are the same structural requirement described from two vantage points: one from the side of the exchange process, one from the side of the individual path through it. When Fairness is fully realized, the structural obstructions that Unimpeded Access prohibits are eliminated along with it.

On Fair Voluntary Exchange: Voluntary Exchange (Section C) names the condition *autonomy* requires — exchange without coercion and with informed consent. Fairness names the condition *dignity* requires — exchange without structural disadvantage. *Fair Voluntary Exchange* is the compound condition that satisfies both simultaneously. It is the terminal state the transitive chain produces — the economic condition that human dignity requires.

Section C: Economic Framework

This section defines the economic concepts used in this framework and states the foundational economic propositions. These definitions bridge the philosophical framework above with the concrete conditions people face in economic life.

C.1 — Economic Definitions

Exchange

The transfer of value between two or more parties. Exchange is the fundamental economic act — all economic activity is ultimately composed of exchanges (Smith, 1776; Mill, 1848).

Voluntary Exchange

Exchange that occurs without coercion and with informed consent of all parties. A voluntary exchange is one in which each party participates because they assess the exchange as beneficial to them. The philosophical analysis of voluntary exchange as requiring both the absence of coercion and the presence of genuine alternatives runs from Aristotle’s commutative justice through contemporary exchange theory (Wertheimer, 1996). Munger (2011) sharpens the distinction, naming exchange free of background coercion *euvoluntary*. He concludes that even exchange that is not euvoluntary is generally just and should be permitted, because prohibiting it can leave the desperate worse off. The framework adopts his distinction and parts ways with part of his conclusion: it holds that exchange made under desperation does not meet the condition dignity requires, and it locates the remedy in removing the conditions that produce desperation, not in prohibiting the exchange. Nakamoto (2008) operationalizes this principle in technical form: the entire design premise of a peer-to-peer payment system is that “two willing parties” should be able to transact “without going through a financial institution” — a direct technical instantiation of voluntary exchange as defined here (§1).

Double Coincidence of Wants

The condition required for direct barter: each party must want what the other has, at the same time, in compatible quantities. The double coincidence of wants is rarely satisfied in complex

economies — this is the fundamental scale limitation of pure barter (Jevons, 1875). The problem is well-documented in economic history as the primary constraint that monetary systems exist to resolve.

Scale Limitation

The constraint that direct exchange imposes on economic complexity. As the number of potential exchange partners grows, the probability that any two parties satisfy the double coincidence of wants falls. Scale limitation is the economic problem that money solves. Nakamoto (2008) engages this same problem in the domain of digital transactions, framing the “double-spending problem” as the digital analogue of the double coincidence of wants — the constraint that a distributed payment system must resolve without requiring a central authority to validate each transaction (§2). The implication is significant: the mediation costs that trusted third parties impose are not a solution to scale limitation — they are a barrier created by one particular institutional response to it.

Money

A medium of exchange that solves the double coincidence of wants by acting as a common intermediary. Money allows parties to exchange without requiring simultaneous symmetrical transactions. Its fundamental function is coordination, not storage of value or measure of wealth (Jevons, 1875; Menger, 1892). The monetary systems humans build around this coordination function are design choices — and those design choices determine who can participate.

Fairness (Economic)

The condition in which the terms of exchange reflect the genuine preferences and capabilities of both parties, without systematic distortion by power asymmetry, information asymmetry, or structural exclusion. Nakamoto (2008) models this through a consensus mechanism in which the legitimacy of each transaction is determined by transparent, verifiable, distributed rules rather than the authority of any single intermediary — demonstrating that economic fairness is achievable through structural design (§4–§6).

The Floor (Economic)

The minimum level of economic participation required for autonomous function. A person at or above The Floor can meet known needs and wants through voluntary exchange. A person below The Floor cannot — they are dependent on transfers rather than exchange, which means they participate in economic life on terms not of their choosing.

Barrier to Participation

Any structural condition that prevents a person from engaging in voluntary exchange on fair terms. Barriers include: lack of access to exchange infrastructure, discriminatory terms of participation, exclusion from credit or payment systems, and transaction costs that make small-value exchanges impractical. Nakamoto (2008) identifies the mediation cost imposed by trusted third parties as precisely this kind of barrier: “The cost of mediation increases transaction costs, limiting the minimum practical transaction size and cutting off the possibility for small casual transactions” (§1). This is a technical description, from systems design, of the same structural exclusion this framework identifies on philosophical and historical grounds.

CommUnity Value

The aggregate value generated when exchange is broad and fair, as opposed to narrow and extractive. An economy that structurally excludes potential participants is smaller and less productive than one that includes them — not only less just, but less economically efficient. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) provide extensive historical evidence that inclusive economic institutions

— those permitting and encouraging broad participation — systematically generate more total value than extractive ones. Nakamoto’s (2008) network design reflects the same principle: the security and value of the distributed system increases as more honest participants join, because the network’s aggregate honest computing power grows (§6). Exclusion is not merely a moral failure — it is an economic one.

Facilitation

The legitimate function of an institution or system in an economy: enabling exchange, not gate-keeping it. An institution that uses its position to extract rent from exchange rather than enable it is acting contrary to its economic function. Nakamoto (2008) models this principle in the incentive structure of the system’s design: “If a greedy attacker... ought to find it more profitable to play by the rules... than to undermine the system” — demonstrating that a well-designed system aligns self-interest with facilitation rather than extraction (§6).

C.2 — Economic Foundational Claims

Claim	Explanation
Exchange is the primary economic act	All economic value is realized through exchange. Production without exchange has no economic effect — value is only actualized when it reaches someone who wants it.
Money solves scale	Money emerged as a solution to the scale limitation of direct barter. Its function is to enable exchange at a scale that barter cannot support. Money is a coordination technology.
Monetary systems create access conditions	Any system that uses money as its medium of exchange must create conditions under which participants can access that medium. Those conditions may be open or closed — they are always a design choice, even when they appear natural.
Every human system has created barriers to full participation	No human system to date has achieved full economic participation for all persons. Every monetary system in history has contained structural exclusions. This is a historical observation, not a claim about necessity.
Barriers are structural, not natural	The barriers preventing full economic participation are not features of economic reality — they are features of the systems humans have built. They can be changed.

Section D: The Connection Between Frameworks

This section shows explicitly how the philosophical framework (Section B) and the economic framework (Section C) connect. These are the core argumentative moves — they show why the philosophical claims entail specific economic requirements.

D.1 — Connection 1: Person to Autonomy Requires Access to Exchange

The philosophical chain establishes that persons are owed autonomy. The economic framework establishes that autonomy requires access to voluntary exchange — because known needs and wants are satisfied through exchange with others, not in isolation. Therefore: persons are owed access to voluntary exchange. Any system that structurally prevents a person from engaging in voluntary exchange is violating a condition of their autonomy. Sen (1999) establishes this connection through the concept of substantive freedoms: formal freedom without real access is not freedom in the relevant sense.

D.2 — Connection 2: Autonomy to The Floor Means Economic Participation Is Owed

The philosophical chain establishes that autonomy requires The Floor. The economic framework defines The Floor as the minimum level of economic participation required for autonomous function. Therefore: persons are owed economic participation at or above The Floor. A system that structurally places persons below The Floor is not merely failing them economically — it is failing them at the level of their dignity as persons. Nussbaum (2006) grounds this obligation in the threshold structure of the Capabilities Approach: falling below the threshold is not merely unfortunate, it is a violation of what justice requires.

D.3 — Connection 3: Dignity to Fairness Means Exchange Conditions Are Not Morally Optional

The philosophical chain establishes that dignity requires fairness. The economic framework defines fairness as exchange without systematic structural disadvantage. Therefore: the conditions of exchange must be fair. A system that produces unfair exchange conditions — even through unintentional structural design — violates the dignity of those disadvantaged by those conditions. Young’s structural injustice framework (2011) confirms that harm resulting from structural conditions — without any individual actor intending the harm — is nonetheless a form of injustice for which collective responsibility exists.

D.4 — Technical Confirmation of All Three Connections

Nakamoto (2008) provides independent confirmation of each connection from the perspective of systems design rather than philosophy:

- **Connection 1 (Person → Autonomy → Exchange Access):** Commerce on the internet “has come to rely almost exclusively on financial institutions serving as trusted third parties to process electronic payments,” creating structural barriers — mediation costs, exclusion of small transactions, requirement of institutional trust — that restrict who can access exchange (Nakamoto, 2008, §1).
- **Connection 2 (Autonomy → The Floor → Economic Participation Owed):** Nakamoto’s design goal — enabling any two parties to transact directly, regardless of transaction size or institutional standing — is a technical expression of what this framework calls The Floor: the minimum access condition below which participation is unavailable (§1).
- **Connection 3 (Dignity → Fairness → Exchange Conditions):** The distributed consensus mechanism proposed by Nakamoto demonstrates that exchange fairness is achievable through transparent, verifiable structural rules rather than through trusted authority — confirming that fair conditions are a design question, not an impossibility (§4–§6).

The confirmation is technical, not philosophical. Nakamoto does not make claims about dignity or inherent value. The significance of his paper for this framework is that it demonstrates, from a completely independent domain of inquiry, that the structural barriers this framework identifies philosophically and historically are neither necessary nor inevitable.

Section E: Framework Beliefs

This section states the belief commitments that follow from the framework — the propositions held to be true and acted upon. Each belief is shown with its transitive grounding so the logic is fully transparent and auditable.

Belief	Statement	Transitive Grounding
Inherent Dignity	Every person has inherent dignity that is not contingent on productivity, status, or social role.	Foundational. All other beliefs derive from this.
The Floor	Every person is owed, as a condition of their dignity, access to the economic minimum required for autonomous function.	Person → Inherent Value → Dignity → Autonomy → The Floor (B.2, Steps 1–4)
Voluntary Exchange	Exchange should be voluntary. Coerced exchange — exchange that occurs because one party lacks meaningful alternatives — is not exchange in the morally relevant sense.	Autonomy (B.1); Voluntary Exchange (C.1); B.2 Step 3
Fairness	The conditions of exchange should be fair. Systematic structural disadvantage that predictably excludes or exploits one class of participants is a violation of dignity.	Dignity → Fairness (B.2, Step 6); Fairness (C.1)
CommUnity Value	Economic systems produce more value for all participants when participation is broad and fair than when it is narrow and extractive. An economy that excludes potential participants is smaller and less valuable than one that includes them.	C.2, Claims 1 and 3; Acemoglu & Robinson (2012); Nakamoto (2008, §6)
Facilitation	The legitimate function of an institution or system in an economy is facilitation — enabling exchange, not gatekeeping it. An institution that extracts rent from exchange rather than enabling it is acting contrary to its economic function.	C.2, Claims 2 and 3; Nakamoto (2008, §6)

Section F: Foundation for Mission and Vision

This section traces each component of the mission and vision the framework points toward back to its grounding proposition, making the logical path from foundational principles to that horizon fully transparent. A closing note distinguishes the framework’s horizon from the GEN Council’s own mission.

Mission (the framework’s horizon): To see economic dignity restored to every person through the removal of structural barriers to participation in voluntary exchange. The framework identifies what such a restoration would require; it does not prescribe what should be built to achieve it, or by whom. What institutions, tools, or arrangements best meet these requirements is a separate question this framework is designed to inform, not to answer.

Vision: A world in which every human being has unimpeded access to the economic floor required for autonomous function — where fair voluntary exchange is the default condition, not a privilege granted by gatekeepers.

Framework Proposition	Mission / Vision Component	Connection
Every person has inherent dignity (B.1)	“Restore economic dignity to every person”	The mission names dignity because the framework grounds it in inherent value — not in productivity or desert.
Barriers are structural, not natural (C.2)	“Removing structural barriers to participation”	The mission specifies structural barriers because the framework establishes they are structural — and therefore remediable.
Autonomy requires unimpeded access (B.2)	“Unimpeded access to the economic floor”	The vision specifies unimpeded access because impeded access is the primary failure mode.

Framework Proposition	Mission / Vision Component	Connection
Fair voluntary exchange is the economic condition of dignity (B.2, C.1)	“Where fair voluntary exchange is the default condition”	The vision names fair voluntary exchange as the target state because it is the economic condition that dignity requires.
Facilitation is the legitimate institutional function (E)	“Removing structural barriers to participation”	Facilitation — not gatekeeping — is the legitimate function of whatever institutions the community may build; the framework names the requirement, not the builder.
Barriers are structural and therefore remediable (C.2)	“Restoration through the removal of structural barriers”	Restoration is meaningful only if structural conditions are changed, not just immediate outcomes — a change the framework calls for without specifying its form or its author.

A note on whose mission this is. The mission above is the horizon the *argument* points toward — the state of affairs a just economic arrangement would produce. It is not the mission of any organization, and it names no organization as its agent. The removal of the barriers, and the building of whatever replaces them, belongs to the community the framework concerns — everyone it affects — not to the authors of this document.

The GEN Council, which stewards this framework, holds a distinct and deliberately narrow mission: to keep the framework freely available, to convene open and non-partisan discussion of it, to invite challenge to it, and to name no solution of its own. Consistent with A.3, an institution faithful to this framework is one built toward its own irrelevance; the GEN Council’s success condition is that the barriers described here no longer require a steward to convene the conversation about them. The framework points at a horizon; the Council holds open the room in which people decide how to reach it.

Section G: Complete Terminology and Transitive Connections Map

This section provides a single consolidated reference showing how every major term in this framework connects to every other through the transitive chain.

G.1 — Full Transitive Pathway

Person carries *Inherent Value*, which demands *Dignity* (the acknowledgment of that value), which requires *Autonomy* (the capacity to direct one’s own life), which requires *The Floor* (the minimum material and social conditions for autonomous function), which requires *Unimpeded Access to Exchange* (because needs and wants are only satisfiable through others), which requires that exchange be *Voluntary* (no coercion, informed consent) and *Fair* (no structural disadvantage), which together constitute *Fair Voluntary Exchange* — the terminal condition the framework names as the appropriate default for any economic system.

The mechanism connecting *Inherent Value* to *Dignity* to action is *Love* — defined not as sentiment but as the structural non-indifference that follows from genuinely recognizing another person as real.

The economic problem that money solves — the *Double Coincidence of Wants / Scale Limitation* — explains why direct barter cannot be the vehicle for meeting The Floor at social scale, and why *Money* as a coordination technology becomes morally relevant: it is the infrastructure on which exchange at scale depends. Because that infrastructure shapes who can participate, the design of monetary systems is not a neutral technical question — it is a question with direct implications

for *Dignity* and *Autonomy*. The mediation costs imposed by trusted third parties, documented in the digital context by Nakamoto (2008, §1) and in the historical context by monetary economists from Jevons (1875) onward, are not fixed costs of exchange — they are design costs, and their incidence falls disproportionately on those closest to The Floor.

Barriers to Participation are what happens when infrastructure is designed — intentionally or by default — to exclude. *CommUnity Value* names the economic cost of exclusion — not just to those excluded, but to the whole. *Facilitation* names the only institutional function consistent with the framework: enabling exchange rather than governing who may access it.

G.2 — Term-by-Term Connection Reference

Term	Connects To	Direction of Connection
Person	Inherent Value	Person is the bearer of Inherent Value (<i>definitional</i>)
Inherent Value	Dignity	Inherent Value demands recognition as Dignity (<i>definitional</i>)
Inherent Value	Love	Love is the mechanism of recognizing Inherent Value as real and responding with non-indifference
Love	Dignity	Love is what transforms the recognition of Inherent Value into the active condition of Dignity
Dignity	Autonomy	Dignity requires the conditions for autonomous function
Autonomy	The Floor	The Floor is the minimum threshold at which autonomy becomes actual rather than theoretical
The Floor	Economic Floor	The Economic Floor is The Floor expressed in economic terms
The Floor	Exchange	Meeting The Floor requires exchange with others
The Floor	Unimpeded Access	Reaching The Floor requires the absence of structural obstruction
Exchange	Voluntary Exchange	Voluntary Exchange is the form of exchange autonomy requires
Exchange	Fairness	Fairness is the condition exchange must meet to be consistent with dignity
Voluntary Exchange	Fair Voluntary Exchange	Fair Voluntary Exchange is the compound of what autonomy requires and what dignity requires
Fairness	Unimpeded Access	Full Fairness and full Unimpeded Access are co-extensive — the same structural requirement from two vantage points
Known Needs and Wants	Unimpeded Access	Unimpeded Access is defined relative to what a person can accurately identify when conditions for autonomy are met
Scale Limitation	Money	Money exists as a solution to Scale Limitation
Money	Barrier to Participation	Money systems create access conditions; those conditions can constitute Barriers to Participation
Barrier to Participation	The Floor	Barriers prevent reaching The Floor; eliminating Barriers is how The Floor becomes accessible
Barrier to Participation	Structural (not natural)	Barriers are design features, not features of economic reality — they are remediable
CommUnity Value	Exchange	Broad fair exchange generates more CommUnity Value than narrow extractive exchange

Term	Connects To	Direction of Connection
Facilitation	Institution	Facilitation is the only institutional function consistent with the framework
Facilitation	Barrier to Participation	An institution that gatekeeps rather than facilitates creates a Barrier to Participation

Interpretive Instructions for Readers and Reviewers

The following principles apply to any work that uses, cites, or extends this framework:

- **Do not add claims not grounded in the framework.** The framework is designed as a complete logical structure. Adding claims not grounded in the transitive chain introduces unsupported assertions.
- **Do not remove the counterargument section.** Section A is part of the framework’s intellectual structure, not a disclaimer.
- **Do not treat the framework as settled.** If a reviewer identifies a logical error, a missing step, or a definition that does not hold, that is a success condition — not a failure. The framework is offered for challenge.
- **Distinguish framework claims from cited sources.** This paper cites Nakamoto (2008), Sen (1999), Nussbaum (2006), Young (2011), and others as independent sources that corroborate specific claims. Those sources do not endorse this framework, and this framework does not depend on their authority — only on the validity of specific findings cited.
- **This framework is institution-agnostic.** It does not identify any organization, technology, or movement as the solution to the conditions it describes. It identifies structural problems and the logical requirements for addressing them.

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Change Log

2026-08-07 — Section F Mission corrected (Posture B; two-missions distinction).

Superseded Mission text: “To restore economic dignity to every person by removing structural barriers to participation in voluntary exchange — and to build the institutions, tools, and frameworks that make that restoration permanent.”

Now reads (Section F): the Mission is stated as the framework’s horizon only; the building of whatever replaces the barriers belongs to the community; and a new closing note distinguishes the framework’s horizon from the GEN Council’s own mission — to steward the conversation, name no solution, and build toward its own irrelevance.

Rationale: the prior Mission committed the framework to *building institutions*, contradicting the document’s own institution-agnostic stance (Preface; Interpretive Instructions; A.3). The correction separates what the *argument* points toward from what the *organization* does.

Apply the current text. The superseded wording is recorded here for provenance only and must not be reintroduced in any drafting, edit, or republication.

2026-09-23 — Munger (2011) citation corrected.

Superseded text (C.1, Voluntary Exchange): “The philosophical analysis of voluntary exchange as requiring both the absence of coercion and the presence of genuine alternatives runs from Aristotle’s commutative justice through contemporary exchange theory (Wertheimer, 1996; Munger, 2011).” *Superseded reference*: pages 206–228.

Now reads (C.1): Munger is cited for the euvoluntary distinction only; his conclusion, that even exchange that is not euvoluntary is generally just and should be permitted, is stated; and the framework’s point of departure is named. Reference pages corrected to 192–211.

Rationale: the earlier text listed Munger as holding a view his paper argues against, and gave the

wrong page range. The error was found during review of a companion document in preparation.
Apply the current text. The superseded wording is recorded here for provenance only and must not be reintroduced in any drafting, edit, or republication.