EMMANUEL DUBUISSON



WHAT WAR AND MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

The Origin of the Dubuisson Model of Systemic Reorganisation 'MDRS'

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MDRS stands for Dubuisson Model of Systemic Reorganisation.
An autobiographical account and essay.

Cover photograph: Emmanuel DUBUISSON
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THE AUTHOR

Emmanuel Dubuisson is the author and self-publisher of this book. Born in Sri Lanka and adopted in France, he developed his view of state systems through travel and the observation of human and economic realities.

In this book, he tells the personal story that led him to devise the MDRS, a reflection on the organisation, creation and transmission of wealth. Edition: First edition Medium:

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To my parents, for the life they gave me, the way they taught me to see the world, and the good fortune that represents.

To those who would like to pass on to their children something other than anxiety about tomorrow.

ABOUT THIS ACCOUNT

This book brings together my memories, the experiences of my life and the thinking that led me to devise the MDRS.

The scenes recounted as personal memories are distinct from the general examples used to explain how an economy works.

The African country to which the early work relates is not named. The memory of Beijing belongs to my childhood in the 1990s. The age mentioned is approximate and does not establish the precise date of the journey.

The idea of the child working in a coal-fired power station has stayed with my memory, though I could not establish it as fact. The remarks about ten francs and a million reflect on the scale of needs, not a subsistence rate.

The passages about adoption are my testimony and my personal way of looking at my own history. They do not claim to describe every family or every experience of adoption.

The detailed rules, amounts, sources and calculations belong to the MDRS technical corpus. This account presents its conception and purposes without replacing them with new parameters.

It is neither an external audit nor a demonstration of results already achieved. The initial conception is my own. Digital tools, including artificial intelligence, have supported the development of the documentation and the work of writing.

TO MY ADOPTIVE PARENTS, THANK YOU

I could begin this book with the countries, the wars, the encounters or the questions that eventually gave my life its direction. But you come before all of that.

There were the slides projected at home, the photographs, your travel stories and those images of countries I had never seen. I did not yet understand war, poverty or fear. I simply saw faces, streets, children, families living in a world unlike my own. Those images stayed with me.

You never taught me to look at the world from a distance. You taught me that there were always people behind the figures, the borders, the crises and the speeches. You gave me the chance to live in France, to have a family, a home, a school, a table and a future. In time, I understood that what seems ordinary to some is, for many others, an extraordinary piece of good fortune.

Dad, you were demanding with me. At the time, I did not always understand those demands. School was difficult. Dyslexia and dysorthographia sometimes made me feel that I was not moving at the same pace as everyone else.

You did not let me believe that those difficulties would decide my life for me. You taught me to work differently, to look for answers myself, to start again and not to give up because an answer did not come straight away.

Over the years, I came to understand what you were trying to pass on to me: we do not always choose how life begins, but we can learn to choose what we make of it. Mum, Dad, you

did not give me a life mapped out in advance.

You gave me a place. You gave me the confidence I needed to move forward, to fall, to learn and to carry on.

You allowed me to become myself without ever asking me to forget the things that made up my history. This book tells a story that is my own. But the first way of seeing that made it possible was yours. Thank you.

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PROLOGUE

Why I wanted to tell this story

I was born in Colombo in June 1985, during Sri Lanka's civil war, and adopted at six months by my parents, with whom I grew up in the Jura. I devoted the opening pages to them because the rest of this book would be hard to understand without them. What they gave me preceded anything I was able to build.

The first MDRS took shape in Africa, several years before I returned to this thinking for France. I was working in a country where resources existed, where people produced things, where money continued to circulate, but where institutions sometimes no longer had even the means to fulfil their own duties. This contradiction troubled me more than the amounts involved. I wanted to understand why wealth seemed able to pass through an entire country without giving its inhabitants the means to live on it.

I had not come to this question without a history of my own. There had been the journeys, the difficulties of my early years, business, the things I had learnt through work, and childhood memories that returned where I least expected them. The MDRS, the Dubuisson Model of Systemic Reorganisation, brought together what I had long considered separately.

It is this journey that I wish to recount. France became one of its destinations, with the conviction that its wealth, too, could be lost, and that we still had the opportunity to think before difficulties took away our choice to do so.

PART I

The country before me

CHAPTER 1

The man who was waiting for me

The director-general was alone in the building where I had come to meet him. He had a title, a responsibility, a government institute to run, but around him almost nothing remained of the picture one has in mind when making an appointment with a public authority. The door hung on only a few hinges, the windows had lost their glass, and the walls bore bullet marks. I had come to talk to him to understand his situation, and that situation had begun to reveal itself before any explanation was needed.

I carry the memory of that contrast with me because it stayed with me for a long time in my work. A country can retain the names of its institutions while what enables them to act has fallen away. One can still identify the person in charge, trace the duty entrusted to him, enter the building that represents it, and discover a man carrying almost alone an obligation that would require an entire team. That day, this was not an idea I had read in a report. Someone stood before me, and he had to carry on with whatever means he had left.

I had no wish to explain this situation with a word that would settle everything in my mind. To say the state was failing was accurate, but it did not tell me what I needed to restore to this man so that he could work. To say the country was poor did not explain why activity nevertheless continued there. I wanted to understand the obstacles, to distinguish what was missing from what was poorly organised, what had been destroyed from what had been diverted.

The answer would differ according to what I found, and the state of the building gave me no right to decide

in advance where responsibility lay with the man welcoming me.

There is a particular loneliness in remaining the representative of something that no longer gives you the means to represent it. I cannot say what this man felt, but I could see what his situation imposed on him. People would continue to turn to him because the institute existed. They would continue to expect a decision, information, an inspection, because his role was still there. Between what was asked of him and what he could accomplish now lay everything that war, a lack of means and the weakening of the organisation had taken away.

Outside these buildings, those who lived there faced other absences, which ultimately belonged to the same problem. Children walked barefoot along roads where tarmac was scarce. A bicycle laden with sacks of food was pushed rather than ridden. In the houses of earth and clay, there was little light, no running water, no electricity. A raised sleeping platform on an earthen base could serve as a bench for eating when no one was sleeping on it. Life was lived with these things, and tomorrow would mean starting again with them.

I did not look at these scenes as the expected illustrations of a poor country. Gradually, I tried to understand the place they occupied in a day. Fetching water, carrying food, reaching a distant school, finding a way to obtain treatment: all of this took time before one could even think of doing anything else. Someone could work from morning to night and devote almost all that work to maintaining the basic conditions of their existence. The effort was immense, but it did not necessarily give them any greater possibilities for the following year.

The children brought me back to this difference with particular force. The nearest school was sometimes several kilometres away, with no bus, and the sports facilities were little more than remnants. I could see that opening a classroom would not

be enough if a child had to spend part of the day bringing home what the family needed. I could not separate that child's future from the way the adults around them managed to live. Their absence from school could begin long before the school gate, in arrangements for subsistence that had already decided how their time would be spent.

I lived in the towns where my work took me. I did not merely spend twenty-four hours between a hotel and a few meetings, and this way of staying in contact with people mattered to me. The presentations made to you in an office can be sincere and still incomplete. The country carries on once the meeting ends, with the journeys, the purchases, the waiting and the difficulties that documents cannot make you feel in full. I tried to be there too, even though I knew that my ability to leave set me profoundly apart from those who had to build their whole lives there.

That difference has never left me. I could be present, take an interest and work seriously without becoming the person who bore all the consequences of the country's situation. It obliged me to listen rather than take my own visit as the measure of their everyday lives. Something straightforward for me could cost someone else a day's travel and lost income. A solution I found reasonable could carry a cost I did not yet see. I needed this reality so that my work would not remain that of a visitor for whom doors had been opened that the women and men living there could not pass through in the same way.

Even the seats of power showed their deterioration. In the palaces, walls were cracking, lawns resembled a mass of weeds, and the steps between one wing and another exposed their metal reinforcement. At the entrance, soldiers and international contingents controlled access and kept watch, because the national army no longer had enough men and resources of its own. The state depended on other countries even for the protection of some of the places from

which it was supposed to govern.

I was not setting these palaces alongside the houses to manufacture an easy contrast between those at the top and those at the bottom. The question occupying me was harder to grasp. Deterioration appeared in several places that should have supported one another. An institution deprived of means knew less about the activity it was supposed to oversee. What it knew less about became harder to monitor and turn into revenue. The lack of revenue weakened its means still further. Meanwhile, the women and men living there carried on as best they could, with services that no longer responded and resources partly slipping beyond their reach.

Yet the country was not at a standstill. People farmed, transported, sold and repaired. They knew things I did not know, found arrangements I would not have imagined, and maintained relationships of trust where the official organisation no longer sufficed. This human capacity was part of what I had to build with. I wanted neither to ignore it nor to use it as a reason to accept that these same people should make up indefinitely for the absence of everything else.

It was from this point that my thinking changed scale. I had come to understand a situation and was encountering connections that no isolated answer could fully restore. Giving the director a budget would not immediately bring into being the colleagues he needed.

Recruitment alone would not make journeys safe. Better knowledge of production would be useless if its sale and payment remained impossible to trace. The man before me was not simply short of a sum of money. He lacked a whole set of conditions whose failures reinforced one another.

I have remained attached to this memory because it gave a face to the problem I was trying to work on. The country could have remained, for me, a territory, a population, figures, natural resources. It was also this solitary man, who continued to receive

those who came to ask his institute for what it should have been able to offer them. It was before this reality, rather than the beauty of a diagram, that I began to look for another way of organising things.

CHAPTER 2

What war still allowed to circulate

What raised the most questions for me was seeing that wealth still found ways through where so many services no longer could. Resources were being exploited, buyers existed, goods were leaving, and some of the money fed networks beyond the state's control, sometimes even financing the armed groups or factions that sustained the violence. The possibility of legitimate trade became harder to maintain, because traceability no longer always made it possible to know what one was buying or the conditions in which it had been produced.

War does not only make activity disappear. It can also change who has the power to determine it. A road remains, but passage along it is subject to other demands. A resource retains its value, but the person extracting it no longer has the means to negotiate what they will receive. An institution still exists, but no longer has the information needed to defend the rights it holds. This shift interested me because it explained how a country could continue to produce while losing control of what its production made possible.

I therefore began by looking at how activities differed. Some had ceased, others continued, and others existed as possibilities without the means to develop. I tried to understand what had changed for each, why one had found a buyer when another no longer had one, why one participant accepted risks from which another had withdrawn.

An inventory of underground wealth could not give me these answers. The resource was only the beginning

of a story that then passed through people, decisions and balances of power.

To explain this part of my work, I can take a material extracted from the ground, without naming a particular operation. The first difficulty arises before money even enters the reasoning. It must be possible to know how much has been produced and where it comes from. If some of it goes unrecorded from the outset, every subsequent document may be correct on a basis that no longer reflects reality. The loss will then be hard to trace because it will never have had a place in what one is trying to reconcile.

But knowing the weight is not enough to know the value. The quality of a material can profoundly change what it ought to bring in, and a producer dependent on the buyer's assessment is in a position from which a banking check will not free them. They may receive exactly the sum written down, without that sum corresponding to what they could have obtained with reliable information and a less unequal bargaining position. I therefore had to consider how value was recognised, not only how money was paid.

This was an essential point in the design. A traceability system made sense only if it allowed the actual product to be identified throughout its journey. It might change hands, be processed, divided or combined. Technical losses might be normal, but they had to have an explanation. The documents at departure and arrival had to be able to correspond, rather than remain two separate pieces of evidence, each reassuring its holder without telling the story of what had happened between them. It was in this interval that I looked for the places where value was lost.

I did not think the problem would be eliminated by adding checks everywhere. A check has a cost, requires expertise, can delay payment, and can itself become a position of power. When it is too complicated for the person it is meant to protect, it sometimes ends up shutting them out of the legitimate

system. It would have defeated the purpose to build an organisation in which only the large operators had the means to prove compliance, while small producers remained dependent on the same intermediaries. The protection had to be usable by the women and men for whom it was intended.

The sale then opened another part of the reasoning. Transport, insurance, processing and finance are genuine services. They justify costs, sometimes substantial ones, and I had no reason to regard every intermediary as someone to be removed. What I wanted to make visible was the function actually performed, the share taken to perform it, and the conditions under which the person producing could understand what remained for them. An excessively opaque chain allows every deduction to be given a justification that no one knows how to relate to the others.

Payment could then be followed from the contract to the recipient. Here again, there were several stages easily confused when one is not living in anticipation of the money. The amount was agreed, the invoice might have been issued, the payment process begun, without the intended recipient yet being able to use it. For the producer, the carrier or the employee, this distance could determine whether they could continue. An operation worthwhile at its conclusion might be unworkable for someone without the means to get through the weeks before payment.

I knew this difficulty from my own working life, and it prevented me from looking only at the conclusion. I had to think about advances, the security of payment and responsibilities during the wait. A delay bearable for a company with reserves could become an insurmountable constraint for another participant. The same rule did not therefore produce the same security for everyone.

This made me build the process around the living conditions

of those who would use it, rather than regard those conditions as a social issue to be considered later.

The state, too, had to regain its place within this knowledge. It needed an identifiable base, an applicable rule, a sum due, a payment, and the ability to link that revenue to what had generated it. I was not seeking to give it the right to levy everything it could take. I wanted it to know what was due to it and actually to receive it, without uncertainty over production or a missing payment leaving it dependent on estimates it no longer had the means to verify. A tax authority without information can retain its power in law and lose it in practice.

As I followed this course, I understood more clearly that the losses were not all of the same kind. A quantity might disappear before it was known, quality be understated, a price shift the margin, a payment fail to reach its recipient, public revenue remain unpaid. Each required precise work. Bringing them together under the general expression 'leakage of wealth' would have produced an impressive diagnosis, but too few practical points from which to build. I wanted to know where to intervene and what the intervention would actually change thereafter.

There remained, finally, a loss whose importance the accounts might not immediately reveal. Money could be received, distributed and consumed without leaving behind a new skill, a maintained installation or the possibility of doing something else when the resource grew scarce. The country would have lived on an income without preparing its ability to outlast it. This question led me towards reinvestment, training, infrastructure and the transmission of knowledge. Wealth did not merely need to be better protected as it passed through. It had to leave something that would continue to be of use.

This was in no sense a rejection of foreign trade. I had long worked with exchanges between countries, and I knew that an

export could provide precisely the means to develop what a territory did not yet possess. What mattered was what came in return. A material sold could finance a wage, a school, a means of production or a reserve. It could also leave while the women and men living there remained in the same conditions, strengthening those who had organised its exploitation. The physical movement was similar, but what it produced for the country was no longer comparable.

In a setting of war, this distinction became impossible to set aside. A contract does not provide enough protection when coercion determines what a person can accept. A bank is no substitute for security. Activity does not become beneficial simply because it continues. I sought a way of operating that could support legitimate exchanges without giving violence an appearance of economic normality. There was a boundary to hold here, even when urgency and a lack of revenue offered good reasons to move quickly.

This search made me understand that the creation of wealth could not be separated from its transmission. Producing more was an important objective, but I could no longer consider it alone. I had to know the path by which that effort would become an improvement for the person who had made it, a means of action for the state and a lasting capacity for the territory. This was how my work began to move beyond organising an operation towards designing a whole.

CHAPTER 3

What I wanted to leave behind

I did not want a country to function only for as long as those who had come to help remained there. This idea mattered from the earliest thinking, because I had before me the consequences of institutions that had lost their means, and replacing one dependency with another would have left the same fragility in a newer form. The work had to be capable of being taken over, understood, maintained and modified by those who would continue to live in the country.

This was what gave substitution its meaning in the structures I designed. When a function could no longer be fulfilled through the ordinary process, I looked for another way of performing it. But I did not see the country as a space at the disposal of whoever brought the means. An operator could have a task, a contract, precise responsibilities. It could not, on its own, become the party that set the rule, carried out the operation and judged whether it had been performed properly. Sovereignty had to remain something other than the name given to an authority deprived of every means of oversight.

I therefore had to consider responsibilities together while keeping them distinct. The producer or carrier should not be their own inspector. The financier should not be able to make the results immune to challenge. The administration had to recover enough knowledge to choose its partners and understand what they were doing. This might seem less direct than an organisation concentrated in a few hands, but I knew that speed at the beginning could become dispossession later on.

Training lay at the heart of this question. Demonstrating an action is not enough to pass on a trade if the learner remains

dependent on someone else as soon as circumstances change. I wanted women and men to understand why they did things, to recognise an anomaly, to intervene and to explain in their turn. The country's capacity would truly grow only when knowledge was no longer tied to the presence of the first person involved. I had to prepare others to take over while the arrangement was working, rather than discover on departure that no one could assume responsibility for continuing.

Equipment required the same care. An installation can give an impression of development and quickly become unusable because parts cannot be found, no one knows how to repair it or its running costs have not been anticipated. I therefore considered what could actually be maintained in the country's circumstances. The most impressive choice was not necessarily the most useful. A simpler tool, understood and repairable, could give people a freedom of use that more sophisticated equipment would have taken away.

The same applied to information. Knowing what had been produced, sold, received and committed was part of public capacity. If this memory stayed locked in a contractor's system, the country could lose the means to understand itself just as it decided to change partners. I sought to preserve useful data, procedures and the ability to take them over, even when communications were interrupted. In these conditions on the ground, an organisation that relied on a perfect connection at all times would have been designed for another world.

The social purpose of wealth had to be considered with the same rigour. I was not seeking to add a few human commitments to an economic operation to give it a more acceptable appearance. Schooling, care, skills and the possibility of working in dignified conditions were part of the construction itself. An activity that leaves workers and their families in insecurity has not fulfilled what led me to conceive it differently, even if its accounts

are better and even if its volumes have increased.

I then considered what a share of the value could prepare over time. Training made it possible to hold a post, and perhaps later to create others. Maintained equipment allowed an activity to escape dependence on constant repairs. Traceable revenue gave the administration the means to decide with greater clarity. An accessible service removed a difficulty that families had until then made up for with time or expenditure. These effects met, and it was their meeting that I sought to organise, rather than their simple addition in a contract.

The territory had to retain its place over that span of time. One can exploit a resource and leave behind costs that will continue long after the last sale. Water, soil, installations, land uses and the activities that can still exist do not disappear at the close of an accounting operation. Those who live there remain. I wanted the design to keep this reality before it, together with the costs of maintenance, closure or repair that a short-term result would readily have left to someone else.

Little by little, I understood that I was not simply seeking a better-equipped country. I was seeking a country more able to rely on its own means, to choose, to discuss what was offered to it, and no longer to depend entirely on whoever had brought the first solution. This gave my work a requirement I recognised without yet having developed its full theory. Helping should make the other person more capable of carrying on, not make our presence more necessary.

The human being was becoming the point around which choices had to hold together. This did not mean erasing costs or pretending that resources were unlimited. It meant not removing women and men from the result when their needs made the model more complicated.

I could modify the organisation, revisit a rule, revise a timetable. I could not declare the construction a success

if the country recovered money while those who kept it alive remained outside what it had recovered.

This conviction also came from further back than the place where I was working. In my own life, I had known what resources passed on could open up. My parents had taught me that one can give someone a possibility without deciding everything they will do with it.

And I had already met difficulties that had forced me to distinguish ambition from the real capacity to move forward. To understand why I thought this way, we must go back a little before these buildings and resources, to the path I had taken to reach them.

PART II

What had brought me this far

CHAPTER 4

The desire to set off

For a long time, I wanted to leave without feeling that I was leaving behind what mattered to me. This may be one of the most precious things my parents gave me. Home existed, I knew where my family was, and that certainty allowed me to look much further than my immediate surroundings. Travel was not an escape. It opened something I wanted to find again as soon as we returned.

I came from Sri Lanka, but the country of my childhood was the one where my parents had welcomed me. At six months, I could not have retained a memory of moving between continents. I discovered it through stories, then through the difference between the places to which I became attached. The Jura, which I called the giant fridge when thinking of the contrast with my native island, was first of all what I knew. The cold did not yet represent the opposite of another life. It was part of mine.

The family came from a rural world, with all that this history held of work, livestock farming and things kept because they were still useful. I grew up among objects whose uses, and sometimes origins, could be recounted, in a house that had sheltered other lives before ours. The stories of water heated on the stove, washing in a tub, laundry done by hand and milk churns were not presented to me as lessons in economics. I was being told how people had lived. Without seeking it, I learnt that what seemed ordinary might once have required far more effort.

This did not leave me nostalgic for harder times. I am glad that comfort exists. What interests me, looking back, is how readily we stop thinking about the conditions that make this

comfort possible once it becomes familiar. The women and men who had had to heat water did not have the same relationship with the tap as the child I was. We used the same thing, but did not see the same history in it. This difference in perspective would follow me far beyond the house.

My mother and grandmother had taught. My mother had also studied in Berlin. The idea of learning elsewhere was therefore not foreign to her own life, and my desire to leave did not come only from my father's international work. Each, in their own way, gave me a curiosity that did not require a choice between attachment to one's country and a desire to know others. I could love the places where I grew up and want to spend much of my time far away from them.

This love of travel and of discovering how people live has never left me, and I must thank my mum for it too. As a child, I wanted only one thing: to spend my time up in the air, in an aeroplane. She knew my favourite aircraft and made sure to choose airlines and flights that would allow me to travel on it. Even if it tired them out more, my mother planned flights with still more stopovers so that I could spend even longer in the air.

Few children have had that good fortune, and I acknowledge it more than willingly, but it is also a good fortune that shaped the way I travel. And often, when I am on an aeroplane, which happens very often, I think back to those moments with them, to those memories that marked me, to recover my childhood way of seeing and understand what I would have wanted had I been in the place of those living in the country I am travelling to.

When I think back to those itineraries, what touches me is not only the chance to have travelled. It is the care she took to make the journey happier still for me, when a more direct route would have been simpler for them. A child does not always appreciate that. He counts the hours he will spend on the aeroplane, looks forward to what he will see, and takes for

granted what has required an additional effort from his parents. I understand it differently now that I look at that time through adult eyes.

The technical world also had a place in this desire to set off. My father took me to the telecommunications exhibition in Geneva, where I came close to the world of satellites, of ways to communicate, of objects that made connections possible across distances I struggled to imagine. I was fascinated by things that flew. I wanted to understand how something that had first been an image or an idea for me could be made to work in reality.

At the time, I did not yet connect this fascination with my attention to people. The two existed together, without my needing to give them a common reason. I could be interested in an aeroplane for its own sake, then be struck by the way a family lived in the country to which it had brought us. This connection developed gradually. Technology ceased to be only what allowed me to discover the world. It also became part of the means through which one could act upon the conditions in which others lived.

Above all, travel taught me that my everyday life was not the measure of everyone's. Things I did not think I would ever have to ask for could be missing elsewhere, and children my age had to devote their day to what the adults around me had already made possible. I did not have the knowledge to explain these differences. I simply struggled to understand why they were so great, and why they seemed to impose themselves so early in a life.

By travelling, my parents did not give me the illusion of knowing every country we passed through. They gave me a desire not to stop at the first image. That desire changed with age. The child wanted to see, the adult began to look for reasons, and work led me to examine the means. There was continuity between these movements, but no obligation

to make of them what I did. The questions to which I returned gave a direction to this good fortune.

I believe we carry away more from our parents than we know how to tell them while we are living alongside them. A habit, a demand, a way of preparing something, sometimes a detour accepted to please a child, remain present in choices made much later. Mine brought the world into my life without taking home away from it. I could leave because I had that starting point, and I continue to find it again on aeroplanes where they are no longer sitting beside me.

CHAPTER 5

What I sought despite the difficulties

For me, wanting to understand has never been the same as finding it easy to learn in the way I was asked to. At school, dyslexia and dysorthographia complicated my relationship with writing, and I could feel a very strong interest in a subject while struggling to convey what I knew. This gap matters in my story. It explains some of the persistence with which I later looked for other ways of working.

I do not want to suggest that, as a child, I already understood what these difficulties would become in my life. There was what was expected of me, what I managed to do and what I could not show. The meaning came afterwards, through experiences, returning to things, and the possibility of building methods that did not depend entirely on a form in which I felt ill at ease. At the time, I had to move forward with that.

I wrote to my father about what I thought of his demands. I do not need to reproduce that letter here, but I still recognise in my way of working the impossibility he left me of treating the first difficulty as permission to stop. I might not know, might not immediately manage to do something, might need more time or a different route. That must not become the end of my search. Over the years, I made this constraint part of my own discipline.

Learning differently does not mean learning without effort. I had to return to things, break them down, look for what escaped me and find the women and men or the reading that would allow me to continue. This way of working also requires

accepting a certain solitude. The path is not always marked, and being interested is not enough to know where the right information can be found. One can spend a great deal of time understanding why one does not yet understand.

At eighteen, when I started my business activities, I slept in my car and washed in railway stations. This sentence recurs in my story because it says something I have not forgotten, not because I want to turn my beginnings into a heroic narrative. I had chosen to move forward, but the project I was pursuing did not immediately resolve the conditions in which I had to live to do so.

Work therefore did not begin only when I set about it. First I had to find ways to sleep, wash, look presentable, get around and keep my belongings. These necessities occupy a space that is hard to measure when they are already taken care of. A home allows one to put down many concerns without even knowing one is doing so. Without it, one carries them along, and they remain in the mind while one tries to think about something else.

I had ambition, and I make no apology for it. It gave me a reason to carry on in conditions that did not match what I was trying to build. But ambition alone does not feed you, rest the body or suspend tomorrow's expenses. I could believe in the future while still having to solve the question of the coming night. These two realities coexisted, and it was precisely their coexistence that taught me to look differently at a project.

Insecurity is often presented as a state in which nothing happens. Mine could be full of movement. I searched, I worked, I travelled, and that activity did not erase material needs. One can do a great many things and still have no room for manoeuvre.

One can seem to be moving forward because one never stops, while a considerable part of one's energy goes

into preserving the possibility of starting again the next day.

I also know that the story changes once one knows what followed. After the difficulties have been overcome, it is easier to find words that give them a purpose. We say they forged character, taught endurance, prepared something else. That may be true, but it does not fully recount what we knew while we had to live through them. Success retrospectively gives order to days that had rather less of it. I am determined not to forget that uncertainty when I speak about my own path.

Nor do I want to suggest that anyone could go through it if only they wanted it enough. Women and men do not have the same health, the same support, the same obligations or the same setbacks along the way. Some work hard and wear themselves out before finding the means to continue. Others have children or a loved one to protect, which profoundly changes the risks they can take. What I did belongs to my own history. It is not a measure of other people's courage.

That period did, however, give a very precise meaning to the idea of wealth. Even a modest reserve would have changed a great deal. It would have given me time to search rather than decide in an emergency, a way to resolve a difficulty before it affected all the others, a chance to wait for an answer without that waiting immediately governing the whole day. There was no need to speak of immense sums to understand the difference a little security could make.

The question occupying me, even before I could put it this way, was the possibility of not being wholly absorbed by the conditions of one's own survival. The attention freed in this way can turn towards a trade, learning, a relationship or a more considered decision.

The value of a reserve therefore lies not only in what one buys with it. It also lies in the bad decisions it helps one avoid and in the time it gives back to what

one is trying to become.

This experience remained with me when I worked on projects of a different scale. I could look at a contract, a prospective result or a transformation that seemed worthwhile and return immediately to what would happen before its completion. I did not do this to hold ambition back. On the contrary, I needed to know how it could last until then. A possible future is not yet an accessible future for someone without the means to reach it.

I kept the same attention for people asked to undertake training. Returning to education can open the way to a trade, but food, housing and other commitments do not stop during the months of learning. I knew this distance between a project and the present too directly to consider the promise of an opening an answer to the whole question. It would return to the heart of the MDRS, alongside another childhood memory of which I shall speak later.

Today, I do not seek to make my school or material difficulties an explanation for everything. They have their place among other things I have received and lived through. Above all, they prevented me from believing that a human capacity could be judged only by how easily it first revealed itself. Someone may search for their path for a long time, find it differently, then build what those early difficulties had kept from view. I would like organisations to know how to leave that possibility open rather than decide too soon what a person might become.

CHAPTER 6

Movement and precision

Gymnastics taught me to attend to a detail without losing sight of the whole movement. A move can seem impossible as long as one sees it as something that must be achieved all at once.

Then one begins to work on it and discovers points of support, an impetus, a position, a way of getting beyond hesitation.

The whole does not become easy, but it ceases to be a mass upon which willpower has no purchase.

I liked this precision. It gave effort a direction that was not simply a matter of doing more. Pushing harder did not always solve the problem, and could even make the fault worse.

I had to recognise what came too early, too late, too far, what the body had not yet learnt to bring together. Progress came as much from attention as from the energy expended.

There was also something misleading about a fall. It drew all the blame towards the landing, because that was where it could be seen. Yet the movement might have begun to go wrong much earlier. Reworking only the final instant did not necessarily make it possible to succeed the next time. I had to go back, find the fault and accept the need to work on a less spectacular part than the one to which failure was instinctively attributed.

This experience mattered greatly to my way of thinking, without my needing to turn it immediately into a method. I grew accustomed to looking at a difficulty where it appeared, then searching for what had made it possible. The visible result remains important, but it is not always the place where

one can act most usefully. I later encountered this difference in my assignments, when a company was short of cash because of a delay decided elsewhere, or a service faced the consequences of a problem born outside its remit.

Sport also taught me not to give every mistake the weight of a judgement upon myself. One can have worked hard and still have to begin again. It is not pleasant, especially when one believes one has understood, but what does not hold together does not start doing so because one defends the effort made. I have kept this fairly practical relationship with correction. I can be attached to an idea and still need to rework the way I have built it.

Serving as a volunteer firefighter brought me into contact with a different responsibility. It was no longer only a matter of achieving something for myself. Someone might need us to be ready, and that expectation gave preparation its value. Equipment, training, passing on the alarm and knowing one's place were not obligations set alongside the intervention. They made it possible.

I came to realise that goodwill was too important to be left without competence. When one wants to help someone, one also owes them seriousness in what one undertakes.

Learning a technique, checking equipment and knowing the limits of one's role may seem less generous than a declaration of intent. In reality, these efforts often prevent others from paying the price for what has not been sufficiently prepared.

Rescue work also requires receiving and passing on. No one can stop at their own task and assume everything else will naturally fall into place. What follows must be understood, responsibilities must connect, and whoever intervenes after you must have what they need to act. This relationship gives organisation an immediate human dimension. It exists so that we can count on one another when there is no longer time to explain everything again.

I did not take on these commitments thinking they were preparing me to design a national architecture. It would be artificial to give every youthful experience the shape of a calling already mapped out. I lived them for what they were, then later recognised certain habits they had left in my work. Attention to where a fault begins came partly from movement. Attention to the person waiting also came from service.

Here were two ways of not being satisfied with appearances. Performing a movement successfully once does not mean one knows how to repeat it. An organisation announced as available is not necessarily able to respond in the conditions in which it will be called upon. What has been prepared must eventually meet reality, and that meeting cannot be replaced by the words used to describe it.

I believe this rigour helped me maintain a fairly simple relationship with subjects that later became very complex. When I stray far into accounts or mechanisms, I return to what someone must be able to do because of them. This does not reduce the need for knowledge. It simply recalls why it must be acquired. Precision has a purpose when a person will be able to rely on it.

CHAPTER 7

What my assignments forced me to understand

I did not reach my profession by a path that gave a precise answer from the outset to what I would do. I learnt by working, by returning to subjects I had not mastered and by seeking explanations beyond what was immediately asked of me. The assignments had this particular quality: they did not respect the boundaries at which disciplines seemed to stop. The problem continued where the vocabulary changed.

A contract could be valid and still impossible to perform on the agreed terms. An order could be signed without the company having the means to produce before being paid. A decision could authorise an operation when another timetable was already making it difficult. These situations interested me because no one was necessarily wrong in the part they described. It was their combination that failed to produce what was expected.

I then had to learn to hear the precision behind the words. Profit was not cash, authorisation was not availability, a sum due was not a payment received. This seems elementary once set out in this way, but in work expressions circulate quickly and can carry a conclusion their author did not quite intend. I sought what could actually be committed, the date on which it could be done, and the obligation that would continue to exist in the meantime.

Business gave me practical knowledge of these intervals. A company often has to buy before selling, invest before knowing the market's response, train before fully possessing the knowledge it seeks. What it prepares is not the same as what it can finance immediately. Its relationships

with customers, suppliers and those providing resources allow it to move forward within this gap, but they do not make the risk disappear.

A delayed payment shows clearly what I was trying to follow. To the person who owes it, a few weeks may seem a procedural difficulty. For the person awaiting it, wages, purchases and other due dates continue. They may draw on a reserve, request an advance, defer an investment or make someone else wait. The delay therefore comes at a cost, even when no new expense appears for the person who caused it. Someone finances that wait.

If the supplier, in turn, waits, the displacement continues. A difficulty arising in one place can end up in a smaller company, in the life of its director or in those of people who had no part in the initial decision. I became interested in this path because it showed the limits of an analysis that stopped at the first participant's accounts. The situation may seem resolved for them at the very moment it begins to deteriorate for someone else.

This way of working led me away from the idea that knowledge of one domain would be enough to account for a result. I needed to understand the law governing the operation, its financial conditions, its practical course and the time it required. I did not possess all these skills myself. I had to know where they were, what I could ask of them, and how to bring their answers together without stripping them of their precision.

In this way, I learnt a great deal from other people's knowledge. Being self-taught did not lead me to see specialists as obstacles to free thought. Their experience makes visible what one would not even know to look for without them. A detail can have considerable consequences in a profession, and the practitioner recognises it where an outsider sees only a formality. My work consisted in understanding that detail's place in the whole, not deciding that an overview excused me from it.

I also became interested in rules that absorbed work without improving the result. Information requested several times, a tool that forces a task to be repeated, a check without access to the document just produced by the previous one can create administrative activity that everyone eventually believes necessary simply because it exists. Before removing it, I tried to understand what it still protected. There were safeguards to keep and detours to revisit; confusing them would have meant simplifying only on paper.

Business makes this distinction acutely felt, because time spent on procedures is no longer available for the product, the customer or the team. A small organisation cannot always divide this burden among several departments. The director carries it personally, alongside other responsibilities. When I speak of making operations less cumbersome, I believe in this time returned to the activity, not in the indiscriminate removal of rules that keep contracts and work reliable.

This perspective eventually gave shape to my profession. I followed problems through their dependencies until I understood why means apparently assembled together failed to produce their effect. The question could begin with a payment and lead to the organisation of production, then to skills or the conditions of access to a market. I was not choosing to add subjects to make an assignment broader. The work imposed them as I tried not to leave an answer unfinished.

It was with this way of thinking that I came to national architectures. The scale changed profoundly, but a question remained. How could we ensure that some people’s efforts were not cancelled out by others’ difficulties, and that the cost of a poor relationship did not always fall on whoever had the least means to bear it? I was no longer simply trying to bring an operation to completion. I was beginning to ask what organisation would allow many operations to serve the same lives better.

This search would not have had the same meaning without what I had seen when I was younger. The assignments gave me means of understanding, but they had not alone brought into being the importance of certain questions.

As I tried to build the first MDRS, a memory returned with a clarity that reminded me of this. It was far removed from contracts and accounts. It came from a journey with my parents, in the cold of Beijing.

PART III

The birth of the MDRS

CHAPTER 8

The face in Beijing

The day I wanted to begin creating the MDRS, I thought back to our journey to China. I was in Africa, occupied with the country's difficulties and the search for an organisation that would allow its population to regain a place in the wealth circulating there.

I was looking at resources, means and institutions, and what came back to me was not another explanation. It was the child I had met in Beijing, when I myself was barely ten years old.

The memory has remained attached to December, to the cold, to the grey sky I associate with coal. We were near a metal walkway, and my parents had bought me a soft toy panda, a comfort toy I was attached to. The child had tried to take it from me. I carry the memory of his blackened face, covered in dust I had taken to be coal, and of the fear that seized me before I was able to look properly at the person before me.

He was my height. Our eyes met directly, without my having to look up or down. This detail stayed with me because it should have allowed me to recognise another child immediately. Yet his appearance had terrified me. In my memory, he had no teeth left, he wore clothes that seemed pitifully inadequate for temperatures below freezing, and the blackness on his face made him almost unrecognisable to me. I had not known how to see first what we had in common.

I have no wish to improve my reaction now so that it resembles that of a child who already possessed all the qualities of the adult he hoped to become. I had been afraid. I had

my panda, my parents, the protection of the journey we were making together, and I faced a reality that nothing in my everyday life had taught me to encounter in this way. The meeting had been too close to remain an image of poverty viewed from afar. Someone wanted to take what was mine, and that someone was a child whom I could almost no longer recognise as such.

I had imagined that he might work in a coal-fired power station, because of what covered his face. That idea has stayed with the memory, but I do not know whether it was true. I knew neither his work nor his life. I cannot therefore give that supposition the status of information today. What I remember is his appearance, his clothes, his gaze and the cold in which we stood. The rest is what I had tried to understand from what I saw.

My parents had given me a toy. For me, it was already more than an object bought, because it belonged to that journey and to their care. I could become attached to a soft toy panda without the question of eating or keeping warm determining the entire importance of things. The other child stood before me with a life of which I knew almost nothing. The same object had brought us together for an instant, but that closeness mainly revealed the distance between our circumstances.

I do not know what the panda meant to him. I could not say whether he wanted it to play with, to keep, or for something else. To give him a precise intention would be to fill the silence of the memory with what suited the narrative. That silence still exists. I do not know his name, I do not know what became of him, and I do not have the rest of his life. I have only kept a moment that continued to act upon my own.

It is strange to think that someone can take such a place without ever knowing it. They looked at you, you looked at them, then your paths parted. The years pass, you learn, you work, you travel in your turn for other reasons, and

that face returns in the midst of thinking that seems to have nothing left to do with the place where you met it. It does not return with an answer. It sets a question before you again with a force that words had gradually softened.

What I had not understood as a child, I tried to understand later. How could we be much the same age, the same height, in the same place, and not have the same possibilities in life? I had accomplished nothing that could by itself explain the protection I enjoyed. I had received it. My parents allowed me to discover a country, to spend time on the aeroplanes I loved and to keep a comfort toy close to me. The other child had not chosen what had brought him there either.

This did not make me feel guilty about the good fortune I had enjoyed. It belonged to my parents' love, and I did not seek to turn it into something that needed defending. But it made it hard for me to accept the idea that the differences between lives could be explained solely by the merit of those living them. We were still children. Much of what was possible for us had been decided around us before we could decide for ourselves.

In Africa, this memory returned as I tried to think about the model from the standpoint of those living there rather than solely from the country's resources. I saw the constraints occupying their days, the work needed to eat, the distances, the weakened services. The question of school could no longer remain a matter of a building or an enrolment. It became a question of the time a child genuinely had the right to devote to the future when the family already had to find the means to sustain the present.

The face in Beijing did not explain the country where I was working. The histories were different. Yet it prevented me from forgetting what could be taken from a life very early, before the person even had the words to ask for it.

I thought of what one does not discover, what one does not learn, the professions one will never have the chance to consider because necessity has already found one another occupation. A country can lose this wealth without a single sum leaving its accounts.

It was here that education took a full place in the design for me. I wanted the learner to be able to live while learning, not merely receive a promise that their efforts would one day allow them to live better. It was not enough to open an opportunity to study if the need to eat then forced it to be abandoned. The apparent freedom to choose a course could conceal a decision already made by a lack of means.

I knew that this intention would require funding, organisation and rules. The memory would not provide them. But it determined the place I wanted to give them in the work. Training would not be a social supplement to add once the other questions had found their answers.

It had to belong to the way the country created and passed on its wealth, because it prepared the women and men who would be able to sustain it afterwards.

This line of thought accompanied the first MDRS developed in Africa, then the one I revisited for France. The level of needs, the structures and the means changed. What I sought to avoid did not: a person giving up learning because they must first find something to eat, and the country then treating as natural the loss of what that person could have brought to it.

I can still see that child with a precision that many other moments of the journey have lost. I do not know whether my memory has preserved every detail exactly as it was. I know it has kept his gaze, my fear and the closeness of two faces at the same height. I cannot go back to him to give him what I wish I had understood then. I can

only do something with what he left in the way I look at others.

That day, I had not known what to do in front of a child who wanted my panda. Years later, I was searching for a way an organisation could spare children from having to ask chance to give them the time to learn.

The path between the two was not an illumination. It was made of journeys, work and questions I had been unable to stop thinking about.

CHAPTER 9

Time to study

When I began working on this question, I was not simply trying to add another allowance to those already in place. I wanted to change the place given to someone who was studying. It is easy to speak of them as preparing to become useful, when they are already devoting part of their life to building the knowledge their country will need. This way of considering education seemed to me to have consequences far greater than a choice of words.

The learner is not absent from the country's life. They work within it differently. They are preparing a skill, expertise, an ability to understand or create. They have not yet reached the end of that preparation, and that is precisely why they need time. If their contribution is recognised only once they practise a profession, the years needed to get there are left dependent on very unequal family means. The country then benefits from what has been built, but has allowed the possibility of building it to depend largely on birth.

I wanted the model to be able to regard that time as a contribution. Remuneration during education had to find its meaning in the work of learning undertaken, not only in the learner's financial difficulties. This is a distinction I value. It takes nothing away from solidarity. It gives what is funded a recognised value, and makes it possible to ask seriously for the means needed to see that work through.

This does not mean that the country buys a career or becomes the owner of the person it helps to educate. I received means from my parents whose use I was not obliged to repay

in the form of a life conforming to what they would have chosen. What they passed on allowed me to make my own choices. The state is not a family, but I recognise something essential in this distinction. Supporting a future must not serve to confine it. What I seek in return is the course actually completed, with its demands, not a moral debt that would follow the student throughout life.

We must also look at what the country receives from knowledge that will not all have the same effect or at the same time. A course can lead to a particular profession, allow a change of direction, open research, develop judgement or pass on a culture. I do not want to confine the value of education to the salary of a first job. That would ignore everything that subsequently circulates through businesses, families, services and society thanks to what someone has learnt.

But recognising this value is not enough to set an amount. When I asked myself how much a person would need to live while studying, I returned to very concrete needs. Eating, having a roof, getting around, possessing the necessary equipment, and not being constantly forced to take from learning the hours it requires. A sum has a different effect depending on what is already accessible and what remains entirely to be funded. The figure must come after this understanding; otherwise it represents only the impression it creates in the person announcing it.

One day, someone told me that ten francs was a great deal, and a million was nothing. I found this very true. For one person, in the circumstances in question, the ten francs could provide food and drink. For a population, the million was not enough to keep everyone alive. The number changed in importance as soon as its purpose was restored to it. What seemed small could decide a day. What seemed immense could become insufficient almost immediately. I have kept this way of looking at money. I do not take the remark as a rate valid everywhere or as an equivalence between periods. It helps me not to let the size

of an amount replace knowledge of what it must make possible. National funding is divided among people, places, needs and a period of time. The total makes sense only once it has been brought back to this reality. One can announce a great deal and give too little to each person, just as a precisely placed sum can remove a substantial obstacle.

For education, I therefore wanted to begin with the learner's life. Cheaper housing that is too far away can cost time and money in transport. A course offered without accessible equipment may remain difficult to follow. A recognised programme may require periods of attendance whose conditions the student cannot afford. The payment had to be part of a wider organisation, so that the possibility of studying did not disappear between the different responses supposedly making it accessible.

Combining work and study had a place in this thinking, because work can itself be a place of learning. It can connect knowledge to its use, help someone understand a responsibility, and give access to techniques and situations not learnt in the same way elsewhere. But its value lies in that relationship with education. I did not want it merely to ask students to finance their studies through work that drew them away from them. That would have preserved the problem under a more acceptable formulation.

Not every subject area can operate in the same way. Some require long periods of theoretical concentration, others more practice, others equipment, placements or particular locations. Fitting everything into the same organisation would have made the table simpler, but not necessarily the courses fairer. The model's coherence had to allow these differences to be recognised without abandoning the shared requirement to make learning materially possible.

I also believe in those who return to study after

working. They do not arrive with an empty life around their project. There may be a home, children, commitments that cannot be interrupted. Asking them to become again an imagined student without responsibilities would mean announcing a possibility whose limits for many of them are already known. The capacity to train must be able to accompany the changes of a life, not only the moment when one is supposed to choose once and for all what one will do.

My own difficulties at school made me attentive to how abilities are recognised. I do not believe standards should be lowered to allow more people to learn. I believe we need to know what we are actually demanding. Mastery of knowledge, a method or a technique is one thing. The ability to bear a material obstacle, finance a wait or fit immediately into a form unsuited to oneself is another. Confusing them can lead to someone being excluded without their potential ever truly being considered.

Funding must still rest on resources that exist in the present. The knowledge being prepared may have great value for the future, but that value is not the money available for this month's payment. This limit gives the design work its seriousness. It requires the means to be organised, hoped-for effects to be distinguished from sums that can be mobilised, and the recognition of a contribution not to become an impossible promise. An idea's humanity does not exempt it from the cost it entails.

I also wanted learning to remain at the centre of this recognition. Enrolment alone does not constitute an educational path. There is work to do, progress to make, conditions of provision and reciprocal responsibilities. Giving people the means to devote themselves to study is precisely what allows these demands to be taken seriously, without asking them to act as though the difficulties of subsistence did not already consume some of their strength.

This became one of the most important links between the first African model and the one I redesigned for France. I was not reusing the same amounts or the same institutions. I was returning to a question I now regarded as central to the creation of wealth. Which people does a country deprive itself of when it lets the means to study decide too early who can continue? This loss does not present itself as additional expenditure. It may never appear in the accounts, because it concerns possibilities that will not have come to pass.

This is what I mean by a living model. An organisation cannot continue assigning the same places while knowledge, professions and lives change around it. It must allow people to develop with those changes. Education is one of the means of preserving that freedom. I sought to give it a full place within the MDRS, with the resources, rights and time that would allow it to be more than a promise addressed to those who already had the means to grasp it.

CHAPTER 10

When the questions began to fit together

The foundations of the first model emerged in less than fifteen days. Those I later developed for France took shape in a comparable time. I designed them alone, without artificial intelligence for the initial idea. I know this speed may seem surprising given the breadth of the subjects, but it does not mean that I came to understand a country in fifteen days. It describes the moment when questions accumulated over years began to find a shared organisation.

Work, resources, public revenue, services and training had not all appeared to me together for the first time. I had encountered them in different situations. Business had taught me about delays, fragile settings about the difficulty of maintaining functions, my beginnings about the need to live before results arrived, and certain memories about the place I refused to let people lose. When the moment of design came, I did not need to invent a reason to connect these subjects. I could already see what they required of one another.

What changed was the way of giving them a place. I no longer wanted to start from an isolated measure in the hope that other domains would absorb its consequences. I sought to build from what had to become possible for those living there, then trace the necessary means and the relationships between them. An improvement in income met the protections and expenses of life.

A course of study met the need to live while undertaking it. Productive activity met energy, skills, transport and the possibility of receiving its

payment.

The core around which this construction was organised was the human being. I do not say this as a phrase added at the end to lend an appearance of generosity to a work of accounting. It was the limit I imposed on myself from the beginning. If improving the system required us to stop looking at what it made people endure, I considered the reasoning to have lost its purpose. Difficulties had to be included in the design, not left to those who would live through it on the pretext that they made the model less simple.

This obliged me to think about relationships in both directions. An economy that gives people greater means may allow some to depend less on compensatory support. But withdrawing that support before those means exist can produce the opposite effect. The change therefore had to understand its own sequence. I was not simply seeking a desirable final state. I was seeking the organisation through which it could become possible without the passage contradicting what we wanted to achieve.

Nor did I start from the idea that everything had to be centralised. Connecting functions does not mean merging powers. Professions retain their knowledge, institutions their responsibilities, women and men their choices. The construction serves to understand what must be received and passed between them, when, and with what scope for oversight. Concentrating everything in a single authority might resolve some coordination problems while creating a far more dangerous dependency.

The first model therefore had to suit its country, its industries and its insecurity. I did not possess a universal diagram to lay upon reality and ask it to resemble my assumptions. Material conditions, security, local capacities and rights had to enter the work.

This was also why France required a new design. The same way of looking could help me, but it could not by itself provide the answers for a different economy

and a different history.

The name MDRS came to designate this search: the Dubuisson Model of Systemic Reorganisation. Behind these words, I saw a way of reorganising how things worked rather than accumulating answers to each difficulty without revisiting what produced them together. I wanted production to become wealth actually received more effectively, that wealth to strengthen women and men and services, and the capacities thus built, in turn, to allow the country to stand more firmly on its own.

This idea could be clear in its direction while remaining demanding to demonstrate. Each relationship then had to be tested against texts, data, costs and available means. The initial design opened the work; it did not replace it. I could understand how two functions should support one another without yet having established every condition for them to do so. Precision required accepting that some parts would resist and that further work would transform answers I thought I already had.

I have never found this resistance foreign to design. It is part of it. A general idea can hold together because one has not yet encountered the case that will challenge it. When that case appears, it makes the work more real. It forces one to establish what can be kept, moved or abandoned. What matters is that the person concerned should not be removed from the reasoning to protect the elegance of the first idea.

The MDRS grew in this way. Detail was not added to impress. It came because an answer on one subject opened an obligation on another. Wealth passed on to those who work had to meet collective funding. Assets had to meet their income and their risks.

Administrative reorganisation had to meet the lives of staff and service users. The time following the initial conception was devoted to bringing these realities into what the first

movement had brought together.

I believe this best describes the place of my own path in this work. It does not prove the model, but it explains the questions I refused to leave outside it.

I had seen too many differences between what could be announced and what women and men could receive to stop at a proposal whose counterpart was always elsewhere. I wanted to follow the path further, even when that required me to leave the domain in which I had begun it.

PART IV

The France I sought to see

CHAPTER 11

Back without taking things for granted

When I returned to this thinking for France, I did not want to impose another country's history upon it. I knew what separated a territory where war had undone institutions from the one where I had grown up. This difference was not secondary. It was precisely part of what I sought to preserve: my travels had taught me never to take as permanently secure what allows us to live without thinking every morning about our safety, the water that will arrive or the payment we will receive.

France was my country, with the particular place it held in a life begun elsewhere. I looked at it both through the habits I had acquired there and through the questions I had pursued far from it. These two perspectives were not opposed. I could recognise what it had allowed me to know without closing my eyes to what was becoming difficult for those living there. Attachment did not oblige me to find everything satisfactory; it made me want to understand what could be done with its resources.

I saw a country with professions, businesses, infrastructure, protections and knowledge. The situation was very different from that of a territory where functions had to be rebuilt after almost all their means had disappeared. Here, much of the capacity still existed, but bringing its parts together could become laborious. Someone knew how to do their job and spent much of their time meeting demands that drew them away from it. A project obtained approval without finding the timetable needed to carry it out. A family sometimes had to reconstruct for itself the links between several decisions that nevertheless applied to its one life.

This gap interested me more than a general judgement about a country doing well or no longer doing well at all. Such expressions steer the debate but do little to explain concrete situations. One can be protected on one point and encounter a major difficulty on another. One can receive useful support and remain obstructed by a cost it does not change. I wanted to understand the relationships, because women and men were already bearing their consequences without waiting for us to describe them together.

In my eyes, French wealth was not a stock placed there once and for all. It also rested on what the country knew how to keep doing. A skill passed on, a team that has worked together for a long time, a maintained network or production that retains its suppliers represent more than their presence on a given date. They contain time and relationships that may be difficult to rebuild once allowed to disappear. I had observed enough of the effects of ruptures to stop believing we could always quickly buy back what we had not taken care to maintain.

This difference troubled me deeply. Losing can be much faster than building. A decision to close something can disperse a team before anyone has measured what its members knew how to do together. Maintenance can be postponed for a long time without an installation immediately ceasing to work, creating the impression that the saving had no consequences. Then the breakdown comes, and in an emergency the country discovers what the preceding years have taken from its ability to respond.

The women and men living in the country may suffer this deterioration before it appears in the major figures. Services still exist, but reaching them takes longer. Employment remains, but leaves less room for manoeuvre. Rights are there, but exercising them requires procedures some people can no longer manage alone. The country has not stopped; it simply asks its inhabitants for an additional effort to obtain what they could expect from it, and

that effort eventually occupies a growing share of their days.

I do not want to use situations of war to frighten France. Above all, they taught me the value of things before they are missing. What I bring back from them is an attention to fragility, not a desire to confuse every difficulty.

We can still look at what is weakening without claiming that everything has collapsed. Indeed, that is when we still have the means to choose a different organisation.

Exchanges with the world belong to this thinking. I do not regard wealth as necessarily leaving the country every time money crosses a border. Trade, investment and cooperation can bring means France would not find alone. What matters to me is what we receive in return, the expertise we retain and the decisions we will still be able to make if conditions change.

Economic freedom gains nothing by ignoring its dependencies, any more than it gains by replacing them all with isolation.

I therefore returned to work with French realities. Income, levies, accrued rights, public commitments, territories and businesses could not simply be transposed into an architecture designed elsewhere. The model had to be rethought. What I had learnt allowed me to ask the questions; the answers required looking at this country as it was, with what already held together and what needed to be transformed.

Nor was I seeking to identify a category of French people as the cause of all the difficulties. Civil servants, employees, business leaders, pensioners and elected representatives do not each live within a single explanation. They act with their constraints, responsibilities and sometimes rules that push them in contradictory directions. There may be individual failings, but an organisation cannot be understood by asking them to

sum up everything it produces.

What I wanted to revisit was more concrete: how could work leave more with the person doing it, businesses produce and invest, services reach women and men, and territories have the real means to fulfil their responsibilities? These questions already existed in people's lives. I wanted to bring them into a single line of reasoning so that an improvement decided in one place would not immediately be cancelled out by a difficulty left elsewhere.

I returned to France with this requirement and the sense that it still had sufficient strengths not to wait for urgency to dictate all its choices. A country does not preserve what it is merely by remaining faithful to its image. It also preserves it through the work it agrees to do upon itself, carrying forward what previous generations made possible. It was within that continuation that I sought to place the MDRS.

CHAPTER 12

What work should earn

I would like work to allow people to look beyond the following month. This wish may seem simple, but it changes the way I approach income. Having a job and receiving a wage matter. We still need to know what that wage leaves in a life once housing, travel, energy, food and other necessary expenses have been paid. It is there that we measure what effort genuinely allows a person to build.

Time devoted to work cannot be recovered. It becomes production, a service, a relationship with a customer or a task performed so that activity can continue. I find it hard to consider satisfactory an organisation in which that time would give someone, over the long term, only the means to return and devote it again. It should also prepare security, choices and an ability to do something for oneself and those one loves.

In designing the MDRS, I therefore wanted to revisit the path from the cost of labour to what reaches the employee. The employee and employer levies concerned must be considered together. This is not a difference of presentation: limiting the reasoning to one of these shares would change the basis of the transfer I seek to organise. What matters is the whole intended movement, its origin, its recipient and the functions hitherto financed by these sums.

I sought to return a more direct share of this value to the person working. But I could not consider the gain independently of its counterpart. If the money funded protection that must continue, moving it requires other

funding. The additional income must not leave the person alone facing a much greater risk when they fall ill, lose their work or retire. Reorganisation must pass on wealth more effectively, not make the cost of protections less visible by shifting it onto whoever will use them.

This requirement explains why the model's different parts cannot be presented as measures to be chosen separately, without examining what they funded together. The transfer towards wages meets collective resources, protections, the company's situation and the household's. I wanted the calculation to follow these relationships: the same sum cannot be announced as new income for one person while remaining implicitly available for the old expenditure.

The change also had to make the rules clearer. A person working should know what is due to them, what is intended for their protection, what remains available now and what prepares for the longer term. An improvement becomes difficult to understand when several mechanisms move in opposing directions and the person discovers the outcome only afterwards. I would like the link between effort and the means received to be clear enough to examine, rather than simply take on trust.

I also became interested in what then happens within the household budget. A higher wage can meet a reduced benefit, a rent that absorbs part of the gain, or transport and health costs that remain high. This does not make the measure useless, but its real effect may differ from what would have been announced by stopping at the payslip. This is how I wish to follow income through to the possibility it opens, rather than reach a conclusion at the moment it is paid.

Reducing certain forms of compensatory support may have a place once the need they addressed has actually diminished. I do not confuse this with abolishing them beforehand. Removing an allowance does not prove that a person has become more independent; they may still face the same difficulty with fewer

means. Change must therefore be built in the right order. Protections linked to illness, disability or dependency must retain their own purpose: a general rise in income does not erase these situations.

Two households receiving the same sum do not necessarily have the same possibilities. Housing, debt, distance, children, health and reserves alter what they can do with it. I value this diversity because the average offers a dangerous convenience: it allows us to speak of a favourable movement without showing those for whom it is not favourable, or not yet. The MDRS must be able to find these people before their difficulty becomes a surprise during implementation.

I also think about the time the organisation asks of families. Journeys, childcare, repeated procedures and distant appointments take hours that a rise in income does not necessarily restore. I do not want to put an artificial price on every moment of life. I want this time to be visible in the design, because it can determine whether one can work, train or care for a loved one. Wealth received is not limited to what enters an account.

What I seek through widely shared personal wealth begins at this scale. Even a modest reserve can free someone from total dependence on the first unforeseen event. It allows them to repair, wait, change and sometimes refuse a condition they would otherwise accept for lack of choice. Someone with a few resources in hand is not invulnerable; they simply have a little more time to decide what happens to them.

I would like this security to come from ordinary work, not only exceptional success. It should not be necessary to become extraordinary to build a life that is not continually on the verge of an emergency. Everyone should be able to see that their years of effort leave them something, even gradually, and that this something will not be taken back in full by the next rule or the next essential

expense.

Work remains one part of existence. It does not sum up a person's value or all their contributions. We learn, we support our loved ones, we go through illness, we grow old. I want to give work greater strength precisely to allow these other dimensions to be lived more freely. An economy that improves production while leaving ever less space for the lives of those producing loses part of what I seek to build.

Sharing in a company's success completes this thinking, but deserves consideration in its own right. Wages and the sharing of a result do not fulfil the same function. By distinguishing them clearly, we can seek to give the worker a more lasting relationship with the value they help to create, without weakening the activity that must continue creating it.

CHAPTER 13

The company and those who sustain it

I know business through the responsibility of keeping it alive. That changes the way I speak about sharing. A positive result does not turn the whole activity into an available sum to be distributed before starting again the following year as though nothing had been committed. There are purchases, wages, equipment, obligations, training and periods when money goes out before coming back. The future has to be prepared without yet knowing exactly what it will bring.

This reality does not lead me to regard sharing as a threat in principle. On the contrary, I would like it to become a more stable relationship between those who make a company successful. The director takes decisions and bears responsibility. Capital enables investment and accepts risk. Employees bring their trade, their time and their knowledge of the actual work. Suppliers, customers and collective infrastructure also contribute to the activity's development. Recognising one does not make the others disappear.

I have never been persuaded by accounts in which a company is entirely the work of one kind of participant. They sometimes give each a flattering image of their own contribution, but make a lasting relationship harder to build. Production requires the means to produce, and those means do not set themselves to work. An organisation needs decisions, skills and trust, with people who do not all expect quite the same thing from it.

The profit-sharing I advocate within the MDRS starts from this plurality. I would like employees to receive a share of the success to which they contribute, on a defined and

verifiable basis. Wages pay for the agreed work.

The result can open another form of transmission when the wealth created can genuinely sustain it. This may take the form of income, savings or lasting rights, according to the model's mechanisms; in every case, the person must understand what they receive and on what terms.

Accounting profit and immediately available cash are not the same thing. A company may have committed its means to stock, investment or payments it is still awaiting. Ignoring this difference would impose an obligation on the activity that it might not be able to pay on the announced date. I do not want sharing to destroy the conditions of its own continuity. But neither do I want this distinction to become a permanent answer that makes any distribution impossible.

This is where rules and transparency acquire their meaning. The basis must be known, the conditions of availability must be explainable, and movements of value must not allow the result to be withheld indefinitely from those for whom a share was intended. The company needs to plan. Employees need to verify. The financier needs to understand the risk. A serious organisation must give these expectations the means to meet, rather than leave opacity to decide on everyone's behalf.

There is also a human span of time within a company. Success may be built thanks to people who know the customers, the machines, the techniques and the difficulties the accounts do not fully describe. Their contribution cannot always be replaced the moment someone else is recruited. I would like this continuity to be better recognised, because it contributes to the value and to the activity's ability to weather difficult periods.

Even so, improving the sharing would not suffice if production remained obstructed by poorly organised conditions. Taxation that is difficult to understand, overlapping procedures, delays

that do not correspond to commitments, or information requested again consume time and resources. A small company often suffers these without specialist teams to handle them. The simplicity I seek must be measured in its work, not merely in a reduction in the number of pages of a procedure.

I want to retain protections that have a real function. Employees' rights, safety, quality, customer guarantees and obligations towards the territory also allow an activity to endure. Removing them indiscriminately would make the costs reappear in accidents, disputes or distrust. The work of reorganisation consists in recovering what a rule protects and, when a detour no longer contributes to that protection, seeking a clearer way to achieve it.

Public support raises a similar question. Some of it supports research, a capacity or the passage through a particular difficulty. Other support compensates for a cost maintained by the general organisation. I cannot give the same answer to all of it. Removing compensation before transforming its cause would leave the company with the problem the model claims to solve. When conditions have genuinely changed, however, funding can be reconsidered in the light of what remains necessary, rather than out of habit.

Production always brings me back to practical realities. An activity needs a place, energy, skills, transport, funding and customers. Approval for just one of these elements does not automatically bring the others. A project may be encouraged by several parties who have not agreed on when their decisions will become usable. I would like coherence to be sought before the person carrying the project commits resources whose value the wait will exhaust.

The state must not, however, determine all economic activity. It must make its own responsibilities understandable and address the choices that fall to it. The company retains its freedom, its choices and its risks. But it

should not have to guess alone how several public decisions, supposedly applying to the same project, might one day work together.

This is the relationship I seek to build within the MDRS: an activity able to produce, invest and take risks, while leaving a more lasting share of its success with those who sustain it.

I do not imagine that their interests will become identical. I would like their differences to be organised without making the exhaustion of one the permanent condition of another's future.

CHAPTER 14

Those who have already given years

I cannot think about a country's wealth by looking only at those working today. Part of what we use was built by people who have left working life. Their work remains in equipment, trades passed on, businesses and services. It does not disappear when their names leave the month's list of employees. That is why retirement has a full place in my thinking, rather than being a subject to which we devote whatever remains once the other questions have been settled.

A person has spent years organising their life around work and rules that allowed them to envisage what would follow. They have contributed, accrued rights, made choices and sometimes accepted constraints of which retirement was intended to be one continuation. I find it hard to speak of this history as a mere burden without considering the commitments made to someone who cannot always start again to compensate for a change.

Time does not offer every generation the same possibilities of adaptation. Someone beginning working life can still modify part of their path. Someone approaching retirement has already built much within the existing rules. Someone receiving a pension depends on its immediate continuity. A new architecture must understand these differences. I did not want to draw a future way of working while forgetting the women and men already living in the one it was meant to change.

The question of funding therefore requires several histories to be held together. Payments continue while new mechanisms are introduced. Accrued rights do not

disappear when the destination of a resource changes. Transitional periods have costs of their own. It would be misleading to finance a new system by silently taking from the old one the means to honour what it still owes. The resulting shortfall would be borne not by the diagram, but by the women and men awaiting their pensions.

I also want to look at the life that a pension makes possible. Its presence in a text is not enough. It must be paid, understood and open to correction when an error occurs. It then meets housing, energy, health, travel and any need for support. The amount does not say everything about independence. A sum can remain unchanged while the person has to forgo more in order to manage on it.

This independence matters within a family itself. Being able to decide one's spending, retain a place in exchanges, sometimes help the young, or not depend entirely on what they can advance changes the way one lives. A pension protects material needs, but it also preserves personal freedom when other freedoms may be diminishing. I would like the model to retain this human dimension rather than allow cost to erase everything it makes possible.

Careers differ. Illness, unemployment, changes of profession, children or caring for a loved one can interrupt a path or alter the ability to work. A representation based solely on an uninterrupted career risks giving the appearance of a neutral rule to something that mainly favours the simplest case to describe. I want less continuous paths to remain present in the calculations, with the protections they require and the contributions they have actually involved.

Solidarity retains its place for those whose rights do not provide adequate security. Recognising work and protecting the person are not two ideas that should cancel one another out. There are setbacks and limits that individual effort

cannot overcome alone. I would not want a model intended to pass on wealth more effectively to end up excluding the women and men whose lives have not matched the form of contribution it describes most easily.

Building up assets can help to organise provision over time. Yet capital, the income it can yield and the necessary reserves must be distinguished. An expected return is not a guaranteed payment. I keep this limit in mind whenever income from assets meets an essential expense: a pensioner cannot postpone their needs because the favourable scenario has failed to materialise. The promised security must have the means to weather less favourable periods too.

I do not want the complexity of this organisation to become another obligation in older people's lives. Understanding one's rights should not require becoming a markets specialist. The design and management must bear that difficulty, with information clear enough for everyone to know what is due to them, what is protected and whom to contact. Technical complexity must not become a way of distancing beneficiaries from decisions on which they depend.

Finally, a pension does not replace a missing service. It does not bring into being a carer, transport, available help or suitable housing. The family cannot be treated as an unlimited reserve of time to which every consequence of absent care can be passed. Income and services must support one another. Someone who has worked should not spend the following years rebuilding alone, with loved ones, what the collective organisation can no longer provide.

I wanted to keep the young and the old in the same country. The former must be able to enter their lives without inheriting hidden burdens in the name of the future. The latter must be able to rely on commitments that are not withdrawn at the

moment when replacing them becomes hardest. Choices must be made between these requirements, but turning generations into adversaries creates no additional means.

When I speak of returning wealth to those who work and those who have worked, I believe in this continuity. The country still uses the years of some while others give it theirs.

Retirement must allow those who have already contributed to continue living there with their place, their ties and their freedom. I cannot see how an architecture could claim to strengthen France while treating this continuity as something outside its wealth.

CHAPTER 15

The people behind the services

In my work, I have often felt that people were being set against one another while suffering the two sides of the same organisational fault. The service user awaited a response. The member of staff held part of the explanation, sometimes even knew what would allow things to move forward, but had neither the power, the information nor the necessary means to act. One saw a refusal where the other faced an obstacle. The difficulty ended up taking a human face when it had begun long before their meeting.

I do not want service reform to begin by accusing those who provide the services. They know the cases that return, the requests no one manages to resolve fully, the tools that force repetition and the detours that still allow work to be done. This knowledge does not always take the form of a report. It lies in the profession, in the succession of situations addressed, and in the weariness of seeing a problem recur that cannot be tackled from one's post.

The user knows another part of this reality. They know what they have already sent, how long they have waited, the journey the procedure has required and the consequences of an error for their life. They cannot describe the whole organisation alone, but their experience shows what it imposes on them. I sought to bring these two kinds of knowledge into the design, because a system conceived only from its centre can lose sight of the actual work it asks of those who operate it and those who need it.

I often take the repetition of information as an example of what must be examined. A person provides a document to one service, then must produce it again elsewhere, sometimes in a

different form. If data is corrected, the systems that received it may continue using the old version. The person finds themselves responsible for carrying not only the documents but the coherence of their entire story. Wanting to verify is not a fault. It becomes one when checks can no longer take account of what has already been established and no one is responsible for the passage between them.

The solution cannot be to circulate all information without limits. Some data is sensitive, some professions must retain their independence, and citizens retain rights over what concerns them. The work of connecting therefore requires necessary uses, responsibilities and possibilities of correction to be defined. Technical ease is not enough to justify access. I do not want a better-organised state to become one able to know everything about a person simply because its systems have been connected.

What interests me is the practical result. A request must be understandable, traceable and capable of being taken up again when it falls outside the ordinary process. Citizens should not need to know every administrative boundary to find an answer. Professionals can each act within their remit, provided the handovers have been thought through and the absence of an obvious remit does not become a reason to leave someone waiting indefinitely.

Healthcare gives this question particular gravity. Care requires a team, availability, equipment and supplies, but it also sits within what happens to the person before and afterwards. Treatment may be prescribed in good conditions and become difficult to continue for lack of transport or support. An institution may receive a problem made worse because other care was inaccessible. The hospital then faces consequences not all of which lie within its power to decide.

I do not seek to replace the doctor’s judgement with

a general organisation. On the contrary, I seek to give doctors the conditions in which their profession is not constantly diverted towards compensating for what is missing elsewhere. The healthcare professional must be able to care. Coordination should provide follow-up, relevant information and access to what the patient needs, without making the practitioner responsible for every social and material difficulty encountered over a lifetime.

Teaching is close to me through my family and my own experience. I know what it means to face a difficulty that cannot be resolved by repeating the same instruction more loudly. I want school to have time for learning, explaining, revisiting and recognising the different paths through which understanding can be built. The means surrounding it must support that task. They should not multiply obligations until the teaching relationship becomes merely one activity among others in a teacher's day.

A school welcomes children who do not all arrive with the same living conditions. Sleep, health, housing, material means and family relationships matter. Recognising this does not mean asking the teacher to solve everything. It means that the other functions must play their part so that the teacher's work can bear fruit. I experienced enough difficulties with the school system not to want its organisation to close off the possibility of progress too early. This attention must, however, be accompanied by standards and real means, not simply goodwill towards pupils.

Justice also led me to look at time differently. A decision may be correct and arrive when achieving its effect has become far harder. A company has lost its means, someone has continued to suffer harm, a situation has worsened during the wait. Independent judgement remains essential. Yet the process can be worked on, from preparing the case to notification and enforcement, so that the law does not remain separated for too long from what it was meant to protect.

The same applies to security. Someone who has suffered harm may need protection, care, information, accommodation and legal follow-up. These needs do not always follow the order of procedures. I would like coordination to be sufficiently prepared that people are not asked to connect every service themselves when they have the least strength to do so. Responsibilities can remain distinct while each understands what it must pass to the next.

I also attend to the place of authority. Training, income and prevention do not replace the need to stop violence, investigate and enforce a decision. But the response must not be limited to what happens after harm has occurred. Work beforehand also belongs to the country's strength, without turning poverty into an automatic explanation of behaviour or an excuse for offences. It is the whole set of functions that provides protection, not one alone asked to replace all the others.

Funding must follow the actual life of these services. Planning a building's opening or a tool's acquisition is not enough. Teams must be able to work afterwards, maintain, renew and train the women and men who will take over. This continuity is less visible than a launch, but it is what allows people living in the country to rely on a response. Public capacity is also built through expenditure that attracts little notice precisely because it prevents a service from ceasing to function.

I value a distinction that protects both staff and the integrity of the project. When an unnecessary task disappears and the time freed is devoted to the profession, the service can improve without pay falling. The country then receives more for the same means. This is genuine progress, but not automatically a cash saving that can be used elsewhere. I do not want every improvement to be presented as the already-secured removal of a post or an expense.

Digital technology can support these changes if it remains a means. It can also accelerate errors and make their origins harder to reach. A system must retain the possibility of human intervention, particularly when a situation does not match the anticipated cases. A repeated automatic answer does not become fairer because the user has tried several times. Someone must be able to understand what is happening and have the means to take up the case again.

What I would like at the end of this work is a less trying relationship with the country. A person could know where their application stands, what is missing, who can decide and how to challenge a decision. Not everything would be accepted or immediate, but the limit would be explained and responsibility would not disappear behind complexity.

Staff could practise more fully the professions to which they committed themselves. People living in the country would have less need to repair for themselves the organisation on whose presence they rely.

CHAPTER 16

The distances within our country

Travel taught me that distance cannot be reduced to the number of kilometres on a map. It also depends on the means of covering them, the price, the time available and what can be found on arrival. Two places that seem close may be difficult to connect in a life. Two distant places can become accessible when the means have been organised. This difference came to occupy a large place in the way I looked at France.

My family history had already made me familiar with rural life. Stories of journeys through the snow to school, on foot or on cross-country skis, recalled that the existence of a building did not remove the question of reaching it. I recognise that question today in other circumstances, when care, a procedure or a job requires a journey someone cannot easily make. The function is announced as present; its presence in a life still depends on access.

I do not believe the answer always lies in keeping the same form of service everywhere. Territories do not have the same means, and shared equipment, a mobile presence or a digital tool with support can sometimes offer a better response. But change must be judged from its use. A journey avoided cannot simply be displaced to the next stage. An online procedure does not help someone unable to complete it or left without anyone to speak to when a difficulty arises.

Local authorities encounter these situations at close quarters. A national decision becomes, for them, a road, a school, a team, equipment to maintain or a bill to pay. They know the consequences that broader perspectives can make less

visible. I sought to make their place explicit within the MDRS, with their resources, responsibilities and the moment when funding becomes usable. The country cannot be regarded as better organised if a central improvement leaves municipalities with a burden the calculation has failed to retain.

Existing revenue must therefore remain identifiable. A new measure does not confer the right to erase silently what already enables a territory to work. Transfers have a history and a timetable. A sum no longer appearing in a consolidated total may remain essential to the cash position of whoever must receive it. I would like the country's financial relationships to be clear enough that no one discovers too late that a responsibility has been entrusted to them without the means to exercise it.

The overseas territories require me to extend this perspective beyond the usual representation of the French map. French Guiana, the French Antilles, Réunion, Mayotte, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna do not constitute a single situation. Distances, statuses, organisations and supply possibilities differ. Giving them a place within the same model requires those differences to be preserved, not an average manufactured that would truly correspond to none of them.

I insist that we begin with those who live there. One can speak at length about France's presence in the oceans, its positions and its resources. But this power acquires its full meaning only if it allows populations adequate access to water, food, housing, healthcare and school. Territories must not merely be useful to the rest of the country. They must be able to build a life for their inhabitants whose continuity does not always depend on the next external support.

Supply makes what is contained in a product's price particularly visible there. It has had to be brought in, stored and distributed, sometimes with delays and costs not encountered in the same way elsewhere. A change of connection or an interruption can affect several activities at once. The design

must therefore know what is indispensable, the time needed to restore it, and the reserves or alternatives that allow people to manage during that period.

I look at the question of skills in the same way. A planned post does not mean there is a lasting presence. Housing, working conditions, training and replacements matter to a service's ability to continue. Equipment can remain unusable because a part or a person is missing. These difficulties seem particular when considered separately; they become structural when they determine the care, energy or activity of an entire territory.

Local wealth must also be capable of being transformed locally when conditions allow. Possibilities for production, training, maintenance and cooperation with neighbouring regions need to be examined. I do not want to announce activities simply because they would be desirable. They need markets, means and people able to sustain them. Development must leave a capacity, not merely equipment whose continuation will be decided by the next funding round.

Energy enters this thinking as one of the conditions for everything else. It concerns businesses, care, product preservation, communications and domestic life. I advocate an approach based on dispatchable sources, notably nuclear power, alongside other resources whose feasibility can be established, including marine resources where appropriate. This direction requires studies and suitable choices. It cannot be applied indiscriminately to every situation merely because it seems coherent at national level.

I am interested in energy that can actually be used where it is needed. Generation must connect with networks, connections, maintenance and backup resources. Announced capacity is not enough to run a site still awaiting access. The cost must also be understandable, including what

comes from generation, transmission, investment and levies. Households and businesses receive a whole bill, not separate political choices.

Agriculture brings me back to a world present in my family history. What we buy to eat contains land, water, time, equipment and knowledge, then processing, storage and transport. I cannot think of the producer's income and the consumer's access as two unrelated problems. A price that becomes affordable for one cannot be built sustainably on the other's inability to make a living.

Soil and water form part of this wealth over time. I do not seek to oppose production to the protection of the territory, but to know what present choices will leave to those who continue producing. An income can be real while accompanied by burdens others will have to remedy. The design must retain what follows rather than end the story at the sale. Agricultural skills themselves must be passed on, and their loss cannot be repaired simply by deciding to produce more.

Sovereignty has a very concrete meaning for me. It is the ability to continue feeding, caring, communicating, producing and protecting when external conditions become less favourable. It does not require France to make everything it needs alone. It requires France to know its relationships, choose its dependencies and retain means of adaptation, rather than discover them when they take a decision away from it.

Medicines, components, data, cables, ports and defence each encounter this question in their own way. European and international frameworks also form part of it. A national architecture cannot behave as though commitments and exchanges did not exist. It must work with that reality, distinguish what we share voluntarily from what we endure for lack of an alternative, and prepare choices that

need time before becoming possible.

In this way, I sought to bring the whole of France into the work. Not only the places where providing a service is easiest, nor the average situation that yields a presentable total. Each territory had to retain its constraints and its means, because the country's strength is also tested where distance makes a response most difficult.

Belonging cannot be limited to a presence on a map if life still requires one to prove every day a right to the same attention.

PART V

What I would like to pass on

CHAPTER 17

What we keep after spending

For a long time, I have found it difficult to regard an account as the end of the story it describes. A sum has been received, expenditure committed, a result appears; we still need to know what the passing of this year has changed in the means available afterwards. We may have spent less by postponing a repair. We may have spent more to build something that will serve for a long time. Money tells part of the story of that movement. What it leaves requires another perspective.

This question connects with what I learnt in my family, then in business. An object can remain useful even after its maintenance has been abandoned. We still benefit from its presence without providing for its continued use. As long as it works, it is easy to believe we have saved. The day it stops, we discover that the expense had not disappeared: it had shifted through time, sometimes becoming a greater difficulty to resolve.

At the scale of a country, this difference concerns means on which many lives depend. A road, a network, a building, a holding or a piece of equipment cannot be understood solely through its overall value. Each has a use, a condition, costs and terms of replacement. Some are indispensable to a function even when they produce no direct income. Others may have lost their usefulness. I would like these realities to be known well enough that their future is not decided from a figure that groups them together without explaining them.

I do not believe all assets must be preserved without discussion. Property can be sold, an activity transformed, an investment redirected. What matters is knowing what is

received in return and what is taken from the country. Selling may be appropriate, but the proceeds of a sale do not recur each year. Keeping may be necessary, but ownership does not remove the need for maintenance. The words saving, investment or assets cannot, by themselves, determine an operation's quality.

Debt requires the same work of remembering. It represents an obligation, with a cost and due dates. It has also financed something: a crisis endured, expenditure consumed, equipment or a capacity. Looking at what stands on the other side helps us understand the choice, but does not remove the need to pay. A useful road is not a sum that can be deducted from a debt so that the latter may be regarded as settled. The use of assets and money available when payment falls due remain two different realities.

It was from this attention to time that I gave the sovereign wealth fund a place in my vision. I wanted part of the wealth to become collective assets, rather than remain wholly absorbed by immediate needs. This was not about inventing a fund capable of financing every promise, but about distinguishing what we use, what we invest, what we retain and the income we can genuinely derive from it afterwards.

Capital is not its return. A valuation is not necessarily a receipt of money. Reserves are not a forgotten sum that could be distributed without changing the security of the whole. I insist on these distinctions because the functions we want to sustain cannot depend only on favourable years.

Revenue may fall, an investment may not produce what was expected, and commitments to the women and men living in the country continue nevertheless. Governance therefore matters as much as the amount assembled. Whoever manages shared assets receives not only the right to make decisions with money, but a responsibility towards people who are not all present to

examine those choices, and towards others who will live later with their consequences. The mandate, risks, fees, results and controls must allow what has been done to be understood, without technical complexity becoming a shelter from every challenge.

I would like assets to give the country an ability to decide, not a new way to postpone difficulties. They can sustain continuity, enable investment and strengthen certain protections. They must not serve to avoid all discipline in ordinary expenditure. Promising to retain capital while treating its entire value as available already confuses two incompatible uses. The construction must choose and make that choice visible.

There are also forms of wealth that resist simple financial valuation. A skill, a relationship of trust, an institution’s credibility, the quality of soil or the ability to work together do not always have a price that properly conveys their importance. Yet their absence can deprive the country of many means. I want neither to ignore them because they are difficult to calculate nor to give them an imaginary amount to flatter a balance sheet.

Skills interest me particularly because they are carried by people. Documentation does not reproduce everything a team knows how to recognise, adapt or pass on in daily work. When women and men leave without others having been prepared to take over, some of this knowledge can disappear while buildings and equipment remain.

Preserving wealth also requires allowing trades to be passed on, giving time to training and understanding what experience contains beyond written tasks.

Household assets contribute to this strength, with a different function from public assets. A population with some reserves does not meet every shock in the same way as one without any margin. Shared protections remain necessary, but women and men

have more possibilities to choose, repair and weather a difficulty. I would like the country's wealth to be recognisable in this widely shared capacity too, not only in the size of certain assets.

What matters to me in the end is knowing what we will still be able to do after spending. One response may have consisted in protecting lives during a crisis, and that is enough to give it a value not reducible to an asset retained. Another must prepare lasting capacity. In both cases, the destination and what follows must be known. The country should not pass on to future generations obligations whose reasons have disappeared, or equipment whose entire life no one has planned.

I wanted the MDRS to retain this memory. Not to immobilise wealth, but to give it uses that do not cancel one another out and that leave greater means to those who come next. We do not receive a country to keep it under glass. We use it, transform it, maintain it, and today's decisions become part of what others will tomorrow call their starting point.

CHAPTER 18

A living model

I care about the MDRS because it brings together work and a way of seeing to which I have devoted a great part of myself. That attachment must not make it untouchable. I know the temptation to defend what one has spent a long time building, especially when part of one's own path explains why it was undertaken. But the effort devoted to an idea does not give one the right to ask others to accept its results without examining them.

The conception is mine. The evidence of what it makes possible must be capable of being examined again by someone who shares neither my history nor my convictions. I want the rules, data, relationships and calculations to be traceable, so that what holds and what does not can be considered. A precise criticism does not necessarily destroy the whole. It can show where the work must continue and prevent an error being passed on to the women and men it addresses.

I chose to start from the bottom, with the person, the household, the company, the contract, the service and the territory, before bringing the results together. This bottom-up approach seems essential to me, because a national total can conceal the lives it is supposed to comprise. A favourable average does not mean every household gains. An overall saving does not say who bears the change. Differences must remain visible long enough for us to understand what we are adding.

Data quality matters as much as the calculation. Numbers have dates, definitions and scopes. Two values bearing the same name do not necessarily describe the same thing. Bringing them together without checking can produce a result precise in appearance but false in meaning. I would rather find

missing information marked in its place than manufacture certainty to allow the table to continue. A blank does not become a zero because what follows needs a number.

Objectives must remain objectives. I wish to improve incomes, strengthen services and give the country greater solidity. This does not prove that every proposed mechanism will achieve it. If the conclusion is fixed first and the assumptions then adjusted to reproduce it, the model can no longer teach us what does not work. It becomes a way of presenting a conviction through figures. That is not what I seek.

It must be possible to compare the situation with reform to one without reform, built on compatible bases. The project cannot be given the best external conditions while the other scenario alone bears the world's difficulties. Change must receive what is due to it, not the credit for a context chosen on its behalf. Behaviour must also remain open. Women and men may save, spend, repay, wait or change their choices. They do not become executors of a reaction written in advance into a formula.

Costs require the same attention. An expense removed from one budget may reappear in a local authority, a company or a family. A gain must not be separated from its counterpart. Internal transfers must be reconciled to avoid double counting, and expected resources must retain their dates of availability. Accounting does not replace life, but it prevents the same means being promised to several people under several names.

It was in this development work that digital tools, and then artificial intelligence, found their place. They can help to work through documentary material, compare texts, identify contradictions and prepare checks. They did not conceive the model's origin for me. Nor do they possess an authority that would make an answer believable simply

because it is well expressed. An error can be stated confidently, and a gap become less visible when a text fills it without evidence.

I therefore retain responsibility for what is accepted and what remains to be checked. The tool must not choose the importance I give to the person, freedom or solidarity. It may illuminate the consequences of a decision, but that decision remains a human choice. The work must retain sources and assumptions so that speed of processing does not produce merely an impression of depth. What matters is understanding better, not making the dossier larger.

The same rigour applies to transition. A reform does not begin only on the day a text announces it. It needs trained people, available means, reliable data and tools capable of functioning. Existing commitments continue through this passage. Wages, pensions and care are not suspended to make a new organisation easier to introduce. I know too well from experience the difference between a prospect and the means to reach it to leave this period outside the model.

It may be necessary to retain two ways of operating for a time. That requires money, attention and teams. These costs are not a flaw that can be removed from the presentation: they belong to change. A favourable development at the end of a year can contain several difficult months for someone who pays each month. The timetable must therefore follow operations at the pace at which they are lived, even if that makes the transition slower or less immediately advantageous than hoped.

Limited trials let us encounter this reality before wider implementation. A coherent procedure may reveal a difficulty in use, a calculation may overlook a situation, a service may discover a new task. The trial's conclusion must remain open. If it can only confirm what has been decided, we have organised a

presentation rather than a verification. I prefer a difficulty to be found early enough to be addressed before it has already been imposed on the whole country.

The possibility of going back must itself be prepared precisely. Some decisions are easily corrected; others disperse skills or commit resources that cannot quickly be restored. A backup can allow data to be recovered. It does not bring back a team that has been broken up. Prudence does not consist in slowing every change indiscriminately, but in knowing where an error would have the consequences hardest to repair.

A living model must also leave room for disagreement that does not arise from an error. We can know a proposal's effects and not share the choice it embodies. Freedom, solidarity, the distribution of effort and risk cannot be settled entirely by an arithmetic operation. Calculation makes discussion more precise. It does not remove the right of citizens or institutions to decide differently from the designer.

I would like the MDRS to be usable without depending on my permanent presence. Professions have their knowledge, institutions their responsibilities, and other people may understand certain situations better than I do. If the project could continue only on condition that I alone interpreted all its rules, it would already contain a fragility. Passing it on requires making the work legible, leaving decisions open to challenge and not turning the model's name into an argument from authority.

A rigid organisation eventually separates itself from the lives it was meant to serve. Professions change, knowledge evolves and constraints shift. I want that movement to be able to enter the MDRS. Remaining faithful to its starting point does not mean preserving every mechanism. It means continuing to look at women and men and accepting that the plan must change when it no longer gives them the possibilities for which it was conceived.

CHAPTER 19

The freedom I seek

I did not become interested in the state so that it could occupy every part of people's lives. What I discovered in countries where its functions had weakened showed me instead what their absence obliged those living there to do themselves: find protection, make up for a service, arrange passage, advance a cost. Much of life could be occupied by what should have allowed it to begin. The strength I seek must return that space to people, not take it away in another form.

An income that leaves room for manoeuvre, a pension one can count on, a service that responds and a right one can exercise give people the means to choose. They allow refusal, a change of path, planning, or simply not accepting immediately the only solution offered. Freedom is not merely written permission. It becomes more real when the first incident is not enough to remove every other possibility.

I want the country to protect this freedom within the very organisation it builds to support it. Control of resources and payments confers no general right over every private decision. The circulation of information must have limits. Professionals must retain their judgement, citizens their avenues of appeal and institutions their independent oversight. A system highly efficient at imposing its will does not become just because it quickly accomplishes what is asked of it.

Peace is part of this thinking. I have seen it through what it allows and what war takes away. Work, travel, learning, maintaining relationships and preparing for tomorrow acquire a different value when their continuity is uncertain. I do not confuse

that experience with all of France's difficulties. I simply want France to retain the means not to ask its population to live ever more of their lives defending what should already be assured.

Authority is necessary to protect against violence and enforce decisions. It must remain subject to oversight so that this protection does not itself become a source of arbitrariness. Services, work and opportunities for training also have their place, without income being enough to explain all human behaviour. The peace I seek does not eliminate disagreements; it allows them to be lived without force being the only way to be heard.

I know that an architecture does not, by itself, give a future. It can open possibilities, make consequences visible and organise means better. Then people work, choose, invent, make mistakes and begin again. It is this share of freedom that also gives a country its capacity to evolve. The MDRS must not replace it with a drawing in which everyone has only to occupy the allotted place.

The working horizon from 2027 to 2048 helps me keep that span in mind. A child born at its beginning will be twenty-one at its end. They will have grown up with the effects of decisions whose intentions they need not have approved to bear their consequences. Their school, the trades they can learn, the territories where they can live and the services they find will be part of what we have prepared or allowed to deteriorate.

I do not claim to know the world in which that child will become an adult. Events, technologies and needs will not follow exactly what we imagine today. This horizon does not serve to create the illusion of foreseeing everything. It serves to prevent the most distant consequences from being systematically excluded from decisions.

A debt, a piece of infrastructure, an education or the loss of expertise pass through years and terms of office. Someone will always live beyond the period at which we stopped our calculation.

I think of my son when I consider what follows. I do not ask him to carry my project or choose the same life. I would like him to have the means to seek his own, to learn, work, change his mind and care for those who will matter to him. This hope does not stop at my family. What I would like for him also allows me to recognise what other parents may wish for their children, even when their lives do not resemble mine.

My parents gave me a place without writing everything that followed. That is what I would like to find again in the way a country prepares its generations: support, knowledge, protections and the possibility of deciding what to do with them. Something solid can be passed on without demanding that it remain motionless. The women and men who come after us will have the right to revisit choices, correct the model and build with knowledge we do not yet possess.

I wish them more than documents explaining why we thought we were doing the right thing. I would like them to find real means and be able to understand the decisions they inherit. For an error to leave a trace, a commitment to have funding, equipment to have people ready to take over, and a rule to be open to discussion. Transmission would be incomplete if it handed on obligations without the information needed to take them up.

This is the direction in which my own path has led me. I began with faces, difficulties and things I did not understand. I sought explanations in work, then a way to bring them together in order to build. I have not forgotten that this search had a human origin, and I would not want its development to make it less and less recognisable to the women and men for whom it is intended.

This book recounts the reasons why I undertook this

work. The MDRS must still answer, through its mechanisms and their verification, for what it can genuinely offer. I can defend its direction, continue building it and accept challenge.

I cannot own the life of the country I would like to help function better. It belongs to those who live there, and it was so that they could enjoy greater freedom that I chose to devote myself to it.

Before closing these pages, I must return to those who made this way of seeing possible. I have spoken of work, wealth and organisation, but none of that erases my parents' place in what I have become. The words that follow owe them a great deal. I also wish to address them to those who have chosen, or are considering choosing, to open their lives to a child.

FINAL WORDS

To all those who have adopted, and to those considering doing so, I want to offer my profound thanks. You give a child an extraordinary chance, not of a perfect life, but of having a place, time and a family.

I do not speak for all adopted children. I know only what a presence, a country and a home can change. That does not remove the questions or the history that comes before, but it gives the strength to grow, find one's path and carry on.

Thank you, every one of you.



WHAT WAR AND MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

Emmanuel DUBUISSON

One does not understand a country by looking at its figures. One understands it by looking at what it leaves behind.

Born in Sri Lanka and adopted in France, Emmanuel Dubuisson grew up with travel stories, images of war and questions not asked early enough. This book was born of a conviction: no country should accept that work, wealth and its children's future become a matter of fate.
A personal story. A perspective on France. A determination to rebuild

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