

NEWS AND NOTES

Tradition and Discovery 47:1

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The online-only “News and Notes” section of *Tradition and Discovery* includes bibliographic information, calls for papers, annual meeting programs, and any other items possibly of interest to members of the Polanyi Society and other persons working with the thought of Michael Polanyi. Send material to David Stewart, Editor of *Tradition and Discovery*, at contact@davidjamesstewart.com.

Membership Renewal and Challenge Grant

The preceding TAD “News and Notes” announced what was already obvious: Covid-19 made printing and mailing the July and October copies of TAD to Society members living in the US impossible. The Society began last year, and continues in 2021, distributing only an online issue of TAD via e-mail. We have over 800 people across the world who receive a Table of Contents e-mail (with links to articles and reviews) when new issues of TAD are posted in the online archives on polanyisociety.org. At the mid-October 2020 online Board of Directors meeting, the shift to a digital-only TAD was discussed and became official policy for the future. Over the next year or so, there will be some additional changes such as the creation of a separate website for TAD (linked to the Polanyi Society website) with more interactive elements. Some things are still in the planning stages, but if you have good ideas, please write to David Stewart at the address above.

For most of the past twenty years, the last printed TAD in the membership cycle included a brightly colored flyer reminding members to pay dues and a self-addressed envelope that could be used in snail mail to send in checks. Additionally, we set up a [membership page with information and a secure PayPal site](#) for dues payment and appointed a membership secretary to e-mail individuals to remind them about dues. However, the change to an online TAD without its separate reminder about dues and perhaps the pandemic seems to have resulted in a dramatic drop in the receipt of membership dues and donations. The Polanyi Society continues to have on-going expenses that need to be funded.

An anonymous patron has pledged a challenge match of up to \$5000 for donations and membership renewals in 2021. This generous gift serves both as a reminder of the Society’s needs and a welcome stimulus toward fiscal stability. Many individuals have been quite willing through the years to support TAD and the Society, but we know annual reminders are helpful for busy people. Please send a check or money order payable to the Polanyi Society to

The Polanyi Society
c/o Charles Lowney, Treasurer
10 Jordan Street
Lexington, VA 14450

Or you may pay by credit card via PayPal at <http://polanyisociety.org/register/join-renew.php>. Annual membership dues remain at \$35 (\$25 for libraries, \$15 for students). Thank you!

Phil Mullins, President
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An Ambiguous 2021 Polanyi Society Call for Papers

This call for papers is an invitation to submit a proposal on a Polanyi-related topic (up to 300 words) for a paper to be presented at some point in 2021. No particular topics are being solicited; the goal is to make available for discussion topics concerning Polanyi's thought that you are interested in. At this point, **three alternative sites for delivery seem to be available:** (1) an in-person (with Zoom also possible) Nashotah conference **or** (2) an in-person annual meeting in November in San Antonio **or** (3) a Zoom presentation at a time to be arranged. This could take the form of a virtual annual meeting. Because the course of the pandemic and our responses to it are so uncertain, we are including the following statements about what we know in January 2021 for your consideration.

A vaccine is becoming available in 2021 at different times in different places for different groups of people. Moreover, the Polanyi Society's status as a Related Scholarly Organization (RSO) with the American Academy of Religion (AAR) is currently being reviewed. We should know whether we are renewed by the end of March. These contingencies, combined with the relative success of Zoom meetings in June, September, and November of 2020, complicate any call for papers for 2021.

The Polanyi Society has taken the step of tentatively reserving space at Nashotah House for a possible three-day, in-person conference between Monday, 31 May 2021 and Friday, 4 June 2021. But a decision about whether the Society will sponsor an in-person Nashotah meeting will not be made until March of 2021. Also, it is presently unclear if an in-person annual meeting (held in conjunction with the projected November 2021 in-person AAR meeting in San Antonio, TX) is feasible or advisable. But if such a Polanyi Society meeting is held later in the year, it would likely be on November 19 and 20, 2021.

Proposals will be reviewed in the standard way by a small committee that will provide feedback. **Please indicate with your submission** which of the three possible venues listed in the first paragraph above you would most prefer and which you would not like considered. You are invited to submit a proposal on **any Polanyi-related topic** when you are ready. For this general call there is at this point no definite deadline for submission, but **the sooner you submit, the better** for our planning. A separate inquiry about interest in attending an in-person Nashotah conference has recently been sent to the Polanyi Society discussion list as part of our effort to plan, and that inquiry is also posted on the Polanyi Society website. As venues and necessary

deadlines become known, they will be communicated on the Polanyi Society website and through the Polanyi-listserv. Please understand that negotiations about time and venue will be the order of the day.

Please send proposals to Walter Gulick (WGulick@msubillings.edu).

Repository for Recordings of Zoom Sessions

The recently created Links for Recordings of Polanyi Society Zoom Presentations/Discussions accessed from the Polanyi Society homepage now includes recordings for several online events. There are six papers and discussions from the three sessions on June 9, 10 and 11, 2020. There are five recordings from the August and September 2020 discussion of Polanyi's five 1964 Duke Lectures. There are seven papers and discussions from the three sessions of the November 19, 20 and 21 online 2020 Society annual meeting.

Additions to the Polanyi Society Website

Three of Michael Polanyi's writings on economics have recently been added to the Polanyi Society website as additions to the selection of primary materials under [Essays, Lectures and a Film by Michael Polanyi](#). They are (1) "Notes on a Film" (1936), (2) "British Crisis (1947-?)" and "What Kind of Crisis?" (1947) and (3) "First and Second Lectures." "Notes on a Film" is a short archival set of notes. "British Crisis (1947-?)" is the draft of a short essay. "First and Second Lectures" is a set of notes apparently for an advanced economics class that Polanyi began to teach in 1948. These three short unpublished selections from the Michael Polanyi Papers were originally published in [Polanyiana 2014/1-2](#) and there is a link to this issue under each selection's title. There is also a link to Gábor Bíró's brief essay, "[Some Notes on the Early Economic Thought of Michael Polanyi](#)," introducing these three short archival pieces.

On the page for "Notes on a Film" there is a [link](#) to Polanyi's film "Unemployment and Money: The Principles Involved" where there are also links to additional documents and commentary on the film provided by Eduardo Beira.

"British Crisis (1947-?)" was published in a somewhat expanded form as "What Kind of Crisis?" in the 4 October 1947 issue of *Time and Tide* (pp. 1056-1058). Michael Polanyi published several short essays in this periodical during this period. "What Kind of Crisis?" is one of the Polanyi writings included in the [Gelwick Microfilm Collection](#) which can be downloaded and includes about 120 items. The filename for "What Kind of Crisis?" is Glwk44-WhatKindofCrisis-1947.pdf. Most of the additions in "What Kind of Crisis?" come at the end of this short essay. Although Polanyi was certainly referring to the economic situation in Britain in 1947, his challenging affirmation reaches beyond his own context to our own:

The fight for freedom must aim . . . centrally at the voluntary reunion of conflicting groups. This is the unending task of those dedicated to liberty. For life in a changing society can never cease to produce new dissensions and free

citizens can never pause in their search for new harmonious solutions to ever recurring conflict” (1058).



Márta Fehér (1943-2020)

The name “Márta Fehér” may not ring a bell in the minds of many interested in the thought of Michael Polanyi who read *Tradition and Discovery*. But perhaps more than any other person, she was instrumental in introducing Polanyi’s philosophy to a Hungarian audience after the fall of the wall in 1989. Prior to 1989, Polanyi’s thought was banned in the Soviet world primarily because of his outspoken anti-Communist stand and his role in the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

Because her academic focus was devoted to the philosophy and history of science, Márta was keenly aware of Polanyi’s prominence in Western thought. She led a movement to reclaim Polanyi as a native son 70 years after he fled Hungary following the turmoil of World War I. Soon after the Soviet empire collapsed, she was one of the founders of the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association (MPLPA), centered in Budapest, which is an organization much like the Polanyi Society. The MPLPA has for years sponsored conferences and other programs that have attracted scholars interested in Michael Polanyi’s thought. Márta was particularly instrumental in pulling together the August 24-26, 1991 conference celebrating the one hundredth birthday of Polanyi. She became the founding editor of *Polanyiana, The Periodical of the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association*, whose first volume was published in 1992. She was editor-in-chief until 1996 when she began sharing with Éva Gábor a co-editorship that lasted over a dozen years.

Márta Fehér began teaching in 1965 at what is now Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BUTE), and from 1989-1999 she served as the chair of the Department of Philosophy and History of Science. She received her Ph.D. in 1970 and concentrated her research in the history and philosophy of science. She published widely in this area in both Hungarian and English. The logic of argumentation in science was one of her special interests. Although she appreciated much in Polanyi’s thought, he does not escape uncriticized. For instance, with respect to “his idealized image of science,” she thinks he ignores the “real problems of science” as a social institution. Several of Márta’s articles are in English issues of *Polanyiana* (all issues are online [here](#)) including “Michael Polanyi on Implicit Belief Systems, Stability and Truth: Comments on a Topic in Chapter 9 and 10 of *Personal Knowledge*” in a fairly recent English issue of *Polanyiana* (21:1-2 [2012]).

Walter Gulick: How fortunate I was as a Fulbright scholar from January to June 1993 to secure a position teaching in the Department of Philosophy and History of Science under Márta’s leadership. Not only did I appreciate her philosophical acumen, but her excellent English was

greatly valued at a time when I knew no Hungarian and English was not spoken by most Hungarians. Kindness and precision of thought are two adjectives that come to mind when I think of her. I have returned to Hungary many times since 1993, and often Márta invited my wife and me to lunch and gracious conversation at the Gellert Hotel. My wife said it well when referring to Márta Fehér as “one classy lady.”

Phil Mullins: In 2014 when I went to Budapest to teach Polanyi, I learned that Márta was an opera aficionado. She invited me and my wife to a performance of *Tosca* at the grand opera house which we were delighted to see. No doubt she had to get the tickets months in advance. Because of her serious eye problems, I knew she could not see either the stage or the electronic sign above the stage on which the Italian was translated into both written Hungarian and English. However, she provided an outstanding running commentary on exactly what was happening on stage and in the music. I recall thinking that this is the same kind of excellence that has made her a figure admired by all the graduate students in the BUTE department that I encountered.

Two recent e-mail comments from Hungarian intellectuals who were her students indicate how much she was appreciated. One calls her an “exemplary person and an excellent philosopher” and notes “I feel gratitude that I had the privilege to know her and to be taught by her. She will be missed very much.” The other celebrates her role in creating an excellent Ph.D. department, but also commends her for creating the “invisible college, a community of gifted university students, exploring, without academic credit, issues in the humanities and social sciences—a true Polanyian Society of Explorers.”

Walter Gulick and Phil Mullins

Academic Papers, Blogs, Dissertations, and Publications

Ted Brown, 2020. “Social Metaphors in Cellular and Molecular Biology.” *How Metaphors Guide, Teach and Popularize Science*. Anke Roger and Thomas H. Smith (eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Abstract: Consistent with conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), metaphor use in biology is characterized by three overarching metaphorical themes: The Semiotic Metaphor, Teleology and Emergence/Supervenience. These themes are applied in analyzing metaphor use in the study of cellular systems. Use of metaphors drawn from social domains is extensive and systematic. In science teaching, attention should be paid to *how* scientists acquire and evaluate new knowledge and convey new findings. *Abductive inference* as a means of arriving at a best explanation is of great pedagogical value. Abductive inference depends upon metaphors grounded in embodied and social conceptual frameworks. Explicit acknowledgment of metaphorical usage in science teaching illuminates the path from scientific observation toward robust theories.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor theory, semiotic metaphor, teleology, emergence, complexity theory, supervenience, quorum sensing, deliberate metaphor, abductive inference to the best explanation.

Stephen Turner and Daryl E. Chubin, 2020 (Spring). "The Changing Temptations of Science" *Issues in Science and Technology* 36 (3): 40-46. Online at <https://issues.org/autonomy-integrity-incentives-in-science/>

Abstract: The ethic of discovery that once governed science has evolved into an expectation of impact. The autonomy and integrity of science are now up for grabs. The changes in science over the past century have outpaced society's images of science, of what sort of activity it is, and of what scientists are and do. Today's question is this: have these changes also outpaced science's capacity to assure its integrity and quality?

Stephen Turner, 2020. "Science on Demand." *Epistemology & Philosophy of Science* 57 (4): 52-61. <https://doi.org/10.5840/eps202057456>.

Abstract: Characterizing science as a public good, as Steve Fuller notes, is a part of an ideological construal of science, linked to a particular portrayal of science in the postwar era that was designed to provide a rationale for the funding of pure or basic science. The image of science depended on the idea of scientists as autonomous truth-seekers. But the funding system, and other hierarchies, effectively eliminated this autonomy, and bound scientists tightly to a competitive system in which the opportunity to pursue ideas in science depended on peer approval in advance. Funding agencies then turned to assessments of impact. John Ziman had already recognized the effects of these changes in the nature of science, and characterized it as "reliable knowledge" produced on demand from funders. As the competition for funds increased, there were further changes in the nature of science itself toward "reliable enough" knowledge. This made science into a "good", but a good in the sense of results produced for funders, a transformation that left the original epistemic aims of science behind.

Giorgio Baruchello, 2019 (September). "Tacit Knowing, Personal Knowledge, and Cultural Trends." *Mother Pelican: Journal of Solidarity and Sustainability* 15 (9): 1-3. Online only at <http://www.pelicanweb.org/solisustv15n09page3.html>.

Abstract: This article reflects on Polanyi's ideas about tacit knowing, its application to culture and the general relevance of Michael Polanyi's thought to contemporary issues.

Owen Omerod, 2020. "Michael Polanyi and the Epistemology of Intelligence Analysis." *Intelligence and National Security*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2020.1836828>

Abstract: Epistemology is at the heart of the intelligence analysis profession. Michael Polanyi's concepts of 'tacit knowing' and 'personal knowledge' offer a more precise account for understanding the tacit process of skillfully solving problems of epistemic complexity, along

with a deeper appreciation for the personal aspect of knowledge. Examining this conceptual framework offers an opportunity for *re-cognizing* key features of this profession, especially the personal and tacit dimensions involved in analysis. These examinations aim to contribute towards the training and education of analysts, along with offering the individual analyst a detailed language and logic for reflection and self-exploration regarding their practice.

Elena Aronova, 2012. “The Congress for Cultural Freedom, *Minerva*, and the Quest for Instituting ‘Science Studies’ in the Age of Cold War.” *Minerva* 50: 307–337.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11024-012-9206-6> .

Abstract: The Congress for Cultural Freedom is remembered as a paramount example of the “cultural cold wars.” In this paper, I discuss the ways in which this powerful transnational organization sought to promote “science studies” as a distinct – and politically relevant – area of expertise and part of the CCF broader agenda to offer a renewed framework for liberalism. By means of its Study Groups, international conferences and its periodicals, such as *Minerva*, the Congress developed into an influential forum for examining the ways Big Science impacted the relations between science, society, and politics, thus constituting a semi-institutional niche for Science Studies before its professionalization within academia during the 1970s. I argue that the Congress contributed to the construction of public space in which the relations between science, society and politics were debated, and science was reconceptualized as a social activity. The vision of “science studies” the CCF-associated intellectuals promulgated was different from the science studies we know today. Yet, this alternative vision, in which the issues of science politics appeared inseparable from those of science policy, science organization, and science governance, constituted the “pre-history” of science studies today.

Keywords: Cold War, Congress for Cultural Freedom, Edward Shils, Michael Polanyi, big science, “end of ideology,” science studies.

Elena Aronova, 2009. “In Search of the Soul in Science: Medical Ethics' Appropriation of Philosophy of Science in the 1970s.” *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 31: 5-34.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23334415>.

Abstract: This paper examines the deployment of science studies within the field of medical ethics. For a short time, the discourse of medical ethics became a fertile ground for a dialogue between philosophically minded bioethicists and the philosophers of science who responded to Thomas Kuhn's challenge. In their discussion of the validity of Kuhn's work, these bioethicists suggested a distinct interpretation of Kuhn, emphasizing the elements in his account that had been independently developed by Michael Polanyi, and propelling a view of science that retreated from idealizations of scientific method without sacrificing philosophical realism. Appropriating Polanyi, they extended his account of science to biology and medicine. The contribution of Karl Popper to the debate on the applicability of philosophy of science to the issues of medical ethics provides the opportunity to discuss the ways in which political agendas of different epistemologies of science intertwined with questions of concern to medical ethics.

Keywords: medical ethics, the Hastings Center, Michael Polanyi, Marjorie Grene, Karl Popper, philosophy of biology.

Mihály Héder, 2020. “The Epistemic Opacity of Autonomous Systems and the Ethical Consequences.” *AI and Society*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00146-020-01024-9>.

Abstract: This paper takes stock of all the various factors that cause the design-time opacity of autonomous systems behaviour. The factors include embodiment effects, design-time knowledge gap, human factors, emergent behaviour and tacit knowledge. This situation is contrasted with the usual representation of moral dilemmas that assume perfect information. Since perfect information is not achievable, the traditional moral dilemma representations are not valid and the whole problem of ethical autonomous systems design proves to be way more empirical than previously understood.

Keywords Epistemic opacity, ethics of AI, embodiment, autonomous systems.

The most recent English issue of [Polanyiana](#) has recently been posted online and includes the following three essays.

Phil Mullins, 2019. “[From Countering Utilitarianism to Countering Planning: Michael Polanyi's ‘Social Capitalism’ and Its Place in His Social Philosophy.](#)” *Polanyiana* 28:1-2: 3-19.

This essay analyzes Polanyi’s “Social Capitalism,” a brief, witty, sarcastic, 1946 opinion piece in *Time and Tide*, a British weekly in which Polanyi published eleven short articles from 1945 to 1954. Polanyi wrote many interesting short articles, letters to the editor, and book reviews for popular journals and newspapers; he was actively engaged with the issues of his day and aspired to make his ideas known by ordinary educated citizens. “Social Capitalism” argues the conflict between socialism and capitalism is over since both have been significantly transformed in recent history. In brief but scathing comments, Polanyi attacks the “scientism” found in both classical economic theory and British utilitarian social philosophy as well as Marx’s views. He praises Adam Smith and briefly outlines his reformed liberal Keynesian views which he compares and contrasts with some recent Soviet policies. Much in this short essay fits with ideas found in other Polanyi writing in this period.

Keywords: Michael Polanyi’s socio-political vision, scientism, Michael Polanyi’s Keynesian ideas.

Alessio Tartaro, 2019. “[Capitalism with a Human Face: A Comment on Michael Polanyi's ‘Social Capitalism.’](#)” *Polanyiana* 28:1-2: 20-27.

Abstract: In “Social Capitalism”, Polanyi argues for reconciliation between Capitalism and Socialism, against false theories that consider them to be firmly opposed. On the one hand, Polanyi shows how capitalism in Western countries was increasingly sensitive to social justice.

On the other hand, he demonstrates that economic planning in USSR was an empty conception because the economic life was actually guided surreptitiously by market mechanisms. The present comment analyzes Polanyi's arguments and discloses some underlying theoretical questions: the problem of the guidance of economic life; the relationship between economics and politics; the balance between individual freedom and social justice and equality.

Keywords: Social Capitalism, State Capitalism, laissez-faire, economic planning, social justice.

Mihály Héder and Dániel Paksi, 2019. [“A Criticism of Weak Emergence.”](#) *Polanyiana* 28:1-2: 28-46.

Abstract: This article presents an internal criticism of Mark A. Bedau's concept of Weak Emergence (WE). WE is based on the concept of explanatory incompressibility: it states that a phenomenon is weakly emergent if it cannot be explained without crawling the micro-causal web of the underlying processes. Bedau's main goal is to show that WE is not merely "Just in the Mind" but is something that can be objectively analyzed. This paper shows that explanatory incompressibility and thus the WE property depends on the observing person's a priori choice of operators for the explanation. The paper demonstrates that Bedau's examples for WE from Game of Life are not weakly emergent if alternative sets of premises are used. Without a non-arbitrary method of picking operators, WE is completely relative to the observer and is not useful for settling debates in the manner that is expected from an objective measure.

Keywords: Mark A. Bedau, weak emergence, computational emergence, reduction, Game of Life.

Lance Elliot, 2020 (December 20). “Self-Driving Cars and The Polanyi Paradox of Knowing Versus Telling.” *Forbes*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lanceeliot/2020/12/20/self-driving-cars-and-the-polanyi-paradox-of-knowing-versus-telling/?sh=3c51076b66e6> .

This column is a reflection on Polanyi's claim that a person knows more than she can tell which an economist later popularized as “Polanyi's paradox,” suggesting that familiar tasks cannot currently be computerized because much knowledge is tacit knowledge. Elliot comments on what he calls the “knowing versus telling riddle” and goes on to ask questions about today's machine learning and self-driving cars using AI.

At [ClubTroppe](#) you will find Nicholas Gruen's introduction to a longer essay on Polanyi's liberalism which is available to anyone who requests it. Nicholas Gruen is a Australian economist, founder of [Lateral Economics](#) and Visitor to [King's College London](#) who regularly writes about economics. The essay is a record of his own engagement with Michael Polanyi and the backdrop is the question of alternative trajectories for what came to be called ‘neoliberal’ economic reform—Polanyi being a fellow founding member of Friedrich Hayek's Mont Pèlerin Society.

The International Institute for Field Being held its annual meeting at the Eastern Division of American Philosophic Association in January 2021. The first session of the meeting (January 8th) concerned “Polanyi, Aesthetics, and a Meaningful Life.” Presentations were given by Walter Gulick (Montana State University Billings), “Michael Polanyi and the Relation of Fields to Discovery and Problem Solving”; Charles Lowney (Hollins University), “Beautiful Minds: Gregory Bateson on Humans, Animals, and Ecological Systems”; James Clement van Pelt (Yale University), “Denizens of the Tacit Dimension”; Sietske Dijkstra (Dijkstra Agency/Utrecht/NL), “Discoveries in Science, the Arts, and Professional Practice: Performative Qualities of Polanyi’s Tacit Knowing”; and Robert Hyatt (Independent Scholar), “Trauma, Metaphor, and Meaning.”

A Note on the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund and the Endowment

In 2018, to simplify our accounting, the Polanyi Society consolidated several old funds into the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund. Particular disbursements from this new fund may, however, be in memory of particular persons. The new fund will continue to support the participation of younger scholars in Society (in-person) meetings. Possibly some new awards and projects aimed at younger scholars will soon be added.

The Polanyi Society Endowment was established a few years ago with a gift from the late Ann Herbert Scott, the widow of William T. Scott, the original Polanyi biographer. The Walter B. Mead estate in 2019 provided a substantial contribution to the Endowment. Slowly, the Endowment is growing. The Society hope to establish an Endowment that generates each year income which can be used to support and expand programming.

Please support the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund and the Polanyi Society Endowment by sending a tax-deductible contribution to The Polanyi Society, C/O Charles Lowney, 10 Jordan Street, Lexington, VA, 24450. Bequests and large donations are very important to the Society, but the many smaller donations to the Society, often made in conjunction with dues payment, are also significant and appreciated. Checks should be made out to the Polanyi Society and, if so intended, marked Travel, Grants, and Projects or Endowment. Unmarked donations will go toward general operating expenses. You can also directly access the Polanyi Society PayPal button (with accompanying tutorial) to make a donation:

<http://polanysisociety.org/paypal/donate.html>

All actual PayPal transactions for the Polanyi Society are is handled on the secure PayPal site.

Back Issues of *TAD* Available for Purchase

A limited number of back printed issues of *TAD* are available for purchase as long as supplies last. The cost for a copy of issues up to and including Vol. 41:3 is \$5.00. A copy of issues from

42:1 through 46:1 (the final printed issue) is \$7.00. All prices include shipping and handling. For issues up to and including Vol. 39:2, contact Phil Mullins (mullins@missouriwestern.edu). For issues from 39:3 to 46: 1, contact Paul Lewis (lewis_pa@mercer.edu). Payment should be sent to The Polanyi Society, C/O Charles Lowney, 10 Jordan Street, Lexington, VA, 24450. Checks should be made out to the Polanyi Society and earmarked for back issues.