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By James Robertson and John Bunzl

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People-centred Global Governance

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– *Making it Happen!*

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For Colin Morley,
an active and long-standing supporter of Simpol who was, tragically,
a victim of the London bombings, 7th July 2005

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1. Introduction

This is the second book in the “*Making it Happen!*” series. The series’ general purpose is to discuss specific reform proposals for solving many of today’s global economic, social and environmental problems, showing how the Simultaneous Policy initiative can be used by citizens to help implement those reforms; to ‘make them happen’ at the global level.

In this second book, instead of looking at a specific reform proposal, we’ll be investigating the much wider issue of *global governance*. As the process of globalisation has steadily deepened, there is increasing recognition that the nation-state system is incapable of meeting the challenges the world now faces. The executive summary of the Club of Athens Global Governance Group, for example, notes that:

“One of the by-products of globalization has been to severely weaken the State Sovereignty System by demolishing its supporting pillars. While sovereignty itself is exercised over geographical territory, contemporary challenges are not limited by the political borders of nation-states. ... For instance, the Internet, climate change, the AIDS pandemic, mad cow disease, global trade and finance, international crime and terrorism, present pressing challenges which cannot be met by purely national legislation. These global problems have rendered current governance structures inadequate, ineffective and, ultimately, obsolete.”¹

Yet, while the inadequacy of the nation-state system to meet these challenges seems to be widely recognised, there is as yet no adequate system to replace or supersede it. Instead, alongside

¹ *The Quest to Civilise Globalisation*, Article by Amb. Kimon Valaskakis RET, 2001. www.paricenter.com/library/papers/valaskakis02.php

the nation-state, we are left at present with a rather haphazard assembly of institutions – some governmental, some non-governmental, some global and others regional or national – all of which are attempting, in one way or another, to fill the global governance gap.

This book attempts to analyse and explain why this rather distributed, haphazard approach to global governance isn't working and is unlikely to work. It will show, not only that a more coherent, global, binding, unified and yet democratic approach is urgently needed, but also that such an approach accords with the principles of natural evolution.

Taking such a stance has become quite difficult these days because global, unitary approaches tend to be markedly out of favour in our post-modern age which tends to champion diversity over unity and rejects anything hierarchical. It thus instinctively regards anything unitary, large-scale and overarching as suspicious, unnatural and to be avoided. So there is considerable resistance to the idea of binding global governance, and even to the idea of governance itself. And to be fair to its critics, the very notion of governance has often merited the pejorative connotations of elitism, abusive domination, excessive uniformity, bureaucracy, corruption and an unwarranted intrusion into our private lives, as well as implying an ever-weaker responsiveness to voters' concerns.

Yet despite these legitimate concerns, in this book we'll be contending that governance, as we'll shortly be defining it, is a vital part of all healthy life. We will also take the view that the process of globalisation is a natural part of human evolution. "The globalization of humanity," Elisabet Sahtouris, the prominent evolutionary biologist affirms, "is a natural, biological, evolutionary process"², and this process of human evolution has been characterised by a move towards ever-larger social units; an evolution that has progressed from the tribes of pre-history to the small state system of the Middle Ages, and

² *The Biology of Globalization*, Elisabet Sahtouris, Ph.D, 1998, paper available from www.ratical.org/LifeWeb/Articles/globalize.html

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has continued on to today's still-larger nation-states. Throughout, the defining characteristic of all human social units has been their governance, and now, as humanity faces potentially disastrous problems on the scale of the planet, many agree that humanity's civilised survival depends on us moving still further to the next stage or level in that natural evolutionary progression: to some form of binding global governance; to a human social unit on the scale of the planet.

Like the previous book in the series, this is really a handbook or guidebook rather than an exhaustive enquiry. It's designed to provide an overview in the hope that you'll be encouraged to find out more by using the bibliography and other resources listed towards the end. Since we'll be taking an evolutionary perspective to global transformation, we'll be drawing on the work of some of the leading thinkers in the field of evolutionary systems science.

A number of global institutions already exist and are attempting, in one way or another, to fulfil a global governance role. The United Nations (UN) would be one. The World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would be others. Various non-governmental initiatives also exist, many of which aim to establish some kind of "people's world parliament". Other self-styled global governance initiatives also abound, such as the World Future Council, the e-Parliament project and so on. Ken Wilber, the leading American philosopher on whose work we will be drawing extensively, speaks of the establishment of a "World Federation" which might one day develop to fulfil this global governance role.³ We will be looking in some detail at these ideas and at some of the practical initiatives that have sprung from them. However, it's important to point out that an entity of binding global *governance* need not mean an institution of world *government*. It need not necessarily mean another layer of distant, burdensome and expensive governmental bureaucracy. While some global governance

³ A *Brief History of Everything*, Gateway (Gill & Macmillan), 2001, p308.

initiatives may indeed entail such a layer; others might not. So, to avoid the often-problematic connotations associated with the word “government”, we’ll instead simply use the word “governance” to cover all the possible types of initiative, regardless of what organisational structures they might practically entail.

But which of these initiatives is most likely to evolve into a healthy and appropriately democratic form of binding global governance? And which, if any of them, has what it takes to succeed? Having suggested that the move from today’s nation-state system to a form of global governance is essentially a natural evolutionary shift, perhaps the process of evolution itself has something to offer in answering these questions. Because, if we can identify the actual processes and principles that characterise healthy evolutionary transformation, we could look at present global institutions such as the UN and at other global governance initiatives to see whether they are in accord with those processes and principles. We could thus see which of them is most likely to transform the present status of international relations and so solve the many global problems that threaten us. But what, precisely, *are* those processes and principles? Fortunately, Ken Wilber has already comprehensively described them. In *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, he sets out the specific dynamics of evolutionary progression towards ever larger social units by extending and elucidating Arthur Koestler’s original theory of holons and holarchies,⁴ summarising them into what he calls “The 20 Tenets”; tenets or tendencies that characterise healthy evolutionary transformation.⁵

The value of Wilber’s 20 Tenets, then, is that they provide reasonably objective criteria against which we can compare the various existing and emergent organisations. We’ll be able to see how consistent or otherwise each organisation may be with those tenets and what practical progress each is making. From

⁴ See *Janus: a summing up*, Arthur Koestler, Picador (Pan Books Ltd.), 1979.

⁵ See *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality - The spirit of evolution*, Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2000, pp43-85.

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this we'll be able to assess their comparative potential for becoming the institution of global governance we so urgently need. For, as global problems pose an ever more urgent threat to our civilised survival, are we simply going to wait passively to see which of these initiatives might eventually come to the fore? Or perhaps sit idly by as we witness none of them succeeding while humanity regresses into melt-down? Or are we going to use appropriate yard-sticks such as Wilber's 20 Tenets to see which of the initiatives is best suited for the job at hand, and then give the one or two most promising amongst them our active and committed support? After all, and not to put too fine a point on it, our very survival seems to be at stake.

What follows, then, is an analysis of the present world predicament and a survey of the various initiatives and approaches which purport to respond to it. In the course of that, our discussion will compare the relative consistency of the various initiatives with Wilber's 20 Tenets. These Tenets will be briefly explained and we'll look in particular at existing world institutions such as the UN, and at other initiatives that are coming to prominence. Amongst these is the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO) and the campaign it runs, the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol). We'll be focusing our attention on Simpol because we will be suggesting that it is quite consistent with the 20 Tenets. At the same time we'll also comment on the thinking and strategies of political parties and on the strategies of the many thousands of organisations around the world that are working, in one way or another, for global justice, human rights and environmental sustainability. We will be suggesting that their approach to global problems is limited, inadequate and severely underestimates the challenge ahead and that their objectives are likely to remain frustrated without an appropriate form of global governance.

We cannot of course describe Simpol or any of the other global governance initiatives as organisations of global governance until one of them had actually brought a form of binding global governance into practical, operational existence. Until then, all these initiatives, including the UN, can only be described as

emergent; they can only be in the *process* of potentially fulfilling that role. Each remains only a *would-be* organisation of global governance; merely an evolutionary experiment.

A further important point is that, if any of them succeed at all, there can be only one successor to the role because governance, by its own definition, is unitary; a natural monopoly. That is to say, for any given social unit there can be only *one* entity that performs the functions of governance. In a nation, for example, there is only *one* government that governs. If there were two, neither could properly be said to govern it. So it follows that the function of global governance, too, can be performed only by one entity. One of the various initiatives purporting to deliver global governance will perhaps succeed to become that entity, but all the rest will fail. That, after all, is Darwin's theory of natural selection at work. But the most likely and frightening scenario at present is that *none* of them will succeed; that humanity's most likely fate is melt-down, chaos and regression, if not dissolution, as global problems such as global warming, poverty, debt, terrorism, nuclear weapons proliferation and monopolist corporate power quickly and increasingly overtake us. That's why it is vital for all of us that one of these initiatives *should* succeed and that, I hope, is why you are reading this book.

Before going further, you'll be most comfortable with what follows if you are already reasonably conversant with Wilber's 20 Tenets. Each of the Tenets is briefly introduced in Chapter 4, but a more detailed account can be found in *A Brief History of Everything* (pages 15 – 39). And for a fuller exposition, please see *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality – the Spirit of Evolution* (pages 43 – 85).⁶

As the founder of SimpPol, my observations are bound to be somewhat biased in its favour, despite my efforts to remain objective. However, I hope this discussion will prompt those who prefer other initiatives to put forward their own

⁶ *A Brief History of Everything*, Gateway (Gill & Macmillan), 2001. *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2000. (Later referred to in footnotes as *SES*).

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assessments of how their favoured organisations shape up to Wilber's 20 Tenets. I invite them to put forward their assessment in a similar fashion to what follows. I will not, therefore, be referring in great detail to initiatives apart from Simpol, except where it serves to highlight key differences with respect to the 20 Tenets. If I have wrongly assessed those other initiatives in what follows, I apologise in advance and hope their supporters will take the opportunity my invitation provides to correct me. By doing so, they will enrich the discussion on humanity's future and how we can best assure that we have one!

2. Five Key Attributes of Governance

Before we look in later chapters at the Simpfol campaign and at its congruity or otherwise with Wilber's 20 Tenets, we'll first briefly cover the concept of holons and holarchies; a concept or theory that purports to explain how evolution works. Also, we'll more clearly define what governance actually means in that context and in doing so we'll be identifying what I am calling "the five key attributes of governance". All of this will help us to understand why governance is now so relevant to our civilised survival.

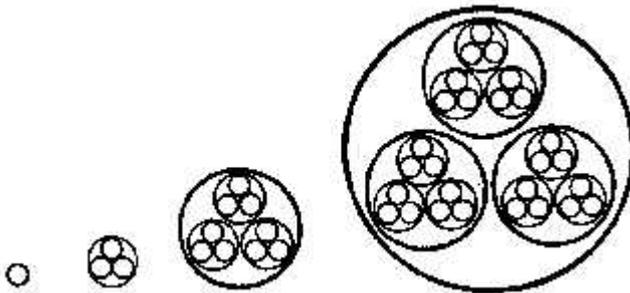


Figure 2-1
Holons in a holarchy

To explain the concept of holons and holarchies, Wilber often uses the simple example of atoms, molecules and cells. At a relatively early stage in evolution, atoms represented the most complex form of matter. As evolution progressed, molecules, which are organisations of atoms, developed from independent atoms. Independent atoms, we might say, learned to co-operate

with one another – to organise themselves - and, in doing so, gave rise to molecules. They became greater than the sum of their atom parts. The molecule was thus an entity or a new level of organisation or complexity which, although composed only of atoms, transcended and included atoms. Later still in evolution, independent molecules eventually came to co-operate with one another and in doing so gave rise to cells. In that way cells came to transcend and include molecules.

But atoms, molecules and cells are all holons. That's because each of them is a "whole/part". Each is a whole and distinct entity that is made up of component parts, and yet each is at the same time a part of a greater whole. A molecule, for example, is made up of component atoms. Yet that molecule is itself a component - along with some other molecules - of a larger cell. Holons, then, can be said to face in two directions at the same time. Looking backwards, as it were, at its predecessors or juniors, a holon sees its junior component parts, but looking forwards at its successors or seniors, a holon sees a higher whole of which it is but one component.

This particular evolutionary progression or series of holons is described by Wilber as a holarchy. Each of them – atoms, molecules and cells – is a holon because they are all, as we saw, whole/parts. But because of their unique and distinct wholeness, each represents a different *level* of organisation; a different and increasing level of complexity. This holarchy can be expressed as a kind of formula: Atoms → Molecules → Cells.

Inherent in holons and holarchies is a progression from smaller to larger scales. For example, the physical space over which a given molecule exercises its organisational properties is greater than that exercised by any of its component atoms. The physical space over which a given cell exercises *its* organisational properties is likewise greater than any of its component molecules, and so on. Evolutionary progression thus entails ever-larger scales of embrace as Fig. 2-1 shows.

But what do these different holonic levels have to do with the idea of governance? A great deal, as it happens. For what we are suggesting is that the organisation of a group of atoms in the

form of a molecule means that the molecule exercises a form of governance over its component atoms; it organises, catalyses, orders, or otherwise governs them in one way or another. We may not know the precise dynamics of how this occurs, but we can say it is true since, if it were not, those atoms would be completely independent of one another – the molecule would fall apart. So, governance, as we mean it here, could be described as the glue that keeps a holon together; the organisational properties that make it a distinct and coherent whole rather than just individual parts: a functioning whole rather than just an indiscriminate heap. The word *holarchy* is in fact derived from the word *hierarchy*, and as Wilber notes, “*Hiero-* means sacred or holy, and *-arch* means governance or rule.”⁷

The human social holarchy

Like Atoms → Molecules → Cells, we can identify a similar holarchy in respect of human social units. A family, to take one unit, is made up of its component individual members and yet it is a distinct whole which is greater than the sum of its individual parts. At the same time, the family is itself also a part of its local community; a community that falls under the governance of a local authority. Local authorities, too, are parts of a still-larger nation-state. Just as with Atoms → Molecules → Cells, then, we can similarly identify a human social holarchy which we could express as: Individual → Family → Local authority → Nation-state.

While larger nations, such as India, by dint of their greater size and diversity, may operate with an additional sub-state level between the local authority and the nation-state, we will be ignoring that intermediate level to keep things simple and because it is not material to our discussion.

To be more specific and relevant in the human context, however, we should further clarify that in this book, the

⁷ *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, (SES) p25.

meaning of governance is defined by what we will be referring to as “the five key attributes of governance”, and we will look at each of these attributes in the next section. These key attributes are, if you will, the glue that keeps human social holons together. What is important to stress is that these attributes do not amount to top-down control or to other more or less authoritarian interpretations of governance. Instead, what we have in mind is a more reflexive, bottom-up *and* top-down system whereby the governor governs in the service of the governed; a system which, in human terms, we commonly call democracy. Democracy is the means through which we humans, in principle at least, best govern ourselves and we will see that democracy must operate at all levels of the human social holarchy. In human terms, democracy is equivalent to what evolutionary biologist, Elisabet Sahtouris, describes as “negotiated self-interest at all levels”: the means by which members of a society work out their “mutual consistency”⁸; i.e. how to live together in reasonable peace and harmony.

Beyond the level of the nation-state, the next level in the human social holarchy, and the subject matter of this book, would be some form of binding global governance; an institution or entity that can perform transnational governance functions and organise nation-states in such a way that they accept, comply with, and benefit from that governance. It would, in short, be a holon of global governance that transcends and includes nation-states.

Some readers may wonder why the European Union is excluded from the above holarchy since in some respects it transcends and includes, and is thus “above”, nation-states. It is true that the EU could be considered a higher holon than its member nations. But we are excluding it at this stage because in world terms it remains a rather exceptional model, extending as it does only to encompass the nation-states of Europe. Also, as we’ll later see, the EU faces significant problems under globalisation.

⁸ *EarthDance – Living systems in Evolution*, iUniversity Press, 2000, p23 and p52.

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So, for our purposes, individual nations still remain by far the dominant model and we'll therefore be taking the nation-state to be the present highest holon in the human social holarchy.

As we think about this holarchy, it's important to keep firmly in mind a particular feature of human social holons that seems to make them different from other holons. This is that their governance, in democratic societies at least, is characterised by *the primacy of the individual*. In this respect, Wilber takes care to point out that,

“in human affairs ... most of us resist the temptation to describe a social holon, such as a State, as being literally a superorganism, because all organisms have priority over all of their components, and yet with the rise of democratic structures, we like to think that the State is subservient to the people, and to the degree that that is true, then the social system is not a true organism.... Further, the State, unlike a concrete individual, does not have a locus of self-prehension, a unitary feeling *as* a oneness. ... And finally, the parts in this social system [i.e. individual citizens] are conscious, but the ‘whole’ is not”.⁹

To help us understand this more easily, we might take the holarchy of your body as an example. Let's say you decide to cut your fingernails and thus to sacrifice some of your body's cells. This is somehow acceptable because you are a superorganism and hold, in your mind/brain, your body's locus of self-prehension; its unitary feeling as a oneness. You thus have priority over your body's component parts, such as its fingernail cells, which do not have any locus of self-prehension: your fingernails contain no brain or mind. But with the State, the reverse is the case. The cells of a nation-state are its citizens. But the lower citizen holons have a locus of self-prehension whereas, as Wilber points out, the higher nation-state holon does not. That is why, in the human social holarchy, the state is

⁹ SES, p72-3

not a true organism and why it is the *individual citizen* who remains key at each and every level. This primacy of the individual citizen brings us neatly to the first of our key attributes of governance.

A. The opportunity for individuals to have a say or vote

The best demonstration of the primacy of the individual is that, at each level, individual citizens usually have a say or vote, whether that be via the expression of their individual needs in the context of the family, or via their right to vote in local elections at the level of their local community. Most important, of course, is the opportunity to express their needs and preferences via national parliamentary elections at the national level. In large-scale social holons, then, we can identify *the right of citizens to vote* as the first of what I am calling the “key attributes of governance”. Voting, after all, is especially characteristic of those higher levels of the social holarchy where verbal communication is clearly impractical as a means of expressing individual needs and preferences. Since, as Wilber noted, the State does not have a locus of self-prehension, the State must, if it is to respond beneficially to the needs of citizens, be substantially influenced from the bottom-up *by* citizens. While there may be a variety of ways in which citizens can make their needs known to the State, our right to vote remains key and fundamental. Voting, we could say, represents a bottom-up attribute of governance.

The key attribute of voting (or having an effective influence) at all levels is vitally important, not least because any system of global governance that is to be implemented peacefully and by popular consent, rather than by force or simple imposition, must necessarily be consented to – bottom-up - *by citizens*. A contrasting but equally unavoidable fact, however, is that global governance must also be consented to and implemented – top-down - *by nation-states*. For as the present highest holons in the social holarchy, only nation-states have the authority and capacity to do so. But, if present inter-governmental efforts to

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solve global warming and other global problems are anything to go by, we'd surely be foolish to rely on governments to achieve this on their own. So, unless *citizens* around the world inject their own energy into this process from the bottom by getting their national governments to *agree* to implement a healthy, binding and essentially democratic form of global governance, we are highly unlikely ever to see it. Citizens must somehow find, or be offered, some means or methodology by which they can *drive* their respective nation-states to implement a system of global governance; a means by which we, citizens, can collectively take the lead.

Devising such a means or methodology is the central challenge faced by any initiative wishing to become the holon of global governance and we should expect any serious initiative to squarely meet that challenge. Clear though it may be, we'll see that the vast majority of initiatives attempt to avoid it, miss it or they simply fall over it. They offer no credible method of allowing citizens to act in a way that compels their governments to deliver the desired outcome. The same, we will also see, generally goes for the many thousands of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and activist groups around the world; organisations which the media often refers to as the "anti-globalisation movement", but which we'll be referring to as "the global justice movement". This therefore includes organisations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Action Aid and very, very many thousands of other such organisations, big and small, around the world.

In respect of the sustainability and governance challenges we face, Wilber astutely points out that,

“the startling fact is that ecological wisdom does not consist in understanding how to live in accord with nature; it consists in understanding how to get humans to agree on how to live in accord with nature”.¹⁰

¹⁰ *A Brief History of Everything*, p268.

The problem, whether faced by global governance initiatives, by the global justice movement or by anyone else, then, is not so much sustainability itself, but how to achieve *agreement* on it. The importance of this point cannot be overemphasised. For it is not that we generally have no solutions to the problems of carbon emissions, global poverty, wealth inequality, resource depletion and so on. It is that we are failing, as a global society, to agree to *implement* those solutions; failing to *collectively agree* to live in accord with nature. The underlying cause, in short, is our failure, as a species, *to co-operate*. And the primacy of the individual citizen in human social holons dictates that such a global co-operative agreement must provide for everyone having the opportunity of a say in, and a vote on, that agreement.

“*How to get humans to agree*” or, if we instead frame the challenge as we did earlier, “*how to get citizens to drive their nations to agree*” are essentially different ways of stating the same challenge; the challenge of global governance. After all, in the context of globalisation and its global-scale problems, “achieving agreement” clearly implies the need to find and put into operation an agreement among humans on the scale of the planet. Quite simply, nothing less will do.¹¹ Or, to describe the challenge of global governance in terms of holons and holarchies, the need is for a new planetary holon which, being a human social holon, not only transcends and includes nation-states but is also *informed and driven by citizens*.

We look, now, at the other four key attributes of governance. For the moment, and to keep things simple, we’ll look at each in the context of the family holon only. Following that, we’ll bring in the higher holons of local authorities and nation-states.

¹¹ Such an “agreement” might also be called a “global social contract” or “global covenant”, which is very close indeed to what Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, calls for in his outstanding book on globalisation, *The Dignity of Difference – How to avoid the clash of civilisations*, Continuum Books, 2005.

B. The ability to integrate ‘trade, society and environment’

Having already identified one key attribute of governance, we introduce, now, the second: that human social holons have the ability to integrate the three different interests of what we are here calling “trade, society and environment”. This might sound somewhat strange or confusing, but let’s first take a look at the holon of the family to see what it might mean in that context.

In order to survive, a family must have an income or some other means by which it obtains food and the other necessities of life. This income or means is what is meant by *trade*. Trade, if you will, simply represents the economic or survival imperative. As for *society*, clearly a healthy family will also be one in which the emotional needs of each member of the family are substantially met and in which all members get along reasonably happily with one another. There is, therefore, a “social” interest to be met; what in this context we are calling *society*. Finally, a healthy family requires a reasonably clean and pleasant home in which to live and this is what is meant by *environment*.

When considering these three interests, however, it’s not difficult to imagine that they often diverge. That’s to say, one may gain but only at the expense of another. And yet all three are a prerequisite to the reasonable health of the whole family. For example, scrimping on keeping the house clean (environment) in order to have more of a family’s income available for food (trade) may, if taken to extremes, be so deleterious to the family’s environment as to endanger its health. Similarly, if one of the parents were to waste relatively large amounts of money (trade) on alcohol and habitually returned home drunk, that would endanger both the income (trade) of the other family members, the harmonious relations within the family (society) and, quite possibly, the family’s environment too. In the context of holons such a dysfunctional imbalance is what Wilber refers to as a ‘pathology’. So, it is the job of the parents, as the holon’s organ of governance, to ensure that the interests of trade, society and the environment are all

integrated in a balanced manner and in the overall interests of the whole family. Their ability and need to do so is our second key attribute of governance.

C. The ability to exercise binding constraints

To ensure that the three interests of trade, society and environment are adequately met in a balanced and integrated way, usually a family's "government" – i.e. the parents – will need to employ a number of strategies. One of these will be to enforce certain rules or norms which all members are expected to abide by to ensure the family's healthy functioning. This we might call the exercise of *binding constraints*; constraints which apply equally and without discrimination to all members of the family. For example, all members of the family may be required to keep all common areas of the home tidy and may perhaps be sanctioned or reprimanded if they fail to do so. *The ability to exercise binding constraints*, either implicitly or explicitly, is therefore the third key attribute of governance.

We see, here, that the exercise of binding constraints entails the setting and enforcement of rules. But human social holons also display a capacity to ensure a reasonably equitable sharing of resources amongst all members of the family according to the often differing needs of each member. Ensuring equity amongst all members of a group involves not just the indiscriminate setting and enforcement of rules, but also two other important functions. The first, which is essentially a more sophisticated kind of rule, is to tailor a rule according to the abilities or needs of each member. A young baby, for example, will not be required to keep common areas of the home tidy. But since this tailoring is merely a more sophisticated kind of rule, we are including it under binding constraints.

D. The ability to equitably share resources

The other important strategy necessary for ensuring equity is the ability of a government (or parents) to *take* resources from

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members of the group where it is appropriate, and to *redistribute* them; to give them back to members but in a different pattern. For example, money earned by some family members may be redistributed to those who cannot yet earn, or it may be used to help the family finances. Nevertheless, being qualitatively different from the mere setting of binding constraints, tailored or otherwise, the ability to redistribute resources requires a higher level of judgement and thus gives rise to our fourth key attribute of governance: *the ability to ensure a reasonably equitable sharing of resources amongst all members of the group.*

E. The recognition by individuals that compliance is in their own interests

We saw that the orientation or direction of the first attribute of governance – the opportunity for individuals to have a say or vote – is bottom-up; that it is exercised by the individual members of a family from the bottom, as it were, and they direct it towards the top – i.e. towards the parents. The second, third and fourth attributes, by contrast, are top-down. They are exercised by the parents from the top and are directed towards the bottom – i.e. towards the individual children. Such is the reflexive, two-way nature of the definition of healthy governance that we are adopting in this book.

Now, with the fifth and final attribute of governance, we have another bottom-up attribute whereby each individual member of a family recognises and accepts that compliance with the parent's governance is in its own interests. In the family context, of course, and assuming relatively normal and healthy family dynamics, this recognition is implicit and mostly taken for granted. Simply because we are so utterly helpless at birth and in our early years, we are quite naturally wholly dependent upon our parents and thus accept their authority without question. It comes by birth, we might say. As we grow older this changes. But given a healthy family situation in which the parents exercise their governance role beneficially and in the interests of

all, it would normally be recognised by older siblings, so long as they still remain at home and have a proper say, that the benefits outweigh the costs; that it is broadly in their interests to accept and comply with the parents' governance.

Although the consent of individual family members is normally taken mostly for granted, it is nevertheless an extremely important issue, especially as we look, later, at the higher levels of the human social holarchy. For the higher the level in which individuals participate, the more pro-active, conscious and deliberate must be our willingness to co-operate and comply. This is because the further from the family level we travel, the more choices many of us have. Increasingly we have to ask ourselves whether it is actually in our *best interests* to be part of a particular local community or nation. If it is not, we might decide to move and become part of some other community or, if we have the means, even to move to another country and change our nationality.

At all these levels we nevertheless start off being born into a family, a local community and a nation whether we like it or not. We start off *belonging*, more or less automatically, to all these levels of legal and political community. But when it comes to the *global* level, we do not belong. We are born human on this Earth but we belong to no global and unified human political community for the simple reason that none yet exists. That is why, if we are to achieve global governance, we must, before anything else, see it as being in our best interests. We shall have more to say on this later. For the moment, within a family holon, we can now see that all of the five key attributes of governance are operational and vital, these being:

- a. The ability of individual family members to have a direct say (or "vote") in the family's affairs.
- b. The ability to integrate the interests of trade, society and environment.
- c. The ability to exercise binding constraints on the lower holons in the holarchy.
- d. The ability to ensure that resources are equitably shared.

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- e. The recognition by individual family members that compliance is in their interests.

It is true that there may be a certain overlap or cross-meshing of these attributes so that we might say, in certain circumstances, that some of them may merely be sub-attributes of others. Nevertheless, they are each reasonably distinct and we shall see that they apply not just at the family level, but at *all* levels of the human social holarchy.

The Five Key Attributes of Governance in Local Authorities and Nation-States

Moving on to the local authority and nation-state levels, we can see that the same exercise of the five key attributes of governance generally applies.

Concerning the integration of the interests of trade, society and environment, for example, in most western countries at least, a local authority will typically raise local taxes (trade), decide on and administer local planning regulations (environment) and, to some extent, perhaps via good community relations with the local police department, ensure reasonably harmonious social relations (society). Local taxes will normally be progressive so that the rich generally pay more and the poor, less (tailored binding constraints). Local politicians are also usually elected (voting) and as citizens born into our communities, we generally accept and comply with local rules and regulations (individual compliance). We can argue, of course, whether and to what extent local authorities still have a significant ability to influence each of these three interests or to actually redistribute resources since many might argue that these functions are today handled mainly at national rather than local level. Nevertheless, I think it is generally true to say that local authorities still retain a role, even if a rather diminished one.

At the national level, we can see most governments integrating the three interests of trade, society and environment in a very clear manner and it is at this higher level of the human social

holarchy that the key attributes of governance are perhaps most evident.

In terms of the *trade* interest, a national government will seek to provide a business environment conducive both to domestic business and to attracting inward investment from abroad. The general idea is to assure, as far as possible, reasonably full employment. As far as the interest of *society* is concerned, a government will operate a system of law, courts and police forces (binding constraints) in order to ensure that law and order is maintained in the wider social interest. Furthermore, it will usually raise taxes in order to fund social safety nets so that citizens who are the losers in its competitive economic market are not left destitute (i.e. equitable sharing of resources). This in turn tends to promote good social cohesion (society). As for the *environmental* interest, again, a national government will normally implement certain regulations and taxes to deter pollution and to generally promote a reasonably safe, clean and pleasant environment. But as we saw at the lower levels of the holarchy, the three interests of trade, society and environment often diverge at the national level, just as they do within a family. So it is the principle task of the national government to *integrate* the three interests as best as it possibly can.

As far as individual consent and compliance are concerned, when we are born and our birth is registered, we automatically become citizens of our nation. We also generally partake of the rights and responsibilities that belonging to our particular country entails. Inherent in this is that we periodically have our say through national elections (voting) and generally comply with the laws and norms of our country (individual compliance) in the knowledge that doing so is, on the whole, in our interests. Like the family and local authority holons, then, we see that national governments also display the top-down attributes of governance we identified above, as do we, as citizens, when it comes to the bottom-up attributes. All five attributes are operational:

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- a. The ability of individual citizens to have a vote in the affairs of the nation, usually by periodically electing the government.
- b. The ability to integrate the interests of trade, society and environment.
- c. The ability to exercise binding constraints on the lower holons in the holarchy (i.e. to make and enforce laws, regulations and taxes, etc, which regulate the healthy functioning of the nation).
- d. The ability to ensure that resources are equitably shared.
- e. The recognition by individuals that compliance is in their interests.

Unfortunately, of course, one of the features of today's globalised world is that national governments are becoming less and less capable of integrating the interests of trade, society and environment. The ability of transnational corporations, financial markets, organised crime and terrorists, amongst other entities, to move relatively freely across national borders is a key factor that undermines the ability of national governments to perform this most central and vital function.¹² Increasingly, the trade interest (in the form of transnational corporations, global investors, commercial banks, etc) is winning at the potentially disastrous expense of society and the environment. There will be much more to say about this in the following sections. In the meantime we need only note that healthy human social holons should display *and* exercise all five key attributes of governance.

¹² This is not to deny, however, that there may be some beneficial measures that governments could perhaps implement unilaterally without fear of capital or corporations moving elsewhere. A move to Land Value Taxation as proposed by Henry George might be one such measure. See: *Progress and Poverty*, Henry George, Robert Schalkenback Foundation, 1979. (First published 1879).

The Status of Global Governance Today

These key attributes already provide strong clues about the role played in today’s world by the UN, the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF; institutions which are commonly thought to be “in charge” of the global economy, or otherwise to represent world institutions of governance. Indeed the key attributes already suggest why these institutions are performing poorly and why the world still has a long, long way to go if we are ever to have the genuine and binding form of global governance needed if global problems are to be solved. But our observations also indicate that it is not just the existing global institutions of the UN, WTO, World Bank and IMF that are lacking. Ordinary people around the world, it is fair to say, still do not generally recognise global governance as being in their own vital best interests. Neither, generally speaking, do the many thousands of organisations around the world working for global justice, human rights and environmental sustainability. Until they do, we shouldn’t be surprised that the world still remains a long, long way from the kind of global governance we are speaking of. Fig. 2-2 shows the extent to which both the existing global institutions and people as a whole fail to display these five essential attributes.

Global Institution	Ability to Exercise Binding Constraints?	Ability to Equitably Share Resources?	Ability to Integrate Trade, Society & Environment?	Ability of citizens to have a direct vote?	Citizens’ recognition that compliance is in own interests?
United Nations	No	No	No	No	No
WTO	Yes	No	No	No	No
IMF	No	No	No	No	No
World Bank	No	No	No	No	No

Figure 2–2

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To explain Fig. 2-2 in a little more detail, the single ‘Yes’ indicates the WTO’s Dispute Settlement Procedure through which nations that fall foul of WTO rules can be made to suffer punitive trade sanctions. The WTO, through this procedure, adjudicates on *trade* relations, i.e. on tariffs, subsidies, import and export quotas and intellectual property rights and so on. But it makes no distinction concerning the environmental or social conditions under which products or services are produced. So, because the WTO only takes *trade* interests into account while essentially ignoring those of society and the environment, it cannot be said to have the ability to *integrate* these three interests. It thus receives a ‘Yes for its ability to exercise Binding Constraints, but a ‘No’ for its “Ability to integrate trade, society & environment”.

Because the WTO can ensure that a nation bringing a justified complaint is compensated by the errant nation, some might suggest the WTO has an ability to equitably share resources. But under the WTO’s Dispute Settlement Procedure, only nations – not the WTO itself – can lodge such complaints. Thus, the WTO *itself* has no independent, autonomous power to initiate such proceedings. Instead, it is more a medium through which nations can exercise their own power in accordance with a set of rules (embodied in the WTO) which member-nations themselves established. And since it is usually only the richer nations that have the legal expertise and financial capability to bring such complaints, poorer nations are often effectively left without recourse. With respect to its ability to equitably share resources, then, the WTO receives a ‘No’.

As far as the UN is concerned, article 2:1 of its Charter precludes it from having any autonomous binding authority (i.e. binding constraints) over its member nations and neither does it possess any of the other key attributes to any significant degree. Although it is true that Chapter VII of the Charter provides for the possibility of mandatory resolutions, sanctions and the authorisation of the use of force, the determination of these issues lies solely with the Security Council which essentially consists of the world’s most powerful nations which are its

permanent members. So, although the deliberations of the Security Council may be binding upon nations, they cannot be said to be exercised by the UN as an independent autonomous entity but, rather, by the world's most powerful nations merely acting in the UN's name.

The IMF and the World Bank, some might argue, have an ability to exercise binding constraints on nations, mainly by insisting upon strict financial austerity programmes if a nation is to receive loans. This may well be true. But in those cases only poorer countries are affected, so these institutions are, in effect, often acting as instruments of domination mainly engineered by the richer countries that control them. This suggests that the IMF and the World Bank do not exercise these constraints autonomously, objectively and evenly upon all nations. Being creatures of the rich nations that control them, they simply do not possess that autonomous ability. Hence, in this regard, they too receive a 'No'.

And as far as any opportunity for citizens to have a binding vote in any of these institutions is concerned, quite clearly there is no such opportunity. The corollary to this, however, is that people generally do not yet see *any* form of global governance as being in their own interests. Nor have they likely given the matter any serious consideration. So it should hardly surprise us if there is a lack of citizen pressure for the existing global institutions to be democratised. And that is the point I mostly wish to make by placing a 'No' in the final column. For, if we are to achieve a healthy form of global governance that is both determined, and consented to, by citizens, citizens must first see such governance as vital and in their own interests. At present, however, they generally do not. Indeed, to a great extent citizens do not yet even *think* in global terms even if global warming and other global problems are now forcing us to do so. Of yet greater concern is that the global justice movement, though professing to be solving many global problems, paradoxically does not generally see global governance as necessary or even desirable. In this book, by contrast, we will be arguing that conventional forms of action adopted by non-governmental

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organisations (NGOs) are inadequate and that an appropriate form of global governance will be absolutely essential for our civilised survival.

Throughout this book, we'll be referring to the UN, the WTO, the World Bank or the IMF as the "established global institutions" or as the "existing global institutions". For now, however, we can very clearly see from Fig. 2-2 that to be able to claim that these institutions presently provide, whether individually or jointly, anything resembling the kind of global governance we are talking about, a 'yes' would need to appear at least *once* in all of the first four columns. It's painfully evident, then, that these institutions are inadequate for the global performance of the key attributes of governance. Equally, it shouldn't surprise us that our global problems continue to worsen as a result.

Governance in the age of globalisation

In order to substantially discuss global solutions to world problems, it is necessary to turn our attention, now, to the holon that has thus far acted as a barrier to global co-operation: the nation-state.

Nation-states are at present the highest holons of governance and yet they act as a barrier because their prime and over-riding need is to further their own national interest; a need which can make co-operation between them impossible in many circumstances. Nations surely *can* co-operate extremely well when it concerns mutually non-contentious and nationally profitable situations. Examples would be cross-border travel and the international sharing of communications systems. Conversely, where one nation's gain is automatically another's loss or on issues such as global warming, arms control or environmental standards where some nations would have more to lose than others, substantive co-operation seems to be virtually impossible.

There are yet other circumstances where nation-states generate merely the *appearance* of co-operation whilst coercing weaker

nation-states into agreements they otherwise might not engage in. Weaker nations, in the face of more powerful ones, often perceive themselves to have no alternative. Here, the appearance of co-operation provided by the established global institutions would, in some ways, be an example. Since these institutions are under the powerful influence of the strongest nation-states, they often consolidate power-divisions and the coercion of others. The disproportionate powers of the UN's Security Council, and especially of its permanent members, would be a particular case in point. Thus, despite the appearance of co-operation provided in this case by the UN, the underlying pursuance of the national interest still remains the underlying driving motive.

Be that as it may, it is the governance of *world trade and financial markets* that is of special interest to us because that, we are suggesting, is where our global problems have their genesis. It is the way nations are co-operating and competing through the world trading and financial systems that highlights humanity's social and ecological problem and why we are all increasingly being placed in jeopardy.

While the participation of virtually all nations in the WTO makes it *appear* that all nations are co-operating happily in trade matters, this co-operation is very partial, unfair and incomplete. For as we already noted, the WTO possesses only *one* of the necessary key attributes of governance; an attribute that is directed towards furthering only the trade interest. Rather like a three-engined jet aeroplane which, because of some severe malfunction in its fuel supply system, channels all its fuel to just one of its engines, the WTO's exclusive focus on trade to the exclusion of social or environmental interests makes its governance of the world trading system lopsided and thus increasingly dangerous and unstable.

Many people think the workings of the global economy and the way in which it impacts on society and the global environment are difficult to understand. But this is not so. We first simply need to recognise one simple fact: that trade, in the terms we earlier defined it, has an inherent tendency to adversely impact

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society and the environment. This is very easily demonstrated when considering the profit calculus of an individual firm. To the extent that all firms are in business to make a profit, clearly, the *higher* a firm's wage and social costs and the *higher* its environmental protection costs, the *lower* its profits will generally be. It follows that profit (i.e. the trade interest) will, within certain limits, generally be maximised at the expense of labour (i.e. the social interest) and of the environment (the environmental interest). There is thus an inherent and natural tendency on the part of the trade interest to erode the interests of society and the environment; an erosion which has to be constantly resisted if society and the environment are not to suffer and ultimately fall apart.¹³ This does not of course mean that trade itself should be resisted; only that its *erosive effect* on the other two interests must be appropriately and adequately resisted. Only when it is, can trade – and the expansion of trade – generally become consistent with the best interests of wider society and the environment.

The erosive effects we are talking about, here, are what economists commonly refer to as “externalities”; considerations or effects which, according to them, have become external and thus substantially irrelevant to their calculations, projections and forecasts. This is why the adverse effects of trade on society and environment largely fail to be taken properly into account by mainstream economists and are left to governments to attend to by other means.

Now, the chief means by which the interests of society and environment are supported and protected from trade's erosive effects is by governments legislating to ensure that businesses adhere to minimum social and environmental standards, pay taxes, landfill costs and so on. By doing so, governments will be able to finance social safety nets and public services and ensure a reasonably clean and pleasant environment. The chief means of resisting trade's erosive effects lie, in other words, in

¹³ The truth of this is amply presented by Karl Polanyi in his seminal work, *The Great Transformation*.

governments' capacity to *exercise* the key attributes of governance we already identified. These, combined, are the attributes that generally enable a government to *integrate* the interests of trade, society and environment so that trade and markets can expand while their erosive effects are minimised, if not fully neutralised. Evolutionary biologist, John Stewart, makes the same point:

“Market systems do not make governments redundant. Management by governments is essential to establish and adapt the market framework and to correct the deficiencies in the market system. Where markets fail, government action is necessary to ensure participants capture the full effects on others of their actions, and to ensure participants do not capture greater benefits than they should.”¹⁴

Since we already identified that governments *possess* the key attributes needed to correct market failures, why on Earth, we might ask, aren't they exercising them adequately in the age of globalisation?

Destructive International Competition

The problem is that, with the onset of globalisation, the main factors of world trade – global markets, global investors, commercial banks and transnational corporations – have evolved an *ability to move*. That is to say, those who control production, capital, jobs and investment can move them across national borders largely at will. But because production, capital, jobs and investment happen to be the key elements without which no national economy can thrive, their ability to move freely and globally requires governments to compete with each other to secure them for the benefit of their economies. To be successful in this competition, they must make the cost of doing

¹⁴ *Evolution's Arrow- the direction of evolution and the future of humanity*, John Stewart, Chapman Press, p280.

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business as low as possible or, at any rate, lower than in competitor countries. Failure to do so would only invite capital flight, unemployment, run-away inflation if not outright economic collapse, as capital, investment and jobs would exit that country and move swiftly to less costly, and thus more profitable, destinations. Implementing *higher* taxes and regulations to protect society and the environment from erosion by trade has thus become substantially impossible because it would increase business costs, so jeopardising the national economy. As a result, governments are either being forced to competitively *lower* them in their bid to remain relatively attractive to global investors and corporations or, at least, not to increase them so as not to unduly harm their “international competitiveness”.

Lowering taxes and regulations may indeed attract capital, jobs and investment to any nation doing so - but only until such time as other nations respond by doing the same, as they eventually must if they are to stay competitive. When they do, no nation will have gained much lasting economic benefit but all will have suffered a permanent and irrevocable loss of tax revenue or of environmental and social protection. It should therefore be of little surprise that global problems only get worse while our governments respond with inadequate action.

As many political scientists will know, the above-described theory of destructive international competition is broadly a re-statement of what is more commonly known as “race to the bottom” theory. This theory, as political scientist, David J. Blair, points out, has “...been cited by a number of environmental groups that oppose international trade and investment agreements as well as the broader process of economic globalisation”. As he goes on to explain, however, “The claims of these various actors have spawned a considerable number of studies that challenge the existence of an environmental race to the bottom or the likelihood of such a race.”¹⁵ A brief

¹⁵ *Race to the Bottom Denial: Reassessing the Globalisation-Environmental Regulation Relationship*, by David J. Blair. A paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association National Conference, 3rd April, 2008.

explanation of my reasons for supporting such a widely-challenged theory is therefore required.

Although the mix of factors which determine a nation's competitiveness will undoubtedly vary quite widely from nation to nation according to differing geographic, economic, political and cultural circumstances, the aggregate result for all nations seems, under globalisation, to be increasingly the same: that each nation seems to be relatively constrained to pursuing only those policies which will not upset the balance of its particular mix of factors. For developed nations, such as the EU states for example, maintaining relatively high environmental and social standards has generally been possible despite competition from lower-cost countries. But that, I suggest, is only because of the presence of other important off-setting factors in its mix; factors such as the attractiveness of its large, rich and educationally advanced market. For developing nations without such off-setting factors, on the other hand, very low taxes and weak or non-existent environmental regulations may be the only ways they can attract sufficient inward investment and jobs.

The point, however, is that neither developed nor developing nations seem to have the ability to significantly *alter* their policies towards the dramatically higher social or environmental standards that are now required to meet steeply mounting global problems. For EU states, significantly tightening already-high standards would risk overwhelming the present off-setting factors, potentially leading to a dramatic loss of competitiveness, investment and jobs. For developing nations with already-low standards, on the other hand, tightening regulations would likewise risk upsetting *their* particular balance, so leading to further impoverishment.

In a world desperately requiring dramatically higher standards, then, destructive international competition, I suggest, remains the central obstacle regardless of individual national circumstances. While it may be true to say that destructive competition does not necessarily lead to a 'race to the bottom', it seems sufficiently clear that it does at least lead to what some

theorists have called “regulatory chill”¹⁶; to a kind of regulatory paralysis just at a time when global problems demand a quantum increase in levels of regulation and enforcement. Whether social and environmental protection regulations are racing to the bottom, staying still or rising slightly, then, makes little difference. Because whichever case one takes to be true, global problems are still far outpacing the ability of regulations to keep up. Collapse of one kind or another is therefore inevitable.

Imagine, for example, you are driving fast on a motorway and you are about to over-take a slow-travelling car. You may not know if the other car is stationery or only travelling slowly. But what does it matter? If you are travelling at 70mph, it makes little difference in terms of the outcome whether the other car is travelling at 10mph, whether it is stationery, or even whether it is reversing towards you at 5mph. In all three cases, you will *still* overtake that car just as global problems will assuredly overtake *us*. The only question is: how soon?

With respect to ‘regulatory chill’, Blair concludes, interestingly, that “Race to the bottom critics tend not to devote much attention to this phenomenon...” and their neglect of it “is a major shortcoming of many analyses of the impact of globalisation on environmental regulation because it involves a much larger number of countries than those that are most likely to weaken or dismantle existing environmental laws and regulations. As even race to the bottom sceptics acknowledge, the most obvious and prominent case of regulatory chill is in the area of greenhouse gas emissions.”¹⁷

My justification for upholding the theory of destructive international competition is therefore three-fold. Firstly, whatever the case concerning the *direction* of environmental regulation under globalisation (increase, decrease or stasis), the issue of competitive disadvantage still seems to be the key factor that renders existing levels inadequate and thus allows

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

global problems to carry on worsening. Furthermore, this seems to hold regardless of whether nations are developed or developing.

Secondly, destructive international competition, although admittedly an over-simplification of the present global predicament, does at least offer a plausible explanation of the key forces that are responsible for the present crisis. As I have said, this book is neither an academic study nor an exhaustive enquiry, so some simplification should, I suggest, be permissible. I do not necessarily expect readers to take my portrayal too literally. Instead, I expect only that most will recognise from their own experience that destructive competition *is* the key barrier (or at least a very important barrier) to solving global problems. Indeed, if race to the bottom critics wish to argue that destructive competition is not the key factor, then they had better tell us what is!

Thirdly, given the uncertainty about exactly how soon collapse will occur, it is surely wise for humanity to err on the side of caution. Accepting, albeit with caveats, my simplified view therefore seems at least reasonable as well as prudent if we are to avoid the approaching collapse.

Numerous anecdotal examples of how the vicious circle of destructive competition inhibits government action have been given elsewhere.¹⁸ Nevertheless, to ensure readers understand how it plays out in real-world events, some further selected examples follow.

From the perspective of protecting the global commons and in particular in terms of combating global warming, the *Financial Times* pointed out that

“...governments remain reluctant to address this threat because any country acting alone to curb its greenhouse gas emissions, without similar commitments by other governments, risks damaging the competitiveness of its industries.”

¹⁸ See *The Simultaneous Policy* pages 26-56.

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From this it should be reasonably clear that destructive competition between nations is the key factor that prevents substantive action on climate change. In the same article, former UK environment minister, David Miliband, candidly confirmed this, acknowledging that “There is a collective action problem internationally.”¹⁹

If we look at the tax revenues governments are able to raise from corporations we see the same damaging phenomenon:

“Governments vying to attract inward investment are weighing the advantages of cutting business costs...Tax rates have been falling across the world over the past quarter of a century.... This trend is forcing some experts to the conclusion that governments have embarked on a race to the bottom.”

Furthermore, the eventual complete demise of corporation tax is, according to Michael Devereux of the Oxford University Centre for Business Taxation, “quite likely”. Given this situation, it is hardly surprising governments around the world are finding it increasingly difficult to properly fund public services such as schools and hospitals and must instead privatise them. As Guy Ryder of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions rightly concludes:

“Governments must stop this tax competition craze if they are serious about ensuring a sustainable future of their societies”.²⁰

Destructive competition is also becoming a significant impediment to securing or maintaining adequate human rights. Having fought for decades to end Apartheid in South Africa, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party came to power only to find that destructive international competition for

¹⁹ Both quotes from the *Financial Times*, 6th December, 2006.

²⁰ Both quotes, as well as Michael Devereux’s comments from the *Financial Times*, 19th January 2007.

investment prevents it from implementing the very laws it hoped to introduce to promote black economic empowerment:

“S Africa relaxes empowerment rules

The South African government has exempted foreign companies from having to sell a 25% stake in their local operations to black business...

The government exempted foreign players because “we had to be mindful that we also have to position South Africa in a global environment where there is fierce competition for investment”, said Mandisi Mphahla, South African Minister for trade & industry.²¹

Having finally achieved “power”, the ANC, we see, finds itself relatively powerless in the face of destructive international competition. The same, we can note, goes for worker’s rights generally. Here, destructive competition to attract jobs and investment leaves governments similarly empty-handed when it comes to their capacity to protect workers from sweat-shop wage exploitation:

“The £25 suit... but at what cost?

Asda [part of Walmart] is today offering customers a passable two-piece suit for the price of a round of drinks in a London bar.

Bangladeshi student, Shafiqul Islam, said “People can’t survive on £12 a month, but if the government protests, Asda and others will go to China or somewhere else”.²²

The above examples simply go to show that, almost regardless of the particular global problem we may be most concerned with – be it global warming, trade justice, human rights or global poverty - and almost regardless of what NGOs, charities and activists may do in an attempt to mitigate their effects, the trade

²¹ *The Financial Times*, 15th December 2006.

²² *The London Paper*, 22nd January, 2007.

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interest's erosive and deleterious effects can never be adequately resisted until the underlying problem of destructive competition between nations is properly recognised and properly dealt with. Destructive international competition isn't just another global problem amongst many others. It is *the* key underlying problem which *drives* all the others. It's a perfect vicious circle in which all nations are locked and none can ordinarily escape. All the while we ignore the problem of destructive international competition, we effectively ignore global problems. We continue to do so at our peril.

Pseudo-Democracy

But it is not only the social and environmental interests that are being eroded. Of particular importance is the effect destructive international competition has on the first key attribute of governance: on the ability of citizens to have an effective say or vote in the affairs of their nation.

Since the free movement of capital and corporations effectively forces governments to implement only those policies which generally won't displease global markets, the choice of policies open to them is severely restricted. In that way, whatever party we elect is necessarily constrained to a very narrow range of policies that maintain international competitiveness. As a result, all parties in power, even Green parties, inevitably end up implementing substantially the same, narrow market- and business-friendly agenda, so ensuring that their nation's economy is kept as internationally competitive as possible. This is why we so often find left-of-centre parties implementing policies traditionally espoused by right-of-centre parties. It's why Tony Blair, for example, was often said to have been the best Conservative leader since Margaret Thatcher. While the *mechanics* of free and fair elections may still exist, the quality and breadth of democracy have been drastically hollowed out, reducing it to little more than a narrow political monoculture; to

what I have elsewhere described as *pseudo-democracy*²³: a kind of electoral charade in which, in terms of economic, social and environmental policy at least, it no longer matters much which party citizens vote for, or whether we bother to vote at all.

Greg Wilpert of the Integral Institute puts this in rather more polite terms, noting that:

“When examining today’s world, we can see that the current manifestation of globalization does not represent a globalization along all possible dimensions or lines of human experience. Today, only some aspects of human development are globalized, while others are left out. Specifically, the economic and some elements of the cultural dimensions tend towards the global, while the moral and political dimensions remain largely stuck at the national level. ... In terms of Integral Politics one can classify this imbalance as a form of pathology because there is a dissociation among the different lines of development in the sense that the neo-liberal economic project denies any validity to the development of a global polity.”

I say “polite”, because pseudo-democracy not only denies the development of a *global* polity (i.e. it not only prevents any political solution to *global* problems being implemented by individual nations), it also substantially undermines the quality of *national, domestic* polities too. This is because it effectively disenfranchises any citizen who does not support the domestic application of pro-business, pro-market policies. In a global market, then, countries with democratic electoral systems can no longer be considered genuinely democratic because the policies they would need to implement to properly integrate the interests of trade, society and environment have been substantially excluded from the domestic political scene. At the same time, the ability of citizens in any single country to remedy this through the ballot box has been severely impaired.

²³ See *The Simultaneous Policy*, pp 30-36.

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Another way to look at this would be to liken the principle of genuine democracy to a theatre or auditorium. Each nation has its own theatre and on each stage stand the actors (i.e. the nation's politicians), ranged from left to right according to their political ideology. Under genuine and ideal democratic conditions, the spotlights would illuminate the entire stage thus giving the audience (i.e. the electorate) a complete view of the stage all the way from far-left to far-right. Citizens in each nation could then freely choose their favoured politician or political party according to taste. But as globalisation has gathered force, destructive competition between nation-states has increasingly had the effect of interfering with the spotlights on every nation's stage, leaving only the right half of the stage illuminated while the left side has become shrouded in darkness with those actors on the left becoming invisible. This effect occurs because policies for exercising the key attributes of governance tend to be left-of-centre policies. Greater regulation or taxation of business, for example, is a left-of-centre policy; a policy that would make a nation less competitive, so risking business and jobs moving elsewhere. Weaker business regulations and taxes, on the other hand, is a right-of-centre policy which would attract business and jobs. Since nations must vie with other to keep their economies competitive, then, left-of-centre policies are effectively excluded from the span of feasible options, so resulting in the spotlights on the left side of the stage going down. Those politicians or parties that were traditionally on the left, such as Britain's Labour party, have thus been forced to move to the right to stay in the light (and have done so by re-positioning themselves as "New" Labour). Having found themselves increasingly shrouded in darkness, standing for policies that were no longer practical in a globalised world, left-of-centre parties consequently, and perhaps without really knowing why, had to jettison those traditional policies in favour of right-of-centre, free-market policies. This, furthermore, has resulted in both centre-left and centre-right parties occupying substantially the same political

space. As former Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, ruefully observed:

“I went swimming leaving my clothes on the bank and when I came back Tony Blair was wearing them.”²⁴

Similarly, the electorate, also without knowing why, now sees only a restricted view of the political stage and thus instinctively shifts its stance or gaze toward the illuminated portion on the right, thinking that to represent the entire stage when, in fact, it is just a small portion of it. Despite what politicians may say in their pre-election manifestos, when it comes to the policies they implement once in government, they are thus effectively bunched up in a centre-right (i.e. in a generally pro-business and pro-market) position from which they cannot escape. It’s little wonder, then, that there is so little to distinguish one party from another. Electorates instinctively know that the quality of democracy has been severely hollowed out, but they generally do not understand why. As a consequence they simply “vote with their feet”, which increasingly means they don’t bother to vote at all. Or, they switch their votes between parties in the vain hope that a change of party might mean a fundamental change of policy. But inevitably no such change occurs, leading to yet further disenchantment.

Whether in the UK or elsewhere, this is how destructive competition severely constrains governments, so allowing the trade interest to continue eroding not only the interests of society and environment, but also the quality and effectiveness of our votes. What all this amounts to is what Wilber has referred to as a “legitimation crisis”; a breakdown in the adequacy of the existing worldview and its governance systems to command allegiance.²⁵

²⁴ *The Week*, issue 227, 23rd October 1999.

²⁵ See *Ken Wilber Online. Excerpt A: An Integral Age at the Leading Edge Part III. The Nature of Revolutionary Social Transformation.*
<http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/books/kosmos/excerptA/part3-1.cfm>.

The Global Legitimation Crisis

In very general terms we could say that, as destructive competition between nations has become increasingly intense under globalisation, so the freedom of nations to exercise the key attributes of governance has likewise become increasingly restricted. This phenomenon is depicted in Fig. 2-3.

As the diagram shows, if the level of destructively competitive pressure between nations were low, their ability to act freely would be relatively high. Thus, the curve extends out to the lower-right side of the diagram. But when the degree of competitive pressure between nations is conversely at a *high* level, as it presently is under globalisation, their freedom to act on international issues is severely curtailed. This severe limitation is shown by the vertical dotted line.

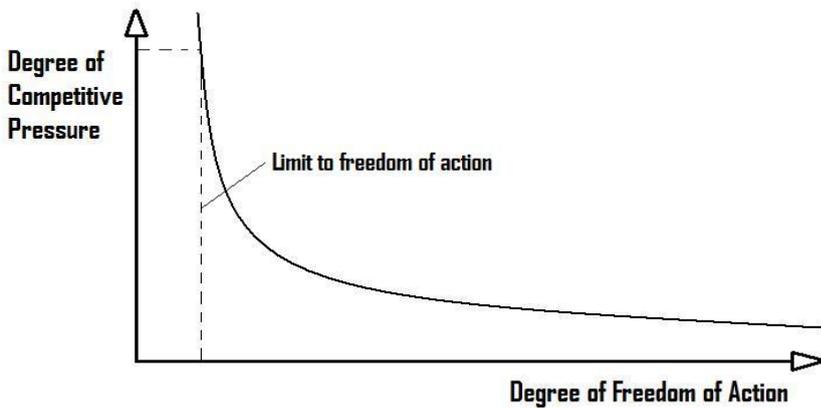


Figure 2-3

Staying with the context of globalisation, and to show more clearly how this situation impacts on a nation's freedom to act in the domains of domestic and international policy, we

elaborate on the previous diagram by over-laying, in Fig. 2-4 below, those two policy domains.

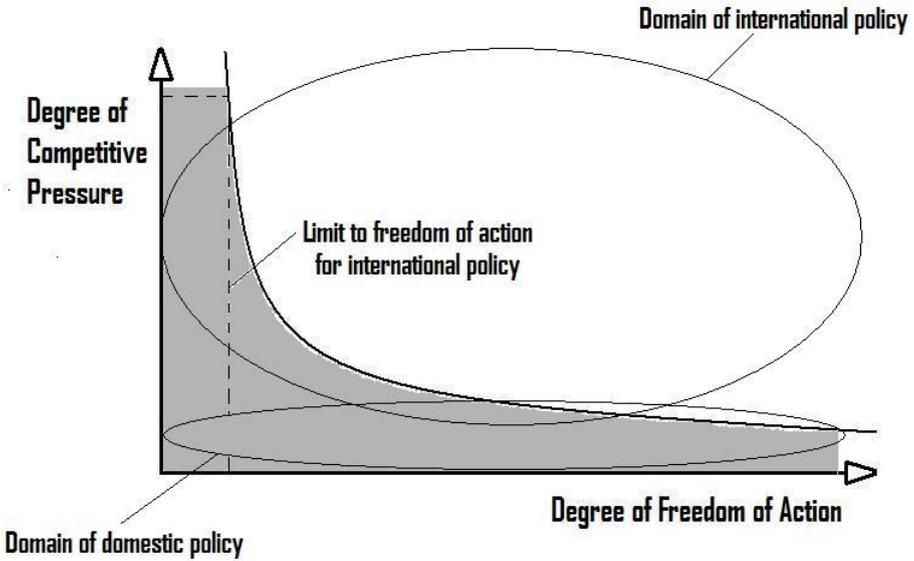


Figure 2-4

Since any nation attempting to implement policies to solve global problems (i.e. policies falling into what we are calling the “domain of international policy”) would, if it acted alone, likely suffer an *adverse* impact on its international competitiveness, it is clear that the ability of nations to act independently has been severely curtailed. Hence we can see that the vast bulk of the large upper ellipse falls *beyond* the vertical dotted line; i.e. beyond the ability of nations to act. Acting unilaterally, then, those policies are beyond national reach. It shouldn’t therefore surprise us that global problems are only inadequately addressed or, indeed, are not addressed at all. That vast portion of the

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upper ellipse could, in that sense, be said to represent “the sustainability gap”.

On the other hand, for policies *unlikely* to have any adverse effect on a nation’s international competitiveness, (i.e. what we are calling the “domain of domestic policy”, as indicated by the smaller, lower ellipse), they fall within the area where the freedom of an individual nation to act remains relatively high. So nations can act very freely indeed on those policies, but since they’re only domestic in nature, they of course won’t have any significant effect on global problems!

As globalisation has gathered force in recent years, so increasing the level of inter-dependence and inter-connectedness of national economies, and as the degree of international competitive pressure has also increased, it has become evident that fewer and fewer issues can be handled unilaterally, by nations acting alone. We could say, then, that globalisation has seen more and more issues “migrate upwards” from the domain of domestic policy to the higher domain of international policy where they are now, to a very great extent, beyond the reach of individual nations²⁶. Or, to put it another way, more and more issues have migrated from the domain where unilateral action was once possible, to the domain where multi-lateral action is now required but sadly cannot occur because of each nation’s fear that moving first will land it with a competitive disadvantage. The worldview of the present nation-state system, we might say, has become incapable of dealing with the new life-circumstances created by globalisation – and hence the onset, as we noted, of the present global legitimisation crisis.

²⁶ Readers might have noted the dramatically different sizes of the two ellipses in Fig. 2-4. This could, I suggest, indicate rather appropriately how domestic politics has become so ‘thin’; so devoid of content and substance. The migration of much of the content and substance of politics to the international domain has thus left domestic politics rather hollowed out, vacuous, and meaningless, thus accounting, perhaps, for the rise of ‘single-issue politics’ (such as the issue of fox-hunting in the UK), ‘personality politics’ and the increasing role of ‘spin doctors’.

But intense international competitive pressure, as we'll shortly see, not only affects governments but just about everyone else too, and we'll be using different versions of the above diagrams to help demonstrate this. Destructive competition and pseudo-democracy, then, are vital concepts which must be understood if we are ever to solve global problems and to overcome the global legitimization crisis.

Positive Feedback

Another feature of the global predicament is that destructive international competition to attract jobs and investment gives rise to what systems theorists refer to as "positive feedback". Positive feedback is a kind of vicious circle which, despite a worsening situation, paradoxically triggers more, and not less, of the same damaging behaviour.

Because corporations can structure their operations to benefit from very low taxes in tax-havens or by otherwise locating wherever production costs or taxes are lowest, this reduces the inflow of resources to governments in the form of corporation tax receipts and makes it ever-harder for governments to pay for schools, hospitals, environmental clean-up and other public services. This, combined with the ever-present need to offer an attractive destination for global investors, causes governments to dismantle their public sectors through repeating cycles of de-regulation and decreasing taxes, leading to yet further waves of public asset sales and privatisation. The more governments cut corporation and other taxes to stay competitive, the more they have to dismantle their public sectors because the less they can afford them. This damaging phenomenon, we might note, is not something that is asserted merely by the global justice movement, it is also corroborated by some organisations that are themselves in the vanguard of corporate globalisation; in the following example by the global accountancy and corporate services firm, KPMG:

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“Competition between governments to attract businesses is driving down taxes on companies around the world, intensifying pressure to raise tax on individuals, KPMG found.

The average level of corporation tax in the world’s 30 richest countries fell from 37.5 per cent in 1996 to 30.8 in 2003, the survey found. ...

As companies become increasingly multinational, it has become easier for them to shift activities between states or allocate their profits to countries with lower taxes...

‘I believe that corporate tax is in near terminal decline,’ [John Whiting, a tax partner at PwC] said. ‘Over the next 10 years governments may have to deal with a lot less corporate tax revenue and will have to raise the tax from elsewhere.’

‘It’s a battle governments will never win,’ said Mr. Battersby [head of strategic tax policy at KPMG].”²⁷

Positive feedback can only be countered by “negative feedback” which, in an economy, can only be effectively provided by applying binding constraints, equitably redistributing resources and so on: in short, positive feedback can only be countered by exercising the key attributes of governance we already discussed. But as we saw, in a global environment where capital and corporations move freely, governments are effectively prevented from adequately applying them and pseudo-democracy meanwhile renders our votes virtually meaningless. So, global problems and the global legitimisation crisis can only worsen. Destructive competition between governments which prevents the exercise of the key attributes of governance is, in the era of globalisation, the crux of the problem.

In the meantime, by working to cut tariffs while enforcing strict rules only on trade, the WTO serves to promote global trade competition (thus furthering the ‘trade interest’) which, because the key attributes of governance cannot be properly deployed by

²⁷ London *Financial Times*, 2nd May, 2003. A further survey by KPMG in 2007 found that corporate tax rates had fallen even further to an average of 26.8% (*Financial Times*, 23rd July, 2007).

national governments to resist its eroding effects, causes our global social and environmental predicament to worsen. The fact that the WTO resolves trade disputes, while helpful and certainly better than nothing, does not alter the fact that the WTO also promotes greater trade competition. Meanwhile, the IMF and the World Bank, instead of exercising constraints on the global free movement of capital and corporations, actually uphold their free movement in the firm belief that increased capital mobility helps to promote wealth – and on that narrow claim they are not wrong. What they ignore, of course, is that the free movement of capital and corporations has deprived governments of the means to bolster and protect the interests of society and environment against the erosive effects of trade. They ignore, in other words, that increased trade and capital mobility only create more overall prosperity if, and only if, the key attributes of governance can be fully exercised. In their absence, increased trade still creates more wealth, but that wealth not only tends to be concentrated in very few hands, it also erodes the social and environmental interests. In their ignorance and in misreading the true causes of present failures, the IMF, World Bank and WTO are thus drawn to conclude that yet *more* trade liberalisation and yet *more* capital market liberalisation must be the solution and not less. The only problem in *their* minds is that their narrow, monological prescriptions have not been followed forcefully enough.²⁸ In that way, our existing global institutions have themselves become important agents of damaging positive feedback, thus placing nations under yet more competitive pressure. As a result, the vicious circle national governments find themselves in, and their inability to escape it, thus make paramount the need for a new holon of global governance which can fully apply *all* of the key attributes of governance - and hopefully before it is too late.

²⁸ See also: *Beleaguered on the shores of Lac Lemman – The WTO invites the activists to tea*. Article by John Bunzl, 2001, at: www.simpol.org/en/books/tea.pdf.

Globalisation in an Evolutionary Context

The ability of corporations and global investors to move investment and production across national borders and thus to undermine the governing constraints of nation-states is not, we should stress, their fault or the result of any particular malicious conspiracy. Nor is the global rise of organised crime, counterfeiting and general lawlessness any surprise. For as economist, Loretta Napoleoni, points out, “Great opportunities arise for crime when politics fails to keep economic changes under control”.²⁹ The ability of capital, corporations and organised crime to circumvent national regulation is, in effect, the result of misguided de-regulation on the part of politicians in the 1970s and 1980s and a consequence of new and more widespread production, information and communication technologies. It is, in effect, a natural and predictable consequence of the evolution of competitive markets which, having substantially escaped the regulatory ambit of the nation-state, are now running largely out of control at the global level. After all, nothing stands still in evolution; change is the only certainty. Just as competitive markets first evolved in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries and eventually drove governments to take action within their national borders to combat the negative social and environmental fall-out, so now under globalisation, competitive markets have further evolved to escape the confines of national borders and now operate at the global level. Only now, there is no organ of global governance capable of taking the necessary action to mitigate the same negative effects.

From an evolutionary perspective, then, globalisation - with all its good and bad aspects - was to be expected. It is, as Sahtouris and other evolutionists have suggested, simply a part of humanity’s natural evolution. Indeed, the very reason holons and holarchies evolve to continuously encompass more new levels is exactly *because* nothing stands still in evolution. Each entire level of holons, as we’ll see in more detail in chapter 6,

²⁹ *Rogue Economics*, Loretta Napoleoni, Seven Stories Press, 2008. Page 70.

goes through a “life/death cycle”, starting out its life by having achieved its new status as the highest level in its holarchy but then, as life around it evolves, it becomes increasingly incapable of handling the new circumstances and crisis inevitably ensues. It is that legitimization crisis – the crisis humanity now faces under globalisation – which is, as we speak, providing the evolutionary drive for us to create and put in place the *next* highest holon. The fact that you are reading this book is a part of that drive.

Natural though the process may be, attaining the next holon is by no means assured. And as we ponder this, it might perhaps help to think of our planet as one huge multi-cellular organism in which some cells – transnational corporations, commercial banks and global investors – have somehow escaped the constraints of the organism’s governance system and are now multiplying out of control. Given that absence or breakdown of governance constraints, we might then consider evolutionary biologist, John Stewart’s, stark warning concerning the governance of cells in a multi-cellular organism: that “If constraints fail...to act globally and simultaneously across the organism, individual cells will...compete by reproducing as fast as they can. Cancer is an example of this breakdown of constraints in multi-cellular organisms.” Cancer, it seems then, is what the world is afflicted with.³⁰

With that chilling thought in mind, one final point must be made which concerns the way in which all the key attributes of governance are applied. As Stewart suggests above, it is of the utmost importance that they are implemented *globally and simultaneously* across the organism. Global and simultaneous implementation, as we’ll next be discussing, could be considered the sixth key attribute of governance. It is one that applies, as far as I can tell, not just to human social holons but, in various ways, to all holons.

³⁰ For an excellent account of our worsening global predicament described in bio-pathological terms, see: *The Cancer Stage of Capitalism*, John McMurtry, Pluto Books.

Global, simultaneous implementation as an integral attribute of governance

What I wish to emphasise in this section is that, at all levels of holarchy, the exercise of governance needs to occur *globally*, in the sense that *all* the sub-holons, and not just some of them, will be affected; and *simultaneously*, in the sense that any imposition of a constraint or other act of governance applies to each sub-holon from exactly the same point in time onwards. Globally and simultaneously: to all, at the same time.

Within a family holon, for example, if after discussion the parents decided to implement a new rule to prohibit smoking in the family home, they'd normally ensure the rule is applied *globally* (to all areas of the house and to *all* members of the family or to any others who enter it), and that each is affected *simultaneously* (so that the rule applies from a certain date onwards). Failure to ensure either simultaneous, or global, implementation would result in chaos or unfairness or probably both, and that failure would be virtually certain to undermine the whole purpose of making the rule in the first place.

Implementation of the attributes of governance globally and simultaneously is already apparent at the level of nation-states where any new national law is typically implemented “globally” to all parts of a nation’s territory, and simultaneously to each citizen or resident from a certain date onwards. If, for example, a new law were to be passed in the UK to the effect that we should no longer drive on the left side of the road but instead on the right, but that this would occur only in parts of the country, or on different dates in different places, well, you can imagine the consequences.

The same, we might note, goes for national elections. They are held throughout a nation on the same date (i.e. ‘globally’ and simultaneously) and polling will generally cease at a specific time in order to ensure, as far as possible, that results from some parts of the country are not announced in advance of others, so as to avoid the risk of the result being prejudiced.

All this seems rather obvious, of course; so piercingly obvious, perhaps, that we have completely forgotten just how fundamentally crucial it is and, as we shall later see, how vital the principle may yet prove to our civilised survival. The global and simultaneous implementation of governance is, as I suggested, an inherent feature not just of human social holons but quite possibly of *all* holons.

Take your body, for example, or the body of an animal or of any multi-cellular organism, for that matter. With respect to how such organisms evolved at all, evolutionary biologist, John Stewart, explains that “if cells [in a multi-cellular organism] could reproduce independently they would compete destructively with each other, making a multi-cellular organism impossible. What was needed was the emergence of constraints that prevented competition between cells. The constraints that evolved were arrangements that ensured that each cell in a multi-cellular organism had the same DNA – i.e. the same governance.” And as Stewart earlier pointed out, “If these constraints fail to continue to act *globally and simultaneously* across the organism [my emphasis], individual cells will again begin to compete by reproducing as fast as they can. Cancer is an example of this breakdown of constraints in multi-cellular organisms.”³¹

Or, let’s take the field of writing where our holarchy could be expressed as Letter → Word → Sentence → Paragraph → Chapter → Book → Library. If we look at a sentence-holon composed of its word-holons, the context of meaning provided by the ordering of words within a sentence applies globally (i.e. to each of the words concerned) and simultaneously (i.e. to all words, at the same time). am an I idiot not ? Without the ordering (i.e. governance) of the word-holons provided globally and simultaneously by the higher holon of a sentence, their meaning is lost. The words are just a heap and not a whole. In the example of ‘am an I idiot not ?’ one can almost *feel* the

³¹ John Stewart. From a personal email dated 11th June 2002.

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words competing with each other for meaning; an example, perhaps, of “sentence cancer”.

The originator of the theory of holons and holarchies, Arthur Koestler, also appeared to recognise the fundamental importance of global, simultaneous implementation. In *Janus: a summing up*, he tells the story of the evolution of the reptilian egg from its amphibian predecessors; an evolutionary step that was crucial to the spread of life from sea to land. But let’s allow Koestler himself to take up this fascinating story:

“The vertebrates’ conquest of dry land started with the evolution of reptiles from some primitive amphibian form. The amphibians reproduced in the water, and their young were aquatic. The decisive novelty of the reptiles was that, unlike amphibians, they laid their eggs on dry land; they no longer depended on the water and were free to roam over the continents. But the unborn reptile inside the egg still needed an aquatic environment: it had to have water or else it would dry up at an early stage. It also needed a lot of food: amphibians hatch as larvae who fend for themselves, whereas reptiles hatch fully developed. So the reptilian egg had to be provided with a large mass of yolk for food, and also with albumen – the white of the egg – to provide the water. Neither the yolk by itself, nor the egg-white itself, would have had any selective value. Moreover, the egg-white needed a vessel to contain it, otherwise its moisture would have evaporated. So there had to be a shell made of a leathery or limey material, as part of the evolutionary package-deal. But that is not the end of the story. The reptilian embryo, because of this shell, could not get rid of its waste products. The soft-shelled amphibian embryo had the whole pond as a lavatory; the reptilian embryo had to be provided with a kind of bladder. It is called the allantois, and is in some respects the forerunner of the mammalian placenta. But this problem having been solved, the embryo would still remain trapped inside its tough shell; it needed a tool to get out. The embryos of some fishes and amphibians,

whose eggs are surrounded by a gelatinous membrane, have glands on their snouts: when the time is ripe, they secrete a chemical which dissolves the membrane. But embryos surrounded by a hard shell need a mechanical tool: thus snakes and lizards have a tooth transformed into a kind of tin-opener, while birds have a caruncle – a hard outgrowth near the tip of their beaks which serves the same purpose, and is later shed by the adult animal.

Now according to the Darwinian schema, all these changes must have been gradual, each small step caused by a chance mutation. But it is obvious that each step, however small, required *simultaneous* [my emphasis], interdependent changes affecting *all* the factors involved in the story. Thus the liquid store in the albumen could not be kept in the egg without the hard shell. But the shell would be useless, in fact murderous, without the allantois and without the tin-opener. Each of these changes, if they had occurred alone, would have been harmful, and the organisms thus affected would have been weeded out by natural selection. ... They are all interdependent within the organism – which is a functional whole, and not a mosaic.”³²

Koestler, we see, clearly understood the fundamental importance of the role played by global, simultaneous implementation in facilitating transformative evolutionary change. Later in the same book he unequivocally concludes that “evolutionary progress...requires simultaneous, coordinated changes of all the relevant components in the structure and function of the organic holarchy.”³³ Global, simultaneous implementation, it seems, is nothing new. Indeed it’s as old as evolution itself.

³² *Janus: A summing up*, Arthur Koestler, Pan Books Ltd., 1978, pp175-6.

³³ *Ibid*, p184.

Do we need global governance?

From what we've covered so far, we can gain some understanding of the fundamental importance to all life of the *existence* of properly functioning governance and of the need for all its key attributes to be fully operational. Governance, we see, cannot be relegated to being merely an optional choice, as if we had the luxury of selecting or rejecting it at our discretion. It is a naturally and vitally occurring phenomenon in evolution: a fundamental pre-requisite to all healthy life. Consider, after all, the consequences for human societies of not having governance. Without it, there would be no laws or courts or police. Not only would there be social disorder and chaos, there would be no way for businesses to enforce adherence to contracts resulting in a complete breakdown of trust and confidence. Under those circumstances, it is difficult to see much being produced or consumed other than on the smallest local scale where goods could be exchanged personally. Without governance, in short, we'd be back in the Stone Age.

Confirming the vital importance of governance, in *Collapse – How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*, the widely acclaimed author, Jared Diamond, surveys the reasons why past human societies have collapsed, from the ancient Mayan civilisation of Central America to that of the inhabitants of Easter Island in the Pacific Ocean. He reaches the following conclusion:

“...throughout human history, in all politically complex human societies in which people encounter other individuals with whom they have no ties of family or clan relationship, government regulation has arisen precisely because it was found to be necessary for the enforcement of moral principles.”³⁴

³⁴ *Collapse – How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*, Jared Diamond, Penguin Books, 2006.

Likewise in the age of globalisation, humanity can of course choose to reject binding global governance. But if we do, we'd likely be consigning ourselves, like the Maya and the inhabitants of Easter Island, to global collapse. If, conversely, we ordinary people of the world *accept* it is needed, we cannot simply sit back and expect it to happen by itself. For as we have seen, such is the vicious circle of destructive competition between nations that we cannot expect our political leaders to deliver a benign form of global governance on their own. Neither can we expect the existing global institutions to do so, for they, as we also saw, are not configured to provide it. We also saw how we are born into this world automatically taking on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our families, local communities and nations. We are automatically born as citizens who belong to political communities of governance. But this is true *only* up to the national level because there is, as yet, no governing entity beyond the nation-state capable of defining us as citizens of the world. More importantly, there is no global political entity to which we automatically belong which exercises the five key attributes of governance. So, if we accept that having such an entity is in our own interests, we ordinary people around the world, will have to create it. This book could be regarded as a guidebook as to how we might go about it. For, as Dr. Peter Corning, director of the Institute for the Study of Complex Systems, reminds us:

“World government (with teeth) may not be a foregone conclusion, but it is not a bad idea. At this critical juncture in our evolution, our long-term survival (and that of our descendants) may very well depend on it.”³⁵

The other understanding we can gain from what we've so far covered is the vital importance of global and simultaneous implementation, not only as the principal methodology by

³⁵ *Nature's Magic – Synergy in Evolution and the Fate of Humankind*, Peter Corning, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

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which governance operates, but also, as Koestler showed, as a gateway to achieving co-operation between previously competing entities. As you read further, you can judge for yourself just how perceptive and valuable these insights might one day prove to be. For, if there is one all-pervading theme running through the theory of holons and holarchies – which is a theory of all reality - it is surely the tension between unity and diversity; the seemingly irreconcilable and unending need to be both an independent whole and a dependent part. Could it be that global and simultaneous implementation or action – each holon remaining whole and separate (diversity) but each acting simultaneously with all the others as parts of a larger whole (unity) – represents the key factor that reconciles them?

In the next chapter, we'll see how this key reconciling factor of *simultaneity* could be applied to our real-world situation and its problems.

3. The International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO) and the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) campaign

“This is no mystical or impractical program; it does not work through the processes of exposing, undermining or attack; it emphasises the new politics, i.e. politics which are based upon the principle of bringing about right human relations. Between the exploited and the exploiting, the warmongers and the pacifists, the masses and the rulers, this group of men [and women] of goodwill will stand in their organized millions, taking no side, demonstrating no partisan spirit, fomenting no political or religious disturbance and feeding no hatreds. They will not be a negative body but a positive group, interpreting the meaning of right human relations, standing for the oneness of humanity and for practical, but not theoretical, brotherhood.”³⁶

- Alice Bailey, 1947.

In this chapter, we'll present a brief explanation of the Simpol concept and campaign.

We've already observed how the free movement of capital and corporations and the vicious circle of destructive competition they set in motion represent the key factor which prevents governments from exercising the key attributes of governance. It thus prevents them from implementing desirable policies to solve global problems. Numerous practical examples of how destructive competition is impacting on our lives and on government policies around the world are plain to see for

³⁶ *Problems of Humanity*, Alice A. Bailey, Lucis Publishing Co., 1947.

anyone caring to look in the newspapers.³⁷ For, wherever you see politicians invoking the need to maintain their nation's "international competitiveness" as the reason why social or environmental protection measures either cannot be extended or must be sacrificed further, you can be sure that destructive international competition is the underlying reason. We also discussed the vital importance of global and simultaneous implementation and this should become even more apparent as we look, now, at Simpol and the international organisation established to promote it, the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO). Arguments in favour of Simpol are briefly set out as well as the most common objections to it and responses to them. No reference to Wilber's 20 Tenets is made in this chapter because that will follow in chapter four.

What is the Simultaneous Policy and what are the aims of the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation?

The Simpol campaign was launched in 2000.³⁸ ISPO, the international organisation that promotes it, is a growing worldwide association of citizens who are gradually organising within and across national borders to use their votes in a new, co-ordinated and effective way to drive all nations to co-operate in solving our many global problems. Simpol's citizen-supporters recognise that these problems cannot be solved while governments are forced to compete within an effective policy straitjacket dictated by global markets. Only by ushering in a fundamentally co-operative world order by which citizens bring their democratically elected governments to reassert proper authority over global markets can the nations of the world work together to find and implement solutions.

Simpol's supporters around the world seek to overcome the present governmental paralysis by gradually bringing all nations to pledge in principle - and later to simultaneously implement -

³⁷ See also: *The Simultaneous Policy*, pp26-50.

³⁸ The campaign and concept were originally proposed in *The Simultaneous Policy*. See also: www.simpol.org.

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Simpol, a range of policy measures to bring about economic justice, environmental sustainability and peace around the world.

To properly comprehend the proposal, it's important to note the fundamental distinction between Simpól's adoption and its implementation; that is, between on the one hand, the *adoption* of Simpól by a citizen (or the signing of a *pledge* to implement Simpól by a politician or party) and, on the other, Simpól's actual *implementation*.

Citizens are encouraged to adopt Simpól and politicians, parties and national governments are encouraged to sign a pledge that they are prepared to implement Simpól at some point in the future. Adoptions and pledges therefore represent *commitments only in principle*; they are commitments which are acted upon if, and only if, all or sufficient nations sign the Simpól Pledge. Only then would the implementation of Simpól occur. The adoption of Simpól by citizens or the signing of the Pledge to implement it by politicians, parties and nations are therefore risk-free and can occur gradually as an on-going process or campaign, whereas the actual *implementation* of Simpól would occur globally and simultaneously, only when all or sufficient nations had first signed the Pledge.

The policy measures to be included in Simpól are being designed by citizens who support it, known as "Simpól adopters". (We may also refer to them as "citizen-adopters" or simply as "adopters"). The final policy content of Simpól therefore remains to be defined; it is not a policy cast in stone at the outset, but a work-in-progress to which all adopters are invited to contribute. While the campaign to elicit pledges from politicians proceeds, adopters will meantime be developing the policy content of Simpól which politicians would, if the stage of implementation were reached, be required to implement. An illustration of the policy issues to which Simpól might apply can be found on Simpól's global website.³⁹ The overall objective of Simpól's policy content is described in the following statement:

³⁹ www.simpol.org

Policy Statement

Simpol allows citizens to use their votes in a completely new way to make governments reform the global economy. Simpol means making governments co-operate to:

- Protect the global commons
- Make all trade fair, sustainable and as local as possible
- Ensure that multinational corporations, the financial sector and rich people are properly taxed
- Re-structure the global financial system
- Re-distribute wealth equitably across national borders
- Establish transnational social and environmental safety-nets tailored to the needs and abilities of all nations.
- Implement all this in a way that does not harm any nation's economic competitiveness.

Adopters can, if they wish, delegate the task of formulating detailed global policies to an expert and independent group of alternative policy makers.⁴⁰ It is important to understand, then, that Simpol is a policy that *Simpol's citizen adopters themselves* will decide upon and determine – not one that is dictated by politicians, political parties, corporations or global institutions such as the WTO.

In the first instance, adopters in each country are invited to discuss and develop the policies they feel to be most appropriate for inclusion based on their particular national perspective. This nationally based approach is important in the early stages because global problems impact on different nations and peoples in different ways. So it provides an opportunity for differing national priorities and perspectives to be identified and articulated. Only when support for Simpol were globally at a stage where the prospect of its implementation came into

⁴⁰ Possible candidates for such a role could include the proposed World Future Council or the Club of Budapest or some other group of independent and internationally respected policy experts.

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realistic view, would all national Simpol organisations commence negotiations with one another to hammer out a final set of policies to which Adopters in each nation would then be asked to consent. This final set of policies would, of course, include any appropriate exemptions or exclusions for certain nations, including any provisions for redistributing wealth or resources across national borders. In this way, while the entire policy package would be implemented by all, or virtually all, nations simultaneously, its *effect* would be graduated and tailored to equitably suit the differing priorities, needs and abilities of each nation.

A further key point to note is that the condition of simultaneous implementation by all or sufficient nations removes each nation's fear of losing out to others; it effectively removes the key objection of first-mover competitive disadvantage which is, today, the underlying obstacle that prevents governments from taking the urgent and substantive action needed to solve many global problems, in particular global warming. Simpol's policy content could thus include all and any desirable policy which hitherto could not be contemplated for fear that its unilateral implementation might impair a nation's economic competitiveness or attractiveness to global markets. This potentially includes many undiluted and far-reaching policies we all know are needed to solve global problems; problems such as global warming, out-of-control financial markets, excessive corporate power, nuclear arms proliferation, sweatshop and child labour, global poverty and many, many others. Indeed, Simpol could probably include most of the key policy demands made by the many thousands of NGOs and activist groups who together constitute the global justice movement.

But beyond being merely a collection of policy measures, Simpol is also a *political process*; a process by which its policy measures can come to be implemented. This is because, rather than merely choosing between the largely indistinguishable policies offered by the existing political parties as voters conventionally do today, Simpol instead reverses this by offering citizens world-wide the opportunity of directing

politicians. For when citizens adopt Simpol, not only do they gain the right to determine its policy content, they also affirm their intention to vote in future elections for ANY political party or candidate – within reason - that has signed a pledge to implement it simultaneously alongside other governments.⁴¹ Or, if they have a party-political preference, they encourage their party to sign that pledge. The adoption pledge that citizens are invited to sign can be seen in Fig. 3-1 and the kind of message they would be invited to send to their Member of Parliament, Congress, or to candidates competing for their vote can be seen in Fig. 3-2.

Adoption Pledge for Citizens

I adopt the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) and pledge to vote in future national elections for ANY political party or candidate – within reason – that has pledged to implement it. Alternatively, if I have a preference for a certain party, by adopting Simpol I encourage my party to pledge to implement it.
As an adopter, I have the right to participate, if I wish, in the formulation of Simpol’s policy measures. I understand that I am free to withdraw my adoption at any time if I wish to do so.

Figure 3-1⁴²

Politicians, political parties and governments are each invited to sign appropriate versions of the citizen’s pledge, so committing themselves to implement Simpol in their country simultaneously alongside other governments, when all or sufficient other

⁴¹ “Within reason” means a politician or candidate that the *Adopter* – not ISPO - feels to be within reason.

⁴² The precise wording of adoption pledges may vary somewhat as it has been modified over time but without changing its meaning or effect.

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governments have also signed. An extract from the pledge form that politicians are invited to sign can be seen in Fig. 3-3.⁴³

By developing their own global policies, adopters remove the policy-making monopoly hitherto possessed by the political parties and, by pledging to vote for ANY party within reason that signs the Pledge, they also drive political parties to compete fiercely with one another to sign it. In an environment where more and more parliamentary seats around the world – and even entire elections – are being won or lost on very small margins, this new way for citizens to use their votes presents politicians in all countries with an attractive, yet compelling, “carrot and stick” proposition.

Since Simpol is only to be implemented simultaneously at some point in the future, there’s absolutely no political risk to politicians who sign the Pledge. That’s because, until sufficient nations had signed, individual politicians, parties and governments can sign it even while continuing to pursue policies designed to safeguard their nation’s economic competitiveness. Failing to sign it, on the other hand, could cost them dearly, especially if they’re fighting closely contested elections, for they’ll be in severe danger of losing to rivals who *have* signed it to attract the Simpol voting bloc. In this way, a growing number of citizen-adopters – even if relatively few - could make the vital difference between politicians winning or losing their seats, or even an entire election. The Simpol process thus potentially offers a means by which citizens, via their adoption, can apply real *electoral* pressure on politicians, rather than relying solely on more traditional methods such as lobbying, consumer boycotts, petitions or street protest, important though these are. It should also be noted that this novel way for citizens to use their votes is likely to appeal strongly to the world’s fastest-growing political constituency: the apathetic/protest voter.

⁴³ A similar adoption form is available, worded as a party resolution, which political parties can officially adopt if they wish to make Simpol official party policy.

Dear Member of Parliament, Congressman or parliamentary candidates,

As one of your constituents, I regret that I am doubtful of the ability of politicians alone to implement policies to solve global problems, especially global warming. That's why I'm joining with other citizens around the world to decide the necessary policies and will use my vote in a new way that requires politicians of all parties and nations to implement those policies. The world is facing collapse and politicians have failed to act. Now it's time for *citizens* to take the lead.

Please therefore note that I will be voting at future national elections for ANY politician or party – within reason - who pledges to implement the multi-issue range of global policies we are developing, known collectively as the Simpol Policy (Simpol). Or, if I have a party preference, I want my party to sign that Pledge. In this way, politicians or parties who fail to sign the Pledge risk losing their seats to those who do.

Simpol's range of policies deals with problems such as global warming, excessive corporate power, pollution, poverty and other global problems and is to be implemented *simultaneously* by governments, ONLY when all or sufficient have first pledged to do so. Also, its multi-issue range of policies will be designed so nations that may lose out on one policy can gain on another. In this way, global problems can be solved without any nation's economy losing out, so removing all the present causes of inaction and delay.

Politicians of all parties are being called upon to sign the Pledge (see form below). It has already been signed by many candidates and MPs from different countries and from across the party-political spectrum. Simpol has the support of the President of East Timor, Dr. José Ramos-Horta. For more information on the policies being developed and on the MPs and MEPs who have so far signed the Pledge, please visit www.simpol.org.uk.

For you as a politician, signing the Pledge signifies your intention in principle to implement Simpol simultaneously, only when sufficient other nations do likewise. Until then, you can continue to support your party's existing policies unchanged. Making the pledge thus involves no risk and yet it qualifies you, potentially, to receive my vote and the votes of others who support Simpol. Making the Pledge also clearly differentiates those politicians having a plausible and logical solution to global problems from those who don't. So, if you wish to make yourself electable to me and to many other citizens in your constituency who support Simpol, I would urge you to sign the attached form and to return it to the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO) without delay.

My national Simpol organisation will publicise those politicians who have signed the Pledge and will inform citizens accordingly so they will know who to vote for at the next election.

Figure 3-2

**Simpol Pledge for Candidates/Members of National
Parliaments**

As a candidate for, or elected member of, the _____
Parliament/Assembly for the constituency of _____,
I pledge that I will vote in the Parliament/Assembly for the
Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) to be implemented when the
governments of all, or sufficient, nations have likewise pledged to
implement it (hereafter “the Pledge”), and I will encourage
members of my party to join this effort.

I understand that the Pledge is only provisional at this stage since
the policy content of Simpol is yet to be decided by citizen-adopters
world-wide under the auspices of the International Simultaneous
Policy Organisation. I further understand that the Pledge, although
provisional, applies to Simpol as an integral and indivisible package
of policy measures.

If I wish to cancel my pledge, I will notify my country’s National
Simultaneous Policy Organisation in writing. I understand that it
and the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation may make
my Pledge – and any cancellation of that pledge – known publicly,
and particularly to Adopters in my country or constituency. I am
making this pledge in my own name (not that of my party as a
whole).

Figure 3-3

This new type of electoral pressure could also be particularly
important when it comes to ensuring that the most powerful
countries co-operate with Simpol. To give an example of how
the process could potentially be used by American citizens to
ensure U.S. co-operation with Simpol, the following scenario
should help to explain.

You'll recall that in the U.S. Presidential election held in 2000, support for the two main presidential candidates was very finely balanced. In the event, the Republicans prevailed over the Democrats by only about two thousand votes in the key state of Florida. Now, if we imagine that by the time of a future Presidential election the National U.S. Simpol Policy Organisation (Simpol-USA) had been able to secure the adoption of Simpol by, say, five thousand people in Florida and by a similarly small yet critical number in other key US states, then assuming a similar situation to 2000, both major parties would likely find themselves under extreme pressure to sign the Simpol Pledge. This is because Simpol-USA would, with the agreement of U.S citizen-adopters, have publicly announced the number of adopters it had gathered in each State and would have re-confirmed that they would be voting for *which ever* of the two candidates signed the Pledge.

In these circumstances, if the sitting President failed to sign the Pledge, s/he would likely lose the Presidency for the simple reason that his/her opponent would likely have signed it to attract the all-important crucial extra votes represented by the Simpol voting bloc. At the same time, however, both contenders would know that neither risks anything politically or economically by signing because implementation would only occur at some future time when all or sufficient nations had signed. In such a scenario, then, even the influence of heavy corporate funding for either or both candidates would be unlikely to deter either candidate from signing because their need to attract Simpol's voting bloc would have become paramount and absolutely vital to their political self-interests. For that reason it's quite likely *both* candidates would sign the Pledge: the ideal outcome!

Although no one underestimates the practical difficulties in arriving at such a scenario, our point is that, through Simpol, US citizens in co-operation with other citizen-adopters around the world, have the potential to ensure that even the most dominant nation in the world could, if need be, be brought to co-operate.

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And the number of citizens needed to do so could, relatively speaking, be quite small.

Immediately prior to the UK general election which took place in May, 2005, Simpol-UK, the UK National Simultaneous Policy Organisation, succeeded in getting numerous candidates from across the party-political spectrum to sign the Pledge, eleven of whom were elected to the UK parliament at Westminster. Most of these Members of Parliament (MPs) were running in “marginal” constituencies; electoral areas where support for the main parties was finely balanced. In some of these constituencies, more than one of the main competing candidates signed the Pledge, thus increasing the likelihood that Simpol would achieve support in Parliament regardless of which candidate won the seat.

Simpol-UK was incorporated in 2004 as a non-profit organisation with all UK members having a vote in its management. Simpol’s New Zealand affiliate, Simpol-NZ, was incorporated in 2006. At the time of writing, the Simpol campaign is already underway on an informal basis in a number of other countries around the world. As the number of adopters in each country reaches a significant level, it is envisaged that national Simpol organisations will gradually be incorporated and, at the time of writing, this is expected to occur soon in Canada, the USA and Australia where the number of adopters is approaching a viable level.

The Simpol campaign could be effectively taken forward in each country by local campaign groups, each based in its own city, town or parliamentary/congressional constituency area. At the time of writing, some local Simpol groups are already in existence. Their purpose is to campaign for adoption in their local constituency or electoral areas, persuading as many individual citizens as possible to adopt Simpol with a view to reaching the critical number needed for it to be in the electoral interests of local political party candidates and the sitting MP to sign the Pledge. As that critical number is reached in a constituency, existing party candidates, apart from an ethical desire to do so, are likely to feel a political need to sign the

Pledge, either in a bid to gain the additional votes needed to win the parliamentary seat or, in the case of a sitting MP, to avoid losing it. Given this overall plan, it would be perfectly possible for more than one candidate to sign the Pledge and this, as mentioned above, is what already happened in some UK parliamentary constituencies in 2005. Clearly, the more candidates who sign, the better. It is also anticipated that each national Simpol organisation would, in the first instance, focus its campaigning priorities on marginal constituencies where adoption by candidates is likely to be achieved most easily, so providing encouragement to Simpol campaigns in other constituencies and countries. Having said that, experience in the UK suggests that many MPs were already very concerned by the dilemmas posed by destructive international competition. Some of them, even in relatively safe seats, signed the Pledge as soon as they heard about the campaign. Nevertheless, to obtain sufficient support in a national parliament so that implementation could proceed, it's likely that a significant number of citizen-adopters, although possibly far short of a majority, would be required in most nations and constituencies. Readers may have noticed that the above strategy is primarily appropriate to non-proportional, "first-past-the-post" electoral systems such as those in the UK or the USA where only a simple majority is required. However, although electoral systems vary from country to country, they are all essentially based on competition between candidates, so the Simpol approach should prove effective regardless. Nevertheless, Simpol has developed modified strategies for countries with proportional representation (PR) and other systems. In addition, ISPO is itself developing to act as a co-ordinating body which supports the activities of all national Simpol organisations as they gradually come into existence. It is therefore envisaged that, as more and more citizens around the world adopt Simpol, a 'local to national to global' organisational structure will evolve to serve both of ISPO's key objectives. Those being, on the one hand to secure sufficient adoptions by citizens or signed Pledges by political parties and

governments and, on the other, to build an infrastructure through which the policy measures of Simpol can be developed and refined.

Specific Arguments in Favour of Simultaneous Policy

The main argument in favour of Simpol is essentially a negative one: that policies to solve global problems, because their unilateral implementation almost invariably involves a first-mover competitive disadvantage, are unlikely to be implemented other than by many, if not all, nations implementing them simultaneously. Simpol, then, is simple logic: plain common sense.

Nevertheless, some specific arguments in its favour are:

- (a) Simultaneous international action would remove the fear of governments, political parties, businesses and citizens being first to 'go it alone'. Since no nation moves before any other, it removes the possibility that capital markets or multi-national corporations could in any way retaliate or take pre-emptive action to thwart its implementation. It thus makes the signing of the Simpol Pledge by governments or politicians risk-free.

By the same token, the argument corporations commonly put forward that socially or environmentally favourable policies or higher taxes will make them uncompetitive with corporations in other countries would be completely obliterated. In removing these key obstacles and objections, Simpol represents a powerful consensus-building strategy. As more and more citizens adopted, and as more and more political parties and nations were driven to sign the Pledge, the pressure on the remainder would steadily increase towards a time when sufficient nations had signed and implementation could proceed.

- (b) Under the present process of international treaty-making, global issues are dealt with only one at a time. The Kyoto

Protocol, for example, deals *only* with carbon emissions and nothing else. The difficulty with trying to solve problems in this way is that, even if the Protocol were implemented by all nations simultaneously, major polluting nations would still suffer more than low-polluting nations because they would have to make larger and more costly emissions cuts. This disincentive to the high-polluters of course means they are unlikely to participate in the agreement in the first place, and that is why some are not. Being a single-issue initiative, the Kyoto Protocol simply cannot escape this disincentive nor the consequence that the whole treaty may be irretrievably undermined or rendered largely ineffective as a result. Simpol, by contrast, is designed to deal with a number of different global issues together; it is a *multi*-issue initiative. This is vital because it opens up the possibility of permitting nations that might lose out on one policy to gain on another, so offering considerable scope for combining solutions to different issues in a way that removes or mitigates the disincentives and barriers to building sufficient international consensus.

- (c) Although many NGOs that constitute the global justice movement appear slow to recognise it, many of the reforms they advocate fall to a greater or lesser extent into the Simpol category of policies likely to require simultaneous rather than unilateral implementation. Once this is fully recognised, however, NGOs and activists could campaign for those policies under the single umbrella of Simpol, thus taking advantage of a common process for harmonising those demands and for getting them implemented. Simpol could therefore provide an effective vehicle for harmonising and implementing a multi-issue political agenda at the global level. Beyond this, it could include specific measures either to reform existing global institutions such as the UN or, if adopters desire it, to implement a more formal institution of global governance.

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- (d) Simpol, to the best of my knowledge, is unique in offering citizens around the world their first real opportunity of having a direct *electoral* influence over politicians concerning global problems and their solution. Also, while citizens who adopt Simpol declare themselves highly *likely* to vote for politicians who have signed the Pledge, it crucially does not prevent adopters either from maintaining a party preference or, ultimately, from voting as they please. So citizens who adopt do not “give” their vote to Simpol. Indeed, far from diminishing voters’ individual rights, adopting Simpol actually enhances and extends those rights to the global level.
- (e) The number of adopters needed to make it in the electoral interests of the major political parties in many countries to sign the Pledge need not be large. This is because in countries with ‘first past the post’ electoral systems, Simpol only needs to attract sufficient citizen-adopters to hold the critical balance of power between the two main parties. When that relatively small number is reached, it becomes in the vital interests of both main parties to sign the Pledge. As we suggested earlier, the U.S. Presidential election held in 2000 demonstrated that the critical balance can be extremely small indeed. The outcomes of national elections in Germany in 2005 and Italy in 2006 were also very finely balanced. So although the target of getting all or sufficient nations to sign the Pledge may at first appear a hopelessly ambitious task, the number of adopting citizens required may actually be much smaller than at first imagined. Indeed, despite a relatively low number of UK adopters, 27 MPs from all the main UK political parties have, at the time of writing, signed the Pledge, as have some members of the EU and other parliaments around the world.
- (f) Simpol potentially offers an entirely new electoral alternative likely to appeal to people and parties across the political spectrum. By 2006, the Pledge had been signed by

Members of Parliament who came from all the main political parties including the UK Labour, Conservative, Liberal-Democrat and Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales) parties. Candidates from the UK Green Party, UK Independence Party and others have also signed. Some minor political parties, such as the Western Australian Green Party and the Canadian Action Party (CAP), as well as individual parliamentarians from other parties and countries, have also signed, thus indicating Simpol's international and cross-party appeal.

- (g) By not being a political party, Simpol has the additional critical advantage of having the potential to attract the support of previously apathetic or protest voters who have become disillusioned with party politics. With an increasing number of seats and elections being won or lost on fine margins, the re-entry of these voters into the electoral process as adopters of Simpol could become a decisive factor. As one apathetic voter, Mark Davey, commented:

“In the twenty years that I have been afforded a vote, I am unashamed to say that I have never used it. My theory was that not to vote was the best way of securing my protest to all or any political parties. As the years have gone on, my decision at 18 to adopt this tactic has been fuelled by what is happening in the world. As soon as I had digested the Simultaneous Policy, I signed up to it without hesitation and now feel almost compelled to get involved. Congratulations!”

- (h) Simpol could be a very viable strategy for overcoming the problem of corporate funding in politics. The ‘carrot and stick’ proposition described earlier is potentially capable of placing politicians in a position where financial inducements to act in corporate interests could at last be outweighed by the fear of losing their seats to candidates that had signed the Simpol Pledge.

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Because citizens in democratic countries can adopt SimpPol and so use their votes to drive their politicians and governments towards cooperation, SimpPol enables political pressure for change to be built up first in the predominantly rich countries where citizens not only have the right to vote, but the time, freedom and money to devote to campaigning. Targeting richer countries to begin with is a major advantage because it would be unrealistic to expect developing countries or their peoples to take the initiative since, under the present world order, they have little power in the face of the richer nations that dominate them. Furthermore, because it is rich-country governments and corporations that predominantly support the damaging status quo, it is in those countries that political pressure is most urgently needed and will have the greatest effect. Although richer, it should not be thought that citizens in wealthier countries are any less worried than their counterparts in poorer countries about the present damaging mode of globalisation:

“Poll reveals backlash in wealthy countries against globalisation

A popular backlash against globalisation and the leaders of the world’s largest companies is sweeping all rich countries, an FT/Harris poll today shows.

The British have the least admiration of any national group for the leaders of their country’s largest companies, and a large majority believes the government should impose a pay cap on the heads of companies to limit their rewards.

Large majorities of people in the US and across Europe want higher taxation for the rich to counter the widespread belief that rewards are unjustified. ...

Believing that globalisation is an overwhelmingly negative force, citizens of rich countries are looking to government to cushion the blows they perceive have

come from the liberalisation of their economies to trade with emerging countries.”⁴⁴

Building the adoption campaign first in wealthier countries, however, shouldn't be taken to mean that citizens in rich democratic countries take precedence when it comes to deciding Simpol's policy content and its implementation. Since Simpol can only be implemented with the consent of all or sufficient nations, it follows that implementation can only go ahead if its policies had first been consented to by adopters in all or almost all nations, including those in small and down-trodden countries. There can therefore be no question of Simpol being said to privilege either the North or the South nor any particular nation or culture. Simpol, then, is aperspectival.

- (i) Since the atrocities of September 11th 2001, the tolerance of state authorities to street protest or to other forms of protest has become extremely low. Since Simpol operates *through* existing political systems it does not depend on any form of protest but only on the continued upholding of citizens' right to vote. Unlike most other NGOs, then, Simpol could not legitimately be accused of being undemocratic or disruptive, or of refusing to engage in established political processes.⁴⁵ Since Simpol does not *depend* on protest or on conventional lobbying, it offers the global justice movement the key advantage of an additional, complementary and potentially highly effective means of pursuing its political objectives through established political processes.
- (j) Since Simpol is to be implemented by nations simultaneously, via their existing parliamentary or other established processes of governance, no change to their legal

⁴⁴ Article in the London *Financial Times* by Chris Giles, Economics Editor. 23rd July 2007.

⁴⁵ We shall have more to say on this in Chapter 4 in the section entitled The Global Justice Movement.

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constitutions ought to be necessary. Under Simpol's global governance arrangement, each nation would simply implement the required measures just as if implementing a new national law. The only difference would be that they would all be doing so simultaneously, thus ensuring global coverage and effect.

Arguments Against the Simultaneous Policy and Potential Responses to them

The most common objections to the Simpol approach and responses to them are as follows⁴⁶:

- a) **The prospect of expecting all, or virtually all, nations to do *anything*, let alone to simultaneously implement a complex range of measures such as Simpol, seems completely unrealistic.**

It is accepted that this is a valid concern. However, the key question is whether, in our current global circumstances, unilateral implementation is more or less realistic than simultaneous implementation. How realistic is it, after all, to expect a single or a restricted group of nations to unilaterally implement policies which are likely to provoke adverse capital market reactions and which are thus *against* their own interests? While the implementation of Simpol may admittedly appear highly ambitious, logically it is difficult to conceive of other ways in which such policies could come to be implemented.

If, on the other hand, we were to imagine that ISPO, with the support of the global justice movement, had been able to get the EU, the USA and Japan to sign the Pledge, the prospect of all or virtually all other countries

⁴⁶ For a more comprehensive discussion of potential objections and responses to them, see the FAQ page of Simpol's global website: www.simpol.org.

falling into line seems not that hard to imagine. As the world economic, social and environmental predicament worsens over the coming years, as regrettably seems inevitable, the pressure on politicians and businesses to support Simpol will become steadily greater. For although Simpol may today appear to global elites to be thoroughly undesirable, it may, by then, appear very desirable to them indeed. Because when circumstances eventually become dire and a continuance of the status quo seems likely only to lead to disaster, for politicians and corporate interests to contemplate not co-operating to support Simpol's implementation may by then have become unthinkable. By that time, it would potentially have become in virtually everyone's best interests to co-operate.

- b) Is it really necessary to get ALL nations to sign the Simpol Pledge before implementation could proceed? Surely, that's never going to happen.**

The signing of the Pledge by *all* nations isn't strictly necessary but for implementation to proceed in a secure manner, clearly its signing at least by *sufficient* nations would be required to avoid any significant risk of 'free-riding' by non-participating nations. The definition of what number of nations would be regarded as being "sufficient" is likely to depend, of course, on which specific policy measure, or group of measures, is being considered. For capital market reforms, for example, "sufficient" may be likely to mean all nations that could be expected to provide a reasonable domicile for the commercial banks, investors and hedge-funds. In the case of dismantling all nuclear weapons, on the other hand, it may only require all those nations who possess, or are suspected of possessing, such weapons. In the end, the definition of what constitutes "sufficient nations"

would be whatever number is needed for all to feel adequately secure for implementation to proceed.

The important point, then, is that Simpol's criteria of "all, or virtually all, nations" shouldn't be understood as a condition cast in stone but rather as a *consensus-building strategy*; a way of removing key objections and thus of persuading citizens, organisations and governments to say "yes" to such policies instead of "no".

- c) **The Kyoto Protocol still went ahead without the support of the USA, so doesn't that demonstrate that there is no need for ALL or sufficient nations to implement policies simultaneously?**

A key reason for the Kyoto Protocol being implemented by the international community without the participation of the USA or China is likely to be because the present provisions of the Protocol are so mild.⁴⁷ That being the case, the loss of competitive advantage that will be suffered by participating nations is not likely to be significant compared to nations which have not participated. But were the provisions of the Protocol to require *much more stringent* emissions reductions – as they'd have to if a really significant impact on global warming is to be achieved – it is unlikely any major nation would be willing to proceed unless all did likewise because the significant additional costs their industries would have to bear compared to those of nations not participating would not be economically sustainable: the competitive disadvantage would simply be too great. It may be strictly true to say, then, that such policies need not require simultaneous implementation.

⁴⁷ The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol call for a reduction in emissions to a level 5% below those recorded in 1990. However, most climate experts suggest that a 50-60% reduction from present levels is needed if a significant impact on global warming is to be made.

But in that case, their provisions will be so mild and ineffective as to be of highly questionable value. So, if we are to have international agreements that have a *really significant* effect on the environmental or economic problems they're supposed to solve, we're unlikely to get them unless all, or virtually all, nations implement them simultaneously. Hence the potential value of the Simpol process.

- d) **If all nations have to implement a reform simultaneously, that will be used by corporate interests and national governments as a reason to do nothing, or at least to cause delay.**

Given common experience with today's efforts at international treaty-making, this objection appears extremely valid. But there are two reasons for questioning it:

- (i) Firstly, in countries where elections are held, it would be the adoption of Simpol *by individual citizens* and their pledge to vote for ANY politician or party who signs the Pledge which drives the process. After all, politicians may not sign the Pledge out of their own volition; they may do so *only because their electoral success would have become dependent on it*. Citizens, through their adoption, would therefore have the potential to lead governments, rather than the other way round. In countries where elections are held, then, it would not be governments or politicians who would be the key actors; it would be *citizens themselves*. As such, under the Simpol process, there is really no possibility of national governments delaying, but only of citizen adopters doing so. But since Simpol's policies would be designed chiefly to *benefit* citizens

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(rather than corporations, bankers or financiers), there is no reason to suppose that citizens *would* delay. Indeed, far from delaying, the contrary seems more likely to be the case.

Essentially, then, there is less reason to expect delay with Simpol than under the present system of government-led international treaty-making which, because of the fear of first-mover disadvantage, is in any case fraught with plausible excuses for delay or outright refusal. Simpol, on the other hand, not only removes those excuses, it puts citizens in control of the process. This is all the more valid since, without the co-operation of major nations such as the USA, little is likely to be achieved and as we have seen, Simpol provides citizens with a powerful tool to ensure they comply.

- (ii) We should also remember that Simpol allows for a new yet critical distinction to be made between two fundamentally different categories of policy. On the one hand, there are those policies, the unilateral implementation of which would be likely to have a *negative* impact on a nation's competitiveness, capital markets, etc. These would be simultaneous-type policies; policies which would have to be implemented by all or sufficient nations together. Examples might be a significant increase in corporation tax or a significant, but consequently costly tightening of environmental regulations. On the other, there are those policies likely to have a neutral or even a *positive* impact on a nation's competitiveness if implemented unilaterally (i.e. unilateral-type policies). Examples here might include anything from banning fox hunting to relatively minor changes

in planning regulations or laws; i.e. any issue that had no significant impact on a nation's international competitiveness.

The Simpol approach naturally applies only to policies likely to have a *negative* impact on competitiveness. Those having a neutral or positive impact can, of course, be pursued by each nation independently and unilaterally, and those policies would therefore have nothing to do with Simpol. After all, nations will not want to delay implementing policies likely to have a *positive* impact on their competitiveness because if they waited for others they'd only lose their competitive advantage! By the same token, it is wholly unrealistic to expect nations to unilaterally implement policies thought likely to have a *negative* impact on their competitiveness. In those cases Simpol clearly offers a more realistic, practical and speedier way forward.

Furthermore, making a clear distinction between these two policy categories and properly considering to which category each reform proposal belongs, is likely to result in the global justice movement arriving at a far more coherent strategy for seeking the implementation of policies in *both* categories. Those in the former (negative) category could be pursued by them using the Simpol approach in conjunction with ISPO; those in the latter (positive) category could be pursued for unilateral national implementation via the usual methods. Making this distinction, and so selecting the appropriate implementation strategy, consequently makes the pursuance of both categories mutually supportive while avoiding undue confusion and delay.

- e) **But what about some of the so-called ‘Third-World’ countries whose governments are either corrupt dictatorships or heavily influenced by foreign corporate interests. How are those countries to be persuaded to support Simpol?**

As this question suggests, most such countries are maintained in this sorry state of affairs because of the interests of foreign – usually Western - corporations or governments. Logically, then, pressure will be most effective if applied firstly to the rich countries or corporations who are responsible for maintaining this state of abusive exploitation. If electorates in richer countries, through their adoption of Simpol, can bring their political parties and governments to sign the Pledge, corrupt governments in developing countries whom they are supporting will similarly come under such pressure. Furthermore, where specific corporations could be identified, adopters in richer countries could perhaps apply additional pressure through consumer boycotts, insisting that the boycott would continue until the respective developing country governments had signed the Pledge. But this is not to underestimate the pressure that could be applied by the peoples of those countries themselves. They too could join with adopters in richer countries to bring sufficient electoral or other pressure to bear on all governments to sign the Pledge.

Again, this scenario might seem unrealistic when judged harshly by the poor norms and standards we are so used to witnessing in the world of politics today. But we need to see the Simpol campaign as a process that is evolving against the backdrop of a steadily deteriorating world situation. The time to persuade corrupt developing nations to support Simpol would, after all, only have arrived because very many politicians and some governments in Western democracies were, by then, *already* supporting it. World public opinion would thus

already be solidly supportive of Simpol and the public's associated standards and expectations would, by then, likely be quite different to what they are today. Furthermore, as the world experiences ever-more severe economic, social and environmental dislocations, co-operating to implement Simpol would increasingly have become in virtually everyone's best interests.

f) But what about China or other countries where no democratic elections are held. How are they to be persuaded to support Simpol?

Before 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down, few could have imagined the dramatic changes that have occurred in countries such as Russia and China. Both have moved rapidly, although not without disruption, from command and control economies to market economies. Some political freedoms have already come to Russia and while it is possible that greater economic freedom may help to foster moves towards greater political freedom in China, we will have to see if, and how quickly, this occurs.

Whether it does or not, China's phenomenal economic growth is bringing many difficulties, not least that its environment is under stress. Beyond its domestic upheavals, China, like all other nations, also cannot escape the severe consequences of global warming and the more open its economy becomes, the more it will be affected by other global threats. Moreover, if the vast bulk of the world's manufacturing jobs move to China, unemployment in the rest of the world will be rife, thus depriving China of the consumers it needs to buy all the goods it produces. Although it is extremely difficult to predict what will happen, global problems seem destined to worsen and China will not be immune. It therefore seems possible that a point may be reached where it would become just as much in China's interests to co-

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operate with Simpol's implementation as it would for any other country. If a time were reached when most other countries had signed up, it seems unlikely China would want to hold out against the rest of the world, especially when Simpol's implementation entailed no competitive disadvantage. Whether through democratic processes or through simple government decree, China's co-operation with Simpol, or with some other similar initiative, thus remains a distinct possibility.

g) But how are the millions of citizens who you hope will adopt Simpol ever going to agree on a set of complex global measures? Surely that's a recipe for chaos?

Since Simpol only deals with policies which can't be implemented unilaterally, it already automatically excludes all domestic-type policies. Policies concerning religious, race or gender issues, capital punishment and many other such contentious issues are therefore left entirely for independent national determination, as now. Because it deals only with global issues, then, much of the scope for division and discord is already excluded.

Furthermore, since the basis of Simpol is "all or sufficient *nations* simultaneously", the development of its policy content is evolving in the first instance on a national basis. That is to say, adopters in each country are developing simultaneous policies which they, from their particular national perspective, wish to see included. This may perhaps involve seeking independent expert advice or assessments as well as the consideration of policy proposals coming from national NGOs and think-tanks. Organising the process initially only at a national level would already help to simplify matters.

At a later stage, the process would increasingly take on an international dimension with a series of international negotiations taking place amongst all national Simpol organisations with a view to negotiating and

harmonising a final set of policy measures. Included in these measures would be any national exemptions, compensations (i.e. equitable sharing of resources) or graduated differentiations (i.e. tailored binding constraints) which define the degree to which each measure will affect each nation. Although undoubtedly complex, these negotiations are likely to be no more complex than those which constituted the GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) which was the forerunner of the WTO.

Clearly, such negotiations will be difficult and fraught with pitfalls. Nevertheless, pressure for agreement would be growing as approaching global crises and dislocations started to loom large. Furthermore, since the negotiations themselves would be conducted by national Simpol organisations on behalf of adopters worldwide, and not by governments, there is perhaps more reason for hope than if this process were being conducted by governments.

It should also not be thought that good and well thought out policies to solve global problems do not already exist. In respect of global warming, for example, there is the well-known policy of Contraction and Convergence, a policy framework for equitably reducing carbon emissions which already enjoys widespread support.⁴⁸ In the field of international monetary reform, proposals for restoring the creation of new money to state control with appropriate safeguards also exists.⁴⁹ Likewise in the field of energy, there is the Oil Depletion Protocol.⁵⁰

Some of these policies have already been put forward by adopters for potential inclusion in Simpol. So it should not be thought that the formulation of Simpol's policy

⁴⁸ *Contraction & Convergence* is promoted by the Global Commons Institute. For more information, go to www.gci.org.uk.

⁴⁹ See, for example, *Monetary Reform – Making it Happen!*, James Robertson and John Bunzl, ISPO, 2003.

⁵⁰ For more information, go to www.oildepletionprotocol.org.

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agenda necessarily entails millions of inexpert citizen-adopters trying to develop them entirely from scratch. On the contrary, while adopters would always retain the final say over its policy content and can, if they wish, put forward their own policies, these and other existing policies developed by experts and by various NGOs are, to a large extent, already there and waiting. The only thing lacking was a potent political tool, such as Simpol, capable of bringing about their global and simultaneous implementation.

- h) But you simply can't *trust* politicians. They may say they'll implement Simpol, but what's to stop them simply signing the Pledge to get the extra votes they need but then renege on their commitment at a later date?**

Firstly, we must recall that politicians are not required to *implement* Simpol until all or sufficient nations have signed the Pledge, so there is really nothing for them to renege on until the date for implementation actually arrived. Remember, also, that those who had signed the Pledge for cynical reasons, only because it had become in their vital electoral interests to do so, would similarly be unlikely to renege because that would only lose them the votes they sought to gain by signing the Pledge in the first place. For politicians, then, renegeing at any point would not only be illogical, it could also abruptly terminate their political careers.

Secondly, we need to bear in mind that by the time support for Simpol had become so widespread that its implementation became viable, governments and corporations would be under extreme pressure to cooperate. This is because, by that time, maintaining the status quo would likely mean to allow complete chaos to ensue; chaos which would be no more in their interests than in anyone else's. Corporations, let's remember,

want to stay in business for the next twenty or fifty years and not merely for the next five. For everyone, then, supporting an orderly transition to an inter-governmentally co-operative and sustainable world order, as Simpol could facilitate, would by then quite possibly represent the only sensible alternative.

But this shouldn't be taken to mean that we must somehow wait for global collapse to be almost upon us before sufficient consensus for the implementation of Simpol can be built. Since it allows citizens to use their votes to proactively *drive* politicians to sign the Pledge, the time needed for global consensus to be achieved depends not so much on politicians, but primarily on how quickly world citizens adopt Simpol and how quickly activists and NGOs take up its approach and make it the focus of their campaigning. If all the millions of people who today count themselves as members of the global justice movement adopted Simpol today, the tremendous electoral pressure this would place on politicians around the world would mean that the time for its implementation would already be fast approaching.

Before moving on, we should ask whether Simpol could be said to encompass the five key attributes of governance we identified in the previous chapter. This is represented in Fig. 3-4 below.

Looking firstly at binding constraints, Simpol's policies are to be implemented by national governments themselves, so the binding constraints expressed in those policies would, when implemented, be enshrined in each nation's laws. Enforcement of those laws would thus automatically be backed up by existing national enforcement mechanisms, such as police, courts, and so on. In this way, Simpol can be said, potentially, to exercise binding constraints on nations and their peoples.

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Global Institution	Ability to Exercise Binding Constraints?	Ability to Equitably Share Resources?	Ability to Integrate Trade, Society & Environment?	Ability of citizens to have a direct vote?	Citizens' recognition that compliance is in own interests?
Simpol	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	?

Figure 3-4

In terms of its ability to equitably share resources, SimpPol provides for the possibility of adopters agreeing, via their national SimpPol organisations, for policies to be included that allow for an equitable redistribution of wealth and resources across national borders. In this way, SimpPol could facilitate, potentially, an international equitable sharing of resources as well as a strengthening of democratic governance and enforcement processes in developing countries that may be in need of them. In this way, SimpPol would potentially be capable of integrating the needs of ‘trade, society and environment’ at the global level.

Finally, because it is adopters, and not ISPO itself, who decide on SimpPol’s policy content, and because it is adopters who drive their politicians and nations to implement SimpPol, citizens have both a say or vote in their own governance while at the same time consenting to it. SimpPol, we could say, *is* citizens’ global self-governance. Or, as the popular British alternative newspaper, *SchNEWS*, described it, SimpPol is “open-source politics”.⁵¹ SimpPol thus potentially offers us the opportunity of creating and implementing a form of people-centred global governance capable of exercising all the key attributes of governance.

⁵¹ *SchNEWS*, 29th September 2006, Issue 562. www.schnews.org.uk

The repeated use of the word “potentially” in the above paragraphs is intended to indicate that Simpol, or indeed any other similar initiative, can only realise its objectives if – and only if – citizens start to see global governance as being in their own best interests and if they then avail themselves of an appropriate political tool, such as Simpol, for achieving it. Until that happens the final column in Fig. 3-4 can only remain a potential, and thus in some doubt.

We end this chapter in similar fashion to the way we began it, with a quotation from Alice Bailey which seems particularly apposite to what Simpol is trying to achieve:

“Unity and right human relations – individual, communal, national and international – can be brought about by the united action of men and women of goodwill in every country. These men and women of goodwill must be found and organized and thus discover their numerical potency – for it is there. They must form a world group, standing for right human relations and educating the public in the nature and power of goodwill. They will thus create a world public opinion which will be so forceful and so outspoken on the side of human welfare that leaders, statesmen, politicians, businessmen and churchmen will be forced to listen and comply.”⁵²

⁵² *Problems of Humanity*, Alice A. Bailey, Lucis Publishing Co., 1947. (Italic emphasis is her’s).

4. Ken Wilber's 20 Tenets: How Simpol and other global governance initiatives shape up (Simpol from the outside)

“What the world now needs is the first genuinely second-tier form of political philosophy and governance. ... The question remains: exactly how will this be conceived, understood, embraced, and practiced? What precise details, what actual specifics, where and how and when? This is the great and exhilarating call of global politics at the millennium.”⁵³

– Ken Wilber

As you'll have gathered from the previous chapter, my personal belief is that Simpol provides reasonably adequate answers to the questions Wilber poses above. But to further substantiate that not inconsiderable claim, we'll now look at Simpol in more detail, this time in terms of Wilber's 20 Tenets – in terms, that is, of the widely recognised principles and dynamics of healthy evolutionary transformation as set out by Wilber, Koestler and other leading evolutionists.

What we are looking at here, are the very principles and characteristics common to all healthy evolutionary shifts. Each tenet describes a particular aspect of transformation; aspects we should therefore expect to find in any global governance initiative hoping to facilitate the benign emergence of the next level in the human social holarchy: the new holon of people-centred global governance.

⁵³ *A Theory of Everything*, p90.

Holons and Holarchies

“Reality as a whole is not composed of things or processes, but of holons. Composed, that is, of wholes that are simultaneously parts of other wholes, with no upward or downward limit. To say that holons are processes instead of things is in some ways true, but misses the essential point that processes themselves exist only within other processes. There are no things or processes, only holons.

Since reality is not composed of wholes, and since it has no parts – since there are only whole/parts – then this approach undercuts the traditional argument between atomism (all things are fundamentally isolated and individual wholes that interact only by chance) and wholism (all things are merely strands or parts of the larger web or whole). Both of those views are absolutely incorrect. There are no wholes, and there are no parts. There are only whole/parts. ...

This means that there is no place where we can rest and say, “The universe’s basic principle is Wholeness” (nor, of course, can we say “The basic principle is Partness”). This prevents us from ever saying that the principle of the Whole rules the world, for it does not; any whole is a part, indefinitely. ...

...it is extremely important to emphasize the indefiniteness of holarchy, its openness, its dizzyfyingly nesting nature... contexts within contexts within contexts ... all the way up and all the way down.”

Figure 4-1⁵⁴

The value of this analysis is that we no longer need to wait passively on the sidelines of global events in the hope that one or other of these initiatives might one day come to the fore and perhaps bring about the global transformation we so sorely

⁵⁴ SES, p43-47.

need. It means, instead, that we can make a very early identification of the initiatives most in accord with the 20 Tenets and then give the most promising ones our active and committed support. In that way, we'll consciously *focus* our efforts at an early stage on the initiatives most likely to succeed, so *influencing and hastening* the process of change. That way, we'll be consciously and purposefully participating in our own evolutionary success.

The 20 Tenets are listed here, grouped into twelve categories, using the same numbering adopted by Wilber.⁵⁵ Each Tenet is introduced with Wilber's own brief explanation. To make some comparative assessment of Simpol's congruity or otherwise with each Tenet, we'll also bring in some of the other would-be global governance initiatives as well as the UN and the other existing global institutions. These observations are really notes; aspects of Simpol that appear to be in accord with one tenet or another. This is not necessarily a complete list and readers may care to add their own further insights.

So, here we go. Reality is....

1. Reality is composed of holons

“Reality as a whole is not composed of things or processes, but of holons. Composed, that is, of wholes that are simultaneously parts of other wholes, with no upward or downward limit.”

Atoms, we saw, are holons or whole/parts; wholes which are simultaneously parts of larger wholes: molecules. Molecules, too, are whole/parts. They are wholes which are simultaneously parts of still-larger cells. Cells may in turn be part of larger multi-celled organisms (such as you or me). So, it's a great chain of whole/parts – of holons – not only all the way up, but also all the way down. Even atoms are not the bottom of the chain because they, so atomic physicists tell us, are made up of

⁵⁵ As in *SES*, pp43-85.

quarks; and who knows what quarks are made up of? What we see here, then, is a series of levels; a hierarchy of holons (or a holarchy), with each new level transcending and including its predecessor.

With global governance, however, the holarchy that most interests us is the human social holarchy. As we identified in chapter 2, it comprises four levels with the whole holarchy being expressed as: Individual → Family → Local Authority → Nation-state, with each level transcending and including its predecessor. Although we may still refer in this chapter to each of these levels as if it were an individual holon, it's important to understand that each is actually an entire *level* of holons. The holon of the nation-state, for example, actually comprises all 200+ nation-states; i.e. it is an entire *level* of holons of a particular type.

Concerning the endurance of holons, it's useful to make a distinction between emergent holons and enduring holons. All holons emerge but not all will endure over a longer period of time. If we look at evolutionary history from today's standpoint, all we'll see as we look back are the *enduring* holons; those that withstood the test of time. All the *other* holons which may have emerged but which subsequently disappeared, such as the Roman Empire, obviously failed; they were, in an evolutionary sense, unsuccessful experiments that emerged but were eventually rooted out. But if we look forward to the *future* – to the future development of a holarchy – all we'll see from today onwards are *emergent* holons; evolutionary experiments which exist, but which may or may not succeed.

As far as the human social holarchy is concerned, then, we are looking at all the various emergent global governance initiatives to assess which of them seems most *in accord* with the principles of evolutionary transformation. Consequently, we'll be able to determine which of them is most likely to *become* the sole enduring holon of binding global governance. Evolution, after all, is all in the *becoming*.

Although the UN and the other established global institutions have been around since the end of the Second World War, we'll

still be treating them as *emergent* holons even though we are referring to them as “established global institutions”. This is because, although they are clearly far more advanced in their development than Simpol or other more recent global governance initiatives, we’ll see that they share severe shortcomings in their agency – in their autonomous ability to evolve and develop further - so it’s possible they may yet be overtaken by one of the other more recent initiatives.

2a. Self-Preservation (agency)

“All holons display some capacity to preserve their individuality; to preserve their own particular wholeness or autonomy.”

The ability to be an autonomous, self-preserving, independent entity is a prime requirement of all holons. Without that ability, a holon couldn’t exist at all, or couldn’t do so for very long. The means a holon uses to preserve and maintain its wholeness and individuality is called its *agency* (or regime or code).

Since all of the global governance initiatives we’ll be considering actually exist, all of them clearly display at least some agency; some capacity to preserve their individuality and wholeness. But when talking about self-preservation, Wilber is not referring so much to new, emergent holons but more to *enduring* holons; holons that had the necessary agency – the necessary autonomy and transformative power - both to transcend and include their predecessors and to preserve themselves in their newly established role thereafter. With global governance initiatives, on the other hand, we are looking only at emergent holons. It’s therefore the agency or *transformative potential* each initiative holds – the degree of *congruity* with the 20 Tenets that each displays - that is most crucial. For that will most likely give us the best indication of its autonomous capacity to *become* the holon of global governance and for its self-preservation thereafter. After all, if one of them

has the considerable agency needed to do that, we need hardly doubt its capacity for self-preservation thereafter.

The agency of various global governance initiatives will be dealt with as our discussion progresses. But from our previous observations, we can already say something about the UN and, in particular, about the WTO in terms of their self-preservation or agency.

The existing global institutions

Although the UN is often thought to be an institution of global governance, we must recognise that it is mainly a creature of nation-states. It was, after all, created *by* them. A key indicator is that, apart from Chapter VII of the UN Charter which concerns the authority of nations that comprise the Security Council, the UN itself, under Article 2:1 of its Charter, is denied any general binding authority over its member-nations. This lack of authority is why the UN has so often been powerless to intervene in international affairs.⁵⁶ Instead, its role has mainly been to organise certain non-contentious multi-national functions such as peace-keeping or disaster relief.

But what this present status of the UN amounts to is not self-preservation as we mean it here. For the UN does not autonomously determine its role. Rather, it is determined substantially by nation-states, and in particular by those comprising the Security Council. The UN, then, is not preserved of its own autonomous volition, as this Tenet would require. Instead it is *other*-preserved; preserved, that is, by nation-states. Beyond that, organs of the UN that have binding authority such as the Security Council are, as we saw, dominated by the Council's permanent members who are naturally unwilling to voluntarily relinquish their disproportionate power. Without any significant capacity for *self*-preservation or autonomous action, then, the prospects of the UN evolving into a more independent,

⁵⁶ The UN's inability to prevent the USA and Britain from invading Iraq in 2003 despite UN Sec. General, Kofi Annan, declaring it illegal is a case in point.

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self-preserving entity seem fairly bleak. Unless nation-states were to confer upon it a far greater degree of autonomy, the UN, from an evolutionary perspective, appears somewhat stranded or stuck and will likely find it difficult to evolve further.

The WTO, too, was created by nation-states, in its case as a successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It is an organisation set up by international treaty essentially to further the global free-trade agenda. As we saw, it is the WTO's ability to arbitrate in trade disputes and to impose sanctions that appear to give it a measure of autonomy (or agency). But as far as *self*-preservation is concerned, the WTO, like the UN, remains a creature of nation-states and endures only because it happens generally to suit nation-states and their trading interests. Again, this is *other*-preservation; not autonomous *self*-preservation. Further confirmation would be that the UN and the WTO (as well as the IMF and the World Bank) are essentially owned and funded by nation-states. They have no independent means or authority to raise taxes or other funds to sustain themselves. So their preservation is almost entirely determined by nation-states. As such, Wilber's following observation would seem to apply: "...determinism arises only as a limiting case where a holon's capacity for self-transcendence approaches zero, or when its own self-transcendence hands the locus of indeterminacy to a higher holon."⁵⁷ In other words the locus of indeterminacy of the global institutions – i.e. their freedom to act - rests not with those institutions themselves but with their nation-state masters. It is nation-states, then, that determine the existing global institutions.

All this increases the doubts about the likelihood of the UN and the other established global institutions ever evolving, jointly or separately, to become the higher holon of global governance under their own steam. Likewise, campaigns to democratise the UN such as *Empower the UN*⁵⁸, to take but one example, seem

⁵⁷ *SES*, p55.

⁵⁸ See www.empowertheun.org.

by the same token to be unlikely to succeed since they effectively focus on the wrong target: on the UN instead of on its nation-state masters. So let us turn, now, to the nation-state.

The nation-state

Nation-states, we can easily recognise, generally display considerable agency and capacity for autonomy and self-preservation. They have armies and weaponry, can print their own money which has a stated value, and so on; all hallmarks of self-preservation; of autonomous *agency*. The driving force behind this agency, of course, is the furtherance of the national interest. But while it provides nation-states with top marks for self-preservation and agency, as we'll shortly see, pursuance of the national interest also causes problems. That's because it is fundamentally at odds with the need to co-operate with other nation-states. It is, in short, fundamentally at odds with the equal need for self-adaptation (communion). Wilber:

“...agency – [a holon’s] self-asserting, self-preserving, assimilating tendencies – expresses its *wholeness*, its relative autonomy; whereas its communion – its participatory, bonding, joining tendencies – expresses its *partness*, its relationship to something larger.

Both of these capacities or tendencies are absolutely crucial and equally important; an excess of either will kill a holon immediately (i.e. destroy its identifying pattern); even a moderate imbalance will lead to structural deformity... [An] imbalance of these two tendencies in any system expresses itself as *pathological agency* (alienation and repression) or *pathological communion* (fusion and indissociation).”⁵⁹

We will see more clearly in a moment how these two pathologies manifest themselves.

⁵⁹ SES, p49.

2b. Self-Adaptation (communion)

“A holon functions not only as a self-preserving *whole* but also as a *part* of a larger whole, and in its capacity as a *part* it must adapt or accommodate itself to other holons.”

Self-adaptation (or communion) or a holon’s participatory, joining or co-operating tendency may be seen as a ‘horizontal’ characteristic, whereas self-preservation can be seen as a ‘vertical’ characteristic. Yet, as we noted, both vertical self-preservation (agency) *and* horizontal self-adaptation (communion) are vitally important. Both need to be present and in balance with each other.

But nation-states, as everyone knows, disclose inherent difficulties when it comes to adapting themselves to each other (i.e. in co-operating or communing). This is amply demonstrated by their inability to implement any substantive solution to global warming despite almost universal agreement about the problem’s urgency. As we saw in the previous chapter, big polluters such as the USA free-ride by refusing to participate in the Kyoto Protocol which in turn constrains participating nations to only small and inadequate emissions reductions for fear of making their economies uncompetitive. Destructive competition and free-riding among nation-states – patterns of behaviour that define the nature of their agency – also define their inherent inability to commune. The need to avoid any policy that might incur even a short-term competitive disadvantage thus makes it highly unlikely that nation-states, on their own, will ever find a way of co-operating with each other on crucial economic and environmental issues. By the same token, they’re unlikely to endow the UN with any significant degree of autonomy or self-preservation since that could only happen at the expense of nation-states’ *own* agency: something of a contradiction in terms, in other words. The self-preservation (agency) of nation-states thus wins hands down at the expense of self-adaptation (communion): an example of pathological

agency which, amongst other adverse effects, leads to the alienation of the global environment.

In our world today, then, we are confronted at the global level by two distinct yet related pathologies: one which concerns the existing global institutions; the other which concerns nation-states. The inability of the existing global institutions to autonomously exercise the key attributes of governance in a manner that is both objective and binding upon nation-states would be an example of their pathological *communion* with nation-states; of their excessive *fusion* with nation-states. Instead of being *above* them, as would be needed if these institutions were to perform global governance properly, they are instead substantially on the same level as nations, and are effectively controlled by the most powerful among them. Alongside this sits the other pathology: the pathological *agency* of nation-states themselves. For, they cannot commune (i.e. cooperate) with each other in many vital areas because of their need to pursue only their short-term national interests. For nation-states, then, there is the pathology of *alienation* from each other. These twin but opposite pathologies – on one side, global institutions which are overly fused with powerful nations and, on the other, nations which are overly alienated from one another - not only allow the global predicament to keep on worsening, they also elucidate the extremely poor prospects for either the established global institutions or the world's nations to solve global problems if we leave them wholly to their own devices.

But what about the other emergent initiatives? We'll look, first, at how Simpol "fits in" with, makes itself compatible with, or adapts itself to nation-states and to the other lower holons in the social holarchy. As our discussion of the tenets progresses, the position with the other emergent initiatives will also become clear. For now, we'll only deal with the simple facts of Simpol's self-adaptation and not with *how* it might also transcend and include the other holons, for that will follow later. The way Simpol adapts itself to the lower holons are:

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- a) The implementation of Simpol, if the day actually came, would occur via national legislation, with each country enacting the agreed measures on the same date. With Simpol, then, no change to the existing governance processes or legal constitutions of nations should be necessary. In this simple, but nevertheless extremely important respect, Simpol adapts itself to, or makes itself *compatible* with, nation-states.
- b) Simpol is only to include simultaneous policies; policies which nations – either singly or in groups - cannot implement alone. It thus leaves all other policies totally unaffected and open to being implemented by nations independently. Simpol cannot therefore be said to encroach upon national sovereignty because the only policies it deals with are those which destructive international competition has *already* put beyond nations' capacity to deal with. So, Simpol accommodates itself to nations by affording them a means of accessing – of implementing - policies that were previously inaccessible to them.
- c) Moving down from the national level, Simpol organisations based in each country adapt themselves to established political parties in those countries by inviting the party in government and all other parties to sign the Pledge. This Pledge commits a party to implement Simpol *only* at some point in the future when sufficient other nations have also signed it. Because that commitment is only acted upon at some date in the future when sufficient nations are on board, political parties and governments can still continue to implement their existing, competition-based policy programmes exactly as now and can do so until such time as Simpol's implementation can proceed. They can thus support Simpol now, *without* conflicting with their existing policies while sufficient international support is being built. Simpol therefore makes itself acceptable to political parties

because it invites them to participate in a way that doesn't conflict with their existing policy programmes.

- d) Simpol's national organisations similarly make themselves acceptable to individual Members of Parliament in their respective countries because MPs or Congressmen are invited to sign the Pledge as individual legislators. Just as parties can support Simpol because it does not conflict with their existing policies, so individual MPs can also sign the Pledge for the same reason even if their party hasn't yet done so. So Simpol adapts itself to individual MPs by not conflicting with either their, or their party's, existing policy programmes.

- e) Simpol adapts itself to individual citizens by inviting them to adopt Simpol, and so to extend the reach of their votes to the global level. And it does so in a way that need not impair their freedom to vote as they please. To reiterate the citizen's adoption pledge, when citizens adopt Simpol, they pledge to vote in all future elections for ANY politician or party – within reason – that has pledged to implement it alongside other governments. Or, they encourage their preferred party, if they have one, to make that pledge. This pledge, while it clearly expresses the strong *likelihood* that adopting citizens will vote for politicians/parties that support Simpol to the exclusion of those who don't, it crucially does not restrict the freedom of citizens to vote otherwise if they choose, nor does it preclude them from retaining a party-political preference. This is because the insertion of the words “within reason” leaves the ultimate determination of what candidates or parties may be seen as “reasonable” entirely in the hands of the individual adopting citizen. Simpol therefore adapts itself to individual citizens by not conflicting with their sovereignty (i.e. with their autonomy) as voters.

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- f) Simpol also adapts itself to all the many thousands of NGOs and activist organisations that comprise the global justice movement. This is because Simpol respects the validity of their campaigns as ways of raising public awareness and of obtaining short-term improvements from the existing destructively competitive global system. Meanwhile it offers NGOs and their individual members a means of delivering just the kind of substantive and undiluted transnational policies that express their long-term aims and objectives; objectives which their conventional campaigning methods are unable to achieve. NGOs and activist organisations could thus continue with their existing campaigns *and* they could support Simpol, so furthering their objectives by encouraging their individual members to adopt it.

- g) Simpol can be said to accommodate itself to global corporations and markets because, by ensuring that any laws, taxes and regulations would be implemented globally and simultaneously, no corporation would lose out unduly to any other, no matter where on the globe they may be operating. Simpol could thus be said to *understand - to take proper account of* - the competitive global environment in which corporations operate.

- h) Similarly, Simpol accommodates itself to the ideology of *free markets* since it could provide a democratic global regulatory and governance framework within which global free markets could then operate fairly, freely, within sustainable environmental limits and, it is therefore to be hoped, for the overall common good of humanity. Simpol has the potential to make the global free market truly sustainable and enduring.

- i) Simpol also accommodates itself to the ideology that is opposed to free-markets; i.e. to the ideology of *protectionism*. Protectionism is the imposition by a nation of import tariffs to protect its domestic industries from what it

perceives as unfair international competition. Because Simpol's policies would be designed to provide a global regulatory and governance framework which would be tailored to the needs of different countries and which could include a redistribution of wealth and resources across national borders, Simpol could protect nations appropriately without the need for import tariffs. It could thus potentially make the need for protectionism substantially unnecessary. Simpol thus accommodates itself to the legitimate need for protection, but does so without necessarily resorting to *protectionism*.

- j) Similar to point (b), Simpol accommodates itself to the ideology of *national diversity* and *national sovereignty* (i.e. to national wholeness/autonomy) because it would not include any policy that could be implemented unilaterally and so does not encroach on national sovereignty. If Simpol were implemented, unilateral policies would still be dealt with independently by nation-states exactly as they are now. By dealing only with policies requiring simultaneous implementation, Simpol limits itself and thus maintains national freedom of action to the fullest possible extent. Allied to this, the potential for Simpol to redistribute wealth to poorer countries would help keep economic migration to a minimum, thus better permitting people to make a decent living in their home countries and so helping to preserve the national cultural vibrancy and distinctiveness of each and all nations.

Simpol accommodates itself to nation-states in another very important way. This is because it does not necessarily require any nation to have achieved a certain minimum level of democratic development before it can sign the Pledge. In principle, it is just as acceptable to ISPO for a nation run by a corrupt and undemocratic government to commit itself to implementing Simpol as it is for an advanced democratic government to do so. This is because it is not ISPO's function to tell governments or their peoples how to run

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their countries or their lives. ISPO's prime requirement is only to ensure that any government that signs the Pledge can be trusted by adopters and by other governments to deliver on their commitment.

At first glance this might appear to be at odds with Simpol's democratic and humanitarian aims and principles and it would indeed be fair to say that ISPO would rank and trust open and democratic nations above those that are not. However, this is to miss the essential point that all nations find themselves at differing stages in their socio-cultural and political development, so the overriding requirement is not to judge or dictate to them but *to help them to evolve*, regardless of what stage they may presently be at. In practice, however, and to ensure that an undemocratic government wishing to sign the Pledge could be trusted to implement it, this may mean ISPO imposing certain reasonable conditions. One such condition might perhaps be to insist that such a government permit its citizens to associate freely, so enabling them to participate freely and openly in Simpol's policy formulation processes, and to provide them with the necessary means for doing so.

This, then, is how Simpol accommodates itself to nations and peoples at all stages of development, while also governing them from the highest presently available level of development. This is what Wilber calls "the prime directive".⁶⁰ We will have more to say on this in Chapter 5.

- k) Simpol also accommodates itself to the ideology of *multiculturalism*; to the ideology that stands in effective opposition to national sovereignty and cultural distinctiveness. This is because the concept of "all nations simultaneously" treats all nations and cultures equitably and objectively (i.e. aperspectivally) while recognising each as individual and unique threads in humanity's rich tapestry. In

⁶⁰ See 'The Handout' contained in *Integral Politics: A Summary of Its Essential Ingredients*, by Ken Wilber, 2007. From www.kenwilber.com.

this way, Simpol would not *prevent* migration, it would merely remove the global economic pressures that today *force* it upon many of the poor. Likewise, because of its ability to redistribute wealth across national borders, Simpol would equitably support all nations and cultures. Again, we will have more to say on this in Chapter 5.

- l) Finally, Simpol accommodates itself to the ideology of *global unity* because it would provide a means by which transnational problems could be dealt with in a unified and effective manner for the global common good.

With Simpol, then, national and global interests are no longer at odds, they are integrated. With Simpol, free-markets and protectionism are no longer mutually exclusive, they are transcended. With Simpol, multi-culturalism and nationalism are no longer incompatible, they are in harmony. With Simpol, unity and diversity are no longer opposed, they find themselves reconciled.

Moreover, with Simpol, we see that it interfaces very directly with the votes of citizens, members of parliament, political parties and governments. As for the other global governance initiatives, their self-adaptive characteristics, such as they are, will become clearer as our discussion progresses.

2c. Self-Transcendence

“...a transformation that results in something novel and emergent – different wholes have come together to form a new and different whole.”

Since none of the initiatives has yet become the new holon of global governance, all we can do if we want to judge their novelty or transformative capacity is to look at their concepts; at the basic ideas upon which each of these initiatives is based. Simpol is based, we might say, on the concept of global simultaneous implementation by nations, but driven by the votes

of citizens. Other initiatives are based on other concepts. But all the concepts at some point involve *nation-states* and their reorganisation into some kind of new whole. To that extent, they could all be said to express the *idea* of self-transcendence. No surprise there, of course, because ideas are easy to dream up. The critical question, therefore, is which of them possesses the necessary transformative properties to succeed? Which of them has the practical ability – the necessary agency - to make their concepts a reality?

We can already see from all that we've covered so far that Simpol represents something novel and emergent; something that reconciles opposites and is thus *qualitatively* different from the world order we see today. Just as a sentence is composed only of words, but cannot be reduced merely to individual words, so Simpol, once implemented, would represent the simultaneous action of all or virtually all nation-states, but it could not be reduced merely to individual national actions. With Simpol, then, citizens would have brought together different national wholes to form a new, different and greater whole: a citizen-inspired and citizen-driven holon of global governance.

2d. Self-Dissolution

“Holons that are built up (through vertical self-transformation) can also break down. Not surprisingly, when holons ‘dissolve’ or ‘come unglued’, they tend to do so along the same vertical sequence in which they were built up (only, of course, in the reverse direction)”.

If we suppose that Simpol were one day implemented but all adopters subsequently cancelled their adoption for some reason, ISPO would dissolve. But we would still be left with nation-states; i.e. with the next lower level in the holarchy. Since the same would be the case also for the other emergent initiatives, this tenet doesn't take our discussion much further forward. Nevertheless, some further observations might be useful before we move on.

One is that, after *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* was published, Wilber realised that pointing to the possibility of self-dissolution was an error in this context.⁶¹ This is because, instead of describing this unhealthy, downward potential of all holons, he should have described its healthy counterpart, known as Agape (or Self-Immanence). Agape is also a downward potential or drive of all holons, but it is one by which higher holons embrace or enfold their lower holons just as a molecule embraces or enfolds its component atoms.

As the benign, gentle-yet-firm, nature of the words “embrace” and “enfold” suggests, this downward drive indicates that the governance exercised downwards by higher holons on their juniors must be benign and in their common interest. If we relate this to the five key attributes of governance, we could say that the attributes of voting and of individual consent are how the lower individual citizen-holons communicate their best interests upwards to the higher state-holon whereas the exercising of binding constraints and an equitable sharing of resources in the pursuit of an integration of trade, society and environment are how the higher state-holon exercises a downward yet benign governance on its lower citizen-holons.

By the same token, if Simpol were ever implemented, ISPO, by permitting Simpol’s policy content to be determined by adopting citizens, would likewise be taking into account the best interests of the lower holons. Then, by implementing it via nation-states, ISPO would be exercising its downward, benign governance on both nations and their citizens.

3. Holons emerge

“Owing to the self-transcendent capacity of holons, new holons emerge. ... The emergent holons are in some sense novel; they possess properties and qualities that cannot be strictly and totally deduced from their components; and

⁶¹ See http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/interviews/interview1220_2.cfm. I am grateful to Steve McIntosh for pointing this correction out to me.

therefore they, and their descriptions, cannot be reduced without remainder to their component parts”.

If for ease of explanation we take atoms as the lowest unit in any physical holarchy, and if we look through a sufficiently powerful microscope at any holon higher than an atom, at a cell for example, all we'll see are the cell's component atoms. We won't see its cell structure or the molecules the cell is composed of, because everything, if you look finely enough, is composed only of atoms. But it would be wrong to say that a cell is *nothing but* atoms, just as it would to say that a human being is nothing but atoms. For if we asserted that, we'd be denying the very existence of holarchy; we'd be denying that a cell, although ultimately composed only of atoms, is *greater* than the sum of its atom and molecule parts. So this tenet essentially asserts the existence of different holarchic *levels* and that any level cannot be reduced to its lowest, or to any prior, component-level.

The recognition that different levels exist – the recognition that holarchy exists – leads us to ask how, although all holons emerge at a certain level, only a few go on to produce a yet-higher holarchic level? Why are only some holons capable of bringing about a new, higher level? And how might this be relevant to sorting out the various global governance initiatives? We noted that since all global governance initiatives actually exist, they are all holons that have emerged. But what is it that would make them capable of *transcending and including* their predecessors, so constituting a completely new, higher and enduring level in their holarchy. To distinguish between these two types of emergence, Wilber identifies *translative* holons and *transformative* holons.

With *translative* holons, their agency (or regime or code) remains substantially the same as other holons on the same level. In this sense, a new molecule, for example, is much like all other molecules and it relates to them, and to any higher or lower holons, as only molecules can. Translative holons emerge “horizontally”, as it were, and stay on the same holonic level

from which they emerged. Another example, here, might be a new NGO established to alleviate poverty. It emerges and adds itself to the thousands of other NGO-holons doing similar work and uses substantially the same means or agency to achieve its aims. That agency would likely consist of raising money from the public to support projects in poor countries, lobbying politicians and so on. But because those means – because that agency - is substantially the same as the agency of all other NGOs, that makes the new NGO merely a *translative* holon. No additional holarchic height (or depth) has been created by its emergence.

The established world institutions would be yet another example. Since they possess no significant capacity for self-preservation and rely instead on nation-states to preserve them, they are effectively added to the same holonic level as nation-states, thus merely enlarging the span of that level on a horizontal axis but not going any significant distance above it. They are thus translative holons. However, since none of the initiatives has yet become the new holon of global governance, all we can look at, we said, are their *concepts* and at what potential their particular brand of agency holds for effecting transformation. So, how can we recognise a transformative holon when we see one? Helpfully, Wilber identifies one of their key hallmarks when he notes that their emergence is characterised by indeterminacy: “Emergence also means that *indeterminacy* ... is sewn into the very fabric of the universe, since *unprecedented* emergence means *undetermined* by the past”.⁶²

This is an extremely important point, but what does it mean? If we think of the political environment of globalisation in which we presently find ourselves, we could say that its key determining factor is destructive international competition. That is to say, all policies that are proposed or implemented around the world, whether by nation-states individually or by international treaty, are today necessarily framed or determined

⁶² SES, p54.

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by the constraint of each nation's need to maintain its international competitiveness in the global market. Destructive competition, in other words, represents the context that determined the recent past and, of course, determines the present. As we saw with respect to climate change, this context necessarily limits the participants in the Kyoto Protocol to relatively insignificant emissions reductions. Destructive competition thus *determines* and limits national freedom of action, so inducing the “regulatory chill” we referred to earlier. This is shown in Fig. 4-2 below, taking global efforts to reduce carbon emissions as an example to explain the point.

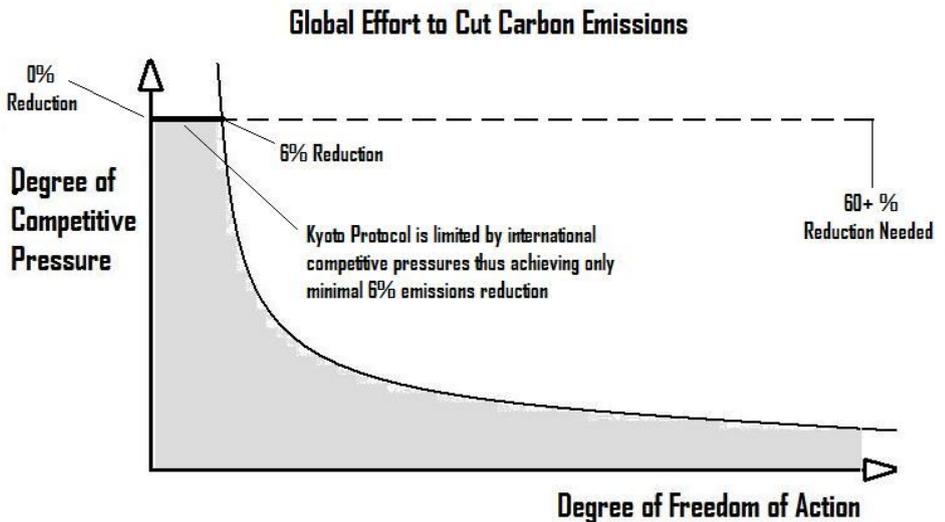


Figure 4-2

As the diagram shows, the present high degree of competitive pressure between nations limits the Kyoto Protocol to only a 6% (or thereabouts) reduction in emissions. Destructively competitive pressure, in other words, represents *determinacy*; it's the key factor which, past and present, induces “regulatory

chill”, so confining the world’s nations to wholly inadequate action.

Indeterminacy, by contrast, or in this context the ability to implement policies which are *not* limited by the need to maintain international competitiveness will only come, Wilber indicates, from the emergence of an *unprecedented* (i.e. a transformative) holon; a holon that is *undetermined* by the constraints of the past and which thus opens up unprecedented possibilities for the future. If destructive international competition represents the context which determines the past and present, something which overcomes or transcends that context will be what we are looking for.

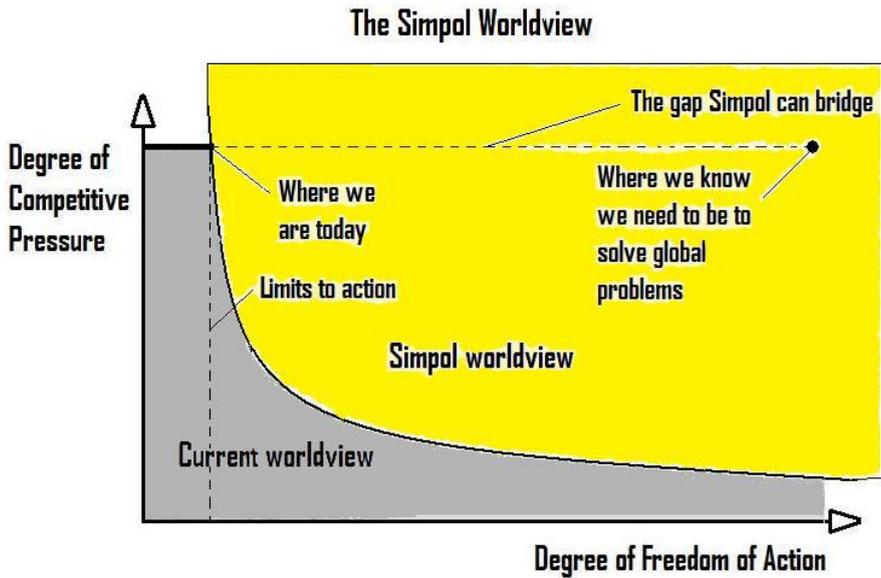


Figure 4-3

And that, precisely, is what Simpol’s concept of global simultaneous implementation achieves. It does this by expressing a *basis* for fruitful international co-operation; a basis

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upon which robust, global problem-solving policies can be devised, combined and then implemented in a way that causes no competitive disadvantage to any nation, corporation or citizen. In that way, Simpol *overcomes* the competitiveness obstacle and thus releases us from the present determining context. Simpol thus expresses, in its concept at least, the unprecedented indeterminacy we are looking for; the hallmark of a genuinely transformative holon. The way Simpol transforms and opens up the territory, potentially permitting humanity to escape the constraints of destructive competition is depicted in Fig. 4-3 above.

Not surprisingly, a clue to Simpol's unprecedented indeterminacy can be found in its citizen's adoption pledge. This voting pledge encapsulates both the concept of global simultaneous implementation and gives citizens, potentially, the unprecedented leverage to drive all politicians and parties to support, and ultimately to implement, its range of measures. Before the emergence of Simpol, the geographical "reach" of a citizen's vote extended to - i.e. it was determined by - the territorial borders of his/her nation. Furthermore, we noted that destructive competition also determines that our votes are reduced to mere pseudo-votes; that democracy is reduced to mere pseudo-democracy. But with the citizen's adoption pledge, not only can the constraints of pseudo-democracy and destructive international competition be overcome, the reach of our votes is extended, potentially, to cover the entire planet. Being uniquely operative *through* established national electoral systems, Simpol could be described as perhaps the first and only form of global electoral politics; a novel and transformative way of voting that is global, undetermined by the past, and therefore wholly unprecedented: *unprecedented emergence*.

Having looked at Simpol and at the existing global institutions we turn, now, to some of the other emergent initiatives.

The e-Parliament

Given the holarchic approach we're taking, one global governance initiative which comes close to meeting the challenge is the e-Parliament project. This independent, non-governmental initiative is designed to link nationally elected members of parliament (MPs) together in an internet forum. To that extent, the e-Parliament can be said to adapt itself to MPs. "When everything is going global except democracy," the e-Parliament points out to participating national members of parliament,

"there is a danger that representative democracy will be sidelined. The e-Parliament can help national democracy extend its reach to the global level. Participating in the e-Parliament doesn't imply support for any policy proposal, party or government; on the contrary, participation is welcomed from all parts of the political spectrum. Most actions won't take you more than a few minutes, and can be done through simple e-mail. Without leaving your office, you can have the world at your fingertips. ... As in any parliamentary body, decisions about the e-Parliament's priorities and Policy Targets are made by the members. As a democratic legislator, you are automatically entitled to be a decision-maker in the e-Parliament through online polls. Policy Targets, arrived at jointly, can then be introduced by interested members into their own national legislative process."⁶³

But although our first key attribute of governance dictates that citizens ought to have a binding vote on the policies being developed, the e-Parliament has only this to say to citizens:

⁶³ This and other quotes were taken from the e-Parliament website, www.e-parl.net, during May 2006.

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“As in any parliamentary body, decisions about the e-Parliament's priorities and Policy Targets are made by the members of parliament and congress. Policy Targets, arrived at jointly, can then be introduced by interested members into their own national legislative process. When the legislators are asked to vote, you will be invited to cast an 'advisory vote'. Legislators can view the votes and comments of organizations and individual citizens in their own country or world-wide.”

In other words, the e-Parliament offers citizens only an 'advisory vote'. It thus appears to assume that simply because its participating MPs were elected by citizens to their *national* parliaments, this automatically confers on those MPs the democratic legitimacy to develop and implement *global* policies too. This would be akin to us electing local politicians for the sole purpose of determining local issues such as local car parking regulations, only to discover that they were developing the nation's foreign policy too. By effectively ignoring citizens in this way, then, the e-Parliament can hardly be said to embody the first key attribute of governance: the right of citizens to have a binding vote, so it can hardly be said to adapt itself to citizens. Beyond this anomaly there are a number of other problems with the e-Parliament approach which are at odds with holarchic principles.

Firstly, and perhaps most crucially, MPs' participation in the e-Parliament is purely voluntary. This is because the e-Parliament offers no means by which citizens can use their votes in their respective national elections to actively compel their MPs to participate in the e-Parliament and its processes. Without that electoral compulsion, how many of the world's MPs could reasonably be expected to participate? Given that many MPs from countries such as the USA may see little need to cooperate with the e-Parliament and might even see it as harmful to their national interests, it is doubtful whether the e-Parliament could ever achieve the high level of participation needed for it

to implement global policies. The e-Parliament, then, is critically short on agency.

Secondly, the e-Parliament makes no differentiation between policies that can be implemented unilaterally and those which must be implemented simultaneously. It thus does not differentiate between the relatively mild policies that can be implemented under today's destructively competitive system and the much more far-reaching global policies that could be implemented if nations acted simultaneously. It thus confines itself to relatively mild policies which continue to be framed by the demands of each nation's need to maintain its international competitiveness. Far from the *indeterminacy* that transformative holarchic emergence would demand, the e-Parliament, despite its claims, appears content effectively to remain constrained by – to remain *determined* by – the existing destructively competitive context. To the extent that MPs participate in the e-Parliament, we could say that they do so from a predominantly national, rather than global, perspective. They are bound to do so, in short, with the international competitiveness of their country in mind. The e-Parliament, we might say, *includes* nation-states but it does not elucidate the problem of destructive competition between them and so does not negate their pathological alienation from each other. It's therefore difficult to see how it could transcend them.

Now, there's nothing in principle to stop the e-Parliament moving to a position where it starts to differentiate between unilateral- and simultaneous-type policies. But if it did, it would no longer have the democratic legitimacy it presently claims because the *indeterminate* nature of the simultaneous-type policies means that they would be of a different order, and likely to be far more substantial, undiluted and far-reaching compared to the relatively mild and largely ineffectual unilateral-type policies the e-Parliament presently deliberates over now. Indeed, the *indeterminate* nature of each higher social holon compared to its predecessor requires that each new level be *directly* determined by citizens through their right to vote. So, if the e-Parliament were ever to start formulating more far-

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reaching *simultaneous*-type policies, it would be doing so effectively undemocratically, i.e. without citizens' direct consent because, as we saw, the e-Parliament permits citizens only a non-binding, advisory vote.

Although it presents a framework which could passively permit its evolution into a holon of global governance, the e-Parliament fails to elucidate the problem of destructive competition and neither does it possess the agency - the active power - that seems to be required if sufficient politicians and nations are to be transcended and included. As we'll later see in chapter 7, however, there are ways that the e-Parliament, Simpol and other organisations could potentially co-operate fruitfully to achieve this overall aim.

The World Future Council (WFC)

The WFC is another fairly high-profile project which, although not fully launched at the time of writing, has nevertheless gathered some measure of support. According to its website, it is to be:

“made up of 100 globally recognised wise elders, pioneers and youth leaders, [who] will work with decision-makers to provide direction for a sustainable future. It will represent the shared ethical values of citizens worldwide. When needed, it will commission research and recommend new policies and laws to protect the welfare of the planet and its citizens.

Despite unprecedented knowledge, skills and resources, humanity is today on a collision course with its own future. International opinion surveys clearly indicate that shared value-priorities exist across cultural traditions all over the world. The Council will be advised by up to 24 small expert commissions focusing on key environmental, social and economic issues.

We lack a powerful global voice, which appeals and responds to our common citizen values and speaks up for

our inner awareness that we are on a wrong path. We propose the creation of such a voice to remind us of our unique responsibilities and provide an ethical audit on important decisions. The power of the Council we propose would be moral - but should not be under-estimated. As a voice of Global Stewardship, speaking for shared human values and traditions, it would provide valuable guidance and could become a powerful agent for change.”⁶⁴

As this initiative concedes, it will possess only *moral* power. It is, therefore, essentially only an advisory body with no concrete means of self-adaptation to the human social hierarchy and to its systems of electoral democracy. The WFC’s agency, we might say, is exterior to the human social hierarchy in the sense that it has no direct effect – no traction – on national electoral processes. Since it does not directly affect the votes of citizens, MPs, political parties or governments, it thus has no significant agency or means to transform, let alone transcend, them. Furthermore, unless the WFC were to differentiate between unilateral and simultaneous policies, its recommendations would likely be either too mild to have any significant effect on global problems, or be so radical as to appear unrealistic given today’s constraints (or, perhaps, to fall unconvincingly between the two). Even if such a differentiation were made, it is questionable whether national governments, being substantially driven by the pursuance of the national interest and being subject to competitive pressures, would take much notice in any case. This, again, is why citizens must take the lead in a manner that is binding. But that, as we’ve seen, seems most likely to be achieved if we, citizens, are offered a means to use our official, nationally democratic, votes. The WFC, however, offers us no such means.

⁶⁴ From the World Future Council website, www.worldfuturecouncil.org, during May 2006.

As with the e-Parliament we will, in Chapter 7, suggest ways the WFC could cooperate with Simpol and other organisations to achieve the task at hand.

World Parliament initiatives

Similar problems can be identified if we move on, now, to look at some of the large number of self-styled “people’s world parliament” projects around the world. These projects almost invariably invite people to “vote” on global issues, or to “vote” to establish some form of world government or parliament. But these are not public votes exercised within established national democratic systems; they are informal, private votes. Because they have no connection with - and thus no bearing upon - established national democratic processes, they cannot be said to have public democratic legitimacy nor any significant political clout.

One such initiative is the World Parliament Experiment.⁶⁵ “A World Parliament is possible, if YOU join it!”, this initiative proclaims,

“We believe that another world is possible. But what does this new world look like? The World Parliament Experiment (WPE) is not just against the current world order, it is a positive vision of a fully democratic world, in which everybody will take part and have a say.

This is why the WPE is YOUR democracy. It is your forum to vote, to elect, to express your opinions, and be elected as the speaker! ... The WPE is the internet platform for political discussions. Besides elections, the forum allows you to debate, discuss and share your views in a truly international environment!”

The hype then calms down somewhat to reveal that:

⁶⁵ World Parliament Experiment. www.world-parliament.org. Taken from their website during May, 2006.

“The WPE results [i.e. the resulting decisions or policies that may be agreed via any “votes” that the WPE may organise amongst participating citizens] will be introduced into the international political process as claims to decision-makers.”

In other words, far from being votes that operate within established national democratic processes which would have binding effect, the “votes” of citizens in the WPE are actually mere “claims” – i.e. moral injunctions at best – which the WPE hopes may be listened to by established national parliaments. Despite that crucial shortcoming, the WPE, undaunted, goes on to proclaim that:

“... the WPE is a real political factor. The more people participate, the more powerful the WPE will become. Imagine the opportunities of such a global forum! Imagine the combined power of all its participants! Imagine a real World Parliament!”

Initiatives such as this, then, are holons whose agency is substantially exterior to the human social holarchy they want to transform. For they possess no substantive means of adapting themselves to the lower holons. Because they do not interface with, nor directly affect, the official public votes either of citizens, political parties or governments, it is difficult to see how they could transform them. Such initiatives do not appear to enable the holarchy to go beyond itself as self-transcendence would demand. Instead they seem, in a sense, to already *be* beyond it; i.e. to be pathologically alienated from the holarchy itself. Rather than being in the business of the hard but necessary work of real transformation at all levels, these initiatives simply attempt to avoid or skip it by claiming their unofficial, private “votes” somehow represent sufficient justification for the established holarchy to submit itself to their claims or demands.

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Another more established initiative of this kind is the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA) and its associated Constitution for Federation Earth (CFE). This initiative appears to have all the trappings of an established government and to claim as a basis for its legitimacy that:

“In the course of history, ... the technique of a Constituent Assembly has been developed and used under various circumstances as a means to devise the constitutions for democratic governments, either to create new governments where none existed before or to replace old or crumbling governments under both peaceful and revolutionary situations. ...

... the move has gone forward during the years since World War II for the organization of a World Constituent Assembly to devise the constitution for a democratic form of federal world government. No previous world government or competent world authority has existed to organize or supervise elections to such a World Constituent Assembly. No universally approved electoral lists exist for the conduct of such elections. Existing national governments heretofore have proved unwilling or uninterested or hostile or otherwise unable to assist in either the appointment or election of working delegates to such a World Constituent Assembly, despite numerous appeals -- although these appeals are continuing. ...

Under these circumstances, we believe there have been convened four sessions of a World Constituent Assembly -- the first in August-September, 1968, at Interlaken, Switzerland, and Wolfach, Germany; the second in June, 1977, at Innsbruck, Austria; the third in 1978-79 at Colombo, Sri Lanka; and the fourth Assembly in Troia, Portugal, in May 1991.

Finally, these sessions of a World Constituent Assembly are fully consonant with the respected theory that democratic government arises from the initiative and consent of the people who will be the citizens under that government, that

people at all times have the democratic right and prerogative to discharge or change any governments which do not adequately serve their welfare, and to initiate new governments when urgently required to their safety or welfare. No superior authority exists at any time to this basic right of people to initiate such action; and in particular, no authority superior to action by people exists for the organization and functioning of a World Constituent Assembly or a democratic World Parliament. ...

We call upon the people of Earth to ratify the Constitution for the Federation of Earth, by direct Referendum and by Initiative Petition followed by election of delegates to the House of Peoples. We call upon the national governments and legislatures of the world to ratify the Constitution for the Federation of Earth and elect delegates to the House of Nations.”

To achieve the practical implementation of this form of world government, the initiative simply invites national governments to ratify its constitution providing for an:

**“IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARTH CONSTITUTION
BY STAGES:**

- Provisional World Government, before 25 countries have ratified.
- First Operative Stage, when 25 countries have ratified.
- Second Operative Stage, when 50% of countries have ratified.
- Full Operative Stage, when 80% of countries, comprising 90% of Earth's population, have ratified.”⁶⁶

What we see here, then, is another unofficial, essentially private world parliament initiative which, in terms of self-adaptation,

⁶⁶ Taken from the WCPA website, www.worldparliamentgov.net, during May 2006.

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possesses very little or none. Again, its agency operates effectively outside the human social holarchy; wholly *exterior* to established national political systems and processes. It makes no attempt to adapt itself to the lower levels of the established holarchy which, we might add, has existed and evolved over thousands of years, nor does it make any attempt to transform the public votes of citizens, MPs, political parties or nations. Instead, the WCPA attempts to ignore the fact of its own unofficial and private nature and simply calls upon the entire human social holarchy to voluntarily submit itself – lock, stock and barrel - to the WCPA's hoped-for governance regime.

It is, perhaps, possible that some national governments might ratify the WCPA and its Constitution for the Federation Earth and some minor nations may even have done so. Even so, the point for our purposes is: what capacity does this or other similar initiatives have to drive *other* nations to participate, particularly those major world powers whose governments have no particular interest in submitting to global governance of any kind? What capacity does it possess for *transformation* of the human social holarchy? Since these initiatives attempt to duck or avoid the hard but necessary work of transforming all the lower levels of the established holarchy, they consequently leave themselves only with a simple demand for submission as their sole means of transcendence.

Gaian Democracies and Political Parties

Gaian Democracies is yet another proposal for a reconfigured world order which presents a vision very close to the transformed world we are suggesting Simpol could bring about.⁶⁷ Both Gaian Democracies and Simpol rely on participative processes and both purport to be consistent with the theory of holons and holarchies.

The theory of Gaian Democracies, its authors say:

⁶⁷ *Gaian Democracies – Redefining globalisation & people-power*, Roy Madron & John Jopling, Schumacher Briefing Nr.9, Green Books, 2003.

“...should be seen as providing a versatile model that can be adapted to different contexts. It is a systemic framework upon which different societies would be able to build their own Gaian democracies. ... we have been referring to the model as ‘Gaian Democracy’ in the singular, but we envisage many networks of Gaian democracies, related to each other on the principle of ‘network government’ ...”⁶⁸

The key propositions of “network government”, according to the authors, are that:

- Network government will enable Gaian democracies to incorporate Schumacher’s principle of ‘subsidiarity’ at every level from the local to the global.
- Network government enables participatory democracy to be extended beyond the local scale.
- Network government improves societal efficiency, effectiveness and learning by minimising information overload within the different parts of the system.⁶⁹

The concept of network government, the authors claim,

“will enable Gaian democracies to make good quality decisions and manage their systems’ complexities successfully rather than being overwhelmed by them. In democratic terms, the more self-governing holons there are within the system as a whole, the better it will manage complexity.”⁷⁰

So far, so good. But what method do the authors propose for transforming the existing political system and its pathological modes of economic and international relations - the “Global

⁶⁸ Ibid, p107.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p122.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p126.

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Monetocracy”, as they have aptly named it – towards the transformed world they wish to see?

Before setting out their approach, they rightly criticise the present strategy of the global justice movement, suggesting it to be inadequate. This, they argue, is because the movement refuses to become a political party and thus does not directly engage with existing processes of electoral democracy.⁷¹ The authors note with dismay, for example, that in the strategy and discourse of the global justice movement:

“There is no discussion of even the possibility of founding powerful political parties, fighting elections, winning office and forming governments with a mandate for fundamental economic and social change.”⁷²

Like Gaian Democracies, the Simpol approach would agree that the strategy of the global justice movement is inadequate in that sense. In holonic terms, the movement’s capacity for self-adaptation to the existing holarchy is simply too low because it does not directly engage with existing democratic processes. It thus has no adequate means of engaging with the system in a way that could facilitate its transformation.

Nevertheless, having correctly identified that approach as fundamentally flawed, the Gaian Democracies proposal then falls into the equally fatal trap of suggesting the complete opposite; that only new political parties can offer a viable route to transformation:

“New political parties, offering their fellow-citizens a vision of Gaian Democracy will encourage their active participation in co-creating a global network of just and sustainable societies. The combination of a new vision and

⁷¹ The Charter of the World Social Forum, Sections 8 and 9, effectively preclude the WSF from becoming a political party and nor is the participation in the WSF by existing political parties or governments permitted.

⁷² *Gaian Democracies*, p106.

a new kind of democracy is what is needed to revive popular commitment to active citizenship.”⁷³

But it should be clear that the creation of new political parties - “Gaian” or otherwise – is inescapably a strategy which comes too much from *within* the existing system. That is to say, any movement for transformation that establishes itself as a new political party inescapably fuses itself with the pathological system it purports to want to change; something of a contradiction in terms, in other words: a fatal case of pathological fusion.

After all, if they were ever to be taken seriously, let alone to get elected, such new parties would first have to reconcile their Gaian political agendas with the need to maintain national economic competitiveness – two aims which are in any case incompatible. Even if it were somehow possible to overcome that, they would also have to deal with the problem of first-mover competitive disadvantage and the threat of capital flight. And to overcome that, Gaian parties would have to be elected to government in a very large number of countries and would have to remain in power in all those countries for long enough in order to simultaneously implement their agendas. The slim chance of that ever happening indicates that political parties, Gaian or otherwise, are flawed and do not represent a genuinely transformative approach.

In terms of holons and holarchies, we might conclude that any newly-founded political party only adds itself to the existing holonic level represented by *all* of today’s political parties, thus consigning itself to being merely a translative holon, so remaining excessively fused with, and thus substantially determined by, the existing pathological nation-state system of which all political parties are a part. That, indeed, is why the global justice movement, with good reason, rejects such a strategy even if it is still struggling to find an effective one of its own.

⁷³ Ibid, p137.

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The failure of the Gaian Democracies proposal in this respect perhaps stems from its failure to have first identified destructive international competition as the underlying driver of the “Global Monetocracy” itself. Had the proposal’s otherwise lucid analysis penetrated to this deeper understanding, it might have identified the phenomenon of pseudo-democracy: that the over-riding need to maintain national economic competitiveness necessarily constrains *all* political parties (those that want a realistic chance of power, at least) to follow a very narrow market- and business-friendly agenda; a constraint, in short, which is wholly incompatible with a Gaian agenda and which thus renders unviable the strategy of creating new political parties.

The same, of course, goes for the Green parties. They, like all political parties, are creatures of nation-states because inherent in their incorporation as political parties is their wish to become a national government. As such they are subject to precisely the same globally competitive constraints as nations; thus sharing in that respect the same agency and worldview of all other political parties and their nations. Even when Green parties succeed in getting into government (usually in coalition with a centre-left party, as was the case in Germany between 1998 and 2005), they necessarily find that many of the central planks of their environmental and social policies must either be ditched or severely diluted so as not to harm their nation’s international competitiveness.⁷⁴ This highlights the extent to which Green and other parties remain *determined* by the pathologies of the existing competitive context and its worldview. For this reason, if the environmental policies of Green parties often appear more radical than those of mainstream parties, that is likely only to be because their chances of ever being elected, and thus of actually having to put those policies into practice, seem rather slim.

We could conclude, then, that while the non-party-political approach of the global justice movement is excessively separated or *alienated* from the human social holarchy, the

⁷⁴ Extracts from a number of newspaper articles which document the Green’s dilemma in this respect can be found in *The Simultaneous Policy*, pp73-74 and p142.

party-political approach of Gaian Democracies (and the Green parties) is excessively *fused* with it. Neither approach, then, is realistic or adequate because neither meets the requirements of a genuinely transformative holon. That, then, is why Simpol offers such a powerful and appropriate solution. For Simpol, we saw, is an unprecedented type of hybrid organisation: since it puts forward no candidates at elections, in no way can it be described as a political party, and yet by driving existing politicians and parties to support it, it is capable of having a very considerable direct influence – potentially a decisive influence - on national electoral processes.

Although there's clearly an enormous way to go before it comes anywhere close to implementation or to being widely recognised by the general public, Simpol's transformative potential is at least already demonstrably operative in today's world, albeit on a small scale. As we saw, a number of candidates and MPs have signed the Pledge, some of them doubtless only because citizen-adopters made it in their interests to do so. Most other initiatives, by contrast, seem merely to articulate the *end-point* of global governance; the end-state itself. But they offer little practical means of *becoming* that end-state; little means of actually reaching it. They appear, we might say, to be short on agency and self-adaptation. With little or no means of becoming the end-state to which they aspire, their chances of success, let alone endurance, seem doubtful.

Simpol's voting pledge, by contrast, acts not just at the level of the individual citizen, but also at the levels of Members of Parliament, political parties and nation-states because each is invited, or if necessary can be driven, to sign its own appropriate version of the Pledge. Simpol, then, is operative at *all* levels of the human social holarchy. And how could it be otherwise? For as Jantsch points out: "In the self-organisation paradigm, evolution is the result of self-transcendence at all levels."⁷⁵

⁷⁵ *Self Organizing Universe*, p183.

4. Holons emerge holarchically

“[Holons emerge holarchically], that is, as a series of increasing whole/parts. Organisms contain cells, but not vice versa; molecules contain atoms, but not vice versa.”

What Wilber is describing is that evolution progresses toward ever-larger scales of embrace. Each new holon that produces a higher holarchic level, organises co-operation over a larger physical area than its predecessors. In that sense it can be said to ‘contain’ its predecessors; just as a molecule contains its component atoms.

‘Contained’ in this context doesn’t necessarily refer to a holon’s physical location, but to the “reach” or extent of its regulatory embrace; the area over which its governance powers apply. The UK government, for example, may be physically located in London, but its governance powers encompass and apply to the entire UK. The UK government can therefore be said to contain the UK. Likewise, ISPO’s governance powers (which would actually be the powers of its citizen-adopters rather than its own powers) would be global and not merely restricted to where ISPO is currently based: to a small and rather shabby little office in south-east London. In this context, were Simpol ever implemented, all, or virtually all, the world’s nations would be contained in ISPO.

But since all the emergent initiatives involve, conceptually at least, the binding of nation-states into some kind of new world whole, couldn’t it be said that they have just as much potential as ISPO to contain nation-states, and thus to qualify as a potential higher holon? Well, yes, but only because, as we noted earlier, ideas for achieving global governance are easy to dream up: they’re just concepts. The problem is that most initiatives apart from Simpol display significant anomalies and pathologies and offer little plausible means of transforming the lower holons, and thus little practical means of achieving their aims.

However, to further confirm that ISPO could potentially become a larger, higher holon than nation-states and could contain them,

to be consistent with this Tenet, we'd also have to show that the reverse could *not* be the case; that nation-states cannot contain ISPO (or Simpol), just as a molecule cannot contain a cell.

Since Simpol, as a campaign, is occurring in some nations and since nations are the entities that would ultimately implement Simpol's range of policy measures, one might be tempted to conclude that Simpol could be said to be contained in a nation-state and is thus disqualified. But it is Simpol's *entire concept* we are considering here; a concept that is based on "all or sufficient nations simultaneously" indicating that it involves many, if not all, nations and cannot go ahead without them. So, until sufficient nations support it, each nation's pledge represents only a passive, as yet infertile possibility: something *less* than the whole concept, in other words. Until implementation occurs, then, no single nation can truly be said to contain Simpol. But when each nation implements Simpol, each would be contained by it.

5. Each emergent holon transcends but includes its predecessor(s)

“Each newly emergent holon ... preserves the previous holons ... but negates their separateness or isolatedness or aloneness. It preserves their being but negates their partiality or exclusiveness.”

Again Wilber is referring, here, to transformative rather than translative holons. Unlike translative holons which merely add themselves to their existing level, transformative holons emerge and give rise to a new level in the holarchy; to a new, higher level of complexity. One feature of this transformation is that a transformative holon will preserve what works in the lower holons but negate and elucidate what doesn't. And it is what *doesn't* work in the lower holons that will be causing the legitimation crisis; the crisis which shows them to be incapable of adapting themselves to the newly-emerged life-conditions.

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To solve the crisis, a new transformative holon must emerge which firstly negates the separateness and aloneness of the lower holons. That is to say, it must first elucidate the key dynamic which keeps them competing and free-riding and prevents them from cooperating – and it must resolve that dynamic. But in doing so, it must also take care to preserve what still works in the lower holons if it's to transcend and include them into a new, higher and more embracing cooperative whole; into a new whole capable of meeting the new life-conditions. This process of transformation, then, can briefly be encompassed, following Wilber, in the phrase “transcend, negate and include”. That, in short, is the task any new transformative holon must achieve.

As we noted, only Simpol has properly pinpointed the dynamic of destructive international competition as the key factor which prevents nations from cooperating. But leaving that aside, let's look more closely first at *preservation*; at how what works in nation-states is to be preserved by the various initiatives. This is important because peaceful and healthy transformation can only occur if the lower holons see it as in their best interests to become parts of the new whole, and those interests won't be well served if functions that still work well are not properly respected and preserved.

We saw in Chapter 2 that what still works, broadly, in nation-states is what we called “the domain of domestic policy”; that is, policies which can be implemented unilaterally because they have no significant adverse impact on the nation's competitiveness. These policies can thus safely be implemented by an individual nation regardless of what may be going on abroad. What *isn't* working, we recall, is the rapidly expanding “domain of international policy”; i.e. all those policies the world's nations now so desperately need but cannot implement because they fear becoming uncompetitive. In the domain of domestic policy, then, national autonomy should rightly be respected and preserved. But in the domain of international policy, it needs to be transcended, negated and included by the new, higher holon of global governance.

Since each of the emergent initiatives we are discussing in one way or another anticipates the inclusion of nation-states in their global governance regimes, one might be tempted to jump to the conclusion that they consequently *preserve* the lower nation-state holons, as Tenet 5 requires. But inclusion does not necessarily mean preservation, and that is where world parliament initiatives based on strict forms of global democracy - on one equal vote for every adult on the planet - run into some difficulty.

Preservation or repression?

When considering such initiatives, a factor we need to bear in mind is that the adult population in each of the world's nations varies dramatically from hundreds of millions in some countries to a million or less in others. This means that giving every adult in the world one equal vote effectively entails disregarding less-populous nations. That's because the votes of those in less populous countries, and thus the sovereignty of those nations, would be drowned out by the most populous ones. We might say, then, that although less-populous nations may be *included* in the governance embrace of such initiatives, these nations would not be preserved in the sense we mean here. Indeed, this shortcoming of world parliament initiatives makes it all the harder to imagine that less-populous nations or their peoples would agree to them in the first place.

A further difficulty is that world parliaments of this kind cannot practically consist of more than, say, one thousand representatives. So, to stay at such a manageable size, they usually entail carving the world into rather arbitrary electoral areas, some of which may straddle existing national borders.

A case in point would be the proposal made by George Monbiot in his book, *The Age of Consent*. Monbiot envisages a world parliament consisting of 600 seats representing constituencies (or electoral areas), some of which span two adjoining nations. Part of one country is thus joined together with part of another to form some of these new super-constituencies. Having

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constituencies of this kind “is not, as some people have suggested, a liability, but an asset,” insists Monbiot. “The less our representatives are bound to the demands of nationhood, the less parochial their outlook is likely to be.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, Monbiot continues: “A key determinant of the success of a world parliament is that its members are seen to have no connection to the governments of the nations from which they come. This helps defend them from the pressures that governments might exert.”⁷⁷

But what Monbiot seems to be describing here is not the preservation of the wholeness and integrity of the lower nation-state holons and their sub-holons, but their effective *repression*. Under his proposed arrangements, the *wholeness* of each nation would not be maintained since, not only would smaller nations be drowned out, the constituent parts of some nations are to be administratively conjoined.

Moreover, we can see from this why nature works on holarchic, rather than on strictly democratic, principles. For there are very good reasons why higher holons always preserve, honour and respect their predecessors. This is because, if a new higher holon is to function in the best interests of its component parts, it needs to be provided with good information *from* each of its parts. But if some of the constituencies of a world parliament are made to straddle national borders, how can the World Member of Parliament of such a newly-devised super-constituency possibly provide good information or assess the likely impact of any proposed global legislation on his/her constituency when it never previously existed? After all, it will possess no ready-combined resource of statistics or other reliable information upon which decisions could be assessed. Cultural and language differences may also be a problem. Creating cross-border constituencies in this way, then, would be as unnatural as actually *creating* Siamese twins; twins who, because of a chance mutational error, are born conjoined and are

⁷⁶ *The Age of Consent – a manifesto for a new world order*, George Monbiot, Flamingo, 2003, p87.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p88.

thus forced to share certain organs or limbs. Nature, although it does occasionally make errors of this kind, generally tries not to make a habit of it. While strict global democracy may be admirable as an ideal of democratic perfection, not only is it likely to be thought undesirable by anyone living in less-populous nations, it seems, more importantly, to be at odds with the principles of holarchy; with the principles of natural evolution.

But that is not to say that strict global democracy or other similar arrangements might not evolve at some point in humanity's far-distant future. Just as the counties of England or the Länder of Germany today no longer hold the same power, relevance or "wholeness" they once had when *they* were the top-most holons, so it is possible that long after global governance had been achieved, today's nations might gradually lose some of their wholeness in favour of more globally and strictly democratic arrangements. But *today*, such arrangements would be extremely premature as well as unviable. After all, one has only to observe the excitement that surrounds events such as the World Cup or the Olympic Games to see that very many people retain a strong identification with their nation, even if some may also consider themselves world citizens.

Finally and perhaps most crucially, Monbiot's world parliament, like the others we have reviewed, would, if it were ever to come into existence, have only *moral* power. This means that nation-states would still have to be persuaded (or blackmailed, as Monbiot proposes⁷⁸) to submit themselves to its authority. Simpol, by contrast, because it enables citizens to use their official votes in their respective national elections to achieve the task at hand, would have more than just moral power. It would have actual political power. Nation-states would thus be *automatically* transcended and included because Simpol works *through* established national electoral systems. This is how Simpol adapts itself to, transcends and includes the existing

⁷⁸ *The Age of Consent*, p177.

holarchy in one elegant move. All three happen together – seamlessly.

Concerning Simpol's specific congruity with Tenet 5, the most obvious way it *preserves* nation-states is by ensuring that, although it would be adopters who decide the policy content of Simpol, it would be nation-states – and not ISPO itself nor any other entity – that actually implements it. Also, as we saw, Simpol should require no change to any nation's legal constitution. Thus, although Simpol is not strictly democratic in the global sense because the votes of all adopters are not strictly equal, it is nevertheless based on democracy *within* each nation (in so far as nations may already be democratic), and then on the basis of the *equality* of all nations. Under Simpol's global governance arrangement, then, all nations would be respected and none would be ignored or repressed. Simpol would thus transcend and include its individual nation-state parts, so adding "its own new and more encompassing pattern or wholeness."⁷⁹

If Simpol were ever implemented, "the many [nations would] become one and are increased by one." [Whitehead]. The "one" by which the many nations would be increased would, in this case, be ISPO. ISPO, which is merely an association of the world's peoples, could thus be said to contain nation-states. So, it can be said that all nation states would, conceptually at least, be properly preserved and included within ISPO's embrace.

Negating separateness and aloneness

A new higher holon, we recall, must also *negate* what doesn't work in nation-states: it must negate their separateness and aloneness. Simpol does this by elucidating the danger of destructive competition and by showing that the vicious circle it engenders will, without Simpol, likely end in disaster for all. It thus elucidates the endless tail-chasing state nations find themselves in and, with it, the threat it poses to their very survival. Simpol thus brings into sharp relief the danger of their

⁷⁹ *SES*, p56

continued separateness and aloneness; the danger, that is, of their pathological alienation from each other; of their inability to co-operate.

Likewise, Simpol can be said to negate nations in other ways. Since its range of policies is being designed by adopters (helped, if they wish, by their chosen independent experts) and not by politicians or governments, those policies are developed *independently* of established national political processes. So ISPO effectively takes the task of global policy-making out of the hands of nation-states; a move which not only clearly negates them, it is justified and necessary because, as we saw, destructive international competition has in any case already placed the domain of international policy substantially beyond national reach.

Coming to political parties, a powerful negation and transcendence is inherent in Simpol's voting pledge. To reiterate: when citizens adopt, they pledge to vote in all future national elections for ANY politician or party – within reason – that has pledged to implement Simpol alongside other governments. Or, they encourage their preferred party, if they have one, to make that pledge.

The emphasised word “ANY”, you'll have noticed, implies a considerable negation of the separateness and aloneness of political parties. In recognising that destructive international competition forces all parties in power to follow substantially the same market-friendly economic agenda, an agenda which precludes any solution to global problems, the adoption of Simpol by citizens powerfully shows that we've woken up to that reality. Our adoption of Simpol shows politicians that, for us, their game is up. If a politician walks up your garden path canvassing for your vote but notices a Simpol sticker displayed in your front window, they'll know that whatever else they may say, they'll almost certainly need to have signed the Simpol Pledge to have any chance of gaining your vote or the votes of other adopters; votes which, in their bid either to gain a seat or to avoid losing it, could make all the difference. The finer the margin of support between the main competing candidates or

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parties, the lower would be the number of adopters needed to make it in the vital interests of politicians to support Simpol. The finer that margin, in other words, the more powerful is Simpol's negation of politicians and parties, and the stronger, likewise, is its agency or power to transcend.

As a final comment on negation, Simpol could be said to negate those citizens who have not yet adopted it because it seems, at present at least, to be the only initiative that allows us to use our official votes to drive our national politicians to solve global problems, or to otherwise implement a form of people-centred global governance. Furthermore, adoption is open to all, no financial charge is made, and citizens are free to cancel their adoption at any time if they wish. So, there really is no excuse for not adopting it. To the extent that it seems to be the only genuine form of global electoral politics available, adopting it could perhaps be argued to be a matter of personal responsibility for every citizen, as well as an immensely valuable opportunity. Citizens who adopt it could, in that sense, be said to have made themselves part of the global political solution, whereas those who haven't could be said to remain, in a sense, part of the problem. It follows, then, that citizens who haven't yet adopted it are, potentially, negated merely by dint of that omission; a negation that would likely become all the more obvious and keenly felt if Simpol were to become more widely known and supported by the public as a whole.

At all levels, then, be it nations, political parties, individual politicians or individual citizens, Simpol transcends, negates and includes.

The importance of the 'critical balance' in transcending the system

At this point it's perhaps worth mentioning that when living systems (far from equilibrium systems) reach a stage of crisis, opposing forces are typically ranged against each other under tremendous, yet equally matched pressure. This makes a tilting (i.e. influencing) of a seemingly immovable system possible by

the addition of only a relatively tiny amount of pressure on one side or the other. As Laszlo notes,

“A complex path of evolution could ... characterize more stable systems, but in a chaotic system [i.e. a system that has reached a stage of crisis], a different dynamic comes into play. A system characterized by chaos has a finely structured order, and the smallest ‘push’ or ‘fluctuation’ can impel its development into a different trajectory...”⁸⁰

Evidence of these opposing, yet equally matched forces can perhaps be seen by the fact that support for opposing politicians or parties was very evenly matched in a number of recent national elections around the world. So much so, that their outcomes were disputed. The results of the U.S. presidential election in 2000, the German national election in 2005 and the Italian and Mexican elections in 2006 were all contested and in doubt because they each depended on a relatively tiny number of votes. This may be a sign of both the equal, double-sided pressure we would expect to see in a system reaching a critical stage and the vital importance of the ‘critical balance’; the vital importance, that is, of a relatively tiny number of votes. The human social holararchy, it seems, is approaching its ossified, chaotic and critical stage; and Simpol, through its capacity to harness or “push” that critical balance, seems potentially well-placed to tilt the system in humanity’s favour.

Simpol’s potential for harnessing the ‘critical balance’ was demonstrated in exactly this way during the UK General Election of 2005. In the previous election in 2001, the seaside constituency of Weston super Mare in south-west England had been won by the Liberal Democrats by a margin of just 338 votes. But shortly before the following general election in May 2005, the opposing Conservative candidate for that constituency, John Penrose, felt moved to sign the Pledge

⁸⁰ *The Chaos Point – the world at the crossroads*, Ervin Laszlo, Piatkus, 2006, p99.

following pressure from just a few local adopters. Simpol-UK, the UK branch of ISPO, then duly advised all adopters in the constituency that he had signed so they could factor this information into their voting decision. In the event, John Penrose was elected to Parliament by a small majority. We can only speculate, of course, as to his reasons for signing the Pledge because although he may have been influenced by his need to win the seat, other politicians in safer parliamentary seats have also signed the Pledge simply because they think Simpol is a good idea.⁸¹

A further aspect of Simpol's negation and transcendence arises because a politician who supports it strongly attracts, but does not necessarily secure, the votes of adopting citizens. In fact, by signing the Pledge, a politician only makes him/herself *eligible* to receive the votes of adopters. This is because a decision by one candidate to sign the Pledge does not preclude other competitors from doing so. Indeed, it makes it more, and not less likely that others will because candidates who fail to sign risk losing to those who do. An example of this also occurred in the run-up to UK General Election in 2005 as a result of some very active local campaigning. In the constituency of St. Ives, situated at the very toe of Cornwall in south-west England, the Pledge was signed by the sitting MP, Andrew George (of the Liberal Democrats), and by the opposing candidates of two of the other main parties.⁸² Provided any of those three was elected, Simpol gained support in parliament regardless.

Additionally, Simpol's national organisations and local campaign groups generally refrain from making public the number of adopters living in any given electoral constituency. So, as an election approaches, political candidates have no certain knowledge of exactly how large Simpol's voting bloc may be and thus how costly it might be if they fail to sign the

⁸¹ An on-going list of UK MPs who have signed the Pledge can be found on the website of Simpol-UK. See www.simpol.org.uk.

⁸² Barnaby Flynn, former Co-ordinator of Simpol-UK's St. Ives constituency Local Simpol Group, and other local Simpol adopters did an excellent job in the run-up to the May 2005 election.

Pledge. This further enhances the pressure on them to sign. These factors are, of course, simply evidence of Simpol's powerful agency and potential to transcend; its potential to *go beyond* the world of divisive party politics, and yet, by driving candidates to pledge to implement it, Simpol also includes them.

Transcendence and the 'creative twist'

In the above two examples we have practical, real-live evidence of Simpol's potential to transcend, negate and include the human social hierarchy: it's already happening. And as it develops, we can see that Simpol paradoxically intensifies *competition* between political parties to produce *co-operative* cross-party support. So although Simpol has global co-operation as its end-point, it uses competition to reach that end-point. This novel, ironic and paradoxical use of competition to produce its very opposite could be seen as an example of what Wilber, in the context of transformative evolutionary change, calls "a creative twist".⁸³

Although Simpol's potential to transcend would be greater in 'first-past-the-post' electoral systems where only a simple majority determines the winner, all democracies are based on competition between political parties, so its approach should prove reasonably effective regardless of the electoral system concerned.

At the level of the individual citizen, Simpol could also be said to transcend and include our right to vote in important novel ways. In particular, the adoption pledge, we saw, does not necessarily restrict our freedom as citizens to vote as we please. Simpol thus preserves our autonomy/agency as individual voters (i.e. it includes and preserves our votes). But it also extends their power and geographical reach beyond national borders and up to the global level (i.e. it transcends our votes).

It is perhaps worth reiterating, here, that the global justice movement also pretends to similar aims to Simpol in terms of

⁸³ SES, p50.

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global social justice and environmental sustainability. The slogan of the World Social Forum (WSF), for example, affirms that “another world is possible”.⁸⁴ ATTAC, one of the largest global activist organisations, said of the challenge that “it’s about taking back the future of our world”.⁸⁵ Many such organisations can be classified as NGOs (Non-governmental organisations) and this term gives an important clue to the nature of their agency. *Non-governmental* in this context means that their modes of action (or agency) are essentially *exterior* to government and to established electoral processes. This “exteriority” or incapacity to adapt themselves to the system thus makes it difficult for such organisations to effect transformation. Simpol’s adoption process, conversely, works *through* established national electoral systems with considerable transformative potential and yet, because its policy content is formulated independently and is thus exterior to those systems, we could say that Simpol works *in* the system but is not *of* it. Another example, perhaps, of a novel and creative twist.

Yet another mark of Simpol’s transcendence is that its transformative power continues to grow from election to election. Under conventional electoral politics, politicians or political parties must, with each new election, essentially start afresh to confirm what support they have amongst the public and must build it over the course of an election campaign. Under the Simpol approach, by contrast, politicians or parties who have signed the Pledge do not have to re-confirm that Pledge at each new election. Once they’ve signed it, they enter each subsequent election with their pledged status intact, and are thus able to benefit from the enhanced electoral support of adopting citizens who remain adopters for life, (unless they choose to cancel their adoption for some reason). In this way, the power of citizen-adopters transcends the election cycle and continues to grow from election to election as more and more adopters are gathered. This, then, is how Simpol, although not a

⁸⁴ World Social Forum. Website: www.forumsocialmundial.org.

⁸⁵ A slogan once used by ATTAC. Their website: www.attac.org.

political party, transcends and includes political parties, thus providing further evidence of Simpol's capacity to *go beyond* the confines of the existing system; evidence that it is not determined by that system but transcends and includes it.

6. The lower sets the possibilities of the higher; the higher sets the probabilities of the lower

“My body [the lower] follows the laws of gravity; my mind [the higher] follows other laws, such as those of symbolic communication and linguistic syntax; but if my body falls off a cliff, my mind goes with it.”

“This”, Wilber goes on to explain, “is what is meant by saying that the lower sets the possibilities, or the larger framework, within which the higher will have to operate, but to which it is not confined.”⁸⁶ The same goes for global governance initiatives in the sense that the existence of 200-odd competing nation-states (the lower) sets the framework of possibilities for what the higher – the new holon of global governance – can feasibly look like.

In other words, if we agree that global governance has to be essentially democratic, that it must be nation-states that implement the arising democratic decisions, and that any risk of competitive disadvantage must be avoided, it's not too difficult to see, broadly, what the new holon would have to look like.

To be democratic it must, firstly, be driven by citizens. To successfully transcend nations it must, secondly, possess the necessary agency and meet all the negating and preserving requirements and, finally, to avoid any risk of competitive disadvantage, its implementation must surely be global and simultaneous. So if all of that adequately describes the framework of possibilities presented to us by today's world, then Simpol, probably, is pretty much what the new holon of global governance would have to look like. Whether or not it is

⁸⁶ SES, p62.

Simpol is, of course, beside the point, because to work successfully within that given framework, any other initiative would logically have to possess substantially the same agency as Simpol; the same basic methodology and features, even if its name might be different.

As far as the higher setting the probabilities of the lower is concerned, this simply means that the higher holon governs or “organises the freedom” of the lower. For example, a set of rules and regulations implemented under Simpol (the higher) would set the probabilities of the lower nation-states. In this way, Simpol could potentially be said, in Wilber’s words, “to limit the indeterminacy (organize the freedom) of its junior holons (precisely because it transcends and includes them; i.e., via ‘downward causation,’ or more generally, ‘downward influence’)”.⁸⁷

7. The number of levels which a hierarchy comprises determines whether it is ‘shallow’ or ‘deep’; and the number of holons on any given level we shall call its ‘span’.

Concerning *depth*, nation-states generally contain, we saw, the following holonic levels (including itself): Individual → Family → Local authority → Nation-state. So nation-states could be said to comprise four levels; to have a depth of 4. We can also further confirm these as distinct levels by noting that, at each one, individuals normally have a direct say or vote.

With respect to *span*, since there are over 200 nations in the world, nation-states could be said to have a span of 200+.

8. Each successive level of evolution produces GREATER depth and LESS span.

As we just saw, Wilber uses ‘depth’ to indicate the number of levels in a holarchy. In the case of nation-states, we saw that they can generally be said to comprise four levels. Since Simpol

⁸⁷ SES, p60.

or any other global governance initiative would, if implemented, add a further level to the human social holarchy, it would have created greater depth: four levels would have become five. But in doing so, it would also have created less 'span'. Span, according to Wilber, is the number of holons on a given level. So, if any of the global governance initiatives were to succeed, it would be unique: a single holon with a span of 1. So, assuming some form of global governance is implemented, greater depth would have emerged but also less span.

8a. The greater the depth of a holon, the greater its degree of consciousness.

To make the factor of consciousness more understandable, Wilber, we saw, drew a distinction between transformative and translative holons. Translative holons emerge and stay on the same level from which they emerged. *Transformative* holons enable a move to a higher (or deeper) holonic level. Transformative holons are special, higher, more embracing, more *conscious*, because they *go beyond* or above the existing level, adding a further level of depth (or height) on a vertical axis. In transformation, "new forms of agency emerge", Wilber explains, "and this means a *whole new world* of available stimuli becomes accessible to the new emergent holon. The new holon can respond to deeper or higher worlds, because its translation processes transcend and include those of its subholons."⁸⁸

In today's world, the primary stimuli to which nation-states respond are the competitive advantages which may accrue if they lower corporate taxes or weaken labour or environmental protection. The maintenance of its competitive position in the global market is, today, each nation's primary concern or stimulus; the way each nation looks at the world. Nations are thus wholly bound within a worldview which, for them at least, consists only of stimuli that demand responses which improve

⁸⁸ SES, p67.

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competitiveness but effectively exclude acting in the lasting interests of society or the environment or of the planet as a whole. Such is the destructively competitive “world” of nation-states; a world they cannot go beyond – a worldview they cannot *see* beyond.

Only an entity possessing truly *transformative* agency which transcends and includes the competitive paradigm, and which has binding authority over nations (i.e. which is capable of delivering binding global governance), could be said to be a more conscious holon; to constitute a higher, transformative holon that has emerged “vertically”, as it were. Wilber:

“in *transformation*, whole new worlds... disclose themselves. These ‘new worlds’ are not physically located someplace else; they exist simply as a *deeper perception* (or deeper registration) of the available stimuli in *this* world. They appear to be – and might as well be – ‘other worlds’ to the junior holons, but these ‘other worlds’ disclose themselves – they become *this worldly* – via transformation and self-transcendence.”⁸⁹

Here, the Kyoto Protocol, which entails only a 5-6% reduction in carbon emissions, helps us to understand what Wilber means. We might say that in *this* world, i.e. in today’s world of competing nation-states, a 5-6% reduction is more or less all that the present constraints of destructive international competition will realistically allow. We all know we need a dramatically greater reduction of 60%, or possibly even 80%, but we have no idea how we are going to get nation-states to implement it, given today’s constraints. Such a reduction thus seems entirely unfeasible or *other-worldly*; entirely beyond realistic reach.

But this is where Simpol’s understanding of destructive competition and its articulation of simultaneity come into play. These factors together with Simpol’s voting pledge combine to

⁸⁹ *SES*, p67.

produce a powerful process potentially capable of achieving binding global governance; a process which serves to make these much-needed ‘other-worldly’ policies feasible because, to implement them, Simpol avoids anyone having to act against their own interests. It also offers citizens a way of driving the process. As such, the technical resources could be mustered and the legal constraints implemented making truly dramatic reductions possible. This is how Simpol transforms sterile policies into fertile ones, so enabling them to be brought into *this* world and thus within humanity’s collective grasp. This is what Wilber describes as a “deepening perception brought about by emergent evolution and transformation. Greater depth brings other worlds into this world, constantly...”⁹⁰

This deeper perception, then, is what Wilber means by higher holons possessing a greater degree of consciousness. Simpol’s elucidation of the vicious circle of destructive international competition as the key barrier to solving global problems is, we could say, a mark of such a deeper consciousness, a deeper analysis or registration – a more profound and penetrating understanding - of the global predicament. And Simpol’s deeper understanding – its deeper *consciousness* – brings into this world a practical, if ambitious, solution.

Translation

We’ve seen how holons, whether transformative or translative, relate to or interact with other holons according to the nature of their agency. Their agency thus determines how they interpret the world and that is what Wilber calls “translation”:

“The agency (or regime or code) of any given holon *translates* the world according to the terms of its code or regime – it will recognise, or register, or respond to, only those items that fit its code.”⁹¹

⁹⁰ *SES*, p67.

⁹¹ *SES*, p66

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Since each holon responds to or translates the world only according to stimuli that fit its code, it's vital to consider what is the primary stimulus to which human social holons respond? Given that the higher holons of local authorities or nation-states most clearly and energetically respond to citizens whenever there is an election, we should note that it is our right to vote that represents their primary stimulus. Rabbits, we might say, respond to carrots; corporations respond to profits; and politicians respond, primarily at least, to votes. Whatever other means we citizens might use to influence the higher holons politicians, political parties and nation-states, such as street protest or lobbying, it is our *right to vote*, it seems, that underpins them all. Any initiative purporting to become the new holon of global governance will be best placed to succeed, it seems, if it directly interfaces, as Simpol does, with politicians' key stimulus; with our right to vote.

The European Union and Regional Trading Blocs

At this point, some observations concerning the European Union (EU) and other regional trading blocs may be useful since we have so far given them only scant attention. By regional trading bloc is meant a group of nations that share a free trade agreement, or that generally encourage the free movement of goods, people and capital. Apart from the EU, other such blocs would include the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Mercosur, an association of South American nations.

The EU, being more than simply a regional trading bloc, can in some respects be considered a higher holon than nation-states since it possesses some binding authority over its member-nations and could thus be said, to some extent at least, to transcend and include them. In the European context, we might say that the EU possesses a deeper consciousness than its individual member-nations.

The question, however, is whether the EU can *endure*; whether it can survive the stresses and strains of a destructively competitive globalised world? The EU is, in principle, an excellent model of transnational governance and, despite many difficulties and shortcomings, it has succeeded in bringing many benefits to its citizens. But the EU's problems are becoming steadily more apparent. The main one is that, while the EU may evidence some transformative properties, its 'degree of inclusivity' or the 'reach of its embrace' is likely to be too small and restricted to retain its agency in a globalised world. The EU's less-than-global size creates problems because the high social and environmental standards it was established to uphold are being undermined by trading blocs and individual nations in other parts of the world where business costs are much lower. Although the EU still provides a valuable bulwark that has so far helped to maintain those standards, there are signs of them being eroded. Up to now, it has successfully protected citizens against many unwelcome products, such as hormone-treated beef and, to some extent, GM (genetically modified) crops. It also boasts some of the most generous social protection systems in the world. But to compete and to remain attractive to corporations and inward investors, the nations of the EU, and especially its oldest members, are being forced to sacrifice some of their high social and environmental standards. This on-going dismantling of the European social market is leading, for example, to social unrest in France and to an on-going dismantling of the German welfare state.⁹² On the macro-scale, this is just one example of the trade interest eroding the social and environmental interests because the key attributes of governance cannot presently be exercised.

Moreover, these tensions are increasingly being reflected in European public opinion. According to an article reporting on an opinion poll carried out by the European Commission,

⁹² During the Spring of 2006 France attempted to bring in a new law to enable young people to be more easily dismissed from their jobs than longer-term employees causing widespread riots.

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“Just 39 per cent of Europeans think the European Union is heading in the right direction and fewer than half of all voters believe that membership is a good thing for their country... Fears over the effects of globalisation and worries about the impact of the enlargement of the EU on local job markets emerged as strong themes in the pan-European poll...”⁹³

Because it encompasses only the nations of Europe, the EU as a whole must still compete with other nation-states *outside* Europe, in particular with the USA and China, where business costs are lower. To that extent, the nature of the EU's agency is essentially no different to that of other nation states. The EU may be transformative *inside* its borders, but when it faces the world outside, it is forced to respond to the same stimuli of competitive threats and advantages that all nations face. The inexorable lock-step logic of destructive global competition means that the surface traits which distinguish the EU as different to other nation-states, namely its protected social market and high environmental standards, are likely to be steadily and substantially eroded over time. This danger seems at least to be recognised by German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who, in an address to the 2006 World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, warned of “grave social disorder” if the international community failed to agree on a global framework of rules to govern competition between old industrial and fast-developing economies.⁹⁴ However, since the agency and worldview of the multi-national corporations who attend the WEF is, like nation-states, fully bound within the confines of pursuing only their own self-interest, Merkel is unlikely to find answers in Davos. In a bid to counteract the shortcomings which arise from the EU's less than global reach, the EU is trying to expand its reach by incorporating more and more new members. But unless the

⁹³ *The Independent*, 6th May 2006. Article by Stephen Castle entitled “Europeans continue to turn against EU.”

⁹⁴ See *The Financial Times*, 26th January 2006. Article entitled *Merkel calls for rules on global trade*.

European Union were expanded to cover the entire world, becoming in effect a Global (rather than merely a European) Union, its expansion only seems likely to bring further problems as the European Commission's own opinion poll suggests. The incorporation of the former east-block nations is making the practical operation of the EU extremely cumbersome and that is to say nothing of the complications arising from differences in tax regimes, social safety nets, languages, cultural and religious backgrounds and so on. Rather like a metal ring of a certain thickness that is perfectly stable and rigid at a relatively small size, it would, if expanded by a factor of 50, become extremely floppy and unstable. If the EU *does* manage to survive these destabilising enlargement processes, it remains to be seen just what evolutionary relevance it can retain.

As far as the other trading blocs are concerned, their situation is not dissimilar in the sense that, like the EU, their less than global size means they must respond to the ever-shifting sands of competitive advantages or disadvantages in much the same way as individual nations, but simply on a somewhat larger scale. All the while there is no global governance that exercises the key attributes of governance, these sands can only continue to shift according to the logic of destructive international competition; a logic which determines that the trade interest will be prioritised at the increasing expense of the social and environmental interests. Trading blocs, then, are in little better position to solve global problems than individual nation-states. Whether in future the role of trading blocs increases or diminishes, the need for a simultaneously implemented, binding form of global governance consequently remains.

Returning to the subject of holarchic depth and consciousness, we might also make some observations on transnational corporations, on the global justice movement, and on some other currently popular approaches to sustainability and social justice.

Transnational Corporations

We already noted the stimuli of competitive threats and advantages to which nation-states must respond under globalisation; the stimuli which frame how nations see the world. The same is essentially true of corporations, for theirs, too, is a world of competing corporations; a world in which increasing market dominance is the only way to survive. Competition between large, publicly quoted corporations, moreover, plays out not just in the product and service markets in which they operate, but also through global stock markets where they compete for share value with all other publicly quoted corporations. The ability of corporations to move their operations across national borders is a key part of this competition for dominance because it brings the stimuli of differing national tax and regulatory regimes into their worldview; regimes which, because of the ability of corporations to move their operations around, can be selected or avoided largely at will. For any corporation not to take advantage of lower tax countries would, after all, be to place itself at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis other corporations. Locked in to competition as they are, the worldview of corporations, then, is not one that is capable of disclosing a solution to present global problems.

Some may be inclined to question this, being encouraged by the fact that a few major corporations have succeeded in behaving in a socially and environmentally responsible manner while also being extremely profitable and successful. Many readers will have heard, for example, of The Body Shop⁹⁵, which makes cosmetics that have not been tested on animals, or of Interface, the flooring company that makes environmentally friendly, recycled carpet tiles⁹⁶. Both of these companies, and some others, have been very financially successful as a result of their ethical stance. But it is important not to be lulled into a false

⁹⁵ www.thebodyshop.com

⁹⁶ www.interfaceglobal.com

sense of security. For what is often overlooked is that there often appears to be only one major company in any given market that takes such a stance. What this suggests is that while it may be possible for *one* major company in a given market to make environmental and social responsibility into a profitable selling point, that does not necessarily mean others can or will follow. Indeed, the fact that one corporation already occupies an ethical market niche may only make it harder, rather than easier, for its competitors to do the same. This is because the sums a competitor would have to invest to ethically out-compete an already-ethical market leader may be better and more profitably spent by differentiating itself and its products in other ways; by investing in superior product quality, for example, or in branding, in more catchy advertising, lower prices or superior customer service. The fact that ethical companies exist, while welcome, should not be taken to mean that ethical behaviour will automatically become the norm. Indeed, these relatively few ethical companies may only be the bright exceptions that prove the otherwise-gloomy general rule. For if the market alone were capable of instilling adequately ethical behaviour in all market players, we'd hardly be faced with so many global problems arising from poor corporate behaviour.

In a competitive global market, then, it has generally become extremely difficult for corporations to “do the right thing” by society and the environment because they cannot count on their competitors doing likewise. Nor can they count on governments co-operating with one another to ensure a level regulatory playing field. This was evidenced in a report in *The Economist* in which corporations complained that they would like to do more to combat climate change but pointed out that “firms that go green will merely burden themselves with higher costs than their less virtuous competitors.”⁹⁷ Corporations too, it seems, are unwittingly crying out for global, simultaneous

⁹⁷ *The Economist*, October 8th, 2005. Article entitled *Regulate us, please*. p38. www.economist.com.

implementation. But their world – the world of Davos⁹⁸ as we might call it – is not one that can disclose such a solution for it does not possess the deeper perception, the deeper *consciousness* required.

The Global Justice Movement

The global justice movement, we can readily acknowledge, does a very good job of bringing pressing global problems to wider public attention. Through high-profile campaigns and protests, it has succeeded in bringing a range of global environmental and social problems to ever-higher public prominence. That in itself is absolutely essential if change is ever to occur and the movement's aim is, indeed, to get governments to change their policies. But although many activist and non-governmental organisations pay lip service to the vicious circle of destructive global competition, they generally fail to recognise the severe limitations it places on the effectiveness of their own campaigns and thus for the achievement of their objectives. They fail to recognise, in short, that destructive competition effectively places politicians in a veritable policy straight-jacket which confines them to pursuing only a market- and business-friendly agenda. However loud protesters shout and however competently campaigners lobby, they can never succeed in getting politicians to take action likely to pose a significant risk to their nation's economic competitiveness. At best, all campaigners will get are relatively minor concessions which will inevitably be a small fraction of what is required. At worst, they will get empty promises destined to be broken. So long as their strategy remains unchanged, destructive competition can only continue to render substantially futile the movement's expectations of substantive government action.

As the policy straight-jacket becomes ever tighter for politicians, the world the global justice movement increasingly

⁹⁸ Davos, the up-market ski resort in the Swiss Alps, is the venue for the annual World Economic Forum at which the world's business and political leaders confer. www.weforum.org.

inhabits is one that consists of little more than the identification of our dire global problems and the movement's increasingly shrill demands for substantive reforms. But, in directing those demands towards governments in a way that takes no account of destructive competition, the movement generally disregards the fact that politicians simply cannot incur significant competitive disadvantages for their nation and neither should they be expected to. For that would be to expect them to do the impossible: to act against their own, and their nation's, best interests. But instead of thinking a few steps further as to how they might frame their demands in a way that *doesn't* require politicians to act against the national interest, the thought processes of the movement, rather like a railway siding, abruptly reach the end of the line.

The movement's reluctance to release itself from these limitations, as Wilber and others have so cogently pointed out, seems to be a function of the pervading average level of individual and collective consciousness; a level which generally denies the existence of hierarchy (holarchy). This is the level Wilber characterises as "Flatland", (or as the mean "Green Meme" in *Spiral Dynamics*).⁹⁹ Flat, because, in denying the validity of hierarchy, the movement clearly cannot accept that any kind of unified and thus higher (or deeper) process for global transformation might be necessary. For, in denying the validity of hierarchy, the movement sees no solution (or campaign or organisation or process) as being either superior to, or subordinate to, any other. In this way, all campaigns, opinions and processes must remain equal. As one visitor to the 2005 World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, commented:

"This diversity of opinion and approach is both a strength of the Forum, as well as its principal weakness. The Forum derives strength from this diversity as it provides the

⁹⁹ *Spiral Dynamics*, Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1996.

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opportunity for a very large number of movements and organisations to come together, each feeling that their views have a place in the open space of the Forum. At the same time the diverse trends and opinions lead, often, to a sense of frustration that the Forum is not able to hammer together a consensus regarding both a strategic understanding and tactics to be applied.”¹⁰⁰

This effective denial of hierarchy (or holarchy) indeed makes the movement highly successful in terms of the number of people and organisations it is able to gather together. But it also leaves it stranded in a position where the only issue it can agree on is its continued espousal of fragmented diversity – stranded, that is, in the position of being a fragmented heap rather than a coherent whole.

Ironically, the movement’s denial in this respect is at odds with some of the movement’s own founding fathers. E. F. Schumacher, the author of *Small is Beautiful*, for example, is widely acknowledged to be one of the founders of the environmental movement, which was itself a forerunner of the global justice movement. But Schumacher was certainly no enemy of hierarchy.¹⁰¹ Indeed, he recognised very clearly “the *duality* of the human requirement when it comes to the question of size...”; that “we need the freedom of lots and lots of small, autonomous units, and, at the same time, the orderliness of large-scale, possibly global, unity and co-ordination.”¹⁰² But if the movement was to accept this, it would have to acknowledge that the need for global unity and co-ordination necessarily implied a global and unified process by which it could be achieved. But that would effectively be to acknowledge that the

¹⁰⁰ *The World Social Forum Sprouts Wings*. Article by Amit Sen Gupta, 20th February, 2005 at www.forumsocialmundial.org.br.

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, in *A Guide for the Perplexed*, Abacus, 1977, Schumacher’s last but little-known book (which I understand he considered to be his most important), he sets out ideas which show some rudimentary similarities to Wilber’s AQAL (all quadrant, all level) approach.

¹⁰² *Small is Beautiful*, Abacus, 1974, p54. (Italic emphasis is his).

entire movement had, in some sense, been transcended and included by such a process; an acknowledgement the movement seems extremely reluctant to make. So until it embraces the deeper, more complex, holarchic philosophy of those such as Schumacher, a philosophy which would enable it to see the value and necessity of a global campaign such as Simpol, its world – the world of Porto Alegre, as we might call it¹⁰³ – seems much like that of Davos: one that cannot disclose a solution for it does not yet possess the deeper perception, the deeper level of consciousness required.

Having substantially abandoned established electoral processes as a means of obtaining reforms, preferring instead the methods of lobbying and protest, many global justice activists and organisations should perhaps ask themselves why, over the last ten years or so since the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999, the free-trade agenda has held almost total sway more or less regardless of the considerable pressure that the movement, aided by a string of high-profile rock-stars, has been able to marshal? While the movement may rightly contend that party politics and traditional forms of voting have become substantially irrelevant as means for gaining reforms from politicians, it seems not yet to recognise that destructive competition equally emasculates the movement's own preferred methods. Indeed, it is the straight-jacket of destructive competition that prevents politicians from responding substantively to the movement's demands, thus permitting the neo-liberal agenda an unimpeded path to its present dominant position.

This highlights, then, the inherent disadvantage of attempting to seek reform effectively from *outside* the human social holarchy. For as we saw under Tenet 5, the movement has no direct traction or leverage over established systems of electoral democracy and this exteriority effectively puts the movement in *opposition* to the holarchy rather than in a position from which

¹⁰³ Porto Alegre, the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, is the venue for the annual World Social Forum at which the global justice movement confers. Website: www.forumsocialmundial.org.br.

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it could encourage its transformation. It seems likely, then, that if the movement applies yet more pressure against the established system, not only will that continue to have little positive effect, it may well provoke the system into angry reactions.

In the wake of the 9/11 World Trade Center atrocity, the tolerance of the authorities in many countries to street protest is already rather low and civil liberties are steadily being eroded in the name of greater security. Moreover, it cannot be escaped that the exteriority of NGOs to the human social hierarchy and its electoral systems makes the global justice movement as a whole inherently undemocratic when viewed from the point of view of the hierarchy itself. That is to say, given that we have substantially free and fair elections, any movement or group wishing to obtain substantive change can, if it chooses, simply become a political party and seek those changes through established democratic processes. That, after all, is what those processes are for. So, the very *existence* of established democratic processes, at least from the point of view of the hierarchy, fundamentally undermines the democratic legitimacy of NGOs in terms of any desire or pressure they may bring to bear in the cause of substantive social and political reform.

Indeed, the U.S. Government and corporate-funded think-tanks are already starting to attack this most vulnerable aspect of the movement. The influential Washington-based think-tank, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), for example, commented that “The extraordinary growth of advocacy NGOs in liberal democracies has the potential to undermine the sovereignty of constitutional democracies”.¹⁰⁴ The subtext of this statement is: “if NGOs want change, they should either become political parties and so use democratic processes which are there for that purpose, or they should shut up”. And in this respect, we have to admit, the AEI has a point. The inherently undemocratic nature of the global justice movement in this sense paradoxically

¹⁰⁴ From an article by Naomi Klein in the *Globe and Mail*, June 20th 2003, entitled: “*Bush to NGOs: Watch Your Mouths*”.

means that the more powerful its advocacy and protests against the system become, the more legitimate and justified it would make any action by the established hierarchy to suppress them. The abandonment of established electoral processes and growing public frustration with the system thus provide the ingredients for a potentially disastrous cocktail of violent social confrontation. Given the police, armies, tear gas, rubber and other bullets the established hierarchy has at its disposal, such a confrontation is, we might imagine, not one the global justice movement is best placed to win.

Furthermore, to the extent that the movement down-plays the processes of government as a means of reigning in poor corporate behaviour and replaces that with its own strategy of 'blaming and shaming' corporations, we should be aware that this, while doubtless raising public awareness about the errant corporations concerned, can also have a subtle, counter-productive effect. Counter-productive, because the refusal of non-governmental campaigning organisations to engage directly in democratic political processes (i.e. their choice not to incorporate themselves as political parties) means that they effectively have no greater public democratic legitimacy than the corporations they so often criticise. And as such, while they may sometimes succeed in halting the poor behaviour of a few corporations, their self-elevation to being the arbiters of ethical corporate behaviour paradoxically tends to have the wider background effect of licensing more, rather than less, corporate intrusion into the public sphere of politics. After all, so the corporations might say, "if NGOs see fit to down-play the role of government and to take more of the law into their own hands, well, so can we." By subtly negating the role of government and thus exaggerating their own role, NGOs thus inadvertently risk exacerbating the already-excessive level of corporate intrusion into politics.

We could conclude, then, that the very existence of NGOs and the extraordinary growth of the global justice movement over the last 40 years should be seen not as any sign of a solution, but rather as a symptom of the legitimisation crisis; a symptom of the

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fact that the key attributes of governance cannot be properly exercised by national governments in the age of globalisation. But while that failure of governance may well *explain* the movement's existence and tremendous growth, it is, for all that, still not sufficient excuse nor justification for abandoning electoral processes in favour of advocacy, lobbying, blame and protest. Indeed, genuine holarchic transformation surely demands that we *transform* governance and its electoral processes, not abandon them.

What the above should indicate, then, is that a fresh look at the use of electoral processes in the completely new form provided by Simpol might prove very worthwhile to the movement as a whole. For what Simpol offers is a way for the potency of our votes, not only to be restored in a way that overcomes the debilitating effects of pseudo-democracy, but also in a way that extends their reach up to the global level. Simpol, we might say, potentially offers a "global ballot box solution" to the problem of destructive competition and to pseudo-democracy, thus opening the way to solving global problems comprehensively, responsibly and effectively. And because it works only on the critical balance of support between leading candidates, the numbers needed to make it work need only be relatively small. Moreover, because it works *through* existing democratic processes, the charge of being undemocratic which can be levelled against the global justice movement, could not justifiably be levelled against Simpol. Street protest, lobbying and other forms of traditional NGO campaigning, vital though they remain for raising public awareness and for gaining short-term and relatively small concessions from the existing system, do not of themselves seem to offer a comprehensive or lasting answer. It is time, then, for the movement to think again; it is time to think *deeper*.

After all, why get people only to sign petitions which have limited effect when you could just as easily get them to sign Simpol's adoption form? If the same millions who engaged in street protest, lobbying and petition-signing over recent years adopted Simpol, we can only imagine the quite dramatic

electoral effect this would have on politicians around the world. Since relatively few adopters are needed to drive politicians to support it, the movement's adoption of the Simpol strategy would likely have a far more dramatic and meaningful effect than anything the movement has been able to throw at the system so far. The effect, indeed, would be *politically transformative*, having a profound impact not just on politicians around the world, but on the consciousness of all concerned. Simpol, we might say, would allow the global justice movement to move from partial modes of action to complete modes of action; from either/or thinking to both/and thinking; from a chaotic heap to a coherent whole, and thus to an integrated approach which makes "another world" not merely possible, but also practical.

Ethical consumerism?

Another approach that has gained considerable popularity in recent years is the concept of ethical consumerism; the idea that the pound or dollar in your pocket, spent ethically, can transform corporate behaviour - and thus the economic system as a whole - towards ecological sustainability and social justice. Apart from purchasing ethically produced products, we could include under this approach initiatives such as Fair Trade, Socially Responsible Investing (SRI), shareholder activism, and many others. Since money is the bloodstream of the economy, changing the way we consumers spend it can, so the theory goes, transform the economy itself. As one leading exponent, David Korten, suggests in *The Post Corporate World*, through "mindful living" we can free ourselves "from the imposed order of coercive institutions that constrain life's creative power ... To be truly free we must learn to practice a mindful self-restraint in the use of our freedom." By "starving the capitalist

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economy”, Korten asserts, we can “nurture the mindful market”.¹⁰⁵

While no one would deny the moral imperative to spend or invest our money wisely and responsibly, the principal problem with such approaches is that the option of ‘consumer democracy’, as it is sometimes called, is open only to those with sufficient money to practice it - hardly democratic, in other words. Moreover, as George Monbiot points out,

“Those who do seek to make ethical purchasing decisions will often discover ... that the signal they are trying to send becomes lost in the general market noise. I might reject one brand of biscuits and buy another, on the grounds that the second one was less wastefully packaged, but unless I go to the trouble of explaining that decision to the biscuit manufacturer I chose not to patronize, the company will have no means of discovering why I made it, or even that I made a decision at all. Even if I do, my choice is likely to be ineffective unless it is coordinated with the choices of hundreds (or, depending on the size of the company, thousands) of other consumers. But consumer boycotts are notoriously hard to sustain. Shoppers are, more often than not, tired, distracted and drowning in information and conflicting claims. Campaigning organizations report that a maximum of one or two boycotts per nation per year is likely to be effective; beyond that, customer power becomes too diffuse.”¹⁰⁶

Another factor largely ignored by ethical consumerists is the dizzying complexity of global supply chains. Since so many end-products are composed of perhaps hundreds of components, each being produced or processed in different parts of the world

¹⁰⁵ *The Post-Corporate World – Life After Capitalism*, David C. Korten, Berrett-Koehler and Kumarian Press, 2000.

¹⁰⁶ *The Age of Consent – A Manifesto for a New World Order*, George Monbiot, Flamingo, 2003.

under widely diverging social and environmental conditions, it is virtually impossible for consumers to determine which end-products are ethical and which not. One exception to this would perhaps be Fair Trade¹⁰⁷, under which consumers pay a slightly higher price for goods accredited as being ethically produced and which offer producers in poor countries a fairer price for their produce. But again this depends on consumers being able to afford the higher price of these goods which clearly not all consumers can. This therefore confines Fair Trade to only ever being a partial solution. As Monbiot rightly concludes, "... mindful consumption is a weak and diffuse means of changing the world, and it has been greatly overemphasized by those ... who wish to avoid the necessary political conflicts".

The challenge, then, is not fair trade for some, but how to make trade fair *for all*; a challenge, in short, which can only ultimately be achieved through exercising the key attributes of governance on a scale that matches the size of our global market. That's because the only genuinely democratic and comprehensive way to ensure that *all* businesses conform to ethical practices; the only way to fully *integrate* the interests of trade, society and environment, is – and always has been – through binding, democratically determined, government regulation and enforcement. Yet in a globally competitive market, such regulation can now only logically be achieved through global, simultaneous implementation.

A belief in corporate benevolence?

Just as very many citizens around the world have, over the last two decades or so, increasingly turned away from politics and have instead placed their hopes for substantive change in the global justice movement; an approach which, as we earlier saw, is incomplete and likely to prove inadequate, so too others place their hopes for our survival in the possibility of corporate benevolence.

¹⁰⁷ See: The Fairtrade Foundation. www.fairtrade.org.uk.

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As the ability of national governments to govern in the interests of society and the environment has been substantially eroded under globalisation, and as transnational corporations have concomitantly emerged as more powerful than many governments, we increasingly witness a plethora of new concepts and initiatives which attempt, in one way or another, to offer salvation through improved corporate behaviour. From triple-bottom-line accounting which attempts to account for social, environmental and financial interests, to ISO 14001 which provides an international standard for auditing environmental management, and from the UN's *Global Compact* under which corporations can commit to a voluntary code of ethical practice, to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which attempts to improve corporate social and environmental behaviour; the list is indeed seemingly endless.

The assumption that underpins virtually all of these approaches, however, is that corporations can somehow go beyond the traditional constraints of the profit and loss account, which has as its sole objective the maximisation of shareholder value, to include in addition the interests of wider society and the environment. In other words, beyond merely adhering to social and environmental laws and paying their taxes, corporations should go further to take the wider world into account, or so a growing army of organisational consultants and CSR advocates would have us accept. "The enterprise can no longer treat itself as an island and hope to survive in splendid isolation", one of these consultants opines. "Ultimately, survival depends upon the capacity of management to transcend the limitations of the boundary of the enterprise and engage with responsibility both inside and outside the designated company domain."¹⁰⁸

At first glance, this sounds perfectly reasonable and the good intentions of such statements are not in doubt. Furthermore, no one would wish to denigrate the very good work that

¹⁰⁸ *Learning Systems and the Management of Change*, David Wasdell, The Meridian Programme, 1993.

organisational and sustainability consultants, CSR advocates, and others do to improve the social and environmental performance of their corporate clients. The problem, however, lies not so much in what they advocate, but in what they *fail* to advocate. For their earnest desire for corporations to embrace the tenets of social and environmental sustainability is not matched by an equally earnest desire to see national systems of governance transformed towards the system of people-centred global governance we have been describing. Such global governance is, as we have seen, absolutely vital because in a highly competitive global market the behaviour of corporate executives is determined not so much by their own free will to do good or bad, but far more by the actions of their competitors. If an ethical corporation's main competitors are gaining a significant market advantage by engaging in shoddy (i.e. lower cost) social or environmental practices, the ethical corporation must ultimately choose between staying ethical or staying in business - and it's not difficult to see which it must select. As such, corporate behaviour is very substantially influenced by business conditions which are *beyond* corporate control; by conditions, in short, which can and must therefore be managed by government. So, by failing to balance their statements by pointing this out, CSR advocates and corporate sustainability consultants are fostering a false sense of confidence in the ability of corporations to always behave as the public, and no doubt corporate executives themselves, would like. CSR advocates thus tend to absolutise the role of the corporation in an open-ended manner.

A further associated danger is that by imploring corporations to "transcend the limitations of the boundary of the enterprise" while failing to articulate where any new boundary should lie, CSR and organisational consultants seem not to realise that they risk licensing, albeit inadvertently, yet more corporate encroachment into politics and other public spheres.

Here, we would do well to recall that it has rightly and often been pointed out that the private sphere of business is about creating wealth while the public sphere of politics is about how

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that wealth should be distributed and under what environmental conditions. The former is a legitimate *private* pursuit but the latter must, in a civilised democratic society, remain the exclusive *public* province of democratic politics – a province that must be kept uncorrupted by corporate or other private influence. But by absolutising the role of corporations while effectively ignoring the vital role of governance, CSR advocates and others are, like the global justice movement, blurring the public and private spheres; a blurring which culminates in the well-meaning yet rather disturbing and potentially dangerous concept of “corporate citizenship”. Dangerous, because if we are now to refer to corporations as “citizens”, we shouldn’t be surprised if they some day claim (if they haven’t already) the same rights as citizens – such as having the right to vote in national elections, for example, or perhaps one day going even further to claim that their vote should be weighted according to their contribution to GDP.¹⁰⁹

While this perhaps exaggerates the present position, we should nevertheless be aware of the danger. After all, we already suffer an excessive level of corporate intrusion into politics by way of the corporate funding of political parties, the bank-rolling of political candidates and the exertion of undue political influence via professional lobbying and PR companies. And that’s to say nothing of the scurrilous practices of bribery and worse in which some corporations all too frequently engage, especially in developing countries where governance, transparency and enforcement capacities are considerably weaker than they are in developed nations. Given the destructively competitive environment in which corporations operate, placing our hopes for global social justice and environmental sustainability in the possibility of corporate benevolence, while perhaps understandable in an age when national governance has been

¹⁰⁹ In fact, corporations don’t need the vote to assert their power because they effectively already have it in gross profusion. This is in the form of their ability to move, or merely threaten to move, their operations (and thousands of jobs) elsewhere if the government concerned fails to act in a manner consistent with the corporation’s objectives.

severely undermined, is not only unwise, it is also deeply misguided. To absolutise the role of the corporation, then, is effectively to negate the legitimate role of citizens and their governments – a role which they, and they alone, can democratically and legitimately perform.

Boomeritis Governance (or Green-meme Governance)¹¹⁰

What all these non-governmental substitutes for binding global governance amount to, then, is what we might call “boomeritis governance”. Boomeritis is a term coined by Wilber to describe the unfortunate combination of a postmodern, liberal, egalitarian worldview shot through with a strong dose of narcissism; a worldview held by those likely to instinctively favour a distributed way of governing under which NGOs, corporations and markets all have a legitimate, front-line role in the job of governance alongside, and equal to, democratically elected national governments.

Under this scenario, NGOs, corporations and markets sit alongside national governments as equal partners as they all supposedly “do governance together” in a kind of non-hierarchical, flat, networked fashion; a fashion which subtly inflates the status of NGOs, corporations and markets and which, by the same token, subtly but devastatingly *negates* the public sphere of democratically elected national governments and their citizens. A way of “doing governance” which, while it may appeal to the Flatland, baby-boomer generation who favour anything egalitarian, distributed and non-hierarchical, will, as global problems steadily worsen under its auspices, soon likely show itself for the poor, inadequate and ineffective substitute that it is.

We could conclude, then, that CSR and the endless stream of other concepts which attempt, rather haphazardly, to act as

¹¹⁰ “Boomeritis” is Wilber’s term for “universal pluralism infected by narcissism”, a characteristic of the baby-boomer, “me” generation. For a full explanation, see *Boomeritis – A novel that will set you free*, Ken Wilber, Shambhala, 2002.

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“quick and easy” substitutes for proper democratic global governance are, just like the emergence of the global justice movement, merely partial responses to the present inadequacies of national governance; symptoms of the fact that the key attributes of governance can no longer be properly exercised by nations in a world of free-moving capital and corporations. The difficult yet inescapable conclusion we must reach is that these quick and easy “solutions” are no solutions at all, and that only a form of people-centred global governance can ultimately deliver a just and sustainable world. Hard as humanity may try to find all sorts of quicker and easier ways out, we will soon, I suggest, be forced, finally, to face up to this singular reality. For, as we noted earlier, genuine holarchic transformation demands that we *transform* governance and its electoral processes, not abandon them.

9. Destroy any type of holon, and you will destroy all of the holons above it and none of the holons below it

If all humans were somehow removed from the planet, all human social holons higher than individual humans, such as local authorities, nation-states and any other human social structures, would disappear with them. But if that happened all holons lower than humans, such as the biosphere, would continue to exist. This is a sobering thought, because the often-heard idea that we need to combat global environmental threats “in order to save the planet” is misleading. If we fail to tackle such threats, the planet would survive perfectly happily without us. So it is our *own* civilised survival, not the planet’s, that is at stake.

10. Holarchies coevolve

“Holons do not evolve alone, because there are no alone holons (there are only fields within fields within fields).”

There is little that we need make special mention of here. As Wilber explains: “This principle is often referred to as co-evolution, which simply means that the “unit” of evolution is not an isolated holon (individual molecule or plant or animal) but a holon plus its inseparable environment.”¹¹¹

11. The micro is in relational exchange with the macro at all levels of its depth

“...as holons evolve, each layer of depth continues to exist in (and depend upon) a network of relationships with other holons at the *same level of structural organization.*”

Relating this to Simpol’s global governance proposal, it means that Simpol’s implementation would leave all the lower holonic levels intact and in the same pattern of relational exchange as existed prior to implementation. Post-implementation, nation-states would, for example, still exist, trade and relate to each other as they did before. They would still co-operate and compete in the same way *but* competition between them would have been fundamentally modified and limited by Simpol’s new laws, regulations, taxes and wealth re-distribution measures.

It is likely, for example, that some Simpol measures would result in business costs in each country being increased due to higher environmental standards. But the point is that, because it would occur simultaneously in all nations and in a proportionate way, no undue harm would be done to any nation’s or corporation’s *relative* competitiveness. Under Simpol, then, nations would still compete with one another as they did before, but the *terms* on which they do so, (those terms being the policy content of Simpol), would have changed and would ensure that society and the environment were adequately protected. The “same level relational exchange”¹¹² amongst nations would thus

¹¹¹ SES p71.

¹¹² SES, p74.

remain essentially as it was before Simpol had been implemented, as this Tenet requires. The same would be the case amongst all corporations and between all holons on any given level.

The maintenance of “same level relational exchange” would not, however, occur with global governance initiatives which work on the basis of strict global democracy. As we saw, they involve ignoring or repressing nation-states in one way or another, so they would, if implemented, alter significantly the way nation-states, and perhaps other lower holons, relate to one another.

12. Evolution has directionality

“...evolution is marked by creative emergence (novelty), symmetry breaks, self-transcendence, increasing depth (and greater consciousness....). Those are already indicators of evolution’s directionality.”

We saw under Tenet 4 that each higher holon has a greater “reach” or a more encompassing embrace than its predecessors, thus indicating directionality towards ever-larger scales. In the introduction to his book, *Evolution’s Arrow – the direction of evolution and the future of humanity*, John Stewart, in respect of human social holons, makes the same point:

“Cooperation amongst humans has expanded considerably in scale over the past 100,000 years. Initially cooperation existed only within small family groups. Since then, cooperative organisation has progressively expanded in scale to produce multi-family bands, tribes, agricultural communities, cities, empires, nation states, and now some forms of economic and social organisation that span the globe.... Modern human societies are obviously not at an endpoint of evolution. ... Guided by awareness of evolution’s arrow, they will go on to form cooperative organisations of

larger and larger scale and of greater and greater evolvability. First they will form a unified planetary organisation that manages the matter, energy and living processes of the planet.”

He goes on to add that:

“Economic markets and governments are the main processes in current societies that support and adapt large-scale cooperation. ...these processes could be improved to produce human societies that are more evolvable and better at exploiting the benefits of cooperation. These improvements would establish a highly evolvable and cooperative planetary society. They would produce benefits for all humanity by suppressing conflict and other damaging competition within the society, and by effectively organising cooperation to serve the needs and objectives of citizens.”¹¹³

In other words, humanity’s next evolutionary task, according to Stewart, is to establish a new, higher and larger social holon; a holon of people-centred global governance.

With respect to symmetry breaks, Simpol’s implementation simultaneously in virtually all countries would be rather like a political “big bang” and could thus be said to constitute a “symmetry break” [Jantsch] or “discontinuity” [Wilber] or an example of “quantum” or “punctuated” evolution: a relatively sudden, if not simultaneous shift from one level to a higher one; from lower parts only, to a higher whole that transcends and includes the lower parts; to a new grade or order of existence.

¹¹³ *Evolution’s Arrow*, p18-19.

12a-d. a. Increasing complexity (and simplicity); b. increased differentiation/integration; c. increased organisation/structuration; d. increased relative autonomy

Like Wilber, we'll take these four Tenets together because they all feed off, or lead off, each other.

A new holon of global governance, provided it had evolved peacefully, unfolds a further higher or deeper holonic level; a new and healthy level of complexity. But what is it, precisely, that *facilitates* this unfolding? Jantsch suggests that unfolding “implies the interweaving of processes which lead simultaneously to phenomena of structuration at different hierarchical levels”.¹¹⁴

Policy Structuration

The way Simpol facilitates this “structuration” or emergence of a new holarchic level (Tenet 12c) is very simple. It does this effectively by establishing a simple criterion for assessing whether any individual policy qualifies for inclusion in Simpol or not. This is expressed in the following question:

“Would the *unilateral* implementation of the policy measure (i.e. its implementation by a single nation or by a relatively small group of nations) be likely to have an *adverse* effect on the nation's/group's competitiveness?”¹¹⁵

If the answer is *no*, then the policy concerned is clearly one that individual nations, or restricted groups of nations, can happily

¹¹⁴ *Self-organizing Universe*, p75.

¹¹⁵ Although we have been speaking primarily about policies which have an adverse effect on a nation's *economic* competitiveness, policies which might adversely affect a nation's competitiveness in the military or in other spheres could also be included.

implement independently.¹¹⁶ Policies falling into this category, for example, would include those such as national housing policy, health and education policy or issues such as capital punishment, abortion or fox-hunting. It might also include relatively mild global policies to the extent that these can be undertaken without significantly harming the nation's competitiveness: a relatively small reduction in carbon emissions, for example. These *unilateral*-type policies, then, are those we earlier described as belonging to the "domain of domestic policy". Being implemented by nations independently, they therefore represent the *existing* holarchic level and have nothing whatever to do with Simpol.

For policies where the answer is *yes*, on the other hand, clearly these policies need to be incorporated into Simpol because only simultaneous implementation can overcome the barrier of destructive international competition. The simultaneous mode of policy implementation thus represents the new, *higher* holarchic level; the new level of complexity (Tenet 12a). Accordingly, policies are structured into two distinct categories – *unilateral* policies or *simultaneous* policies. In my first book, *The Simultaneous Policy*, these two levels were referred to as "the current context of competition" (i.e. today's context of destructive competition and unilateral policy implementation) and the "future context of co-operation" (i.e. the context of co-operation under which simultaneous-type policies could be implemented via Simpol).¹¹⁷

Unilateral policies, of course, can be implemented within a relatively short time-frame. But being implemented by nations independently, most of these policies would be unlikely to have any impact on global issues. Policies implemented via Simpol, on the other hand, may at first take longer to implement but, because they are simultaneously implemented, they can be

¹¹⁶ Included in this category, of course, would not only be policies which have *no* adverse impact on competitiveness but also those likely to have a *positive* impact; i.e. those which give individual nations a competitive *advantage*.

¹¹⁷ *The Simultaneous Policy*, p94-95.

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much more powerful and far-reaching. Since no nation or corporation would unduly lose out to any other, this should, with practice, encourage rapid agreement. Under Simpol, then, all sorts of global problems could be dealt with in far more effective, undiluted and high-impact way, so giving humanity greater *relative autonomy* (Tenet 12d); greater power and flexibility in the face of changing global circumstances as we proceed together into the future.¹¹⁸

Simpol's differentiation between two types of policy thus gives rise to differentiations in time and space, and in the differing impact the two policy-types would have on global problems. These are summarised in Fig. 4-5 below.

Implementation method	Policy type	Spacial effect	Impact on global problems	Time-frame
Via nations independently	Unilateral	National	None/Low	Short-term
Via Simpol	Simultaneous	Global	High	Longer-term

Figure 4-5

Policy differentiation, then, provides a basis for facilitating the implementation of both types of policy, unilateral *and* simultaneous, so permitting their integration. That is to say, the two different types of policy can be matched up with their respective appropriate implementation methods (unilateral policies via nations independently, and simultaneous policies

¹¹⁸ *SES*, p78.

via Simpol), thus helping to ensure the swiftest possible implementation of *both* types (Tenet 12b). Wilber: “Differentiation produces partness, or a new ‘manyness’; integration produces wholeness, or a new ‘oneness’. And since holons are whole/parts, they are formed by the joint action of differentiation and integration.”¹¹⁹

Policy Flatland

An interesting point to note is that the current context of competition persists not simply because that is the way policies are framed and implemented, but mainly because that is *the way people think*. At present, because there is little recognition of the fundamental problem of destructive international competition, and because Simpol as yet remains relatively unknown, politicians effectively have no choice but to try to reconcile global interests, such as drastically cutting carbon emissions, with national interests, like keeping their economies internationally competitive. But because these two objectives are fundamentally incompatible, the result is an on-going attempt by politicians to persuade citizens (and perhaps themselves) that they *are* compatible; to have us swallow the lie that in the age of globalisation environmental sustainability *can* somehow be reconciled with economic growth and competitiveness when, in fact, it can't. To the extent that we remain wholly submerged in the current context of competition and can see no other possible context, we are forced, in effect, to lie to ourselves; to live in an oppressive state of psychological denial.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ *SES*, p75-76.

¹²⁰ As Wilber notes: “The type of techno-economic base of a society constrains its various probability waves in very strong ways. Thus, it appears that there is a crucially important (if partial) truth contained in Marx’s most famous statement about these facts, namely (to paraphrase): ‘It is not the consciousness of men that determines their reality but their economic-material realities that determine their consciousness.’ That is, the Lower-Right quadrant (which includes the techno-economic base) clearly has a profound influence on the types of beliefs, feelings, ideas, and worldviews of

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This denial applies, of course, to just about everyone and manifests itself in different ways. For society as a whole, it can be seen in the way people cling to the belief that one party is substantially different to another and that politicians operating in the present context have the power to solve global problems. Consequently, when our government fails to deliver, we succumb to the idea that changing the party in power might somehow help. Rather than accept the scary reality that politicians are simply not in substantive control, the vast majority of us prefer to believe their promises despite the mounting evidence of their increasing hollowness.

The global justice movement meanwhile has its own version of denial: the belief that if only activists campaign hard enough, they somehow have the power to drive governments toward fundamental change. But unless the movement adds to its present strategy by embracing Simpfol (or some other similar campaign), destructive competition determines that its demands for drastic remedial policies can only remain largely unmet: a cacophony of desperate cries for change in the chaotic, undifferentiated and echoing flatland of a million other similar cries. As Wilber might comment: "...until [the movement] takes the larger and deeper context into account, the limitations of its own shallower position will torment it, inflict it with the agony of incompleteness, tear at its boundaries with hints of something deeper, higher, more meaningful..."¹²¹

Anyone who has not yet discovered Simpfol (or some other campaign that operates on similar principles) can thus only remain caught or trapped in that worldview; trapped, that is, in today's stifling and *undifferentiated* context of competition in which all policies are jumbled together on the unilateral level.

men and women. For us, of course, this is in every way an AQAL [all quadrants, all levels] affair – we needn't buy in to Marx's tendency to absolutize the LR quadrant. At the same time, it is very hard indeed to overestimate the impact of the LR quadrant on the various modes of consciousness and culture." Ken Wilber Online

<http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/books/kosmos/excerptA/part3-1.cfm>.

¹²¹ SES, p85.

They remain trapped – mind and body – in what we might call “Policy-Flatland”; caught in a mode of policy implementation - at a level of consciousness - which is simply incapable of responding to the urgent need for drastic remedial action. Both their thinking and, not surprisingly, their actions are thus veritably crippled by those mental and existential constraints.¹²²

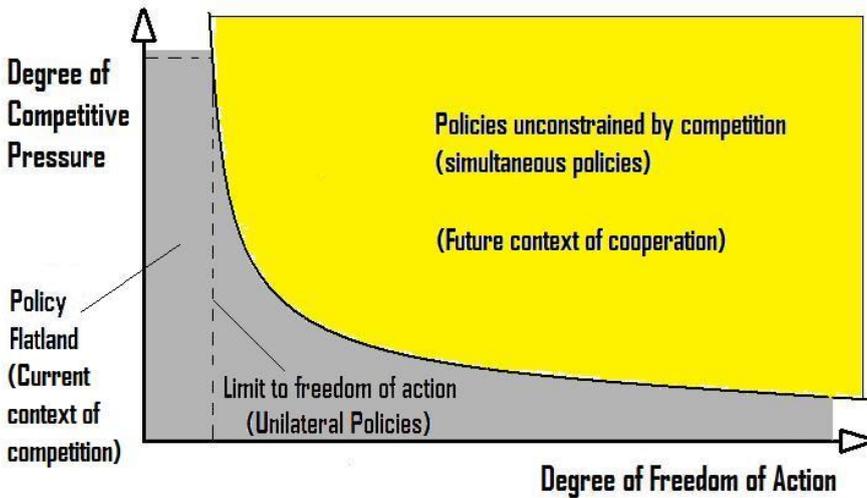


Figure 4-4

Policy Flatland is indicated in Fig. 4-4 above, using our familiar diagram and showing how the high degree of international competitive pressure confines present thinking and actions to a very narrow and inadequate range. Only by identifying the need for simultaneous implementation – only by reaching a deeper

¹²² In his book, *The Possibility of Progress*, Shephard Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd., 2005, Mark Braund draws some interesting parallels between psychological denial and the hyper-competitive society in which we live. See p182-183.

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level of consciousness - can we escape the mental constraints of Policy Flatland and move to embrace the deeper and wider future context of global co-operation; the only context now capable of delivering humanity from its present crisis.

Uniformity or Diversity?

At this point it's worth mentioning that, despite the increasingly obvious need for an appropriate form of global governance, many people remain highly suspicious of the idea, feeling perhaps that the very term itself implies global and monolithic uniformity. But this is not so. While it's true that the kind of global governance we are describing would bring integration and coherence to global-level affairs, the opposite would be the effect lower down the system. So, the paradox of holarchic transformation, it turns out, is that differentiation (manyness) and integration (oneness) go hand in hand. The new "manyness" that would be facilitated by the "oneness" of Simpol is explained by John Stewart:

"It is worth emphasising [that the] unification of the living processes of the planet into a single organisation will not impose uniformity on them. ... To the contrary, the formation of managed organisations paves the way for a massive increase in diversity by allowing specialisation and a complex division of labour to emerge. This is what has occurred within cells, within multicellular organisms, and within societies of organisms. In the same way, the planetary organisation will produce unity within difference. The formation of a planetary organisation will facilitate a huge increase in the variety and diversity of living processes, including in human behaviour, and will unify this diversity into a coherent whole."¹²³

¹²³ *Evolution's Arrow*, p311.

In his excellent book, *The Global Brain*, Peter Russell also makes the same point:

“...a human social super-organism [i.e. a global human social holon] would not entail our all becoming nondescript cells who have given up their individuality for some higher good. We already are cells in the various organs that compose society yet still retain considerable individuality. The shift to a social super-organism would mean that society has become a more integrated living system. ... this is likely to lead to greater freedom and self-expression on the part of the individual, and to an even greater diversity.”¹²⁴

Simpol brings deeper meaning by disclosing to us, already today, the contours of the next level of complexity through the *differentiation* of two types of policy (Tenet 12b). Without this differentiation (or structuration) there is, it seems, no way of thinking differently nor of escaping policy-flatland - and thus no possibility of escaping the current context of competition. Without first differentiating between the two types of policy, there is, of course, no possibility of subsequently integrating them. With both types of policy today generally remaining all mixed up together (one large heap instead of a differentiated whole), psychological denial is the inevitable result. Only a future context of co-operation, such as Simpól discloses, could transcend, negate and include the current context of competition. For as Wilber might suggest, “...each discovery of a new and deeper context and meaning is a discovery of a new *therapia*, a new therapy, namely: we must *shift our perspectives, deepen our perception*, often against a great deal of *resistance*, to embrace the deeper and wider context.”

¹²⁴ *The Global Brain – The Awakening Earth in a New Century*, Peter Russell, Floris Books, 2007.

The Two-Dimensional Party Manifesto

If we fast-forward, now, to imagine a time when Simpol, although still not implemented, had perhaps made significant inroads and gained the support of major political parties in some countries, we could imagine what the differentiation of the two types of policy might look like in practice, and how they could be integrated.

For political parties which today pretend, increasingly in vain, that social justice and environmental sustainability can somehow be reconciled with economic liberalism, signing the Simpol Pledge would permit them to resolve that dilemma and to “have their cake and eat it”. Once they had signed it, they could very cogently argue that, until Simpol’s implementation came about, continuing to implement economic policies that enhance the nation’s competitiveness was *still* in the nation’s best interests. But having signed the Pledge, they would also be demonstrating their readiness to implement Simpol, and so to deal effectively with global problems as soon as sufficient other nations did likewise. They would thus be protecting their nation’s competitiveness in the short-term, *and* be standing ready to solve global problems too.

In this way, signing the Pledge would enable political parties to present the public with what we are calling “two-dimensional manifestos” as a new way of setting out their political programmes. (We might alternatively call them “integral manifestos” or “differentiated manifestos”.)

One-dimensional, “flatland manifestos” are how political parties present their policies to us today. The subtext of these manifestos is: “if you elect us, we’ll implement all the policies in our manifesto – including solutions to global problems - when we come to power”. One-dimensional manifestos may sound good, but because they embody the denial we earlier identified, few people believe them anymore. It’s little wonder that politicians enjoy ever less public credibility especially when it comes to solving global problems. Nor should it surprise us that fewer people bother to vote anymore.

When political parties sign the Simpol Pledge, by contrast, we could look forward to the *two-dimensional* manifesto: one in which political parties *differentiate* between the two types of policy. Once a party signs it, all its *unilateral*-type policies would effectively constitute the first part or “dimension” of its manifesto. That’s because those policies, implemented unilaterally, would have no significant adverse impact on the nation’s competitiveness, or they may even give the nation a first-mover competitive *advantage*. The second dimension of the manifesto would simply consist, of course, of Simpol; i.e. of all the *simultaneous*-type policies needed to solve our global problems; policies which can only be implemented when all or sufficient other nations do likewise. These are the policies already being developed as part of Simpol’s on-going policy development process. The passing, under a party’s legally constituted rules, of a resolution to sign the Pledge would thus make Simpol’s policy agenda the second dimension of the party’s manifesto.

In this way, a political party that signs the Pledge would remove from its previous manifesto all those policies which reflect promises which, in reality, can only be delivered via Simpol. That’s because they would instead be reflected in Simpol’s policy agenda. This two-dimensional, differentiated effect would allow political parties to provide a far more authentic, honest and integrated presentation of a political party’s entire programme in today’s context of globalisation. By differentiating between unilateral and simultaneous policies and by supporting both methods of implementation, political parties could finally stop pretending they have the unilateral power to solve global problems. They could at last be honest about what policies they *can* implement unilaterally and what policies must be implemented via Simpol, so integrating the two. The two-dimensional manifesto, then, would represent a far more *coherent*, more *realistic*, more *authentic*, more *appropriate* political response to today’s destructively competitive, globalised world. After all, what kind of parties will citizens around the world be most likely to vote for as the world steadily

continues to fall apart? Will they vote for parties that continue to pretend they can solve global problems by using today's inadequate method of international treaty-making; a method destructive competition effectively renders obsolete? Or for parties which, while each having their own clear and realistic *domestic* agenda, also support a shared global process, such as Simpol, for implementing a far-reaching *international* policy programme; a programme that would also be supported by hundreds of other parties in countries all over the world, and by millions of citizens? Only political parties that sign the Pledge, I suggest, could make themselves credible and relevant in a globalised world. Only *they* would make themselves believable and capable of restoring peoples' faith in politics; only *they*, indeed, would show themselves capable of resolving the legitimisation crisis.

Since Simpol makes it clear which policies are which, and how to implement each, it *integrates* them and thus brings with it "a new *simplicity*, precisely because the new whole, as a single whole, is simpler than its many parts."¹²⁵

Two-dimensional NGOs

It should be clear that this differentiated approach is also one we are suggesting NGOs and global justice organisations around the world should adopt. By supporting Simpol and so taking on board the reality of destructive competition and its implications, the global justice movement would have recognised that a substantial portion of its policy demands inescapably falls within the category of policies requiring simultaneous implementation. They would consequently have *differentiated* between unilateral and simultaneous policies and so would campaign for unilateral-type policies using their conventional methods and for simultaneous-type policies via Simpol. *Differentiation* by NGOs of unilateral from simultaneous

¹²⁵ *SES*, p75.

policies would thus enable them to pursue the appropriate campaigning method for each type, so enabling their integration. Crucially, by supporting Simpol in this way, NGOs would ensure that their policy demands no longer risked being dismissed by governments, as they so routinely are today, on the grounds that their unilateral implementation would harm national competitiveness. In the UK in August 2007, for example, a wide array of NGOs and climate campaigners held a major protest at London's Heathrow airport as part of a high-profile campaign against the construction of a third runway. But this had little effect in the face of the justification subsequently given by the government for the runway's go-ahead, as reported in *The Guardian*, 22nd Nov. 2007:

“Kelly [Ruth Kelly, secretary of state for transport] said abandoning expansion plans might salve green consciences but it would have no impact on the environment because the global appetite for air travel would continue to grow at 5% a year. “If Heathrow is allowed to become uncompetitive, the flights and routes it operates will simply move elsewhere. All it will do is shift capacity over the Channel. It will make us feel pure, but with no benefit to the rest of the planet.” [she said].”

Simpol, then, would allow the global justice movement to properly *acknowledge* the competitiveness objection, and by calling on politicians to sign up to a solution that removes it, the movement would leave politicians little choice but to support it. In that way, Simpol would allow the movement to regain the upper hand. The direct pressure the movement exerts through its conventional campaigns would continue and would extract from politicians the important, though limited, concessions possible in the present competitive context. Meanwhile, by mobilising its own members as well as members of the public to adopt Simpol, the movement would be applying very considerable *electoral* pressure on politicians and governments to sign the Pledge, so

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hastening Simpol's global implementation and, with it, the achievement of the movement's wider aims.

Not only would supporting Simpol be a genuinely coherent stance for politicians, parties, governments and the global justice movement to take, it would also serve as a powerful challenge or example – a powerful *attractor* - to all *other* politicians, parties, governments and NGOs, home and abroad, to follow suit. As global problems worsen, parties or nations choosing to sign the Pledge would gain a powerful whip-hand over those that hadn't because they, and they alone, would be seen to have a *coherent solution* to the competitiveness obstacle and they alone would attract the votes of the growing number of adopters. Those that hadn't signed, on the other hand, would only show themselves to be stuck in Policy Flatland, still in denial, so making themselves distinctly unattractive: increasingly irrelevant. Conversely, since Simpol represents no risk, there's every reason to support it, so making it very attractive indeed. This subject of attraction, then, brings us to our final Tenet: *telos*.

12e Increasing telos

The regime, canon, code or deep structure of a holon acts as a magnet, an attractor, a miniature omega point, for the actualization of that holon in space and time. That is, the end point of the system tends to “pull” the holon's actualization (or development) in that direction, whether the system is physical, biological, or mental.

I hope by this point the reader will recognise the entire Simpol concept as a kind of attractor within which many of its elements function as individual contributors to the main attraction. As an attractor itself, Simpol could perhaps be considered as a “bifurcation” or “shift mechanism” which moves our human system from one attractor to another. Laszlo:

“Models with catastrophic bifurcations (conducting from turbulent to newly ordered states through the reconfiguration of the attractors) simulate rapid *evolutionary leaps* with the greatest fidelity. The significant simulations occur when dynamic systems are destabilized and pass through a chaotic phase on the way toward essentially new – and in practice unpredictable – steady states.”¹²⁶

Simpol’s implementation would thus represent a rapid *evolutionary leap* as Laszlo describes it. It would be a move from many nation-state holons to their reconfiguration within one holon of global governance. In political-economic terms, the present global system is becoming turbulent and unstable because the key attributes of governance can no longer be properly exercised in a competitive, globalised world. The longer this continues, the more unstable and prone to collapse the system becomes.

We might liken this situation to a pair of traditional weighing scales which normally has two dishes, one on each side to maintain the balance. With the advent of globalisation under which the exercise of the key attributes of governance has been substantially impaired, the scales, too, are impaired and have something missing. We could say that the apparatus is missing one of its two dishes. So the remaining dish – which we’ll call the “unilateral dish” – simply goes lower and lower as it becomes increasingly weighed down by global problems and the ineffectiveness of unilateral solutions. But because it cannot cope – because it is not *configured* to cope – the unilateral dish just keeps on going down until the whole apparatus risks falling over at any moment. This is the “chaotic phase” Laszlo refers to; i.e. the age of globalisation we presently find ourselves in which is characterised by global problems getting worse and nothing of substance being done about them.

¹²⁶ *Evolution*, Laszlo, p43.

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Negative		Positive
Simpol is no-risk due to simultaneous implementation..		Makes Simpol easy to support
Politicians who fail to support Simpol risk losing votes		Politicians who support Simpol can gain our votes
Any nation moving first to solve global problems lands itself with a competitive disadvantage...	→	With Simpol, problems can be solved without any nation acting against its self-interest
Simpol's policies are not yet decided...	Simpol	Invites participation by all in their design
Global policies cannot be implemented by individual nations: they're sterile!		But they <i>can</i> be implemented via Simpol. Now they're fertile
Political parties who fail to support Simpol remain in policy-flatland ...	→	Simpol's policy differentiation allows parties to 'have their cake and eat it'
The vicious circle of destructive international competition is deepening...	ATTRACTS	So the pressure for global co-operation and support for Simpol intensifies
Do we have a better idea? Which horse should we back?		Let's adopt Simpol <i>and</i> support the best other initiatives too.
What do we have to lose? Our skins?		What do we have to gain? Our bodies, minds and souls

Figure 4-6

But, with the *differentiation* of two types of policy that Simpol discloses, the missing simultaneous dish is suddenly restored to the other side of the scales, so permitting the *global* problems (and, with them, their simultaneous solutions) to be removed from the unilateral dish and transferred to where they properly belong. If that is achieved, the evolutionary leap will have been made and a new balance - a new “steady state” at the new higher level of complexity - will then have been achieved.

Some of Simpol’s features in terms of their functions as negative “repellers” and positive attractors are listed in Fig. 4-6 above.

The final Omega-point?

“The mind’s omega point, for each theorist, is the context that they believe cannot be outcontexted, the context beyond which growth or expansion cannot or does not or should not proceed.”

Readers could be forgiven for suspecting that I consider Simpol, if it were ever implemented, as in some sense the “end of history”; the “omega point that, when reached, would answer all the really difficult questions and usher in some sort of relatively paradisiacal condition.”¹²⁷

Well, of course I do believe that it, or something very like it, would usher in a world system that is considerably better than what much of humanity endures today and, like most advocates of global governance, I believe humanity cannot overcome threats like global warming unless we co-create a new human social holon on the scale of the planet. But as Wilber points out, and as the theory of holons and holarchies itself makes clear, everything is a whole/part. So, even if Simpol were to become the global human whole, it would also be merely a *part* of the wider planetary universe and thus, like all holons, its negation

¹²⁷ SES, p84.

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and inclusion into some other yet more embracing whole would some day come.

This on-going and timeless evolutionary march toward new higher levels of co-operation – to new higher levels of holarchy or complexity - is also the story of competition and co-operation. In his ground-breaking book, *Nature, an economic history*, evolutionary biologist and palaeontologist, Geerat J. Vermeij, shows how competition at any level tends to reach a crisis point which serves to push a given system, either down to collapse or up to a new higher level of co-operation. But just when a higher level of co-operation is reached, the competition starts all over again at that new level. Similarly, if and when global governance is achieved, co-operation would then exist at the level of our planet, but that would then only push competition to the higher, inter-planetary level. Vermeij: “cooperation merely shifts competition to a higher level in the organizational hierarchy of life, but hardly diminishes it.”¹²⁸

In his excellent book on the evolution of human co-operation, *Nonzero*, author Robert Wright also reaches similar conclusions. Citing game theory which draws a distinction between “zero-sum” games (in which one side’s gain is the other’s loss) and “non-zero-sum” games (in which each side’s interests overlap or are the same), Wright reviews the broad patterns that have driven human cultural evolution:

“...the crevices of social organization – the zones of zero-sum contention [i.e. of destructive competition] between families or villages or chiefdoms or states – keep getting filled in by the cement of non-zero-sumness [i.e. by the drive for co-operation]; and the zero-sumness [competition] thus displaced keeps retreating to higher levels of organization.”¹²⁹

¹²⁸ G.J. Vermeij. From a personal email, 18th January 2006.

¹²⁹ *Nonzero – History, Evolution and Human Cooperation*, Robert Wright, Abacus (Random House, Inc.), 2001, p63.

The interplay of competition and co-operation - the way competition drives co-operation at higher levels and vice versa - points up the evolutionary dance between these two seemingly opposed poles. We will be looking at this in more detail in chapter 6. For the moment, the point to note is that while the implementation of Simpol or some other similar form of global governance would indeed be an omega point and bring with it the benefits of a globally co-operative human society, it would, for all that, not mark the “end of history”. The omega point of global governance, like everything else, resides in its own particular context - and contexts, as Wilber ceaselessly points out, are endless. So even though global governance *is*, if only we wholeheartedly embrace it, our evolutionary destiny, it would not be the end of progress because “The solution to the old problems is the creation of a new one – they come into being together, although the new problems usually surface only as the worldview approaches its own demise.”¹³⁰

¹³⁰ *A Brief History of Everything*, p61.

5. Vision-logic: Simpol From the Inside

“Social labour could unite world citizens to the extent, but only to the extent, that we all share matter in common. The Greens can unite world citizens only to the extent that we all share bodies in common. But it will take a vision-logic movement of tremendous integrative power (integral-aperspectival as universal-integral) in order to unite world citizens on the centauric basis that we all share matter and bodies and minds in common (not to mention a Spirit and a Self prior to all that).”¹³¹

- Ken Wilber

To this point we’ve mainly been discussing global governance initiatives in terms of how they look from the *outside*; in terms of how they or their concepts manifest in the outer world of our social and political institutions. In this chapter we’ll attempt to describe what Simpol looks or feels like from the *inside*; from the point of view of how it affects the way we see and feel about the world as individuals and as cultures. We’ll also be addressing this in the final chapter.

Just as our outer reality consists of holons, the same, Wilber suggests, can be said of our inner cognitive/spiritual development. Both as individuals and as whole cultures, we progress through various levels of *inner* development, with each new level transcending and including its predecessor. An illustration of these holarchic levels of development as they manifest in both the inner and outer realms, as well as in both the individual and the collective, can be seen in Wilber’s “4-Quadrant” model shown in Fig. 8-1. In fact, our outer social and

¹³¹ *SES*, p201. Wilber refers to “centauric” (as in the mythological half man; half horse creature) to symbolise the need for the integration of body and mind.

political institutions not surprisingly reflect our inner individual and collective level of cognitive/spiritual development. Our outer institutions reflect our inner worldview. Holons, then, do not arise separately in the inner and outer realms. Instead, each holon has an inside and an outside. Holons in inner consciousness will have an outer correlate. The way we think “in here” not surprisingly has its reflection - its correlate - in our social and political institutions “out there”. They are, in effect, one and the same holon. And as we began to see in the last chapter, the inadequate way in which humanity presently tries to solve global problems is merely a reflection of its entrapment at a level of cognitive/spiritual development – in a worldview - which is no longer adequate for the recently-emerged life-conditions presented to us by globalisation.

The aggregate level of inner development at which the developed world presently finds itself is described by Wilber, following Piaget, as “formal operational” (formop, for short) or “rational”. This rational level is the culmination of a number of prior stages of interior growth that have unfolded in the course of human evolution and represents a remarkable achievement, as Wilber and others have noted, so we will not repeat those here. Nevertheless, each new level of development, while solving the problems of the previous level, brings with it its own inconsistencies and pathologies – and formop/rational is no exception. In this respect, a key characteristic of rational is its ability to see and recognise multiple ideas or “truths”, but the problem is that it cannot *integrate* those multiple truths. While it can hold truth against truth or can select between them, it cannot hold them both in mind integrally.

To explain this inner pathology more clearly, we’ll take an example of one of its outer manifestations. We already saw in the previous chapter how the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement seeks to improve the social and environmental behaviour of all corporations; an idea which sounds excellent, worthwhile and “truthful”. But as we saw, CSR is a concept that is applied to each corporation *individually*, thus effectively ignoring the destructively competitive relationship that exists

between corporations. CSR sees the fish, as it were, but not the water they swim and compete in. CSR, we might say, is the exterior manifestation of a cognitive level of development which holds only one truth but not two. It holds the “truth” of good corporate behaviour but not the “truth” of destructively competitive inter-corporate relations; all fish, but no water.

The global justice movement, as we also saw, habitually blames and shames individual corporations and that may well feel like a rational and “truthful” stance to take – and as far as it goes, it is. But, like CSR, by failing to take into account the destructively competitive relationship *between* corporations, the strategies of blame, shame and protest can at best be only partially effective. The same, of course, goes when it comes to pressurising governments, because that ignores the competitive relationship *between* governments. In all these ways and many more, the worldview of rational/formop which sees “multiple truths-on-the-same-level” is reasonable enough, but it cannot take us where we need to go.

Simpol, by contrast, discloses a level of consciousness that holds both the distinct entities themselves (eg. corporations or governments) *and* the relationship between them in mind together, integrally. The policy content of Simpol, once implemented, would serve to regulate the *individual entities themselves*, thus taking into account the first truth. Then, its global, *simultaneous* implementation takes into account the second truth: the competitive relationship *between* the entities or the need for all corporations and nations to maintain their *relative* competitiveness. It thus holds both truths – the entities themselves (the fish) and the relationship between them (the water) – in mind together, integrally.

While it’s doubtless true that the rational/formop worldview has got as far as *identifying* destructive competition as a phenomenon operating in today’s world, the problem is that it recognises it simply as one “truth” on the same level as many others. Only if our consciousness reaches *beyond* rationality can we reach the depth of awareness that recognises destructive international competition as *the* key causal dynamic that

underlies and perpetuates the destructiveness of the global market. Only then, will we identify it as a second truth that is *super-ordinate* to the first. Only then, in other words, will we be capable of *differentiating* between, on the one hand, a campaign such as Simpol which, because it offers a coherent solution to destructive competition, treats causes and, on the other, virtually all of today's other global justice campaigns which, because they offer no such solution, effectively treat only symptoms (important though treating symptoms also is). This inability to differentiate between *levels* of truth, then, is the defining pathology of rational/formop, and the severe limitations of that worldview are evident.

Vision-Logic

The higher or deeper stage that lies beyond formop/rational at which a genuine solution to our global ecological, economic and social crisis might disclose itself is referred to by Wilber as "vision-logic". Vision-logic is level 13 in the upper-left quadrant of Wilber's model (See Fig. 8-1). It is vision-logic, Wilber suggests, "that drives and underlies the possibility of a truly planetary culture...".¹³² Theorists from Aurobindo to Habermas have also identified a similar developmental stage. Aurobindo defines vision-logic as a stage which "can freely express itself in single ideas, but its most characteristic movement is a mass ideation, a system or totality of truth-seeing at a single view; the relations of idea with idea, of truth with truth, self-seen in the integral whole."¹³³

Simpol, we are suggesting then, is reasonably expressive of vision-logic and if we follow Aurobindo's definition above, it could certainly be said that Simpol represents a "single idea". But that single idea gives rise to a "mass ideation", to a whole new way of looking at, and thinking about, the world "at a single view". Indeed, with Simpol we look at and think about the world globally and simultaneously. Whereas Wilber notes

¹³² SES, p191.

¹³³ SES, p190.

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that “rationality is global, [but] vision-logic is more global”¹³⁴, we might define it more precisely by suggesting that: rationality is global, but vision-logic is global and simultaneous.

Citing Habermas, in whose developmental model “mature or communicative reason” is the equivalent stage to Wilber’s vision-logic, Wilber concurs with the view that the presently predominant rational/formop level:

“establishes the postconventional stages of, first, ‘civil liberties’ or ‘legal freedom’ for ‘all those bound by law,’ and then, in a more developed stage, it demands not just legal freedom but also ‘moral freedom’ for ‘all humans as private persons’. But even further, mature or communicative reason (our vision-logic) demands both ‘moral and political freedom’ for ‘all human beings as members of a world society’.”¹³⁵

And achieving such a world society characterised by moral and political freedom for all, as well as by social justice and environmental sustainability for all, is, indeed, the end-point of which Simpol (or something very similar) would be a necessary, facilitating and transformative starting-point.

But for most people, the presently predominant rational worldview, being truncated by the highly limited possibilities of competing nation-states and confined, consequently, to Policy Flatland, militates towards politicians and people remaining in an effective state of psychological denial; a state in which there is a widespread feeling of hopelessness, powerlessness and considerable scepticism that many of us feel with respect to the present sorry state of the world and the prospect of saving it. It all seems so out of control, so scary and so potentially dire. Moreover, the possibility of us making any significant difference seems distant, remote and thus somehow futile. This

¹³⁴ *SES*, p267.

¹³⁵ *SES*, p267-268.

inner feeling of disempowerment is portrayed in Fig. 5-1 below, using the familiar diagram we used in earlier chapters.

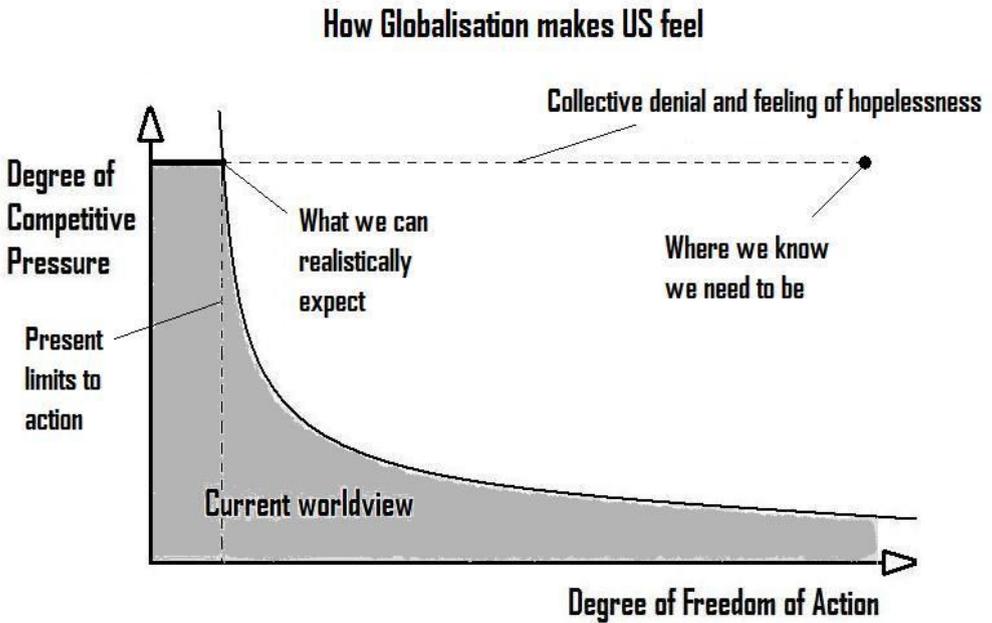


Figure 5-1

Our hopelessness and denial are nevertheless merely psychological symptoms of our self-imprisonment within the mind-set of the current rational/formop worldview and its present context of destructive competition; a context we cannot go beyond unless we collectively discover a way to escape it, thus accessing a higher (or deeper) context of co-operation which transcends and includes the current context. Until then we are stuck. But escaping the current competitive context is a function of *consciousness*; it requires us to *evolve* our level of individual and collective consciousness from the undifferentiated, stifling, single-truth, rational, Flatland view to embrace the new, more encompassing worldview disclosed to

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us by simultaneity itself. That is, by the higher and more inclusive level of consciousness which is vision-logic, and of which Simpol, we are suggesting, represents a facilitating outer manifestation.

We saw in earlier chapters how, with Simpol, opposites can be reconciled, how competition can be transcended and included by cooperation, how seemingly other-worldly policies can thus become *this*-worldly, and how disempowerment and denial can be transformed into hope, conviction and purposeful action. It is precisely because the Simpol worldview sees *beyond* destructive competition that it discloses a means of overcoming those constraints, so giving us a feeling of renewed potency and global empowerment. It allows us to disclose to ourselves a whole new world of realistic and far-reaching possibilities which *completes* us and makes us feel whole again, even if the task of actually achieving that new world still remains before us.

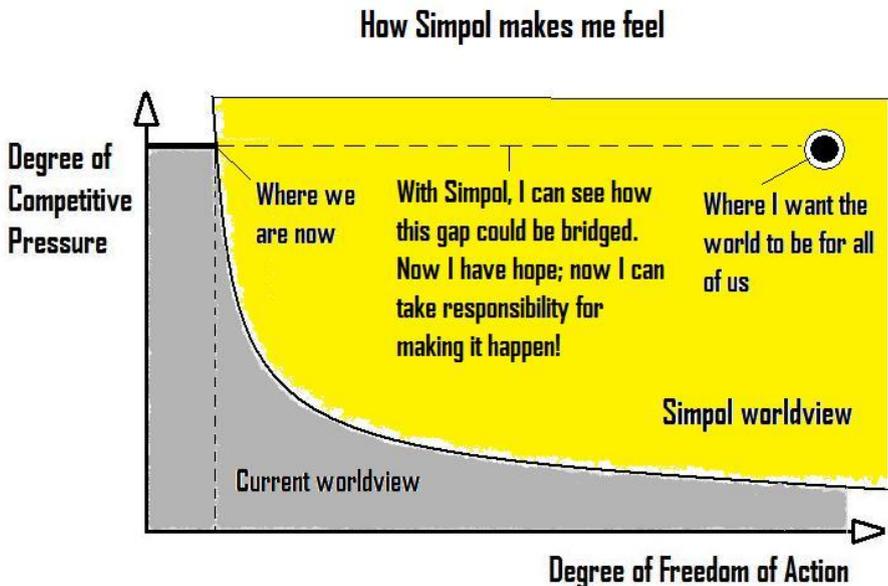


Figure 5-2

When we add the Simpol worldview to Figure 5-1, what we get is the more complete, more encompassing worldview portrayed in Figure 5-2 above. For as Wilber reminds us, “each time we identify a deeper context, our relative autonomy actually increases, because in identifying with a deeper perception, we have found a wider freedom”.¹³⁶

Spiral Dynamics

Coming, now, to the inner-collective (lower-left) quadrant in Wilber’s model, the quadrant which describes cultural evolution or the evolution of collective worldviews, instead of Wilber’s own model which runs from Physical-pleromatic, through Archaic, Magic, Mythic and onwards up to Rational and Centauric, we will use an alternative holarchic model, also sometimes used by Wilber, which is known as Spiral Dynamics. In Figure 8-1, then, we are replacing Wilber’s lower-left quadrant with the Spiral Dynamics model.

Spiral Dynamics, writes Ronnie Lessem,

“presents a new framework for understanding dynamic forces at work in human affairs – business, personal lives, education, and even geopolitics. It is not another hard-edged and simplistic ‘types of people’ model nor a soft, ‘everybody’s beautiful’ egalitarian approach. Based in decades of research, real-world applications, and the latest findings of both organizational theorists and neurobiology, [Spiral Dynamics] lays out a very specific Tool Kit for managing the deepest differences in people. These core intelligences exist like strange attractors below our values, beliefs, and ethical structures.”¹³⁷

Like the developmental stages used to describe evolution in the other three quadrants, Spiral Dynamics, too, comprises a

¹³⁶ *SES*, p81.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p1.

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holarchy; in this case a holarchy of cultural worldviews denoted as vMemes to which Beck and Cowan have assigned various colours ranging from Beige to Turquoise. Like all holarchies, each successive worldview (or vMeme) transcends and includes its predecessors. A vMeme, or simply “meme”, is a way of describing:

“a unit of cultural information such as a political ideology, a fashion trend, language usage, musical forms, or even architectural styles. ... Thus, what biochemical genes are to the DNA, memes are to our psycho-cultural ‘DNA.’ ... A meme contains behavioural instructions that are passed from one generation to the next, social artefacts, and value-laden symbols that glue together social systems. Like an intellectual virus, a meme reproduces itself through concepts like dress styles, language trends, popular cultural norms, architectural designs, art forms, religious expressions, social movements, economic models, and moral statements of how living should be done.”¹³⁸

Beck and Cowan’s holarchy of vMemes together with their main traits and where we might most likely come across them is set out in highly simplified form in Figure 5-3 below.

Looking at Turquoise and considering to what extent Simpol may express it, Beck and Cowan suggest that Turquoise firstly entails “Blending and harmonizing a strong collective of individuals”. This, I suggest, is precisely what Simpol’s articulation of simultaneity as a satisfactory basis for global co-operation is designed to do, along with its adoption campaign and policy formulation process: a blending and harmonizing of all humanity.

Secondly, it entails a “Focus on the good of all living entities as integrated systems”. Such a focus would, indeed, be the objective of Simpol’s people-centred global governance regime,

¹³⁸ Ibid, p30-31.

which is aimed at sustainability and thus at assuring the overall health of the biosphere.

vMeme	Traits	Where Seen
Beige	Survival sense	First human societies
Purple	Magical-animistic	Ethnic superstitions; tribes
Red	Power gods	Feudal kingdoms; frontier mentalities
Blue	Mythic order	Totalitarian cultures; religious fundamentalism
Orange	Scientific achievement	The Enlightenment; liberal self-interest; materialism
Green	Sensitive self	Deep ecology, post- modernism; global justice movement
Yellow	Flexible, holarchic mind	Unstable complex systems; every crisis is an opportunity
Turquoise	Holistic; global view	Freedom within global communitarian order

Figure 5-3

Thirdly, it entails an “Expanded use of human brain/mind tools and competencies”. These would certainly be in play as we move from mere national governance to global governance, increasingly integrating the realm of mind (the noosphere) with the realms of the body (biosphere) and matter (physiosphere) in the process.

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Fourthly, Turquoise expresses the “Self as part of a larger, conscious, spiritual whole that also serves itself” which Simpol expresses as a globally co-operative collective that would serve the survival interests of all sentient beings, and not least of humanity.

In its swing away from both rugged individualism and destructive competition towards a globally caring human collective of deeper consciousness and embrace, Simpol also expresses what Beck and Cowan have identified as another key characteristic of Turquoise: a “major swing of the pendulum back toward the sacrificial/collective pole”¹³⁹; i.e. a swing back from competition to co-operation (about which, more in the next chapter).

Interspersing some further observations with those of Beck and Cowan, the Turquoise collective system in the form I am suggesting in this book, (that is, in the form of Simpol’s evolution and potential implementation), “steps back and creates the next form of order”, say Beck and Cowan. “Not to be mistaken with a New Age lexicon of pseudo-science and pseudo-mysticism”, nor, we might add, with the lexicon of pseudo-democracy, “or a Green bond with only those people who share the same values, Turquoise defines a world community more broadly.” Turquoise, like Simpol, victimises no one and includes everyone. “In part, a Gaia view emerges, one that centers on life itself – all forms of life (not just humans)”, a result which Simpol’s governance regime would achieve by substantially restraining damaging human encroachment on the biosphere so assuring an increased stability of species habitat including our own. “Every person, every creature, every species belongs”, say Beck and Cowan. “The planet itself is seen as a single ecosystem”, or, as we might put it, the planet is seen globally and simultaneously. “Individuals are not separated” say Beck and Cowan, and “neither are national boundaries, ethnic peculiarities, nor elitist privileges

¹³⁹ Ibid, p286-7.

allowed to divide people destructively.”¹⁴⁰ Simpol very directly achieves this final characteristic of Turquoise by enabling the substantial elimination of destructive competition between nations, so giving practical political expression to their equitable and harmonious co-existence.

Turquoise, Beck and Cowan further suggest, and Simpol, I suggest:

“views the world of interlinked causes and effects, interacting fields of energy, and levels of bonding and communicating most of us have yet to uncover. The vMeme liberates a sense of living systems that mesh and blend, flowing in concert with each other. This is another order-seeking system, but the first one that searches for the macro view. ‘Seeing-everything-at-once’ [i.e. globally and simultaneously] before doing anything specific dominates the thinking process. Collective imperatives and mutual interdependencies reign supreme.”¹⁴¹

Returning to Wilber’s own model, the cultural developmental stage of turquoise in *Spiral Dynamics* is equivalent, in Wilber’s model, to the Centauric stage (Level 13, lower-left quadrant in Fig. 8-1). Centauric, because of the mythic beast, half-horse and half-human, which symbolises the integration of body and mind; the integration of biosphere and noosphere.¹⁴² Likewise, in the cognitive-spiritual development of the individual (upper-left quadrant), the corresponding level of development is, as we noted earlier, vision-logic. For Wilber, the stage of centauric/vision-logic promises the realisation of a number of hopes or objectives. “For it is vision-logic with its [turquoise] centauric/planetary worldview,” Wilber affirms,

“that ... holds the only hope for the integration of the biosphere and noosphere [the realms of body and mind

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p290.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p289.

¹⁴² *SES*, p192.

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respectively], the supranational organization of planetary consciousness, the genuine recognition of ecological balance, the unrestrained and unforced forms of global discourse, the nondominating and noncoercive forms of federated states, the unrestrained flow of worldwide communicative exchange, the production of genuine world citizens and the enculturation of female agency (i.e. the integration of male and female in both the noosphere and the biosphere)...”¹⁴³

That is a long list, so let us, with Wilber’s help, very briefly unpack each one to see in what respects Simpol could offer prospects for their fulfilment.

Integration of biosphere and noosphere

In very simplified terms, we could say that the biosphere represents the realm of *body*, a realm which transcends and includes the more fundamental but less significant preceding realm of *matter* (the physiosphere). As evolution progressed it produced atoms, then molecules, then cells and then multi-celled organisms – that is, evolution progressed from matter to body: from physiosphere to biosphere. But with *human* bodies also came the realm of *mind*; the realm which transcends and includes the biosphere and which Wilber, following Teilhard de Chardin, refers to as the noosphere. In this connection, Wilber explains that

“there was no compelling *biological* reason to produce villages and cities and states. The social holon of the family/group could have sustained the human triune brain, just as it does other primates to this day. But just as matter had pushed forth life, the self-transcendent drive *within* biology pushed forth something *beyond* biology, pushed forth symbols and tools that both created and depended

¹⁴³ *SES*, p192.

upon new levels of social holons in which the users of symbols and tools could exist and reproduce themselves, but the reproduction was now the reproduction of culture through symbolic communication [the noosphere] and not just the reproduction of bodies through sexuality. Kinship gave way to ‘cultureship’”.¹⁴⁴

In other words, the physiosphere which had pushed forth the biosphere, in turn pushed forth the noosphere: the realm of mind. But as each first emerged, so differentiating itself from its predecessor, it brought with it its own particular pathologies. “Just as the biosphere was first emerging on Earth”, Wilber explains,

“we can imagine all the fits and starts, all the dead-ends, that the first populations of cells tried out in their attempt to fit with the preconditions set by the physiosphere, whose territory the living cells were now invading. A false start – a start not consonant with the physiosphere – was simply erased. And throughout biological evolution, as the biosphere itself began adding layers and layers of new depth, each of these levels had to be brought into an adequate harmony with *both* its predecessors *and* its peers – no easy or trivial task, as the awesome example of the dinosaurs reminds us. ...

And just as the biosphere had to find its acceptable niche in (and beyond) the physiosphere, so too the noosphere had to find its allowable or harmonious place in (and beyond) the biosphere”.¹⁴⁵

The noosphere evolved. But that, as Wilber goes on to point out, is where our problem begins:

¹⁴⁴ *SES*, p106.

¹⁴⁵ *SES*, p109-110.

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“... as various stages of political, linguistic, and technical development emerged – incorporating and transcending their predecessors – not only could these higher stages of cultural development repress and alienate their own previous connections in the noosphere ..., they could also come perilously close to severing their connections with the biosphere as well...”.

And that exceedingly brief overview of evolution brings us to where we are today: to humanity’s present *disconnection* or alienation from the very biosphere upon which we depend, a pathological disconnection between noosphere and biosphere which is occurring to such an alarming degree that, today, as Wilber ruefully notes, “humans have earned, through enormously hard work and labor, the privilege and the possibility of being the first cultural dinosaurs in the fragile noosphere.”¹⁴⁶

Having *differentiated* ourselves from the biosphere – and to such a pathological degree that our very survival is now under threat - the urgent need is for humans to *integrate* biosphere and noosphere; to bring ourselves, as Wilber asserts, “into an adequate harmony with *both* our predecessors *and* our peers”. And that, effectively, is what Simpol could help us to achieve, firstly because it identifies destructive international competition as the key underlying barrier to that integration and, secondly, because it offers a means to overcome it. Simpol, we saw, offers a coherent and practical way for us, firstly, to bring our techno-economic noospheric mode of life “into an adequate harmony with the biosphere”; that is, its global governance regime would allow us to achieve ecological sustainability. In that respect, then, Simpol could bring the noosphere into harmony with our predecessor, the biosphere. But, in bringing citizens all over the world to cooperate, Simpol also brings us humans “into harmony with our peers”; into harmony, that is, *with each other*. Simpol thus holds the potential for us to integrate, in the outer

¹⁴⁶ SES, p110.

realm of our social and political institutions at least, the physiosphere, biosphere and noosphere; to integrate matter, body and mind, so achieving, hopefully, an adequate harmony between all three: the realisation, finally, of our specie's maturity.

This, of course, will require a prior inner shift in consciousness and culture at least among a critical mass of people; a shift which goes deeper than the single-truth level that is rational/formop to the integral consciousness that is turquoise vision-logic.

The supranational organization of planetary consciousness

That inner shift of consciousness towards a genuinely planetary view – a shift which is already occurring to some degree – is of itself not enough, however. Because that growing consciousness – that feeling of care and embrace for the whole world, for all humanity and for all sentient beings – needs to be *organised*. It needs to become *manifest* in our social and political institutions. It needs to occur not just inside each of us 'in here' (in consciousness), but also 'out there' in the objective world of politics and governance. The Ascent to greater inner consciousness (Eros) and the Descent to its outer-worldly manifestation (Agape) must go hand-in-hand.

The concept of Simpol, we saw, has the potential to transcend and include nation-states and their junior holons because it would be in a position to have knowledge of – to be *conscious* of - the needs of each nation as well as of the competitive constraints they operate under. It is also capable, potentially, of organising nation-states; of binding them within its people-centred global governance embrace. But more than that, Simpol offers a crucial and (so far, at least) unique *political process* for translating our growing planetary consciousness 'in here', into coherent and powerful political action 'out there'; a process which, because it works through (and not against) existing national electoral systems, is capable of transforming them. For each individual on the planet, then, adopting Simpol has the

potential to bring us to an outer, planetary manifestation - to the supranational organisation - of our inner, planetary consciousness.

The genuine recognition of ecological balance

“The startling fact,” we recall Wilber noting, “is that ecological wisdom does not consist in understanding how to live in accord with nature; it consists in understanding how to get humans to agree on how to live in accord with nature”.

And “how to get humans to agree” means that our present ecological crisis is not a problem that can be solved at the level of the biosphere, but only at the level of the noosphere – in the realm, in other words, of the inter-subjective human mind *which transcends and includes* the biosphere. For the crisis which shows up today in the biosphere stems not from the biosphere itself, but from a crisis *of the noosphere*; from our failure as a species to have found a way *to cooperate*. For as Wilber points out,

“Gaia’s primary problems and threats are *not* pollution, industrialization, overcultivation, soil depletion, overpopulation, ozone depletion, or whatnot. Gaia’s major problem is lack of mutual understanding and mutual agreement *in the noosphere*. [his emphasis]”¹⁴⁷

To solve biospheric problems, then, we need a noospheric agreement, and “Anything short of that noospheric agreement”, Wilber emphasises, “*will continue to destroy the biosphere*.”¹⁴⁸

Simpol, we saw, provides a framework for getting “humans to agree on how to live in accord with nature” as well as a potentially powerful means of implementing that agreement. To the extent that humanity might decide to take it up, then, Simpol has the potential to *be* the noospheric agreement Wilber refers

¹⁴⁷ *SES*, p541.

¹⁴⁸ *SES*, p541.

to. It could potentially become the noospheric accord through which the recognition of ecological balance is expressed and applied.

The unrestrained and unforced forms of global discourse and the unrestrained flow of worldwide communicative exchange

There are many forms of discourse and communicative exchange ranging from the global exchange of goods and services to cross-cultural exchange and from instant movement of billions of dollars in global capital flows to global and simultaneous media broadcasting. The operative word in Wilber's above sentence should, I suggest, be "unrestrained" rather than "unforced", because today under globalisation what we are mostly suffering from is a *lack* of restraint. We already *have* unrestrained military intervention, unrestrained cultural imperialism, unrestrained corporate power, terrorism, economic migration, global warming and so on. These are all unrestrained and left to run rampant because, in a global economy over which the exercise of the key attributes of governance is largely absent, it is that *absence* – the lack of that restraint - that is allowing these unrestrained and destructive tendencies.

If the world could, by using Simpol, reap the benefits of exercising the key attributes of governance, the global free movement of capital would be tempered by an international redistribution of wealth and resources. The freely given support this would provide to poorer countries would in turn permit their citizens to make a decent living in their home country if they wish.¹⁴⁹ Migration could *then* be unrestrained (since far fewer numbers would feel the need to migrate) and it would *then* be unforced, since the economic pressures that cause mass migration in the first place (as well as those of war, famine and

¹⁴⁹ Although support, financial or otherwise, would be freely given in the sense that it would not be a debt and neither would interest be involved, conditions and care would need to be exercised to ensure that such support was applied properly and accountably.

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pollution) would largely have been removed. This, in turn, would also help to preserve and support the cultural richness and distinctiveness of all nations and peoples everywhere.

In this way, the present concept of multiculturalism could be superseded (transcended and included) by what we might call *simul*culturalism. For as Wilber points out,

“The ‘multicultural movement,’ which claims a universal tolerance of all cultures freed from the ‘logocentric, rational-centric, Euro-centric’ dominance and hegemony, is a step in the right direction, with all good intentions, but ends up being self-contradictory and finally hypocritical. It may claim to be ‘not rational-centric,’ but in fact cultural tolerance is secured only by rationality as universal pluralism, by a capacity to mentally put yourself into the other person’s shoes and then decide to honour or at least tolerate that viewpoint even if you don’t agree with it. You, operating from the pluralism of rational worldspace, might decide to tolerate the ideas of a mythic-believer; the problem is, they will not tolerate *you* – and, in fact, historically they would burn your tolerant tail at the stake in order to save your soul (whether your saviours be Christian, Marxist, Muslim or Shinto).”

In other words, the assertion of multiculturalism, that all and any cultures can live happily and harmoniously in a relatively integrated, mixed together, heaps-not-wholes fashion, has too often proved false. Paradoxically, far from producing inter-cultural harmony, it has often contributed to raising, rather than diminishing, inter-cultural and inter-racial tensions; and this especially when the prevailing economic circumstances happen to take a turn for the worse.

This is why the good intentions of multiculturalism can only become a practical and functioning reality – can only be completed and fully realised - if we move *beyond* the present stance of multiculturalism itself and go further to embrace a

genuinely aperspectival, global-and-simultaneous view. This more complete *simul*cultural view would genuinely respect and honour all cultures simultaneously *in their own context*, whatever their stage of development, by ensuring that each was respected and equitably supported by a cooperatively governed global economic system that was genuinely fair to all. Fair, because it would be regulated by a form of people-centred global governance that encompassed all, was contributed to by all, and which took into account the differing needs and abilities of all. It would thus be substantially free from today's pathological distortions which only serve to heighten tensions, whether between rich and poor nations, between rich and poor within nations, or between cultures, creeds or races.

A globally equitable sharing of resources and the consequent alleviation of destructively competitive pressures that Simpol could enable would not only allow the world to solve problems like global warming and the "clash of civilisations"¹⁵⁰, it would make wholly unnecessary the use of military intervention as an extension of competitive advantage. Post-implementation, the only need for the maintenance of an independent global military capability would be to maintain co-operation; i.e. to suppress any nation that might be tempted to undermine the globally cooperative laws and regulations Simpol had put in place. This, at the global level, would be akin to the function played today by police forces at the national, domestic level. The enormous reduction in military expenditure that could be achieved would, of course, enable vast amounts of money to be ploughed into any number of globally beneficial projects or to compensate nations that might be unduly disadvantaged by certain of Simpol's measures.

Furthermore, the implementation of Simpol or some other similar form of global governance could, through the exercising of the key attributes of governance, set the safe parameters within which global free markets would be permitted to thrive.

¹⁵⁰ See Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, Touchstone, 1996.

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Just as, in the wake of the industrial revolution, government regulation was required in the *national* context to mitigate the negative social and environmental fall-out of industrialisation, so too, in today's *global* context, global governance would generally permit markets to operate in a healthy manner that is consistent with human social needs and with sustainability. Then, and only then, could we truly enjoy all forms of global discourse - unrestrained and unforced.

The nondominating and noncoercive forms of federated states

The deep structure of Simpol takes an aperspectival and equal approach to all nation-states because no national perspective is allowed to dominate at the expense of any other, (as in “all nations simultaneously”). Moreover, Simpol's implementation could not in any case proceed unless and until all, or virtually all, nations were on board, thus ensuring the equal participation by adopters in all nations in the design of its policy content. Since Simpol is driven by citizens and can do nothing without them, it is people, not states, who would dominate. Simpol thus effectively possesses a deep structure or “prime directive” capable of allowing it to become, potentially, a people's federation of equitably treated and non-coerced nation-states; an appropriate and healthy form, that is, of people-centred global governance.

The production of genuine world citizens

Today, feelings of world citizenship are expressed by people in very many different ways. Concern for the planet and for all its living beings is expressed by our own individual life choices, by the way we spend or invest our money, by how or if we travel, whether we choose to recycle our waste, and by the organisations we support. But citizenship at any level finds its most potent incarnation in our right to vote. For without votes, we can hardly describe ourselves as citizens. Voting, you'll also

recall, is the first of our key attributes of governance. The problem, as we earlier saw, however, is that destructive global competition is increasingly turning our democracies into mere *pseudo*-democracies; our votes into mere *pseudo*-votes. As a result of this on-going process, the potency of our right to vote even at the national level has been substantially neutered.

But what if we could somehow re-discover, re-invent and re-empower our votes? What Simpol aims to offer is one way to do that; a way to make our votes, once again, the most powerful – and, as we have argued, potentially the most effective – means for global transformation. In this respect, John Stewart points out that:

“Effective global governance is in the interests of the majority of people in the world. If they had a capacity for systemic mental modelling [i.e. for vision-logic] that enabled them to see and understand this, global governance would be established swiftly. The majority would use democratic processes to have their national governments get together with other governments to set up such a system.”¹⁵¹

Because it uniquely and directly influences established electoral processes, Simpol seems, at present at least, to be the only initiative which could enable humans around the world to become world citizens; to use our official votes in our national elections to drive our politicians and governments towards an appropriate form of people-centred global governance. Simpol, then, is perhaps the first and only form of genuine global electoral politics; the only initiative, at present at least, that seems capable of producing *genuine* world citizens. That, for each individual, is what adopting Simpol is really all about.

¹⁵¹ *Evolution's Arrow*, p287.

The enculturation of female agency (i.e. the integration of male and female in both the noosphere and the biosphere)

A global political-economic paradigm which turns on a vicious circle of destructive competition, as we see it today, is an environment which supports male agency to the virtual exclusion of female agency. The better you compete, the better your chance to survive and thrive. As psychotherapist, John A. Sanford, notes:

“Masculine achievement, power, control, success, and logic are rewarded in our society by prestige, good grades in school, and generous paychecks. The feminine principle, which tends to unite and synthesize is undervalued culturally both in men and in women.”¹⁵²

In present western culture, the application of female agency, at the level of governments or corporations at least, carries considerable risks. A genuinely responsible, caring, (and thus inevitably more costly) “feminine” approach to social and environmental issues, for example, exposes its proponents to risk. David Korten explains the point:

“With financial markets demanding maximum short-term gains and corporate raiders standing by to trash any company that isn't externalizing every possible cost, efforts to fix the problem by raising the social consciousness of managers misdefine the problem. There are plenty of socially conscious managers. The problem is a predatory system that makes it difficult for them to survive. This creates a terrible dilemma for managers with a true social vision of the corporation's role in society. They must either

¹⁵² *The Invisible Partners – How the Male and Female in each of us affects our relationships*, Paulist Press, 1980, p48.

compromise their vision or run a great risk of being expelled by the system.”¹⁵³

In other words, any attempt to apply female agency in the present environment would likely result in you losing your job. The same would go for any politician or political party that advocated the unilateral implementation of policies to save the environment that would cost business significantly more.

It is difficult to overestimate the consequences this relentless need to compete has for our psychological health, be we men or women, or for the collective health of humanity itself. Though we may not immediately realise it, the male principle of competition thoroughly permeates our daily lives, be it in the competition for jobs, or in our children’s competition at school for good grades which may, later, enable them to better compete for employment. Although competition has spurred massive technological innovation which, for many, has brought material comfort and pleasant life-styles, Sam Keen notes that “the shadow of our success, the flip side of our affluence, is the increasing problem of stress and burnout. ... Corporations are losing many of their best men to the ‘disease’ of stress.”¹⁵⁴ The problem, then, is that the male principle of competition becomes destructive, pathological and ultimately self-destructive when it is not complemented and balanced by the female principles of relation and cooperation. In their absence, the first casualty of our highly competitive, male-agency-dominated mode of life is, not surprisingly, our ability *to relate* to ourselves, to one another or to the Earth itself. As psychotherapist, Terence Real, observes:

“What the ethic of man-the-breadwinner has ignored is the wisdom of relationship. That wisdom...has a central tenet that it is a source of one’s own growth to care for the context one lives within. It is essentially an ecological

¹⁵³ *When Corporations Rule the World*, David Korten, Kumarian Press & Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1995.

¹⁵⁴ *Fire in the Belly – On being a Man*, Sam Keen, Bantam Books, 1992.

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wisdom, teaching that we are not objective observers standing above and acting upon a passive world. We do not stand apart from a system, like God, but within it – whether the system is our body, our psyche, our marriage, our state, or our planet.”¹⁵⁵

Be we individuals, cultures or nations, not only does the need to remain ‘competitive’ relentlessly drive us apart from one another so impairing our ability to relate, it also insidiously justifies reciprocally competitive behaviour in return, as articulated, collectively, in the well-worn truism, “if we don’t do it, our competitors will”. This never-ending and ruthless vicious circle, then, is the bread and butter of our everyday economic lives, and perhaps this is most true of business people themselves – mostly men - who are the global economy’s chief protagonists and who, whether they realise it or not, both suffer themselves - and inflict on others - the consequences. As Real goes on to note:

“The dynamic of dominance and submission, which has been the heart of traditional masculinity, can play itself out inside the psyche of a man as depression, in his interpersonal relationships as irresponsibility and abuse, in one race’s contempt for another people, or in humanity’s relationship to the earth itself.”¹⁵⁶

The chief gift of Simpol in this highly inhospitable environment, then, is that by accepting that the vicious circle of destructive competition must inevitably continue until such time as all or sufficient nations can be brought to implement its policies, and in further accepting that destructive competition is a vicious circle which is really no one’s fault (or, if you will, is everyone’s fault), the concept of simultaneous implementation crucially provides a secure and non-judgemental pathway to

¹⁵⁵ *I Don’t Want to Talk About It – Overcoming the secret legacy of male depression*, Terence Real, Scribner, 2003, p322.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p324.

cooperation; a pathway which already today provides us with a vital and safe *space for communication* regarding the new world we *could* co-create *if* we all cooperated. Simpol also, we saw, provides a realistic and practical political methodology for achieving that cooperation and for implementing any policies that may arise from it. Even as we continue to compete in the harsh and unforgiving seas of global competition, Simpol thus affords us the vital opportunity of creating our own life-raft; a safe and non-judgemental space for mutual forgiveness and *relationship* which opens us to our humanity, to our connectedness, and to the opportunity of rescuing us from ourselves. A space, in short, for including the feminine principle without which modern human civilisation will, like the Maya and the Easter islanders before us, most assuredly continue to compete itself steadily to its own destruction.

And since it has been men more than women who have been both the chief architects and the main construction workers of the Earth-alienating edifice of free-market capitalism, the challenge of releasing humanity from its life-threatening bond of destructive competition is, therefore, an issue which perhaps cuts deeper with men than with women. For as Sam Keen points out,

“Women must bear their share of guilt and responsibility for the profligate life. But until very recently, woman was identified with the natural rather than the economic order. No matter how she might participate in a consumer culture, her primal psychological identity was with the biological order. Her bottom line was not profit and loss, but birth and nurturance. Men’s identity since the industrial revolution, on the other hand, has been so closely bound up with exploiting natural resources that the creation of an earth-honoring ethic will require men to make a fundamental change in our self-understanding. Not just our actions must change. Our identity must also change.”

Keen goes on to add that, for men,

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“Our loss has been ontological, not psychological. A deficiency in meaning and in being. A refusal to care for what matters, a limpness in the face of the challenge of our history. The challenges seem overwhelming, and we are understandably tempted to retreat into professions and corporations that swallow us, into private pleasures and high consumption. But let’s call that what it is: moral cowardice, abdication of responsibility, voluntary myopia. And if we continue on this path we will continue to feel empty and devoid of meaning. The historical challenge for men is clear – to discover a peaceful form of virility and to create an ecological commonwealth, to become fierce gentlemen.”¹⁵⁷

The inextricable binding of the male identity with our globally competitive techno-economic system, then, makes the enculturation of female agency not so much a challenge for women (though it is for them too), but paradoxically *the* defining challenge for men. And as we have seen, in a destructively competitive world market only the implementation of a healthy and essentially democratic form of global governance seems capable of allowing female agency an opportunity for widespread and global enculturation. For global governance of the kind we have been speaking *is* global co-operation (i.e. global communion) and Simpol, as a potential vehicle for delivering it, could thus be said to express the very idea of female agency. Were it ever implemented, it or some similar form of global governance would have achieved a global framework of inter-governmental co-operation (the feminine) within which market competition (the masculine) could safely and sustainably flourish, thus going some way towards integrating the two: yin and yang. And what greater gift could we, men, give to our women and to ourselves than delivering this historic integration? And what greater gift could women

¹⁵⁷ *Fire in the Belly*, Sam Keen, Bantam Books, 1992, p120-121.

give to us and to themselves than joining in the effort to achieve it? And then, let us also not forget the children.

Interestingly, Simpol could itself be said to be hermaphrodite or androgynous in nature; to possess or incorporate both male and female forms of agency. This is because Simpol, we recall, is composed of two distinct but related processes. On the one hand, the adoption campaign transcends, negates and includes as it boldly moves out into the world to recruit citizens, politicians, political parties and nations. As it does, it seeks to overcome resistance by highlighting, tactfully, the shallowness and separateness of the lower holons and by exploiting party political competition and the critical balance of support between competing candidates. The adoption campaign could thus be said to represent, in some sense, the application of *male* agency. On the other, the collaborative, gestative, co-creative process of developing Simpol's policy measures and, of course, its eventual implementation, which would enfold all nations and peoples in its aperspectival and unconditionally loving embrace, could be said to represent the application of *female* agency.

The centauric view

Seeing all of the above through the prism of centauric, turquoise vision-logic, the often alarming events and trends of today's world no longer seem quite so worrying in the sense that they become understandable. Seen in the context of a world increasingly in the grip of destructive competition, the economic crises, wars, poverty and all manner of other crises we see today can be understood as part and parcel of a deeper pattern; parts of a pattern which, as we will more clearly suggest in the next chapter, are only to be expected and can be overcome. It has, we shall see, all happened before and it will happen again and this brings us a certain feeling of security and confidence. For, although today's events may be appalling, threatening and even terrifying, they are – whatever we may think of them or of those who may be behind them – consonant with this pattern; a

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pattern that hints of a deeper evolutionary context that must, and can, be embraced.

Even if Simpol or another similar global initiative may perhaps seem reasonably expressive of an integral, all-quadrants structure at the vision-logic/Turquoise level, that fact itself is, as Wilber points out, “no guarantee that the necessary integration will in fact occur. The claim is simply...that the integral structure *can* integrate the physiosphere, the biosphere, and the noosphere – it has the *potential* for that integration. Whether that potential becomes actual is up to you and me; it depends on the concrete actions that each of us takes.”¹⁵⁸

Such actions depend, in turn, on our level of consciousness; a level of consciousness which, I hope, will be enhanced by the knowledge that evolution works in cycles and that we can locate ourselves very clearly in the present one. Poised as we are at the beginning of the 21st century at a stage of chaos and impending crisis - the prelude either to dissolution and regression or to a new higher level of unity - our ability to locate our position in evolution’s cycle and the knowledge that we are not the first species on Earth to struggle for our species maturity should help us to see that the process of evolution that started with the Big Bang fourteen billion years ago has *intelligence* behind it. And it is to the stages and patterns of this evolutionary cycle that we turn in the next chapter.

Even though there may be many problems inherent in different stages of the cycle, the presence of intelligence means, for me at least, that the life-process itself is positive in character; that it is fundamentally beneficial; essentially *good*.¹⁵⁹ And the conviction that has driven my compulsion, my need to *give form* to a potential vehicle for humanity to move to the next higher and more embracing level, I can tell you, *feels* good; in fact, it feels like love.

¹⁵⁸ *SES*, p197.

¹⁵⁹ With grateful acknowledgements to Andrew Cohen, who has expressed these points so well in various talks he has given on the evolution of consciousness. Andrew Cohen’s website: www.andrewcohen.org.

6. Cycles, Stages and Patterns in Transformative Evolutionary Change

In the previous chapters we saw in some detail how transformative holons emerge to transcend and include their predecessors and how Simpol shows a high degree of congruity with that process. We also took a brief look at Simpol from the perspective of vision-logic and Spiral Dynamics. In this chapter we look more broadly at the stages and patterns which characterise change from one holonic level to the next, or from one level of development to the next. This, for me at least, indicates that there is deep and loving intelligence behind the evolutionary process; a process which holds hope and promise. Change mainly occurs, of course, because of need. “Necessity,” it is commonly said, “is the mother of invention”, and so it is with the emergence of transformative holons. If evolution were ever to reach a state of perfection there would be no need for further change and all life would, paradoxically, become static or even ‘dead’. So we might well be thankful for imperfection. But as we saw in the previous chapter, the on-going drive for improvement which produces multitudes of new holons, only seldom produces a truly *transformative* holon capable of moving evolution to a new higher level.

The life/death cycle

Transformative holonic change tends to occur in large cycles. We might call it a “life/death cycle” because the cycle is composed of stages which describe the life of an entire holonic level (i.e. the life of an entire span of holons) from birth to death. Barring catastrophe, an entire holonic level or level of development does not normally die, it is, of course, merely transcended and included by its successor level. The important

point is that its transcendence by a successor spells the death of its obsolete worldview and to that extent the level can be said to die. The importance for us is that the stages of the life/death cycle allow us to locate our present position and thus to find greater meaning in - and understanding of - what is happening to us under globalisation. If, in the cycle of our own evolution, we know which stage we are at, we will know what to expect, what to work on, what to embrace and what to be wary of. The stages help us, in short, to gain greater *evolutionary awareness* which can help us navigate our way into the future. Furthermore, because human social evolution follows broadly the same life-death cycle as evolution generally, knowing which stage we are at helps us to better understand why the world is presently as it is. It also reminds us that other forms of life on our planet have gone through similar stages and that we are, therefore, not alone. In short, it shows us that we are not *dissociated* from nature but remain very much *in tune* with her.¹⁶⁰ For as we shall see, our destructive behaviour is, in a sense, only to be expected given the stage of the cycle humanity finds itself at. And when we realise all of this, we know that, in the most profound sense possible, we are coming home after all. In what follows, then, we'll look at some examples of the life/death cycle and its various stages and at various versions of the cycle as described by some leading theorists. In this way we can observe the *universality* of the evolutionary life-death cycle: it is literally everywhere! Important to stress, though, is that we are not talking about the different *levels* of development themselves, but about the *stages* generally gone through by each level as it evolves from its emergence to its eventual inclusion in a yet-higher holon.

Most theorists tend to have their centre of gravity in one or more of Wilber's four quadrants (see Fig. 8-1) rather than in all of

¹⁶⁰ i.e. we are *in tune* with Nature not in the sense of being lower holons than Nature (or the biosphere), for we are not, we are higher holons; but we are in tune with - or a part of Nature - in the sense that we follow similar *patterns* to other species.

them. So let's look very briefly, now, at some of the models put forward by these theorists.

Ken Wilber

First we look at the cycle as it manifests in personal transformation; in the realm of our inner cognitive-spiritual development (upper-left quadrant). Here, Wilber cites four identifiable stages: *fulfilment*, *dissonance*, *insight* and *opening*¹⁶¹:

“*Fulfilment* means that the individual has generally fulfilled the basic tasks of a given stage or wave [or level of development]. A basic competence has been established at that level. The person does not have to perfectly master a given level ..., but simply function adequately enough to move forward.”

A person who has fulfilled that level is then open to transformation but, as Wilber continues,

“for this to occur, some sort of *dissonance* generally has to set in. The new wave [or level] is struggling to emerge, the old wave is struggling to hang on, and the individual feels torn, feels dissonance, feels pulled in several directions.”

For the stages of *insight* and *opening* to occur,

“one has to be willing to let go of – or die to – the present level. Perhaps one has run up against its inherent limitations or contradictions ..., or one is beginning to disidentify with it ..., or perhaps one has just gotten tired of it. At this point, some sort of insight into the situation – insight into what

¹⁶¹ All quotes from *A Theory of Everything*, Ken Wilber, Gateway (Gill & Macmillan Ltd.), 2001, p35.

one actually wants, and insight into what reality actually offers – usually helps the individual to move forward. ... Finally, if all of those factors fall into place, then an *opening* to the next wave [or level] of consciousness – deeper, higher, wider, more encompassing – becomes possible.”

M. Scott Peck

Let’s now take another model, this one based on M. Scott Peck’s experience working with groups of people who are together seeking to reach a higher level of understanding with one another. This, effectively, is an exercise in creating human social holons out of parts (i.e. individuals) who were previously unknown to one another.

Over a number of years of organising these “community-building workshops”, as Peck called them, he identified four stages that the participants often, but not always, experienced. These four stages, in their sequential order, Peck has named *pseudo-community*, *chaos*, *emptiness* and *community*.

In *The Different Drum*, Scott Peck’s book on community-building, *pseudo-community* is described as the first stage of the group’s existence when its members have just met one another.¹⁶² In this stage they pretend they have already reached the final stage of community, and they do this by faking it, by being extremely pleasant and polite to one another, and by going to great lengths to avoid any disagreements. But soon this stage degenerates into what Peck describes as the stage of *chaos*. Chaos is when the cloying politeness of pseudo-community gives way to the participants revealing their true prejudices and irritations about each other. This manifests itself as well-intentioned but misguided and competitive attempts to heal and convert others in the group:

¹⁶² *The Different Drum*, Arrow Books, 1990, pp 90-103.

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“After a period of uneasy silence a member will say ‘Well, the reason I came to this workshop is that I have such-and-such a problem, and I thought I might find a solution to it here.’

‘I had that problem once,’ a second member will respond. ‘I did such-and-such, and it took care of the difficulty.’

‘Well, I tried that,’ the first member answers, ‘but it didn’t solve anything.’

‘When I acknowledged Jesus to be my Lord and Savior’, a third member announces, ‘it took care of that problem and every other problem I had.’

‘I’m sorry,’ says the first member, ‘but that Jesus Lord-and-Savior stuff just doesn’t grab me. It’s not where I’m at.’

‘No’, says a fourth member, ‘As a matter of fact, it makes me want to puke.’

‘But it’s true’, proclaims a fifth member.

And so they’re off.

By and large, people resist change. So the healers and converters try harder to heal and convert, until finally their victims get their backs up and start trying to heal the healers and convert the converters. It is indeed chaos.”

Emptiness is the stage at which the participants come gradually to realise the futility of their chaotic and competitive attempts at healing and converting one another. Often this will take a long time or may not even happen at all. Scott Peck describes how it is sometimes necessary for him, as the group’s facilitator, to prompt it to move into emptiness:

“More often than not the group will simply ignore me and go on squabbling. Then after another while I will say, ‘I suggested to you that the only way from chaos to community is into and through emptiness. But apparently you were not terribly interested in my suggestion.’ More squabbling, but finally a member will ask with a note of annoyance, ‘Well, what is this emptiness stuff anyway?’

It is no accident that groups are not generally eager to pick up on my suggestion of emptiness. The fact that ‘emptiness’ is a mystical sort of word and concept is not the deterrent. People are smart, and often in the dimmer recesses of their consciousness they know more than they want to know. As soon as I mention ‘emptiness’ they have a presentiment of what is to come. And they are in no hurry to accept it. Emptiness is the hard part. It is also the bridge between chaos and community.”

If they enter emptiness the members of the group come to recognise both the futility of their attempts at healing and converting and the hypocrisy of their self-righteousness. They empty themselves, or let go, of the barriers to community including expectations, pre-conceptions, prejudices, ideologies and, above all, of their need to control others. As they die to these barriers, the stage of community arrives:

“In this final stage a soft quietness descends. It is a kind of peace. The room is bathed in peace. Then, quietly, a member begins to talk about herself. She is being very vulnerable. She is speaking of the deepest part of herself. The group hangs on each word. No one realized she was capable of such eloquence.

When she is finished there is a hush. It goes on a long time. But it does not seem long. There is no uneasiness in this silence. Slowly, out of the silence, another member begins to talk. He too is speaking very deeply, very personally, about himself. He is not trying to heal or convert the first person. He’s not even trying to respond to her. It’s not she but he who is the subject. Yet the other members of the group do not sense that he has ignored her. ...

Then the next member speaks. And as it goes on, there will be a great deal of sadness and grief expressed; but there will also be much laughter and joy. There will be tears in abundance. Sometimes, simultaneously, they will be tears of both. And then something almost more singular happens.

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An extraordinary amount of healing and converting begins to occur – now that no one is trying to convert or heal. And community has been born.”

Here, again, we can identify a high degree of congruity between the stages identified by Wilber in the inner cognitive and spiritual development of individuals (Upper Left quadrant) and those which manifest both culturally and socially amongst a group of individuals in Peck’s community-building process (Lower Left and Lower Right quadrants). Peck’s stage of *pseudo-community* is, we could say, broadly analogous to Wilber’s initial stage of *fulfilment*; Peck’s *chaos* is analogous to Wilber’s *dissonance*, and Peck’s *emptiness* and *community* are analogous, respectively, to Wilber’s *insight/opening* and *fulfilment at a new higher level*. We can therefore identify essentially the same cycle both within individuals and amongst a group of individuals as the individual or group moves from one level of development to the next.

Elisabet Sahtouris

In the field of evolutionary biology (Upper and Lower Right quadrants), Elisabet Sahtouris also describes a similar sequence of transformational change:

“All evolution - of the great cosmos and of our own planet within it - is an endless dance of wholes that separate themselves into parts and parts that join into mutually consistent new wholes. We can see it as a repeating, sequentially spiralling pattern: unity → individuation → competition → conflict → negotiation → resolution → cooperation → new levels of unity, and so on.¹⁶³ ...

Competition and cooperation can *both* be seen within and among species as they improvise and evolve, unbalance and

¹⁶³ *EarthDance: Living Systems in Evolution*, Elisabet Sahtouris, iUniversity Press, 2000, p24.

rebalance the dance. ... Note that competition and cooperation are different phases of the cycle. Young species tend to grab territory and resources, maximising the numbers of their offspring to spread themselves where they can. As species encounter each other, conflict develops in the competition for space and resources. Eventually negotiations leading to cooperation prove useful to the competing species and they reach the higher level of unity.”¹⁶⁴

So, here again we see a broadly similar transformational cycle of change in which both competition and co-operation play their part. It is important to note, however, that Sahtouris’s reference to the stage of “negotiation” should be regarded as somewhat metaphorical and should be seen as including other processes by which co-operative organisations have evolved in the past at the biological level.

Beck & Cowan

We saw in *Spiral Dynamics* the concept of cultural genes called vMememes and how these vMememes comprise a holarchy. Humans and their cultures appear to be moving individually and collectively, some faster than others, from one vMeme level to the next; from one view of the world to the next, with each new worldview transcending and including its predecessors.

The stages through which individuals and whole cultures pass are described by Beck and Cowan as *Alpha Fit*, *Beta Condition*, *Gamma Trap*, *Delta Surge*, and *New Alpha Fit*.¹⁶⁵

The first stage, “ALPHA”, say Beck and Cowan, “is a place where individual, organizational, or cultural vMeme systems are in sync with and relatively successful at addressing the [present] life conditions.”

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p107.

¹⁶⁵ *Spiral Dynamics*, pp86-92.

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“BETA”, as they have named the second stage, “is a place of doubts. Something is wrong, but what is it? The older ways of living no longer quite work.” It is a “time of uncertainty, questioning and frustration.”

The third stage, the GAMMA TRAP, is:

“a state of anger, hopelessness and revolution. ... Here one is trapped by barriers that seem insurmountable. The denial and foggy thinking of BETA give way to stark reality. There is now a clear vision of how bad things are. Whether the perception is accurate or not, it produces a very real sense of knowing what went wrong and why.”

As Beck and Cowan point out, however, “the trip to full-fledged GAMMA is not inevitable” for at this point, they identify two alternative possibilities. Despite the onset of crisis, the worst of the GAMMA TRAP can still be avoided if reforming action is taken soon enough. This is what Beck and Cowan call the “Reform Option” and as they also note:

“Locating the Reform Option usually requires that someone flag us down and point it out. Actually taking the reform road demands a willingness to pro-act rather than react, a sincere commitment to take some risks”.

Simpol would be an example of the Reform Option. Nevertheless, the other possibility is that full GAMMA TRAP is experienced, for as Beck and Cowan note,

“Most people wait to see for themselves that the next bridge is out, and then it is too late because they are in the GAMMA Trap. Deep GAMMA is a difficult time. ... The GAMMA Trap spawns psychopathic rather than neurotic behaviours, ranging from forms of self-destructiveness (wild-and-crazy acting out and even suicide) to morbid anti-social acts (crime, vicious personal attacks, homicide, and

terrorism.) Riots break out, post offices are shot-up and airplanes are bombed from within the GAMMA Trap.”

If the GAMMA Trap is survived – which is by no means a certainty - the DELTA Surge is ignited. DELTA Surge, Beck and Cowan say,

“is a yeasty time, a period of excitement and rapid change where the barriers are overcome and previous restraints drop away. People prepare to take charge of their own destinies. The past no longer controls the present. The DELTA energy rush is often raw, enthusiastic, and indelicate... a thrill of liberation mobilizes people in search of the new Utopia, the glorious New ALPHA ahead.”

“The New ALPHA,” Beck and Cowan’s final stage,

“reflects the consolidation of the ideas and insights from BETA and GAMMA through the DELTA Surge. ... The individual [or organisation or society] returns to a steady state as the world is once again in sync.”

With Beck and Cowan’s model of cultural transformation, then, the life/death cycle is essentially the same as for other theorists. Their models are compared in Fig. 6-1 below.

What stage are we at?

The premise of this book is that the holonic level of the nation-state is approaching the end of its life as the top-most holon in the human social holarchy. Like all holonic levels, it too is gradually undergoing transformation according to the stages of the life/death cycle; a transformation that could, if we organise ourselves, see the nation-state transcended and included into a yet higher holon of people-centred global governance. But if we fail to organise ourselves, we’ll soon find ourselves in Deep Gamma: heading, that is, for dissolution. The importance of the

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	Beck & Cowan	M. Scott Peck	E. Sahtouris	K. Wilber
Quadrant/ Stage	Lower Left	Lower Left/ Lower Right	Lower Right	Upper Left
Stage 1	Alpha fit	Pseudo-community	Unity	Fulfilment
Stage 2	Beta condition	Chaos	Individuation	Dissonance
Stage 3	Gamma trap		Competition/ Conflict	
Stage 4	Delta surge	Emptiness	Negotiation/ Resolution	Insight/ Opening
Stage 5	New alpha fit	Community	Cooperation/ New unity	Fulfilment (at new level)

Figure 6-1

stages of the cycle, then, is that we can better locate our own present stage and thus have an idea of what is to be expected. But to confirm more clearly that the holonic level of the nation-state is approaching its demise, let us first recapitulate somewhat.

We proposed in earlier chapters that the key underlying feature of nation-states under globalisation is the vicious circle of destructive competition in which they are firmly locked; a vicious circle that drives them to competitively down-level social and environmental protection in their bid to attract capital and jobs. Another feature is that nations engage in what is called “free-riding”. Free-riding is where one player (or nation) takes

the benefit of the altruism of others but without contributing anything itself. An example in today's world would be the refusal of some nations to participate in the Kyoto Protocol while benefiting from the emissions cuts made by others.

The interesting and crucial point is that these two underlying features of our present world - destructive competition and free-riding - have been found throughout evolution to be the key barriers that always stand in the way of co-operation; they are the barriers that always prevent – but thus also make necessary – the emergence of a new transformative holon. Destructive competition and free-riding, then, are the very behaviours which characterise a holon approaching its demise and this is not just the case now under globalisation; it has, according to evolutionary biologist, John Stewart, *always* been the case. The barrier to co-operation posed by destructive competition and free-riding applies, says Stewart,

“to all living processes. The circumstances that cause it are universal. Individuals [i.e. individuals, corporations, nations or any other entity] who use resources to help others without benefit to themselves will be out-competed. They will be disadvantaged compared to those who use the resources for their own benefit. And the barrier applies no matter what the evolutionary mechanisms are that adapt and evolve individuals. The barrier has applied whether the evolutionary mechanisms are those that adapt corporations, individual humans, other multi-cellular organisms, single cells or autocatalytic sets.”¹⁶⁶

Sahtouris further points out that destructive competition and free-riding are especially characteristic of immature species:

“Young species are found to have highly competitive characteristics: They take all the resources they can, they hog territory, they multiply wildly. Sound familiar? But a lot

¹⁶⁶ *Evolution's Arrow*, p57.

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of species have managed to grow up, to share things and territory, to cooperate. It's what keeps them alive.”¹⁶⁷

The identification of destructive competition and free-riding, then, is not merely some “theory of international relations” that may perhaps be pertinent at this time. Instead it is far more significant: a far deeper universal evolutionary phenomenon which is characteristic of – indeed, is the underlying *cause* of – all major evolutionary crises. To suggest, as we earlier did, that to ignore destructive international competition is to ignore global problems is something of an understatement.

Leaving that aside, however, the stage in the cycle at which humanity now finds itself should be reasonably clear. We are at the stage Scott Peck calls Chaos. Or depending on which theorist’s model you prefer, Dissonance [Wilber] or Competition/Conflict [Sahtouris] or the Gamma Trap [Beck/Cowan]. We find ourselves, in short, in the hangover of our *species adolescence*. To survive, humanity will - like all other organisms - have to *grow up*: we will have to abandon the present immature, competitive paradigm of international relations and evolve it into a mature, co-operative one. Humanity, to use Scott Peck’s model again, now needs to move into and through emptiness and thus to reach its species maturity: the stage of community. Or, to use Sahtouris’s model, the human species, like all others, is following the same life/death cycle of individuation and competition leading (hopefully) to negotiation, and leading in turn to a new higher level of co-operative unity. So, if we thought we were separate from other species in Nature or somehow “above” them, the joke is on us! Simply because we have more *power* than other species does not mean, in an evolutionary sense, that we are more *mature* than they are. We are not.

¹⁶⁷ Sahtouris [check]

Globalisation in the context of the life/death cycle

Immersed as we are in scientific materialist globalisation, in the midst of our species adolescence and increasingly suffering the hangovers, we are now on the brink, either of species collapse or of an evolutionary shift to a new higher level; the level at which we would achieve our species maturity. Before looking forward, however, we could usefully look back at the present highest holon, the nation-state, and trace very briefly its holonic life history.

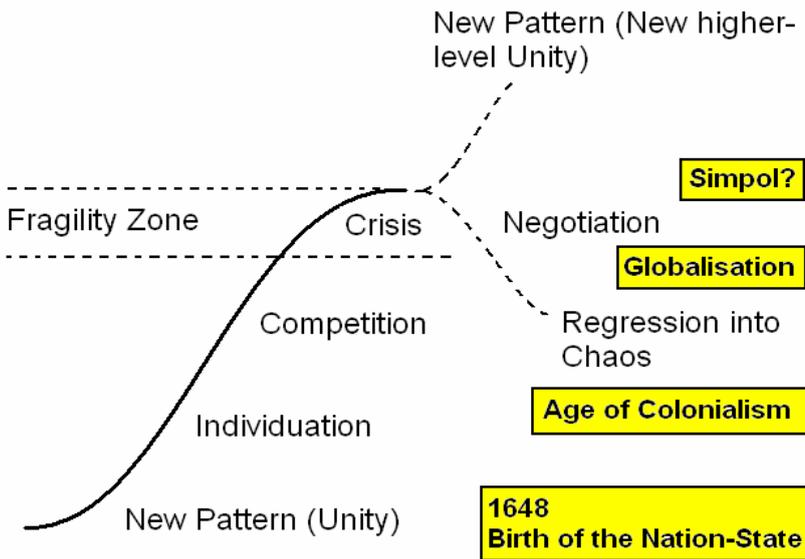


Figure 6-2

In Fig. 6-2, we trace the nation-state's life stages. In this diagram, we are using both Elisabet Sahtouris's cycle stages, (unity → individuation → competition → crisis → negotiation → new higher-level unity) and an "S-Curve". The S shows, in

linear form, the life-progress of a holonic level.¹⁶⁸ The holon of the nation-state, we see, emerged in earnest with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648; a point in time at which nation-states can be said to have transcended and included the myriad Middle-Age small states. At that time, the emerging modern nation-state system then represented the New Pattern (unity). Over the following centuries, nation-states progressed up the S-Curve through the era of competitive colonisation towards our era of destructive competition and globalisation; i.e. to humanity's present location in the Fragility Zone. The Fragility Zone is where the system becomes critical and prone to sudden collapse. The harsh winds of crisis could spell regression into chaos and dissolution; but the same winds could, if we organise ourselves, instead fill the sails of our life-raft and take us to the new level: to the New Pattern of higher-level unity.

Evolutionary transformation, some might say, is a slow and gradual process and, indeed, for most of the time it is. However, when a system has entered the Fragility Zone near the top of the "S", as our global human system already has, things can happen extremely rapidly. This is what evolutionists often refer to as "punctuated evolution"; a rapid shift from one system-level to the next. If we observe the many problems humanity now faces, the pressure for such a shift is already mounting and we must move swiftly if we are to survive. Global warming, the melting of polar ice-caps, the depletion of fossil fuels, terrorism, wealth inequality, ballooning national and personal debt, financial crises, nuclear proliferation are all signs of fragility; all signs that should warn us to be prepared either for melt-down or for a rapid shift to a new level. Moreover, the way things are going we should be prepared for this to occur not in the next fifty or one hundred years but, quite possibly, even within the next ten or twenty. Amongst others, the widely respected evolutionary systems theorist and futurist, Ervin Laszlo, seems to concur:

¹⁶⁸ *After the Clockwork Universe*, S.J. Goerner, Floris Books, 1999, p143.

“the Chaos Point [i.e. the point of fragility at which a sudden shift could occur] is likely to be reached on or around 2012. ... The year 2012 is indeed likely to be a gateway to a different world, but whether to a better world or to a disastrous one is yet to be decided.”

And, as Laszlo concludes,

“The decider, however, is not more technology, but the rise of new thinking [i.e. deeper consciousness] – new values, perceptions, and priorities – in a critical mass of the people who make up the bulk of society.”¹⁶⁹

In Fig. 6-2, “Simpol?” represents Sahtouris’s stages of “negotiation” and “new higher-level unity”. For, as we saw, Simpol is *two* things and not just one. It is both a *policy*, a clean sheet of paper upon which, (or an “open space”¹⁷⁰ within which), humanity could potentially *negotiate* the policies so urgently needed to solve our global problems; and its adoption campaign is a transformative *process* through which humanity could potentially, and if it so chooses, *drive* politicians and governments to implement the policy, and so to achieve a new, higher-level unity.

Repeating patterns: fractal evolution

“Fractals,” says Dr. Sally J. Goerner, **“are beautiful, useful and ubiquitous. They rise from processes we assume could create only disorder. But there is order! ... Fractals .. help explain another ancient insight – the microcosm reflects the macrocosm at every level. ... It**

¹⁶⁹ *The Chaos Point*, Piatkus, 2006, p14-15.

¹⁷⁰ “Open Space” is, actually, a way of conducting meetings of large numbers of people in a way that gives the best chance of achieving consensus. Such “meeting technologies” may well be very useful as one of Simpol’s policy formulation tools. See www.openspaceworld.org.

means that finer and finer versions of the same pattern repeat at every level.”¹⁷¹



The fern leaf - an example of a fractal found in nature

Figure 6-3

An example of a fractal can be seen in Fig. 6-3 above. The interesting question we might ask is: if fractals indicate repetition in evolution, would it not be reasonable to expect that a crisis similar to that now confronting humanity might have occurred at some point in our distant evolutionary past? Is it possible, in other words, that something very like globalisation occurred on some different and much smaller fractal scale before? And if such a crisis was eventually overcome, as it clearly was, could its solution hold clues to what might be an appropriate solution now? And if, to solve today’s crisis, we are proposing a global and simultaneous solution comprising, firstly, a range of policies which is to be contributed to by all and, secondly, a transformative “adoption” or “pledge” process

¹⁷¹ *After the Clockwork Universe*, p122-3.

capable of driving all nations to implement those policies, could we expect to find something similar if we look back to some critical crisis that occurred in our evolutionary past?

At this point, let's allow Elisabet Sahtouris, to take up the story:

“Like ourselves, the ancient bacteria got themselves deeper and deeper into crisis by pursuing win/lose economics based on the reckless exploitation of nature and each other. The amazing and inspirational part of the story is that entirely without the benefit of brains, these nigh invisible inventive little creatures reorganized their destructively competitive lifestyle into one of creative cooperation.

The crisis came about when food supplies were exhausted and relatively hi-tech respiring bacteria (“breathers” with electric motor drives) invaded larger more passive fermenting bacteria (“bubblers”) to eat their insides out – a process I have called bacterial colonialism or imperialism. The invaders multiplied within these colonies until their resources were exhausted and all parties died. No doubt this happened countless times before they learned cooperation.

Somewhere along the line, the bloated bags of bacteria also included photosynthesizers, “bluegreens”, which could replenish food supplies if the motoring breathers would push the enterprise up toward a lighter part of the primeval sea. Perhaps it was this lifesaving use of solar energy that initiated the shift to cooperation.

In any case, bubblers, bluegreens, and breathers eventually contributed their unique capabilities to the common task of building a workable society. In time, each donated some of their ‘personal’ DNA to the central resource library and information hub that became the nucleus of their collective enterprise: the huge (by bacterial standards) nucleated cells of which our own bodies and those of all Earth beings other than bacteria are composed.”¹⁷²

¹⁷² *The Biology of Globalization*. Article by Elisabet Sahtouris, Ph.D, www.ratical.org/LifeWeb/Articles/globalize.html

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So we see, here, a major crisis in past evolution that threatened bacterial wipe-out; a crisis which triggered a switch to co-operation that was orchestrated by an emergent central entity: the cell's nucleus. The cell nucleus, it seems, proceeded to invite all the competing entities within the dangerously unstable cell to contribute some of their DNA to the nucleus's "central resource library and information hub". The competing entities, it seems, accepted or "adopted" the invitation or process that the nucleus had set in train and they contributed their DNA to it - their ideas or policies, we might imagine, for how the cell could be organised on a co-operative basis in future. After some time and at some point, life within the cell somehow became transformed from a mode of destructive competition to one of fruitful co-operation. Since all the competing bacteria in the cell were affected, we can say with reasonable certainty that the transformation occurred *globally*, but we can only wonder if it might also, perhaps, have occurred *simultaneously*?

Be that as it may, Sahtouris continues:

"This process of uniting disparate and competitive entities into a cooperative whole – a multi-created cell, so to speak – was repeated when nucleated cells aggregated into a multi-celled creatures, and it is happening now for a third time as we multi-celled humans are being driven by evolution to form a cooperative global cell in harmony with each other and with other species. This new enterprise must be a unified global democracy of diverse membership...".

A unified global democracy of diverse membership, as Sahtouris describes it, would have started out by inviting all to participate in the design of its policies and would have possessed the transformative potential – the necessary congruity with the 20 Tenets - to effect a shift from destructive competition to fruitful co-operation. After many repeated failures, it seems that our bacterial forbears eventually managed to achieve co-operation in the form of the nucleated cell, the cell of which we ourselves are composed, and they did so without the benefit of brains.

With the big triune brains we humans have at our disposal, is it too much to hope that we, too, might be able to achieve co-operation in the form of a nucleated, i.e. globally governed, Earth? – and that we might achieve it on our first attempt?

Not only are we suggesting that the task humanity now faces has occurred fractally in the distant past, we can also detect the performance of a “fractal dance” between competition and co-operation as each new holonic level evolves. Integral to this dance is an alternation between internal and external competition and co-operation.

To explain this more clearly, in Fig. 6-4 we see a depiction of how individual competing single cells that plundered other cells eventually created the first item at the bottom left of the diagram: the multi-created (or nucleated) cell. The story of how that move to internal co-operation first occurred is the one Elisabet Sahtouris just told us above. In that phase, competition was *internal* to the cell until co-operation was achieved. But just as internal co-operation was attained by the success of the nucleus, the dance shifted as a new round of *external* competition started on the new higher level with *different* nucleated cells competing with one another. When that competition eventually became critical, and after many failures, co-operation again took the lead as nucleated cells joined to create multi-cellular creatures. Then, of course, it was again competition’s turn to lead the dance externally as different multi-celled creatures competed with each other to a point where wipe-out threatened. Again, and doubtless after many failures, co-operation was recognised to be in their best interests, and at that point, internal co-operation again leads the dance with the creation of a new, but fractally larger, multi-created cell. And so on.

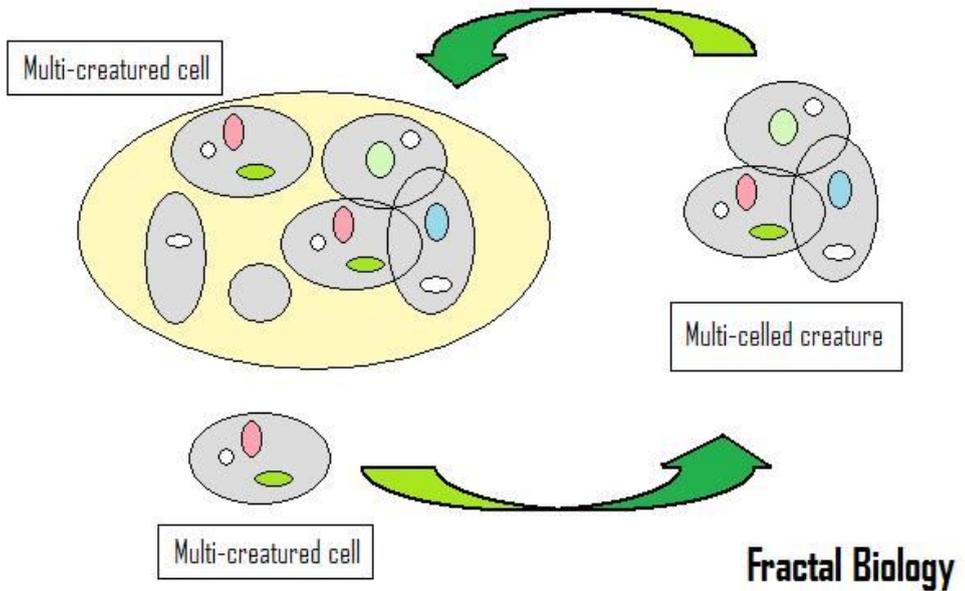


Figure 6-4¹⁷³

Similarly, as the human social holarchy gradually evolved from families to tribes to small-states to nation-states we can discern substantially the same fractal pattern – the same dance between competition and co-operation - in motion.¹⁷⁴

“There is a cycle of evolution,” explains Sahtouris, “that occurs all over, across time and space, at the tiniest levels of biology, and in the largest cosmic processes. It always begins with unity that then individuates—as in the ancient Vedic creation story in which a little wavelet forms in a

¹⁷³ Adapted from *EarthDance – Living Systems in Evolution*, E. Sahtouris, iUniversity Press, 2000. p271.

¹⁷⁴ This evolutionary dance between competition and co-operation is what Beck & Cowan refer to as a “spiralling between two poles of express-self competition and sacrifice-self co-operation” in their book, *Spiral Dynamics*.

smooth sea, and forever after is torn between loving its own individuality and wanting to merge back into the One. This universal tension between part and whole, and among parts, drives evolution. Individuation always leads to a kind of tension and conflict. And if the parts don't kill each other, they start negotiating. Negotiations can lead to resolutions of some of the tensions, moving from conflict to cooperation, and then to some new level of unity.”¹⁷⁵

In Fig. 6-2 we saw how the competitive dance of nation-states which started in earnest in 1648 is now coming to its end under globalisation. Just as æons ago the competitive dance of the bacteria was brought to an end when the nucleated cell became a co-operative unit, so now for humanity and its nation-states, too, the time has come for co-operation to take its lead.

“Perhaps, in a parallel fractal way,” continues Sahtouris, “globalization struggles to happen on countless planets in our universe that have evolved civilisations, but we humans cannot afford to be one of the failures, as we have only one chance – the common cell wall that binds us together is the boundary of our planet itself.”¹⁷⁶

The time has come, then, for humanity to co-operate to realise our specie’s maturity; it is time for us to grow up and it is time for us to come home. We have only one chance and we have been away too long. In the most objectively accurate, as well as in the most profound sense possible, we are all in the same boat. In terms of game theory, humanity is now playing a non-zero-sum game; a game where it’s in all our interests to co-operate. And as Robert Wright observes, “There is no better metaphor for a non-zero-sum relationship than ‘being in the same

¹⁷⁵ Elisabet Sahtouris, adapted from *Understanding Globalization as an Evolutionary Leap*, presented to the Institute of Noetic Sciences www.noetic.org, July 2001.

¹⁷⁶ *EarthDance*, Sahtouris, p272.

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boat””.¹⁷⁷ But co-operation will not happen if we simply sit back and take no action. For we are now in the age of conscious evolution. It requires our active, *conscious* participation. As opposed to purely biological systems where precise outcomes are unpredictable, Ervin Laszlo suggests that,

“In a human system... while the indeterminacy and autonomy of cultural mutation is real, the unpredictability of the outcome is mitigated. This is due to the presence of consciousness. Conscious members of the social system can grasp the nature of the evolutionary processes that unfold around them and can purposefully intervene.”¹⁷⁸

Spiritual teacher, Andrew Cohen, also suggests something not dissimilar: that the process of our own evolution is awakening to itself *through* us. We need to *make* it happen and we are all in this together. We always were, and we always will be.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ *Nonzero*, p30.

¹⁷⁸ *Chaos Point*, Laszlo, p108.

¹⁷⁹ Based on a talk given by Andrew Cohen at EnlightenNext, London, April 16th, 2005. EnlightenNext’s UK website: www.enlightennext.org/london.

7. The Sheepdog Trial: a metaphor for how global governance initiatives and NGOs could co-operate for global transformation

With all that we've covered, we should by now have some understanding for what a new transformative holon of global governance and its agency might look like. Whether Simpol discloses a sufficient degree of congruity with that vision is something only the reader can judge. But even if it does, that congruity, while perhaps being indispensable for global transformation, is not the only ingredient that will be helpful. We will therefore be looking in this chapter at some of the other ingredients and at some existing initiatives that seem well-placed to provide them. If all the right ingredients can be assembled and brought into a productive relationship, we'll have an even better chance of a successful outcome.

To make these ingredients and their functions more understandable, I will explain them in the context of a game or competition that is widely known in parts of the world where sheep are reared. The competition, known as a "sheepdog trial", provides a good metaphor for the challenge we citizens face in establishing the new holon of global governance. The sheepdog trial is a competition held amongst different shepherds. The idea is to see which shepherd and his dog is quickest to herd a flock of sheep into a wooden enclosure. This game and its different entities seem to offer a very useful and evocative visual metaphor for the dynamics involved if citizens are to drive their politicians and governments to solve global problems or to otherwise implement a more permanent system of people-centred global governance. If humanity is to win this evolutionary contest, we'd better be quick about it!

The four entities in the game are: the shepherd, the sheep, the wooden enclosure and the shepherd's dog. The role each entity has to play and their equivalent entities and roles in the task of establishing global governance are as follows:

The Shepherd

The shepherd's role is to direct the process, and especially his dog, to drive the sheep into the enclosure.

In the real-life task of building a new holon of global governance, we could say that the task of the shepherd is to articulate what *policies* need to be implemented to solve global problems. Or, to be more precise, we could say that the shepherd represents the mouthpiece of the world's people for it is *through the shepherd* that our policy requirements will need to be expressed.

The Sheep

In the sheepdog trial, the sheep wander relatively aimlessly and unpredictably around the field, being attracted by whatever takes their fancy. Or they may be compelled to move by a sheepdog.

In our real-life task, we could liken members of parliament and governments around the world to our flock of sheep. They could generally be said to be legislating as best as they can, and yet inadequately, as they respond to the endlessly shifting threats and opportunities presented by the destructively competitive global market; a process that, as we have seen, constrains our parliamentary representatives to maintaining their nation's international competitiveness and this causes them to participate more or less unwittingly in the "race to the bottom".

The Wooden Enclosure

The wooden enclosure or sheep-pen is the place into which the sheep must be driven and where they must be marshalled pending further action.

In our task, we could say that the wooden enclosure symbolises a point in time at which all or sufficient members of parliament and governments had signed the Pledge to implement Simpol or had otherwise agreed to implement some other form of global governance. They need to be marshalled into one place and time in order to implement the policy.

The Sheepdog

It is the dog's job to drive the sheep. Some sheep may by chance wander into the enclosure but most will not. They must be driven. So, without the dog, nothing can be achieved.

In our terms, we could say that the dog needs to embody the transformative potential or agency (or regime or code) necessary to drive politicians of all political persuasions – even potentially reluctant ones – towards the goal of global governance. This, as we saw, is the agency we are suggesting Simpol possesses. Whether it is Simpol that becomes the dog or some other organisation that discloses the same transformative potential does not really matter. For what is important is that *some* organisation is available which does. For the moment, however, Simpol seems to be the only initiative, as far as we know, which has the potential to provide people with a way to use their official votes in national elections to drive all politicians to implement a form of global governance. So we are proposing that Simpol could perform the dog's role.

Interrupting our flow somewhat, it is worth pointing out that if the analysis presented in this book is reasonably accurate, it would seem that, in the absence of Simpol or an organisation that possesses its kind of transformative agency, the only other means by which global governance could be achieved would likely be a good deal less than healthy; indeed it would be prone

to pathology. For if citizens do not drive their politicians to implement global governance, and if the global justice movement cannot do so by its present methods, who can? If it is not us, via Simpol or something similar, then who? For, if it isn't us, it could only be imposed by national governments alone, perhaps in a knee-jerk response to a global crisis of some kind. Global governance, achieved in that way, is hardly likely to be benign or free from corporate influence. At best, it would perhaps be a more authoritarian version of today's global institutions in which citizens would still have no direct say or vote. At worst, it could prove to be highly authoritarian: a kind of global corporate fascism. Indeed, that is where the world is already headed and where it may well end up if we citizens fail to act. That is why it is so vital that we now take the lead through the ballot box in a way that provides the necessary electoral *compulsion*; the necessary *drive* capable of ensuring that *people-centred* global governance - and not any other form - is achieved.

Working together

Simpol, or some other organisation that operates on similar principles, need not necessarily perform *all* the roles of shepherd, wooden enclosure and dog. For although Simpol at present seems to be alone in its potential to fulfil the dog's role, other organisations could perform or assist in the other two available roles. For example, one initiative that seems particularly suited to the role of wooden enclosure would be the e-Parliament initiative. By providing a unified internet forum potentially capable of linking all the world's members of parliament, it could provide an excellent marshalling point through which Simpol's implementation (or simultaneous-type policies generally) could be co-ordinated. The reason the e-Parliament is unlikely to perform the role of dog, we recall, is because although *some* members of parliament may voluntarily participate in it, very many will not, and the e-Parliament has no

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means of compelling them. It has, in short, no leverage – no bark.

With the role of shepherd, too, other organisations could assist in the function of facilitating the formulation of Simpol's policy content. Their participation would be likely to be valuable especially in the later stages of the policy development process. One such potential partner for this role might be the World Future Council (WFC).¹⁸⁰ As we saw, it intends to assemble a globally representative group of “wise elders” – world-renowned experts in various relevant fields – who, it is hoped, would analyse all of today's major global problems with a view to advising governments and policy-makers on how they can best deal with those problems. The advice and expertise of organisations such as the WFC, could prove very valuable to ISPO. It could provide vital information and recommendations to all adopters as they gradually work towards a final set of globally beneficial policy measures. Other organisations that could potentially fill or contribute to this role might be other world parliament-type initiatives, international NGOs and think-tanks, many of which have considerable experience to offer in terms of appropriate policies. In order to ensure the most democratic participation, however, it would always be *adopters* – i.e. the people - who would have control of the process.

Rather like the way a certain transformative configuration of molecules came together in the primordial soup to form the first cell, so perhaps various organisations could come together as described above to catalyse humanity's transition towards a form of co-operative, people-centred global governance. What seems certain, at any rate, is that today's vicious circle of destructive economic competition is unlikely ever to be broken without global and simultaneous action. For only the concept of *simultaneity*, it seems, discloses a future context of co-operation and thus permits the necessary differentiation between unilateral and simultaneous policies to be made. And only this differentiation, it seems, can in turn permit the global interest to

¹⁸⁰ World Future Council. Website: www.worldfuturecouncil.org.

be reconciled and integrated with national interests at all levels. Finally, only simultaneity, it appears, can give rise to a citizen's adoption pledge capable of directly affecting national democratic processes. For while citizens like to blame politicians for not solving global problems, the truth is that if citizens fully understood the economic dangers of *unilaterally* implementing the radical policies required, they would not vote for them. After all, nobody generally acts against their own self-interest. So the barrier to co-operation that destructive competition represents can only be surmounted, as John Stewart points out, "by building cooperative organisations out of self-interested components"; by finding ways to make it *in the interests* of individual entities to cooperate. And the only way to do that, it seems, is through simultaneity.

Simpol, we have seen, potentially possesses considerable transformative power, but it is vital that it not be abused. It is therefore important to emphasise that if the support of sufficient nations were ever achieved, there is provision in ISPO's Founding Declaration to ensure that Simpol's implementation could not take place without the citizens in those nations, whether they be adopters or not, having given their final majority consent. This provision is important because it would prevent the possibility of Simpol being implemented with only the consent of what may be a minority, i.e. only with the consent of adopters rather than of the majority of a population who may, for some reason, not be adopters.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, it is hoped that by the time implementation came into view a majority of citizens in each nation would have become adopters in any case. But should this not be the case, this provision is an important safe-guard that would ensure the widest possible popular consent.

However, whether Simpol is chosen to play the dog's role or whether it is played by some other organisation which possesses essentially the same agency, such an organisation cannot enable

¹⁸¹ The full text of ISPO's Founding Declaration can be found at www.simpol.org

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global citizens to achieve global governance unless we, citizens, all over the world each take on our *personal* responsibility of global citizenship by supporting not necessarily just Simpol, but *all* the global governance campaigns we feel to be amongst the most promising contenders for the dog's role. The purpose of this book has simply been to set out Simpol's claim to be considered amongst them and to invite you, the reader, to adopt it.

But to take on the adult responsibility of global citizenship, we must first shake off our adolescence. We must *deepen* our consciousness by first letting go of the dependencies and misconceptions which hold us back and, moreover, we must be prepared for commitment. For as Scott Peck reminds those who attend his community-building workshops:

“There is only one major rule. You can't drop out. I have no guns, whips, chains or shackles to enforce this commitment but each one of us is responsible for the success of this group. If you are unhappy with the way things are going – and you will be – it is your responsibility to speak up and voice your dissatisfaction rather than simply pick up your marbles and quietly leave.”

And so it is for citizens who adopt Simpol. For achieving the task at hand was never going to be easy. For us, too, as Scott Peck says,

“The expectation is that we will hang in together through periods of doubt, anxiety, anger, depression, and even despair.”¹⁸²

¹⁸² *The Different Drum*, p129.

8. Letting Go – Surrendering to the global politics of forgiveness

“The coming of the Over-Soul that is the World Soul, touching each and all with its Goodness and its Glory, baptizing each with its Brilliance and its Blessing. The coming of the World Soul, trailing clouds of wonderment, singing songs of liberation, dancing madly and divine in splendour and salvation. The long-sought coming of the World Soul, changing every “it” and every “we” and every “I” it touches; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we will be changed, we all will be changed.”¹⁸³

- Ken Wilber

Wilber, as we earlier recalled, observed that all of this remains only a *potential*. “Whether that potential becomes actual”, he reminds us, “is up to you and me; it depends on the concrete actions that each of us takes.”

It depends on our actions, yes, but our actions, as we earlier noted and as Wilber is at pains to stress, arise from our level of *consciousness*; and reaching each new level of consciousness involves not so much a building up, but a letting go of, or a dying to, the previous level. And that is a risky business. It feels profoundly dangerous and deeply scary because letting go means staring into the abyss; it means facing the unknown or going into free-fall. And yet, in emptying ourselves of our existing assumptions, prejudices and dependencies – of everything with which, and through which, we are used to thinking - something new, deeper and more embracing emerges.

¹⁸³ SES, p521.

Humanity, it seems, must now navigate the stage of *emptiness* (or *negotiation*, or *insight/opening*).

It was the inner space, that momentary *emptiness*, which was created by such a letting go (and quite a ruthless letting go at that) which allowed the profound conviction that simultaneity was key to solving our global crisis to enter not so much my mind, but my very heart and soul. Like the tumblers of a combination lock all falling into place at once, it all seemed so incredibly simple and yet also so complex and far-reaching in its ramifications. The significance at that moment could only be felt, it could not be thought – and as I said, it feels like love. For some weeks afterwards I was overcome with what felt like a kind of ecstatic compulsion; a need to *give form* to this profoundly soul-felt conviction. And as you can probably tell, I am still in recovery. But on a more practical, everyday level, how could we generally conceive of such a “letting go” in a way that gives new coherence to the way we see the world? What might letting go actually look or feel like?

The first thing we might do is simply to bring to mind all those people, organisations or –isms (such as capitalism) that we most fondly believe to be responsible for our global crisis. It might be corporate executives or global investors, or it might be George W. Bush or politicians generally, or capitalism, terrorism, fundamentalism or some other-ism. Then, once they are all in my mind, I simply *let go* of that belief. I let go of it because it is false. It is false because, in a globally competitive world, corporations, global investors and politicians have far less room for manoeuvre than I think. If behaving responsibly means losing profits, share value and ultimately my job, what would *I* do if I were in the shoes of a CEO (Chief Executive Officer or company director)? If investing responsibly means losing out to my competitors and thus losing my position on the investment ranking tables and possibly my job, what would *I* do if I were an investment manager? If protecting society and the environment meant jobs and capital going elsewhere causing inflation, unemployment and a loss of votes, what would *I* do if I were a politician? And even if I was the leader of the most powerful

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and highest consuming country in the world, the most dependent on fossil fuels, and I had the power to militarily reinforce my nation's dominant position in the world; a position which, if I fail to maintain it, might quickly be taken over by some other country, what would *I* do?

I would probably, I now see, be doing pretty much what *they* are all doing now.¹⁸⁴

So, when I let go of the smug belief that I would somehow behave significantly better were I in their shoes, I start to take on board in a very real sense that my belief in their guilt is false – and that I need to *let go* of it; to die to it. When I realise that I am no better than they, that I am no more or less guilty than they, and that I am therefore as helpless as they, I realise, in short, that I *am* they and they are me: that *we* are one.

Another similar but equally vital step is to *let go* of the belief that politicians have substantial power or that the G-8 somehow has the power to “make poverty history” or to otherwise “save the planet”.¹⁸⁵ When trillions of dollars of global capital move daily across national borders with a few clicks of a computer mouse, a phenomenon that is well beyond the control of politicians or global financial institutions such as the IMF, I now realise that no government can unilaterally impose any policy that might displease global markets. I realise that the IMF is relatively powerless. This, I now see, means that all governments, *regardless of their party-political affiliation*, are constrained to implementing much the same market- and business-friendly policies. So whatever party I elect, the policies delivered – both domestic and foreign - will stay substantially the same. That is why, all around the world, I and others are losing interest in party politics. Until now, I didn't understand

¹⁸⁴ This is not to suggest, of course, that everything can be laid at the door of destructive competition. For there are quite a few greedy, mischievous and malicious people out there. But even if there are, little is served by attacking them directly. Malicious intent or not, Simpol still remains, I suggest, a viable strategy for addressing their behaviour.

¹⁸⁵ See: *Live 8. Making Poverty History or Entrenching Our Irresponsibility?* Article by John Bunzl freely downloadable from www.simpol.org.

why this was happening. But my understanding of it now means I can *let go* of the idea that genuine democracy exists or that starting a new political party or changing the voting system might help. I can see, now, that they won't. I can also see that lobbying and street protest can at best obtain only short-lived gains from a system that politicians themselves have already lost control of. As a consequence I can *let go* of the idea that pressuring politicians or governments on the basis of unilateral action can have much effect, for what is the point of demanding such action from nations or politicians when it's clear they do not have the power to deliver? In *letting go* of the belief in powerful politicians, I can embrace *wholeheartedly* and in the depth of my very heart and soul the certain knowledge that the lunatic herd mentality of global markets has long since taken over the global asylum. Politicians and CEOs may well be sitting in First Class, but I can and must *let go* of the idea that they, or anyone else, is sitting in the cock-pit. They're not.

When - finally - we individually and collectively *let go* of all this falseness, far from being overcome by a feeling of desperation and despair, paradoxically we reach a crucial and fundamentally important intellectual and spiritual turning point. A point at which we can move to a new and profoundly liberating level in our thinking and being. Once we stop blaming others, we start to see that, in reality, no single person, group, organisation, country, religion or culture can be singled out. We start to see that even those who benefit hugely from the status quo are in no position to actually *change* the system and we start to see that we are all caught - at one level or another - in the vicious spiral of globally destructive competition: in a veritable "prisoner's dilemma" from which there is, ordinarily, no way out. We start to see - finally - that we are *all* prisoners, all in the same boat.

From a collective realisation such as this, we would have gone a long way to satisfying the pre-conditions for building a genuine global community: the conditions of *forgiveness and non-judgemental acceptance* of ourselves and each other; the *inclusiveness* necessary if we are to find genuine and lasting

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global solutions; solutions based on collective, simultaneous, international action. After all, it is upon such a state of genuine Global Community that a properly functioning people-centred global governance must surely depend. In short, we would have surrendered in the depths of our very souls to the reality that we are ALL ONE; all one in the recognition of our common human fallibility and ‘brokenness’; all one in the celebration of each others’ differentness, all one in the brother/sisterhood of humanity and all one in the eye of our respective God.

Such a realisation would, I believe, be understandable, logical and verifiably appropriate in today’s globalised world. It is a realisation that everyone who wishes to can fairly easily accept as a starting point for their part in this latest and most essential of humanity’s evolutionary journeys. A journey which demands that our individual and collective consciousness move beyond the ‘first-tier’ mode of protest, blame and ‘either/or’, flatland-thinking to the ‘second-tier’, non-judgemental, world-centric, ‘both/and’, holarchic-thinking needed to solve global problems. For as Einstein rightly suggested, “no problem can be solved with the same thinking that created it”.



Your species needs

YOU!

And finally – *very* finally – we, each and all, must *take responsibility*. There is, remember, no one in the cock-pit so we

have only ourselves to look to. And yet we must ensure that our destination is not a regression into chaos and dissolution, but instead an ascendance to our co-operative species maturity; and that, not surprisingly, can only *be* our responsibility. No one is available or capable of getting into the cock-pit except we ourselves. We are naturally scared and racked with self-doubt and yet, as Marianne Williamson reminds us,

“our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are *powerful beyond measure*. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in Everyone! And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others!”¹⁸⁶

Only we, ordinary people around the world can liberate ourselves from our own fears and dependencies and so drive our politicians and nations to transit from today’s vicious circle of destructive competition to the new world we all wish to see and we wish our children to see. This is both our collective and our *individual* responsibility, as E. F. Schumacher so presciently observed:

“On the one side, I see the people who think they can cope with our...crisis by the methods current, only more so; I call them the people of the forward stampede. On the other side, there are people in search of a new life-style, who seek to return to basic truths about man and his world; I call them

¹⁸⁶ Reference reqd.

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home-comers. ... In one way or another everybody will have to take sides in this great conflict.”¹⁸⁷

Each of us will indeed have to take sides. But, for perhaps the first time in human history we citizens all over the world now have, in the form of Simpol, a way of using our official votes in national elections to ensure beneficial global outcomes – a way, we might say, of voting globally. Adopting Simpol, if you will, is a way we can each make a very *personal* statement by electorally “taking sides” in a way that shows all humanity that we are, in fact, all on the *same* side. So, is it not our personal responsibility to do so and to make Simpol our own? And after all, do we have any valid excuse *not* to? And if we do adopt, do we really have anything to lose?

In my book, *The Simultaneous Policy*, I used Scott Peck’s community-building process, Pseudo-community → Chaos → Emptiness → Community, as a metaphor for our global transformation. Adopting Simpol, I suggested, “could be likened to a bridge that spans the stages of Chaos and Community. In terms of world Community-building, the adoption process could *itself* be described as the stage of Emptiness.”¹⁸⁸ And that is because, to adopt is to empty ourselves, or to let go, of our deep-seated misconceptions and, at the same time, to take responsibility for making ourselves part, potentially, of the global political solution. In adopting Simpol, we could say that we join the march through emptiness; the march that has, if *you* choose to join it, the potential to take us to where we belong – to where we have *always* belonged – to the stage of world community.

Simpol, remember, loves unconditionally because it is, to its core, *universally inclusive*. Because it understands in its deep structure that it is the vicious circle of destructive competition *itself* which drives so much of our socially and environmentally damaging behaviour – that it is destructive competition *itself*

¹⁸⁷ *Small is Beautiful*, Abacus, 1974.

¹⁸⁸ *The Simultaneous Policy*, p103

which locks us all into that vicious circle – Simpol forgives us all and so makes itself open to all. Simpol has no need to point fingers, nor any need to take sides for we are all on the same side and we always were. In the recognition of our common human brokenness and fallibility, and in the knowledge that we are all in some sense responsible for our perilous global predicament, we can see that Simpol has a need only to include us, to forgive us and to afford us the opportunity of making it our own. Simpol, we see, has a need *only* to love.¹⁸⁹

Observations we have made in previous chapters show us that the paradox of this and all previous major evolutionary transitions is, that if left to reach a critical stage, competition ultimately ceases to be a strategy for individual survival but instead becomes a strategy for collective suicide. At that point – a point we are now fast approaching - co-operation becomes in everyone’s self-interest. But for a regression into chaos to be avoided and for co-operation at a new higher level to emerge, not only is global and simultaneous action required to overcome the barriers to international co-operation; an appropriate *catalysing political process* is also needed. For, as Wilber so rightly makes clear:

“Every revolution, every transformation, every shift in consciousness and culture that actually sticks has *of necessity* a Lower-Right [i.e. an outer socio-political-economic] component, and if that component is not present or prominent, you can dismiss any claims to have a new

¹⁸⁹ In this respect, Simpol appears to have some resonance with M.K. Gandhi’s philosophy of *Ahimsa*: “It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist or attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. For we are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of one and the same Creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world.” M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1927, 1929.

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paradigm, a great transformation, or a new and revolutionary anything.”¹⁹⁰

And *that*, so succinctly put, is what the Simultaneous Policy offers if we only choose – if you only choose - to adopt it: an integral political technology for us to *responsibly* and *consciously* co-create the now-vital holon of people-centred global governance; a world-centric governance born of an aperspectival vision-logic that transcends and includes political parties and nation-states and “through which runs the blood of a common humanity and beats the single heart of a very small planet struggling for its own survival, and yearning for its own release into a deeper and a truer tomorrow.”¹⁹¹

*“People get ready
There’s a train a comin’
Don’t need no baggage
You just get on board.
All we need is faith
To hear the diesels hummin’
Don’t need no ticket
We’ll just thank the Lord.

I believe, I believe...”*¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Ken Wilber Online.

<http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/books/kosmos/excerptA/part3-1.cfm>

¹⁹¹ SES, p206.

¹⁹² Words from *People get ready*, by Curtis Mayfield. Mijac Music Co./Beechwood Music Ltd.

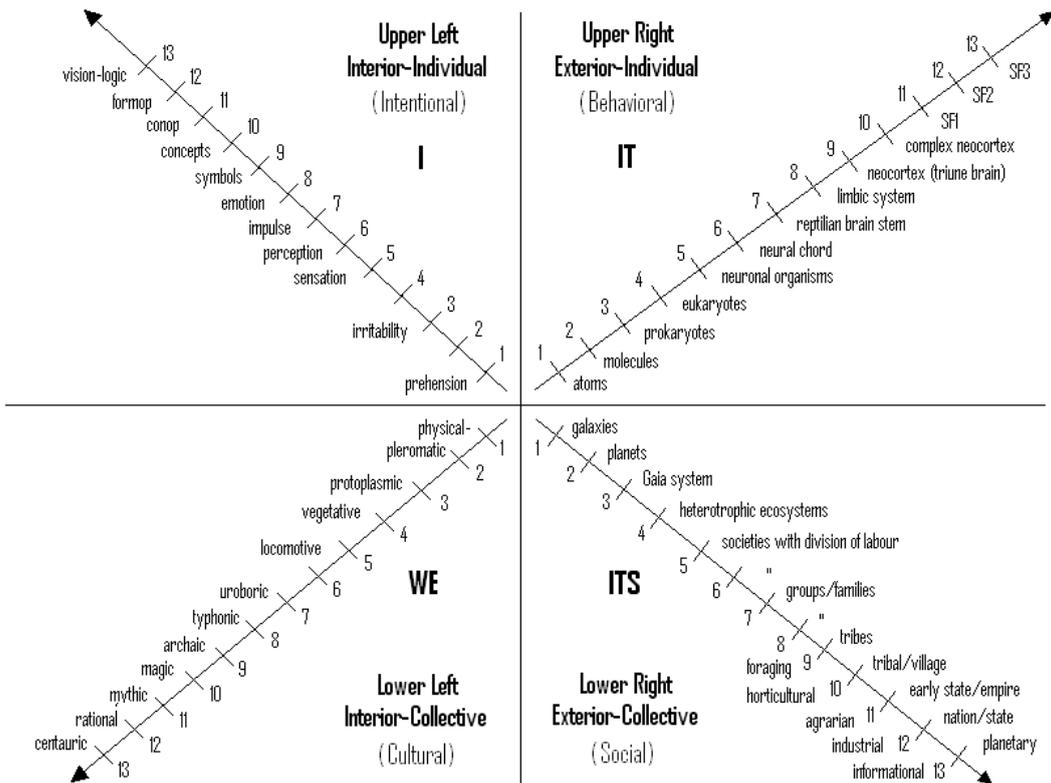


Figure 8-1

Ken Wilber's Four Quadrants¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Adapted from *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Ken Wilber. Shambhala Publications, Inc. 1995, 2000.

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Simultaneous Policy Adoption Form

(Please do not tear this form out. Please photocopy instead or adopt Simpol online)

I adopt the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) and pledge to vote in future national elections for ANY political party or candidate – within reason – that has pledged to implement it. Alternatively, if I have a preference for a certain party, by adopting Simpol I encourage my party to pledge to implement it.

As an adopter, I have the right to participate, if I wish, in the formulation of Simpol's policy measures.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my adoption at any time if I wish to do so.

Last Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms).....

First Name.....

Postal
Address.....

.....

.....Post Code.....

Country.....

Email.....

Nationality.....

Telephone.....

Signed.....Date.....

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Please tick as appropriate:

I would like to become involved in campaigning for the adoption of Simpol

I am a member of these NGOs (please list)

.....

.....

Please send me information on “*The Simultaneous Policy: An Insider’s Guide to Saving Humanity and the Planet*” and other books by John Bunzl.

Optional: I would like to make a donation to ISPO. I enclose cheque payable to “ISPO” for the in the sum of:

£.....

Thank you!

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Global Greens: www.globalgreens.info

Institute of Noetic Sciences: www.noetic.org

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Monbiot, George: www.monbiot.com

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