

Driving Forces on the Social Order

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Abstract

The article aims to explore the fundamental driving forces and trends that influence the future of statehood and democracy in general. It also aspires to build upon the view that such a macro perspective will open, and to generate some new insights and knowledge for those idealists among us who endeavour to advance and improve the global social order in general.

"What is important about the EU isn't that it is located in Europe, but that it is pioneering a form of transnational governance. Contrary to what some of its supporters and its critics say, it is not a federal state or a super nation-state" (Giddens 2000: 98).

General Purpose

What follows is a research effort in the field of Future Studies (FS). It is an effort that aims to look deeper into the future of statehood and democracy in our seemingly dystopia-oriented (Slaughter 2004) world. It is also an effort that relies heavily upon the fundamental sciences (notably physics, biology, and systems theory) in order to build such a view. However, the first insight from these sciences is that the objective 'outside' observation of the future is simply not possible. Not only, because there is a multiplicity of futures, or that such an

exercise would be too complex, but also because of the phenomenon known as the 'measurement problem' in quantum physics (Marshall and Zohar 1997), implying that the act of observation itself will always change the observed future, *ad infinitum*. Therefore, the aim of this paper is not to draw 'the one-and-only' right picture of the global future. Instead, as Slaughter (2004: 24) puts it: "...the twin motivations for future enquiry [are] the avoidance of danger and the pursuit of positive goals for humankind". Encouraged by this statement, the purpose of the article will be to produce some new means to influence the future, and to open up new alternative avenues for it to unfold.

The usual tools that futurists use in their daily work are the trends and driving forces of the future. So this article will open with driving force analysis, mentally assuming the remotest possible 'telescope perspective' upon the object of observation. Then, a closer 'naked-

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JOURNAL OF FUTURES STUDIES

eye' view on the major trend-clusters, wherein these forces reveal themselves, will be taken. Finally, an attempt will be made to build upon these observations, and to draw some 'orienting generalisations' (Wilber 1995; 2000) for those idealists among us who wish to contribute to and advance the global social order in general.

Systems Theory and Ken Wilber's (1995; 2000) four-quadrant worldview are the two pillars of the study's epistemological framework. This means that the driving forces are analysed at three system levels: physical, biological and human, and the trend-analysis will follow the four-quadrant logic of Wilber (1995; 2000) – the interior and exterior of the individual and the collective aspects of society. It must be noted that the simplified approach, concerned with the four quadrants only, was chosen to limit the scope of this paper. This means that the results are not exhaustive, and come mainly from a 'horizontal' exploration of the question. Using more 'vertical' methodologies such as Casual Layered Analysis (Inayatullah 2004) to explore trends in each quadrant might lead to different insights.

Driving Forces

Entropy versus emergence

The 'as-remote-as-possible' perspective forces the author to skip the more obvious drivers generally acknowledged in the FS literature, such as technology and globalisation, as there always seems to be some next force that is causing the previous one on the list. When digging further in search of fundamental drivers, the two that seem to meet the criterion of being truly original, are the concepts of *entropy* and *emergence*. Those two are the natural processes that are not usually connected with the day-to-day events, but nevertheless appear to influence any phenomenon in our surrounding environment and, furthermore, to be contradictory by nature.

In general, questioning the applicability of the Second Law of Thermodynamics to the process of evolution is still causing one of the most fundamental disputes in modern science (notably between physicists and biologists, see

e.g. Chaisson 2004; Cirkovic 2002; Koestler 1967; Marshall and Zohar 1997; Wilber 1995; 2000). However, whatever the outcome of this debate, from the point of view of FS, the relevant conclusion seems to be that the arrow of time is generally guiding the flow of affairs in two opposite directions. In the physical realm, the arrow's downward direction is determined by the aforementioned 2nd Law: towards greater entropy, that is, from order to dissolution. Yet, in everything that concerns life as such – biology, social structures, culture etc – the direction of the flow seems to be the opposite, towards higher complexity and integration. Koestler (1967: 197-98, original italics) summarises the biologists' view of this phenomenon:

"[The Second Law of Thermodynamics] asserted that the universe is running down like a clockwork affected by metal fatigue, because its energy is being steadily, inexorably degraded, dissipated into heat, until it will finally dissolve into a single, shapeless, homogeneous bubble of gas of uniform temperature just above absolute zero, inert and motionless – the cosmic *Wärmetod*. Only in recent times did science begin to recover from the hypnotic effect of this nightmare, and to realise that the Second Law *applies only in the special case of so-called 'closed systems'* (such as gas enclosed in a perfectly isolated container). But no such closed systems exist even in inanimate nature, and whether or not the universe as a whole is a closed system in this sense is anybody's guess. ... Instead of 'running down' like a mechanical clock that dissipates its energies through friction, the living organism is constantly 'building up' more complex substances from the substances it feeds on, more complex forms of energies from the energies it absorbs, and more complex patterns of information – perceptions, feelings, thoughts – from the input of its receptor organs. ...The idea [is] that organisms, in contrast to machines, were primarily *active*, instead of being merely *reactive*, that instead of passively adapting to their environment they were 'creative in the

DRIVING FORCES ON THE SOCIAL ORDER

sense that new patterns of structure and behaviour are constantly fabricated..."

This phenomenon of building up more complex patterns seems to fit well as the definition of emergence. However, to fully define it, another concept – the one of a system – needs to be briefly examined. Ludvig von Bertalanffy (1968: 34) defined his General Systems Theory (GST) as "...a general science of 'wholeness'", and the system as "...a thing with interrelated parts". By this (almost the broadest possible) definition, the idea of interrelated parts emphasises the basic feature of all systems – they can analytically be broken down into interrelated subsystems. According to GST, to understand the whole one should, besides the features and interrelations of its parts, analyse the unique properties of the whole itself. Another important notion from GST was that everything that is valid for the subsystems is valid for the whole as well, but the definition of the whole is not limited to that. In other words: "...[the] whole is greater than the sum of parts" (Marshall and Zohar 1997: 138). Hence: "The property of an entity or complex system is said to be emergent if it cannot be defined or explained in terms of the properties of its parts, or if it is not reducible to these properties or their relations" (Marshall and Zohar 1997: 137).

When the phenomenon of emergence is observed as an ultimate driving force of the future, it becomes particularly relevant at the level of living systems (i.e. biological and above levels, including human systems). As such, it is the ultimate cause of new qualities or states in social systems – the appearance of something that was not, and cannot be deduced from what went before.

It is on this twofold nature of the very fundamental flows in the environment, where two conclusions, perhaps trivial-looking but still extremely relevant for the paper's purpose, may be grounded. Firstly, the planet's inert physical and natural resources will continue to be downgraded and diminished as the current exploitation continues. There is no reasonable ground for hope that someday or somehow science will find a way to reverse this process. Secondly, human society will never 'be ready', and its

rulers will never have a chance to rest idle. There will be an ever-increasing flow of new and more complex issues and problems emerging to confront us, needing to be resolved and solutions integrated into the day-to-day functioning of society. There will never be 'the end of history' in the early Fukuyama's (1992) sense, and democracy as such is hardly the last and final social order to be reached. This tension between the need for ever-increasing absorption capacity and ever-downgrading resources simply prevents us from ever seeing something like '*wärmetod*' in a human society.

Human creativity – wisdom versus folly

When talking about ultimate driving forces, technological change, pushing mankind from agricultural to industrial to information to knowledge society, tends to be named most often by various authors (Barker and Heijden 2000; Mannermaa 2003; Schwartz 2003; Slaughter 2004). This seems to be often considered as the most basic driving force into which the origins of all the other major human developments may be traced back to. However, any new technology is always based on knowledge, invented and adopted by humans, and thus there are certain problems with privileging technological change in the present list of ultimate drivers.

The nearest argument against this 'autonomy of technology' (Launis 2002; Mannermaa 2003) comes from the field of FS itself. When looking back on the history of FS, it may be noted that future scenarios developed a few decades ago tend to tell us more about their time of creation than about the future that actually followed. In particular, technological change has tended to be overestimated and social change underestimated (List 2004). In that sense, one is inclined to agree with Richard Florida's (2002) comment that a man shifted from year 1900 to 1950 would find it harder to adjust to new technologies than a man shifted from 1950 to 2000. At the same time, with his potential to adjust to societal or cultural change, things would probably be the other way around.

The second ground is that, in its very

depth, the reasoning behind technology as the major driving force usually reaches either the 'technological imperative' or the 'slippery slope' argument (Mannerman 2003). The 'technological imperative' is defined by Launis (2002: 171) as the rule according to which "...whatever scientific or technological development comes about, we shall ultimately come to use it (or abuse it)". The 'slippery slope' argument states that whenever we adopt a seemingly unproblematic new practice, "...we will eventually end up performing or allowing something that we regard as unacceptable or at least problematic [to occur]" (Launis 2002: 169). Thus, it is not the technology, but how we apply it.

Therefore, one would rather seek inspiration from Florida's (2002) vision and recognise *creativity* as the most recent and higher-level original driving force, unique to human systems and driving even the technological change. Basically, what distinguishes this driver from the physical and biological ones is our ability to foresee and consciously influence the consequences of both entropy-growth and emergence. This qualitative distinction should also ground the claim that creativity is something more than a simple human-level extension of emergence. In addition, although the extent of our ability 'to foresee and influence' is obviously limited, extending it is precisely what FS in general is all about.

Although Launis' (2002) deeper analysis reaches the conclusion that neither the 'technological imperative' nor the 'slippery slope' arguments, in their classical form, are ultimately valid, there seems to be something that connects them with life in general (just as we recognise the value in Murphy's Laws, although they are not ultimately valid either), and creativity in particular. It would seem that they point to certain 'boyish' characteristics in our creative capability – 'what happens if I stick this nail into the socket on the wall?' Thus, a deeper understanding of creativity and differentiating between its dimensions (e.g. technological vs. social innovation) is important for the purpose of this paper. To cite Slaughter (2004: 67):

"The axioms of [US] economic system have been consistently imposed on other coun-

tries by powerful Washington-based institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. Its high-tech companies together comprise possibly the single most influential driver of technical innovation in the world next to the military (not that the two are entirely separate). Yet, if we pause a little and take stock there are some curious aspects to this process. One is that there is really little or no public demand for the increasingly sophisticated goods that emerge. This helps to explain why so much time and money is devoted to marketing, the quintessential American gift to modern culture. Yet, ...'you only have to spend billions marketing something if its worth is in doubt'. Another curious fact is that the whole process of compulsive technical innovation is not driven by any notion of appropriateness or human need. Rather, the primary dynamic appears to be that of the race between competing trans-national enterprises for competitive and commercial advantage."

In other words, people create and innovate not only to satisfy an objective need (i.e. to influence the two fundamental drivers discussed earlier), or for fun and curiosity (which is simply human): We also *consciously create to create a new need*. And that seems to be quite self-destructive in the perspective taken here (not to mention the military field in which the sole purpose of creation is to destroy). And so, we have reached an economy where people with the highest creative capacity are usually to be found in the advertising industry. Yet, the current international patent and copyright framework is indiscriminate about the kind of creation it is supposed to protect. As Estonian IT analyst Linnar Viik (2004) has pointed out, it is actually empowering the self-feeding loop of pointless commercial innovation.

Disequilibrium

In biology, systems further away from equilibrium, and closer to the edge of chaos, have been found to be the ones more prone to the emergence of new qualities (Marshall and Zohar 1997). At the same time, total stability

DRIVING FORCES ON THE SOCIAL ORDER

seems to be the surest way to avoid it, leading a system towards stagnation. Thus, the level of balance becomes the key variable upon which the speed of change depends in a system. As the focus of this study is on the highest level of human systems – society in general – it is reasonable to investigate what it is about such systems that affect their balance.

Ken Wilber's (1996; [1995] 2000) work seems to offer a comprehensive and practical framework for such investigation. According to him, all systems (although he uses Koestler's (1967) term *holon*, to emphasise the system's inner dimensions overlooked by the GST, the concepts of system and holon remain essentially the same) "...display four fundamental capacities: self-preservation, self-adaptation, self-transcendence and self-dissolution" (Wilber [1995] 2000: 48). From an external point of view, through self-preservation the system aims to preserve and increase its individuality or wholeness, and through self-adaptation it aims to adapt with its neighbours and the super-system. From an internal point of view, the self-transcendent capacity of a system enables and forces it into constant merging with others to form higher-level systems, while through self-dissolution, a system is capable of dissolving into its constituent sub-systems again. This four-directional framework should provide a universal and logical environment to weigh any systems balance: one simply needs to evaluate the path a system has gone through on the line of its development on each of the four directions.

Lessem and Palsule (1997) set this idea of four capacities into a global business organisation context. Although their work has not relied on Wilber, it seems quite evident that the West, North, East and South organisational archetypes they talk about, are the very same thing as the four drives of a holon, only in a less abstract level. As they write:

"So the four worlds simultaneously exist on all levels both 'out there' and 'in here'. On the one hand the quaternity of forces are distinct and separate. Yet each of these worlds contains the other three enfolded in it. ... What we are saying is that the four cultural forms are like the quaternity that exist

in each one of us as four forms of knowledge. What we need to do is first become aware of their existence and develop the skills and the art of tapping into those modes. ...The four worlds, then, represent a universal archetype of organization. This archetype recurs and replicates itself at all levels, from the psychological structure of a human being, to a physical and economic structure of a corporation..." (Lessem and Palsule, 1997:10-11).

In order to link Wilber's (1995; 2000) four capacities with the four archetypes proposed by Lessem & Palsule (1997), a brief overview of them is required.

According to Lessem and Palsule (1997: 12-13) "[The Western] organisation derives its identity from its separateness from the environment", and this mode is prevalent in typical US or (more softly) UK business organisations. The force driving such an organisation is usually *pragmatism*, which "...as a philosophical mainstream, rooted in individual self-consciousness, is often linked to both *empiricism* and also to *individualism*" (1997: 21). Also: "...whereas thinking implies a separation from things thought, experience [i.e. *empiric* encounter] is a stream of life which bathes the individual at every moment in a well of practicality" (1997: 22). In that sense this mode appears to be best characterised through its reaction to the outside world, aiming to separate itself from it. From Wilber's (1995; 2000) four capacities of a holon, self-preservation is the one most clearly corresponding with this archetype.

Opposite to Western pragmatism, is *rationalism* that is said to be the driving force behind the Northern way of thinking (Lessem and Palsule 1997: 12). Here, the organisation is more concerned with its maintenance and consolidation as an entity. "Unlike his or her more individualistic Western counterpart, whose dictum is 'do well', the Northerner is motivated by deep sense of 'doing right' and that of a collective good" (1997: 41). This rational mode is usually considered to reveal itself strongest in Scandinavian organisations, and generally in continental Europe. It is about seeking out external coherence in systems, and a "...sense of

JOURNAL OF FUTURES STUDIES

uniformity and order" (1997: 35). From the four capacities of a holon, self-adaptation is the equivalent to this.

East and South represent the 'view from within'. East prevails in Asian enterprises, and is seen as the opposite to the West:

"While the West seeks to affirm, the East seeks to dissolve; while the Western archetype is about outwardly directed movement, the Eastern one is inwardly directed. While Western knowledge is masculine in character, because of its complete dependency on abstraction and logical consistency, Eastern knowledge is fundamentally feminine because of its intrinsic lack of division and categories" (1997: 46).

According to Lessem and Palsule (1997), the Eastern driving force is continually striving to dissolve one's identity, or to subsume it within a higher order. Again, the equivalent from the four capacities of a holon is quite obvious – self-dissolution.

The Southern archetype is associated with (South) African organisations, and seen turning smoothly over the Arab world towards the Eastern mode in India and further east. The 'heart' is the core metaphor here, as opposed to the Northern 'head'. In the Southern mode, "...one exists as a part of a larger family or a community to which it is bound by forces of evolution" (1997: 14). In the literature there is even a special African term for it – 'ubuntu' – essentially meaning that a person can only become a person through connection with other people (Tutu 1996). Indeed, one key feature of this perspective seems to be a certain inner force, often revealed in the form of rhythm in African culture. "While in Western and Northern terminologies, an organization may 'have' force, the native perspective maintains that the organization is force himself. To be part of an organization is therefore to partake in its potency" (Lessem and Palsule 1997: 60). Also:

"The purpose of rhythm is force itself and to apply it is to transform what you are doing from being an act of triviality to one of vitality. That is the reason why in African poetry, a poem is not considered complete if it is

not accompanied by at least one percussion instrument. Meaning is achieved not by climax, which is usually the case in the linear Mentational mode, but through repetition, whereby the multiplicity of recurrent rhythmic tensions transforms the word by infusing it with power. The poem, when it is sung and danced to the beating of a drum, is then not just a string of words, but a centre of power. Once again, the transformative intensity emerges from attitude" (1997: 61).

From the four capacities of a holon, the last remaining one – self-transcendence – links perfectly with this organisational mode.

To summarise the combined arguments of Wilber (1995; 2000) and Lessem and Palsule (1997): there is no society that develops in only one direction. The four archetypes are 'recurring and replicating' at all levels of any society, driving it in four diverging directions. Yet, as Lessem and Palsule (1997) conclude, a generally prevailing orientation or strength of a particular organisation or culture may usually be distinguished. No society is in complete balance in that sense. Overall, their arguments seem to point towards a subtle energy source determining the intensity of emergence in human systems. It is the continuous *disequilibrium* and interplay between these four drivers.

TRENDS

With this driving force review in mind, it seems fit to move the observation point closer, and to take a short look on how the three drivers (entropy, emergence and creativity) are appearing in more recognisable forms of large trends and drifts around us. In order to carry out such observation Wilber's (1995; 2000) four quadrants perspective is assumed. In essence, that means scanning the FS literature for major societal trends, sequentially in the behavioural (Upper-Right quadrant), social/system (Lower-Right), cultural (Lower-Left), and intentional (Upper-Left) dimensions. However, due to the general scope this study has assumed, the scan aims not to be exhaustive but only map the most general trend-clusters evolving in these domains.

DRIVING FORCES ON THE SOCIAL ORDER

Upper-Right quadrant

In the UR quadrant, the scanning focus is on the observable aspects of people's lives, such as changes in their living conditions, consumer habits, population statistics. Three large trend-groups emerge here from the literature: changes in population, welfare, and behavioural patterns.

The first group seems to carry us towards increasing and aging population. Population growth appears as a wave-like and slowing trend and is expected to peak at roughly 9 billion people around 2050-2070 (EarthTrends; Raskin et al. 2002; Strategic trends 2003). Europeans and Japanese, with their already unsustainable birth rates, might give us a hint of what to expect at the global scale further on. In this group, entropy may be seen as causing the aging process at first hand. Then, on the biological level nature has equipped us with reproductive instincts to compensate aging. On the human level we are trying to fight entropy with better healthcare and lifestyles, and the creativity has equipped us with contraceptives to combat population growth caused by our reproductive instincts.

The second group – the welfare trends – is moving us towards growing general wealth and inequalities. General economic wealth is growing, and speeding up rather than slowing down. This applies even to the poorest parts of the world: "...poverty has decreased more in the last fifty years than it had done in previous five centuries" (Mayor and Blinde 2001: 57). However, the gap between the richest and poorest is mounting too, both between nations and at the individual level. So, at the absolute historical standard well-being is generally improving. At the relative and contemporary standard (i.e. compared with one's peers and neighbours), it may well be decreasing. In this trend group, entropy may be seen behind the most basic needs of hunger and cold. At the biological level, nature has turned us towards the external environment to compensate, and by now creativity has provided humanity with so many powerful means to exploit this environment, that the same source is busy inventing new means to protect it from ourselves.

The third group of behavioural trends takes us towards growing individualism and social activism. On one hand, people are growing more individual and separated. At home, the traditional family structure is increasingly replaced by cohabitation, single-parenting and varying sexual behaviour (Strategic trends 2003). Outside home, "...[work] environments will become even more "darwinistic" when the people are hired for short term project vacancies" (Mannermaa 2003: 9). On the other hand, globalisation, defined as "...the increasing integration and interdependency of societies through the interchange of ideas, capital and people" (Strategic trends 2003), will continue to connect and unite people behind various goals. Paradoxically, the anti-globalisation movement is a good example of that phenomenon. In the field of social behaviour we might discover entropy-growth, for example, in tiredness either from an old partner, or from a way of doing things. Emergence might be seen behind our restless nature, and the countless fruits of creativity we can see every day on the streets and TV screen.

Lower-Right quadrant

In the LR quadrant, the focus is on the most commonly discussed aspects of change, such as new technologies, environmental problems and the organisational landscape. Again, three subgroups will be based on these, to achieve general coverage of the area.

With regard to the environment, the trends are well-known: pollution, global warming, climatic instability, water shortages etc. Here, the entropy is most visible in the form of degrading natural resources and physical environment. AIDS, SARS and bird-flu are the unfortunate signs of emerging new life forms, and while human innovativeness seems to succeed well at technical and micro levels, it seems to turn out quite powerless when trouble reaches a truly macro scale.

On the techno-economic field, perhaps the most widely discussed current trend (e.g. Joy 2000) is the emerging wave of gene-, nano- and robotics (GNR) technologies. In the most general sense, technical innovation is expected to

remain high, and it will be increasingly hard to control the pace and direction of new technologies (Strategic trends 2003). In this sphere, during the past few centuries, human creativity has truly exploded. And the problem is not that technological innovation is too rapid, but rather that we risk significant disequilibrium if development in other areas (i.e. in the other three quadrants) does not follow. Here, starting with the Nazi's and Stalin, 20th century history is rich with examples of crimes committed with modern technical innovations in the hands of pre-modern, morally underdeveloped minds (Slaughter 2004: 161; Wilber [1995] 2000: 690).

Trends in organisation and government seem to be taking us towards higher globalisation and localisation. The first of this pair is probably best witnessed by the growing size and power of trans-national corporations. There are also a growing number of global non-governmental organisations (NGO) aiming to match the spread of corporate activity and exert control that neither governments nor the UN are able to provide (Molleda and Quinn 2004). However, in many ways (publicity campaigning, lobbying, power-plays, etc) global NGOs resemble their targets' behaviour. In addition (at least in a financial reporting sense, because the requirements are often applicable to stock-listed business entities only), their own transparency and control systems might be weaker rather than stronger when compared with the corporations they are supposed to oversee. Globalisation is also witnessed by the ongoing economic integration and internationalisation, of which the EU and WTO are the two most familiar examples (Mooij and Tang 2004). Yet, analysts seem to agree that a central world governance is unlikely to emerge in the foreseeable time horizon, while the variety of wide-membership international treaties and organisations will grow to fill the empty space (Mapping the global future 2004; Strategic trends 2003). Opposite to globalisation, there is a distinctive trend of transferring responsibility and authority from national to local and non-governmental bodies (O'Brien, Pike and Tomaney 2004; Scenarios for the future of Europe's regions 2004). These trends, wherein the power is shift-

ing from states to both local and supranational actors, seem to sum up in a slow but distinctive global shift towards declining role of states as such (Ogilvy 2002; Strategic trends 2003). This process is noted to be as sizeable in scope as the medieval shift of power from the church to the state. However, just like the church has not disappeared, but only lost its dominant position, the same destiny is foreseen for states: "The old institutions do not die; they just recede in historical significance" (Ogilvy 2002: 22).

Lower-Left quadrant

In the LL quadrant, the search-focus is on trends in the cultural domain of society: e.g. changes in shared worldviews, language, issues debated, and the cultural exchange process. At the most general level, the significance of the processes that take place in the interior domains is increasing, and their weight as the major future-driver is becoming more acknowledged even in the most 'materialist' societies (Wishard 2002). At the more particular level, globalisation is shaping a new form of global culture. Here, the expectation seems to be that globalisation will take on an increasingly non-Western character (Mapping the global future 2004). On the global stage, the distinctions between the world's major cultural/religious areas are growing sharper (Huntington 1996), and the recent war in Iraq has drawn into plain light the differences between the European and American worldviews (extracting the North dimension from the previously one big West, as will be discussed below). Balancing the globalisation process, there is also the revival of local cultural content and difference (Raskin et al. 2002), and evolving new cultural phenomena (e.g. new extreme sports and ways of artistic expression) that are invented every day.

It is relevant to note that the prevailing worldview in the LL quadrant develops through the logical stages, e.g. from tribal- to nation- to world-centric, or from magic to mythic to rational to centauric (Beck and Cowan 1996; Wilber [1995] 2000). To a futurist, the value of this observation is that societies do not stand still in the cultural domain, and the general direction of development is predetermined –

DRIVING FORCES ON THE SOCIAL ORDER

towards higher and more sophisticated levels. However, acting in the background of this development, entropy may still be noticed, e.g. with empires and old cultures fading into history. And, again (although Hollywood and global media are making a strong effort), it seems that when the scale grows truly macro, human creativity has little control over the emerging flow of affairs.

Upper-Left quadrant

In the UL quadrant, the general changes in personal values, moral, and consciousness are observed. Like with cultural development of a society, the psychological development of a human being follows a logical pattern (Loevinger 1976) that has a generally predetermined direction – towards higher cognitive capabilities and moral norms – and understanding this process is becoming increasingly relevant for the futurist profession (Hayward 2003; Slaughter 2005).

In search for more practical trends in this quadrant, the growing value of education must be mentioned. Primary education was the norm a century ago, and tertiary education has become more or less compulsory nowadays in developed countries. In this light, and as the complexity of social relations grows, the equivalent of today's bachelor degree could soon be a generally accepted minimum for a human being to adapt in more advanced societies. On an even more individual level one could observe that, in general, the significance of things going on 'in here' is rising, when weighed against those 'out there'. For example, our moral autonomy is increasing (Eckersley 2004), and the concept of art grows to be understood more as an internal experience rather than the illustration or reaction to the outside world (Aguirre 2004).

And even here in the consciousness domain one can detect all three major driving forces engaged. Entropy is at work as we forget things. There is also a constant flow of new thoughts emerging in our heads and, to deal with this realm, creativity has equipped us with the discipline of psychology.

INSIGHTS

Now, equipped with the overview of the most basic driving forces that are shaping the future and major trends around us, what are the implications? What are the fruitful insights for a futurist wishing to pursue the ultimate goal of FS, to 'foresee and influence' the development of global social order? Again, the list of conclusions drawn below does not claim to be comprehensive, or offer immediate 'hands-on' guidance of how to build the next best world, whatever anyone would wish it to be. Instead, to use the Wilber's (1995; 2000) terminology, the aim is to draw some 'orienting generalisations', to clarify the framework for further efforts and debate for the futurist community, and generally for people that wish to contribute to the improvement of the current social order.

Expanding universe

The first insight from the trend overview might be that trends tend to emerge in pairs of opposites and this results in the increasingly paradoxical nature of the organisational environment (Lindgren and Bandhold 2003: 145). The 'hollowing out' (Ogilvy 2002) or 'expanding universe' might be suitable metaphors to describe the situation. That is, the universe is not expanding only in cosmological terms. It is also expanding right here on Earth, in social, economic, cultural and moral dimensions, meaning that we are growing relatively more wise and ignorant, more rich and poor, more good and evil at the same time. Within this universe, no force remains without a counterforce, and whenever there is a trend, a countertrend is likely to evolve. Wilber (1995; 2000) explains this dialectic nature of development, noting that there is a continuous process of *differentiation* and *integration* of new and higher systems' levels in the world. It should also be noted that the speed of change is growing exponentially. For example, average annual GDP growth of 2.5% means doubling GDP in 30 years and 12-fold growth in 100 years. The Moore's law is another well-known example of such snowball effect.

Bridging the gaps

This 'expanding universe' metaphor seems to suggest that we should aim to 'ride' the driving forces and trends rather than trying to suppress them. As the Luddites' experience has taught us, fighting the globalising trend is hardly a solution. This is not to say that the efforts to influence the flow of events should be given up. Quite the opposite – exerting an influence is what 'riding' a trend is all about. However, the learning is that if a trend is seen as problematic, instead simply trying to oppress it, a countertrend could be looked for to provide the cure and new balance. One can hardly disallow or eradicate the barriers between emerging new fragments in society. Dissolving the newly emerged system violently (i.e. breaking a newly differentiated fragment back to its parts) is not the solution, *integration* is. So, rather than fighting the emergence, the efforts should be directed at 'bridging the gaps' and maintaining the wholeness of society, i.e. keeping the fragments connected, enhancing communication and people's movement from one fragment to the other, integrating the newly emerged fragments within the total network of society, and coordinating this 'network of fragments'.

Differentiating the North from West

The connection made above between the four capacities of a holon (Wilber [1995] 2000) and the four organisational archetypes (Lessen and Palsule 1997) seems to offer a deeper understanding of the roles that different cultures are playing on the global stage. For example, why the American invasion in Iraq seemed so *irrational* and *unreasonable* from the European perspective, and so *pragmatic* and *empirically* right from the American point of view. However, this is not to say that the European (Northern) worldview in itself is more correct or enlightened than the American (Western) one. Europe has bitter experiences of being too tolerant, trying to accommodate everybody, and compromising too deeply (e.g. with Nazi-Germany, or the Balkans' conflict). The role that the Eastern approach has to play in the world becomes clearer in that light too,

explaining for example why, as Mannermaa (2005) has observed, both in China and Singapore, despite their ideological differences, individual freedom tends to be secondary to the collective interest.

Missing link

In addition, discussion of the four capacities of a holon (Wilber [1995] 2000) above pointed to the idea that total balance leads a system towards stagnation, while the opposite pulls it towards the edge of chaos. Consequently, a kind of balanced disequilibrium should be the most desirable state of affairs in a human organisation or society. Indeed, the global experience seems to be that there is a problem as soon as any of the four forces grows too dominant. This has been the case e.g. with US unilateralist behaviour (the Western self-preservation drive) and European indecisiveness and over-tolerance (Northern self-adaptive drive), as well as with the 20th century human catastrophes in China and Cambodia (Eastern self-dissolution drive). Furthermore, the same reasoning leads to perhaps the most striking insight from the driving force analysis above. Namely that one of the great balancing forces – the *ubuntu* or family – is actually missing from the global picture. While, starting with the post-war economic rise of Japan, the Eastern mode has generally increased its global weight, and started to balance the Western/Northern materialist approach, the Southern 'heart' attitude remains largely hidden from sight. Thus, it may well be that, despite all the aid and development efforts, we haven't even started yet to acknowledge how much we really need the 'awakening' of healthy and developing Africa in the world. Perhaps a very remote way to envisage what we are actually missing at the global scale is to try imagining today's America without its black dimensions, e.g. jazz, soul or hip hop music. What an empty picture it would look like, wouldn't it? One might also ask whether the shortage of uniting and self-transcendent '*ubuntu*' forces might not provide the answer to the question why the emergence of any global governance forms was not considered very likely in the above trend review?

DRIVING FORCES ON THE SOCIAL ORDER

Yet, all four forces were found to be present in any organisation by Lessem and Palsule (1997), and thus even the most materialist Western society is not completely void of the self-transcendent drive. For example, the need to acquire a sense of belonging to a community is still driving the social change processes in the most advanced societies (Desforges 2004). Another hopeful sign is that exactly the same force seems to be driving the flow of affairs even at the very edge of our technological and social innovation – the open source movement (Rushkoff 2003).

Change of social order

In the perspective this paper has taken, the architecture of the world in general is essentially systemic, consisting of interrelated parts at different levels of integration that always 'include and transcend' (Wilber 1995; 2000) the lower levels. In that sense, when we look back at the earlier shifts of prevailing social order in history, we cannot really say that knowledge-based society is now replacing the industrial society that has replaced the agrarian society etc. Instead, the later stage has always included and been built upon the previous one, and thus could not really exist without it (Wilber 1995; 2000). For example, in absolute terms the agricultural output and productivity are still increasing today, but agriculture's relative share of total GDP has diminished in the industrial economy. The same happened when services supplanted industry, and is happening now as knowledge is rising to fill the position of the main driver of economic growth. In absolute terms the development of old areas continues, but in relative terms the focus of GDP growth is shifting to new areas. In a similar way, every later social order has been built upon rather than replaced the previous one. For example, the 'monarch' in democracy is still there, but usually in a collective form and for fixed term only. Macrohistory (Galtung and Inayatullah 1997) is a field of study that attempts to systematise the history of social systems at large. Besides that, many futurists have drawn maps to illustrate these historical paradigm shifts from agrarian to industrial to information to knowledge ages, and to seek

clues for future development (Mannermaa 2003; Oliver 1999). In addition to external changes in society, the works in macrohistory shed new light on the changes in underlying values, and focus of attention that characterise any particular era: from religion to technological progress to social justice to knowledge. Viewing these changes in the context of four quadrants (Wilber 1995; 2000) inspires me to suggest one more map to enrich the existing variety: a kind of 'Wheel of History', presented in the Figure 1.

Figure 1

The proposed map places the general shift of attention towards interior domains, observed in the trend analysis above, into a larger macro-historical context. And, potentially, it hints the focus to move towards the Lower-Left quadrant in further future (towards something to be called culture-based society?). However, given the accelerating nature of change, and increasing paradox and complexity, the arrow on the map can hardly be viewed as a kind of steady circle or spiral of history, constantly repeating itself at new levels. In that sense it is meant to support neither linear nor cyclical schools of macrohistory (Inayatullah N.D.). Instead, seeing the arrow as a part of a larger fractal, endlessly replicating and complex both up- and downward, probably offers a better lead for guidance.

It may also be noted from that map that any successive paradigm has, besides including and building upon the previous ones, also concentrated on the main shortages of its predecessor. For example, the exploitation and social justice issues, raised in the 19th century industrial revolution, have largely determined the development in the 20th century. The conclusion here seems to be that whatever forms a post-democratic society or global governance finally take, they will have to include and extend the democracy and national governance, not simply replace them. They will also have to address the major shortages of democracy. Namely, the contradictions between (a) simplifying and consensus-oriented nature of decision-making, and increasing complexity of problems, and (b) shortening time-horizon of decisions (Karlsson

2005) and accelerating speed of change.

In addition, the application of systems' thinking points to the biggest threat that the emergence of any next-level social order would likely face. A system can successfully emerge at the higher level only if it has harmoniously integrated its constituent parts, not regressed or repressed them in its initial self-establishment efforts (Wilber 1995; 2000). Therefore, simply swapping national governments to the global one won't do. Many obstacles in building transnational governance – and the EU is the leading-edge example here – are caused by overlooking this rule. And, for the same reason, the EU would fail fundamentally if its federalist movement (see e.g. Haseler 2004) would have its way, and it would be reduced to some sort of new super-state (such as the United States of Europe). Indeed, the weight of the 'state' as an institution is declining in the above trend-review. But still, just like newspapers did not disappear with the arrival of radio, and radio did not disappear with the arrival of TV, the nation-state is likely to have a distinctive role also in any further global governance system to emerge.

Last but not least, the systems perspective also explains why the efforts of imposing democracy onto underdeveloped societies tend to fail. Just like we cannot allow a child to skip a few years at school, and move from grade two to grade six, a society needs to experience and include all its natural growth stages.

CONCLUSION

The article was written in hope to (a) empower the discussion among the futurist community and those that endeavour to advance the global social order in general, and perhaps (b) to open up some new avenues for the future to unfold. Its mission was to provide the 'as-large-as-possible' perspective while exploring the major trends of the global future and analysing the most fundamental driving forces acting hidden behind those trends. These trends and driving forces were found speaking against any kind of 'end of history' (Fukuyama 1992), or seeing the Western democracy as the

ultimate and final social order in the world. In addition, it was found that the dialectics of the fundamental drivers speaks against the predetermined nature of any utopia or dystopia (Joy 2000) in general.

The discussion of key driving forces has not resolved the discussion of whether globalisation and economic growth in itself are good or bad. In the expanding universe growth is simply natural. However, to use Wilber's (1995; 2000) arguments again, systems can become pathological at any level. And, as the discussion over creativity pointed out, much of the global marketing and commercial innovation, fed by the current copyright and patent rules, seems to be pathological indeed.

Finally, due to its general scope, the article did not offer any 'hands on' tools or measures to advance the current social order. With this regard, perhaps one good starting point is the open source movement and three steps in its development described by Douglas Rushkoff (2003: 24): "...deconstruction of content, demystification of technology and finally do-it-yourself or participatory authorship". Indeed, it seems that the time is ripe to demystify democracy as such, and start building upon it.

DRIVING FORCES ON THE SOCIAL ORDER

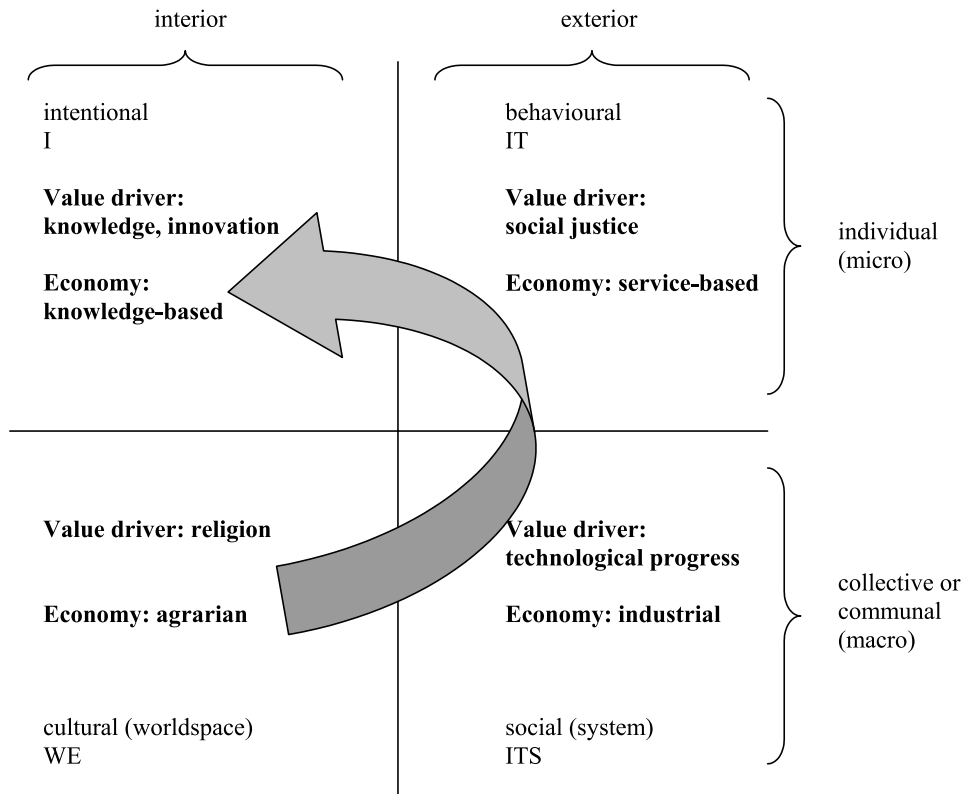


Figure 1 The Wheel of History (Wilber [1995] 2000:127).

Correspondence

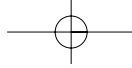
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