

Dawn of the Cosmopolitan

The Hope of a Global Citizens Movement

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with
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GTI Paper Series

Frontiers of a Great Transition

15

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Dawn of the Cosmopolitan: The Hope of a Global Citizens Movement

Prologue: Human Agency in the *Great Transition*

[Humanity has] the capacity to turn toward a truly planetary civilization, one that reflects universal social and ecological values while respecting differences. Today, our collective wealth and technological prowess could defeat the scourges of destitution, war, and environmental destruction.... The choices we make now and in the critical decades ahead will [set the trajectory of global development for generations to come]. (GTI Proposal, 2003)

From the point of view of any single individual, the world and its future appear to be constructed by vast social forces, elite power networks, and continent-spanning institutions with their own internal logics. Many people would like to help address the intimidating challenges of our times, yet they feel powerless and this diminishes their potential agency for change. They do not know where to begin or what would be an effective contribution to the creation of a hopeful future and a better world.

To begin to resolve this dilemma, one needs to broadly analyze the forces shaping world events today. At the most comprehensive level of analysis, the world is perhaps best understood as a complex system in which nature, technology, and humanity all influence, and are influenced by, each other.* Although difficult to disentangle from other aspects of the global system, *human agency*—the capacity of people to reflect, make choices, and act collectively to realize those choices—plays a critical role in shaping the course of events.

On the global stage, encompassing over six billion individuals and millions of organizations, human agency is expressed through organized social actors negotiating competing interests. The most influential of these social actors are nation-states, inter-governmental organizations, transnational corporations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Also active at the global level are criminal organizations and terrorist networks. Organized religions, as well as ideological, social, and political movements, transcend and incorporate other institutional actors—limiting, organizing, and shaping the direction of activity. In practice, all these social actors shape, and are shaped by, world events; thus: “the play is difficult to distinguish from the players” (Raskin et al., 2002, p. 50).

The Global Scenario Group (GSG)—an international research body convened in 1995 by the Stockholm Environmental Institute and Tellus Institute—analyzed alternative scenarios of global development (Raskin et al., 1998; Gallopin and Raskin, 2002). The results of this analysis are summarized in the essay *Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead* (Raskin et al., 2002), which explains that humanity has entered the planetary phase of civilization and that the future character of global society is uncertain and hotly contested by the global actors identified above. To explore possible future outcomes, the GSG examined several alternative scenarios.

In its *Market Forces* scenario, global corporations, market-enabling governments, and a consumerist public take the lead in shaping the future. In *Policy Reform*, “the private sector and

* See the companion piece in this GTI Paper Series by Raskin (2006a) for a more detailed discussion.

consumerism remain central, but government takes the lead in aligning markets with environmental and social goals”. While these first two scenarios arise from incremental changes to continuing trends, the scenario that defines the conceptual framework for this paper, *Great Transition*, is characterized by a sharply discontinuous, positive, systemic transformation.* The *Great Transition* scenario transcends market-led adaptations and reformist policies to imagine change shaped by a profound shift in values among an aware and engaged citizenry. Transnational corporations, governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) remain powerful actors, but all of these are deeply influenced by a coherent, worldwide association of millions of people who call for priority to be placed on new values of quality of life, human solidarity, and environmental sustainability. We will refer to this values-led mobilization as a *Global Citizens Movement (GCM)*. It is important to note that the GCM is a socio-political process rather than a political organization or party structure.

This paper starts by describing global civil society and examining the potential for a GCM, looking at relevant lessons from past and current social movements. As it distinguishes existing social movement activity from a robust and authentic GCM, this paper concludes that while the emergence of a GCM may not be probable, it is possible given the historically unique factors pushing us into a global age. In the last section, *Contours of a Global Citizens Movement*, we intend to indicate some of the necessary missing ingredients for the emergence of a GCM and point to future avenues for exploration.

Global Civil Society and Latency

Civil society refers broadly to voluntary activity that is not strictly familial, governmental, or economic. As individuals, we are all members of civil society, participating in sports leagues, church groups, book clubs, or any organized activity with our neighbors. Civil society includes civic action by individuals, associations, foundations, faith-based groups, and nonprofit organizations, and has been active on a global level for centuries (initially in the form of missionary work). The early nineteenth century campaign spearheaded by religious organizations to end the slave trade was perhaps the first concerted effort by civil society organizations to exert influence on global affairs. Since the end of World War II, global civil society has been growing at an unprecedented and escalating rate (Florini, 2000). As one indicator of the growth of civil society, we examine the rise of globally active NGOs. NGOs have been steadily accumulating, so that now there are over 25,000 active at the global level, with more added each year. These global NGOs increasingly make their voices heard in global forums and negotiations, and many participate in issue-oriented networks with intergovernmental organizations and the business sector.

The unprecedented growth and rise in influence of global NGOs may represent the tip of an iceberg regarding a deep shift in public engagement and awareness. While part of the rapid increase in global NGOs can be attributed to the advent of modern information and communication technology, this alone cannot explain the explosive growth of global activity. Perhaps even more important is the fact that the very idea of civil society has increasing legitimacy among the general public in most regions of the world (Florini, 2000). Thus developing countries have experienced the emergence of vibrant domestic civil society organizations that then provide a foundation for transnational organizing. This is the platform

* The other alternative—sharply discontinuous *negative* systemic transformation—was previously analyzed as the *Barbarization* scenarios (Gallopín et al., 1997).

upon which the globalization of activity could build, tracking the globalization of social, ecological, and economic challenges over recent decades.

A related factor influencing the rise of NGOs is an increase in state funding for civil society activity. For example, today Northern European NGOs receive 50-90% of their funding from government. Additionally, governments and private foundations in wealthy countries finance much of the growth in civil society in developing countries (Florini, 2000). The reasons for this increase in funding are complex, but several important factors are:

- 1) public demand due to the failure of other institutions to address societal problems, and a decline in public trust of government and corporations;
- 2) economic growth and the rise of a sympathetic middle class in developing economies; and
- 3) appreciation by state officials for the role of civil society, in part due to the strong belief that a healthy market system is connected to functioning democracies which, in turn, depend on a robust civil society.

State-based financing does affect the scope and character of NGO activities, although there are cultural norms and legal protections in many societies that preserve NGO independence and right to challenge government policies. Insofar as it is a response to public demand, the increase of government financing is also indicative of a larger shift in the awareness and engagement of the general public.

While the rise of NGOs indicates a potentially profound shift in public engagement, we need to acknowledge that some NGOs are vehicles for corporate or special interests with little or no grassroots. Others are linked to fundamentalist groups or reactionary forces, corresponding to elements of the public threatened by the rapid pace of global change. Still, many others are engaged in the struggles for peace, justice, development, and environmental health. Global NGO activity not only points to a possible latency, but also contributes to it by articulating the universality of basic human rights and the need for sustainable development as the basis for a global political culture (Florini, 2000). Claiming to speak on behalf of grassroots networks and the public interest, these NGOs seek to ensure that the voices of the mass of humanity will not be absent from negotiations over the future character of planetary civilization. The following chart offers an overview of promising civil society activity, focusing on those efforts to create a just and sustainable world rooted in democratic principles.

TABLE 1

A Typology of Global Civil Society Activity for Justice and Sustainability		
Type	Description	Examples
Global Forums	Civil society meets to share ideas, discuss experiences, and build community.	World Social Forum, NGO meetings accompanying major international summits (e.g., annual UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, etc.)
News & Information	Various initiatives enhance connectivity by providing information resources for civil society organizations and the wider public.	Inter Press Service, Sustainable Development Communications Network, Social Watch, Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Indymedia, etc.
Research Networks	Analysts from policy institutes and academia build the knowledge base for sustainable development and influence policy.	The Ring, Third World Network, Trade Knowledge Network, Trans National Institute, Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, International Forum on Globalization, Focus on the Global South, etc.
Humanitarian & Development Aid	Organizations respond to natural disasters, genocides, famines, deforestation, extreme poverty, etc.	Oxfam, CARE, World Vision, Médecins Sans Frontières, Red Cross and Crescent, Catholic Relief Services, World Wildlife Fund, etc.
Global Campaigns and Protests	Coalitions address ongoing international policy debates, environmental and human rights issues, or mobilize action around specific events linking local place-based struggles to transnational networks.	Climate Action Network, ATTAC (Association pour la Taxation des Transactions pour l'Aide aux Citoyens), Global Forest Watch, World Movement for Democracy, Transparency International, Amnesty International, EarthAction, etc. Zapatistas in Mexico and protests of G-8, World Trade Organization, World Bank, and other global institutions as well as the war in Iraq, transnational corporations, etc.

Taken as a whole, the above activities address a comprehensive set of issues. However, the interests of donors and the dynamics of professional organizations tend to favor a narrow issue-oriented approach to the work, encouraging NGOs to specialize in delineated niches (or “issue silos”) despite the growing awareness of the interrelated nature of today’s challenges. The strength of global civil society remains circumscribed by this organizational and philosophical fragmentation. Additionally, success stories of community action, often inspiring in terms of local accomplishments, have not been able to scale up to new pathways for global development. Today’s civil society efforts remain too dispersed, diffused, and small scale to systematically transform the dominant trends of globalization led by powerful state actors and multinational corporations (Raskin et al., 2002).

Still, the rapid growth of civil society is a profound source of hope if it represents an early manifestation of a widespread latent desire among concerned citizens who recognize that the world must address a suite of deepening social, economic, and environmental problems, but do not yet know how to take action themselves. This hypothesis—positing such a latent desire to be engaged in shaping global society—is further strengthened by an examination of the novel conditions defining this planetary phase of history.

Planetary phase of history: support for the latency hypothesis

Globalization arises out of a centuries-long process that accelerated dramatically over the last fifty years. The formation of the UN, ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Accords among other landmark treaties, and development of institutions such as the International Criminal Court, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) express the growing need to develop new forms of cooperation at the global level. Yet, the tantalizing promises of improved global relations, new technologies bringing widespread prosperity, and rational management of the earth's resources seem to dangle just out of reach.

Since the 1960s, ubiquitous images of our fragile planet floating in the vastness of space have changed our consciousness—making us more cognizant of humanity's vulnerability and interconnectedness. Technologies such as airplanes, TV, satellites, and the Internet have expanded awareness of cultures and events across the world. We are now instantly aware of havoc wrought by hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, genocide, poverty, and AIDS. Displaced by such tragic events, or simply seeking better opportunities, increasing numbers of migrants test the hospitality of wealthy, relatively homogenous communities. As economies become more interconnected and the rate of cultural exchange increases, for better or worse, our world is shrinking.

Pursuing business as usual in this rapidly shrinking world is increasingly difficult, not least because the planet's climate is becoming less predictable, with the catastrophic consequences of greenhouse gas accumulation becoming bleaker and more evident daily. In addition to global warming, we are faced with other unparalleled environmental challenges, such as cross-boundary water degradation and air pollution, overfishing, declining ecosystems, and loss of biodiversity. The threats to our collective existence are quite real. Ecocide, nuclear proliferation, global terror networks, new military technologies, and the threat of pandemics remind us, as Bertrand Russell said, "it's coexistence or no existence". Only greater degrees of international cooperation can possibly resolve these complex dilemmas.

People's psychological responses to a shrinking world include some mixture of fear and hope. When fear dominates, this leads to xenophobia, retreating into protected enclaves, and projecting militaristic solutions. It can also fuel fundamentalist movements that offer reassurance and simple answers for an increasingly perplexing world. When hope is strong, people's highest aspirations motivate them to uphold their moral responsibilities to their fellow humans and the larger community of life. Countless new cultural developments manifest the growing awareness that one's narrow self-interest is dependent on general social and ecological interests (Ray and Anderson, 2000). In contrast to fundamentalism, many religious leaders now seek to emphasize the great humanitarian traditions of their faiths and the theological basis for tolerance and cooperation. Moreover, growing subcultures underscore the opportunity to increase quality of life, free from the domination of consumerism, creating new avenues of human exploration and contentment.*

In developing countries this hope is expressed by communities devising new development paradigms seeking sustainable livelihoods (Amalric, 2004). Indigenous groups, women's place-based initiatives, worker-owned cooperatives, and community lending institutions all enhance local empowerment. In wealthier countries, these insights manifest in various lifestyle movements (e.g., voluntary simplicity, slow foods, cooperatives, ecovillages) seeking to

* See Stutz (2006)

consume less and devote more time to family, community, and personal projects. The hope of improved lives lived in a just and caring world is the most empowering psychological response to the turbulence of our times.

These objective and subjective conditions emerging in this *planetary phase of civilization* underpin the *latency hypothesis*, that more and more people are inclined to understand themselves as part of a common community of fate that includes all of humanity and the biosphere. This transformation of consciousness challenges conventional categories of identity. The key to the political crystallization of today's cultural latency is the shift toward a shared identity—the co-recognition and internalization of others' struggles as our own in a global community of fate. The historic potential for deepening the solidarity among the peoples of the world is the precondition for a GCM.

Cosmopolitan identity

The identification of oneself as part of the human family, with responsibility for one's brothers and sisters, is an extension of the sense of kinship many already feel for their nation, hometown, and family. Political theorists discussing the sense of belonging and responsibility to an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991) have introduced the concept of an implicit social contract that characterizes the presumed rights and obligations of individuals to the community, and of the community to individuals. This implied citizenship can precede explicit constitutional and institutional manifestation, and even challenge the form of established institutional structures by highlighting their failure to live up to the ideals which define the community.

The emergence of a global identity is a new implicit social contract in which increasing numbers of people understand themselves practically and aspirationally as *global citizens*. They share the broad values and principles that would underlie a transition to a just and sustainable planetary society, such as human rights, freedom, democracy, pluralism, and environmental protection. This new global identity need not subsume or eliminate particular subglobal or group identities, although it would certainly transform them.

Identity, like personality, is quite complex and hard to delineate as different aspects of it are evoked under varying social and political pressures. People can simultaneously identify with their local sports team, their undergraduate alma mater, their gender, their religion, their ethnic group, their generation, etc. Humans are not reducible to either the universal or the particular—we are dynamically multi-dimensional (Wood, 2005). In the US, the fluidity of identity is often observed. After centuries of migration, many people hyphenate their identities: African-American, Italian-American, Jewish-American, Indian-American, etc. Some might feel most loyal to their hometown, then their state, then their geographic region, and finally identify as American; while others might see themselves primarily as American, not invested in any specific locale. Recently, due to popularization by the mass media, some Americans identify as part of the Democratic "blue-states" or Republican "red-states", illustrating how quickly identity can be constructed and deconstructed. While the assertion that we choose our identities is an oversimplification, it is clear that personal identity is influenced by collective human choices in relation to external factors. The question then is: under what circumstances might the identity of *global citizen* emerge?

People have identified themselves as "citizens of the world" at least as far back as the Stoic philosophers in the Roman Empire who argued that all humanity belongs to a single moral community. The Stoics have their roots in the Greek Cynics of the fourth century B.C. who

coined the term “cosmopolitan” meaning “citizen of the cosmos”. To embrace an identity as a cosmopolitan, one need not abandon specific loyalties—one can continue to take pride in one’s local, regional, or ethnic culture and community—but add a healthy respect for other cultures in the context of pride for the diversity of human achievement.

What does need to be abandoned is any fundamentalist notion that all of humanity must conform to a specific cultural expression—no longer can we afford to tolerate chauvinist pretensions. The reification of cultural archetypes ignores the fact that culture itself is always fluid and evolving, and that human societies have continuously traded ideas, cuisine, music, etc., while absorbing, blending, and innovating (Appiah, 2006). As a practical matter, such hybridization makes it nearly impossible to delineate the boundaries of a specific culture. Cosmopolitanism rejects chauvinism and values diverse cultures, regarding all people of the earth as branches of a single family tree. The diffusion of this old consciousness in the new context of globalization is the basis for forging global citizenship.

Lest this sound too utopian, let’s remember that the extension of identity has historical precedent in the enlargement of society from clans to tribes to chiefdoms to city-states to nation-states. At one point the crystallization of national identities seemed as implausible as global identity might seem today, and yet, with hindsight, the formation of nation-states appears natural, almost inevitable (Raskin, 2006a). More recently, we can observe social and political forces attempting to construct identity around multinational regions. But, as the struggle over the European Union constitution shows us, identity realignment is a nonlinear process that must overcome historically rooted inertia. As identities enlarge, so do the existential fears that what one cherishes may be dissolved. Today, powerful conservative elements are mobilized to resist the loss of autonomy to broader decision-making communities that include people of other cultures, languages, and histories. Such fears should not be dismissed as mere xenophobia. The historical expansion of identity is a process riddled with wars, genocides, and subjugation. Threats to the identities of peoples, certainly in past times, have been quite deadly.

In fact, the threat of an external foe has often been a significant part of the impetus to overcome regional antagonisms and forge new bonds of cooperation (e.g., the Greek city-states vis-à-vis the Persian Empire). Ideology, myths, and religion often serve as the tools to weave people together in the context of common defense or conquest. For example, after centuries of Moorish rule, Catholics united across regional differences and languages under the leadership of *Castile* to push the Moors out of the Iberian Peninsula. Castellano—literally the language of Castile—is the language English-speakers call Spanish, yet even in Spain today regional languages are quite popular (and there are ongoing movements to reject national unity). The complexity of this example illustrates that for robust new identities to cohere, in addition to external threats there must be the internal motivation of a shared dream of people-hood.

Culture can play a powerful role in expressing and reinforcing identity. For example, it has been argued that the novel, a relatively new art form that offered a narrative story written in vernacular, played an instrumental role in helping construct the imagined community of the Italian nation-state, which had to overcome strong antagonisms between city-states (Anderson, 1991). The novel helped inspire people to conceive of themselves as part of a common cultural group. While other factors such as leadership and the role of elites were essential, the novel seeded the cultural moment, or latency, for national identity.

Thus, the push of necessity (external threat) and the pull of desire (internal motivation) are both critical in the construction of identity. In retrospect, the specific boundaries framing

national identities are somewhat arbitrary, while the case for global identity is more objective: we all share one world. Many people, from the Stoics onward, have noted this. While past movements for world citizenship were premature, the objective and subjective conditions shaping the current historic moment create conditions that are ripe for the emergence of global citizens.

Of course, latency cannot be directly observed since, by definition, it is yet to manifest. It is a multi-layered phenomenon with many cultural currents just under the surface, that occasionally bubble up as movies, books, lectures, songs, websites, study groups, new organizations, protests, or other modes of expression. As these signifiers of new identity become more noticeable, they feed back and amplify, stimulating reflection and action on the part of others, bringing the latency in the system closer to the surface. New information technologies accelerate this process. For example, the Internet is increasingly a space to connect with others around the world, trade and share information about lives and cultures, learn new languages, collaborate remotely on projects, and to collectively bring dreams and concerns into the open.

It is in the latency hypothesis that we find the potential for the emergence of a historically novel phenomenon: a Global Citizens Movement. Although it would emerge from the inchoate pool of latency, in its robust form a GCM would be a coherent movement of a significant segment of the world population. Such a movement would emerge in opposition to mainstream trends, notions of development, and the meaning of “the good life” and would seek to provide plausible alternative visions (of necessity, rooted in the shared values of quality of life, human solidarity, and sustainability). A movement that engaged ordinary citizens throughout the world, as it expanded and matured, would eventually connect with sympathetic partners in political parties, governments, corporations, even the military—and individuals from these sectors could be involved in a GCM in their personal capacity. Thus, a GCM would be distinct from, but engaged with, other major global actors.

To be clear, we do not accept the notion that a GCM would spontaneously self-organize once a critical mass of civil society activity is reached. Such convenient fatalism downplays the need for intentional leadership. A GCM is not a foregone conclusion, or even a probable outcome. Assuming we accept the latency hypothesis, the pertinent question becomes: how could cultural latency crystallize into a robust GCM?

We believe that *hope* is a crucial missing ingredient. Increasingly, the general public is aware of emerging dangers but, in the absence of compelling alternative visions and a clear way to take action, apprehension can lead to apathy and resignation. Should the de-stabilizing tensions in the emerging global system ultimately lead to some form of global crisis, people well could embrace authoritarian solutions out of desperation and retreat into national enclaves. Fear without hope is not a powerful basis for social change. The crystallization of a GCM depends on the creation of a framework for common action that moves beyond reactive protest to the proactive implementation of a hopeful vision. By definition, a robust GCM would have cultural, economic, and political dimensions at local, regional, and global levels—and the people engaged in each dimension at every level would recognize their diverse activities as part of a common effort. The development of a shared vision that reflects our highest aspirations while respecting local differences and the diversity of human culture would provide a plausible basis for hope that is a key ingredient for such a movement.

Lessons from Social Movements: Hurdles for a Systemic Global Movement

While some NGOs are social movement *organizations*—helping to disseminate information, training professional organizers, and generally mobilizing resources—social movements *per se* transcend the realm of professional and technical expertise, rallying a wider range of public participation (Keck and Sikkink, in Guidry et al., 2003). Typically, social movements organize a particular constituency to seek redress for a set of grievances, overcome oppression, and permanently change the social, political, and/or economic system. Entrenched interests are challenged through campaigns calling attention to a specific problem, appealing to the moral sentiments of the broader society, and mobilizing large numbers of people to demonstrate the political will for change. While campaign tactics vary, many social movements are protest-oriented and this can give them a reactive character.

Although campaign activists can be drawn from the diverse spectrum of society (e.g., men participate in the feminist movement and straight people in the gay rights movement), social movements frequently draw most heavily from a homogenous base. This base shares a common sense of identity, i.e., a deep solidarity that is constructed vis-à-vis the very oppression they are trying to overcome. As noted above, identity can be latent in the social system due to many objective and subjective conditions unique to specific historical moments. Social movements can be thought of as part of the cultural process by which identities coalesce:

Oppression is not taken as a given, something naturalized; it is something that must be recognized and named through cultural processes—in the same way that, from the other side of the table, oppression must be created and sustained through some cultural process. (Guidry et al., 2003)

While “one of the main tasks social movements undertake is to make possible the previously unimaginable” (Keck and Sikkink, in Guidry et al., 2003), within any social movement some strands might call for reformist measures (i.e., incremental or technical changes to norms, laws, etc.), while other strands might call for transformative systemic change (i.e., fundamentally altering values, power structures, etc.). In the environmental movement, for instance, demanding new regulations on car emissions is reformist, while seeking to change lifestyles that promote car use by drawing connections between ecological concerns and a wide range of other social issues is systemic. What appears reformist or systemic can depend on one’s point of view. For example, the anti-Apartheid struggle transformed political power and many aspects of South African society, but has not fundamentally challenged entrenched economic interests.

A transition to a truly just and sustainable planetary society will require broad and deep systemic change in every realm of society:

All components of culture [would] change in the context of a holistic shift in the structure of society and its relation to nature. The transition of the whole social system entrains a set of sub-transitions that transform values and knowledge, demography and social relations, economic and governance institutions, and technology and the environment. These dimensions reinforce and amplify one another in an accelerating process of transformation. (Raskin et al., 2002, p. 54)

Keeping in mind the systemic nature of the societal transformation sought, the most relevant lessons for a GCM will be drawn from those strands of social movements aiming at transformative systemic change.

A sweeping history of systemic social movements

The term “social movement” originated in reference to the labor movements of the late nineteenth century, which sought to organize the new class of workers created by capitalist industrialization (della Porta, 2005). Although peasant movements and slave revolts have been forces throughout history (at least as far back as Moses), some scholars argue that political movements such as those connected to the French Revolution, which arose in the late eighteenth century, are the first social movements—still others claim that the abolitionist and suffrage movements are the first antecedents to contain all the essential elements of movements seen today (Tilly, 2004). Importantly, all these early social movements had transnational elements. Accordingly, the contemporary momentum of globalization has witnessed the strengthening of transnational elements of today’s social movements.

The democratic revolutions that overturned feudal society in Europe, and set the conditions for the socialist and anti-colonial struggles of the last century, are the antecedents of today’s movements for global change. The Russian and Chinese Communist revolutions had a profound effect on the international socialist movement, leading to the formation of sectarian groupings (e.g., Leninists, Stalinists, Trotskyists, Maoists), some of which are active still in today’s global movements. World War II and its aftermath severely disrupted the socialist movements in Europe and the US. In Europe, post-war reconstruction saw the rise of social democratic parties that co-opted many of the planks of the Communist parties—such as national health care. In the US, the witch-hunt of McCarthyism, cooption of labor unions, and creation of the “welfare state”, marginalized the socialist movement. Three years after Stalin’s death, unsure how to respond to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution against the Soviet Union, the declining socialist movements in the West were sent into disarray (Rowbotham et al., 1980).

In the 1960s, amidst a wide wave of social upheaval and youth-led challenges to the status quo, independent intellectuals and disaffected socialist party members put out the call for a New Left. Critical of both Soviet-style socialism and contemporary capitalism, New Left participants argued for moving beyond labor activism to engage in broader social activism. Unlike past workers’ movements, the New Left’s base was drawn predominantly from the post-war middle class and, in the US, was essentially embodied within the student and anti-war movements.

The anti-colonial struggles in Vietnam, Africa, and elsewhere that shook the foundations of imperialists worldwide during the mid-1900s inspired struggles for minority rights and Black empowerment in the US and other developed countries. Already there were global ripples caused by local struggles (akin to the contemporary inspiration groups like the Zapatistas provide for activists in developed countries).

In Europe after the student protests of May 1968 and in the US after the end of the Vietnam War, the student and anti-war energy behind the New Left dissipated, Black civil rights took on the more militant stance of Black Power, and separatism and nationalism gained credence among ethnic minorities, feminists, and gay liberationists. Single-issue organizing also characterized the environmental and anti-nuclear movements. Social movement scholars generally use the term New Social Movements (NSMs) to refer to the political campaigns that gained prominence in the 1970s: Black liberation and other ethnic formations, feminism, environmentalism, gay liberation,

peace, and anti-nuclear movements. Many activists in these movements, often middle class professionals (della Porta, 2005), continue in the present to embrace a fragmented “identity politics” and avoid discourses that emphasize coherent and universalized visions (Melucci, 1989).*

Meanwhile, with the Cold War drawing lines between the “first” and “second” worlds of capitalist and communist nations, ongoing independence movements in the “Third World” blended together the rhetoric of national sovereignty with the principle and idea of people’s power. After independence, most newly independent states—Nyerere’s Tanzania standing as an exception—articulated their main political project in terms of modernization and westernization. The state and, further down the road, the business sector were to lead society. The idea of people’s power was thus sidelined from the mainstream development discourse, but was kept alive in alternative development projects and movements (Amalric, 2004).

The end of the Cold War and the accelerated pace of globalization has led to the resurgence of these people’s movements in the global South and to increased connections between these movements and Northern social movements.

Today’s global justice movement

The broad umbrella term Global Justice Movement really refers to many different movements seeking to find areas of overlap and common agreement. Confusingly labeled by mass media as the “anti-globalization movement”, most activists reject this term as an inaccurate characterization of diverse social movements which value cross-cultural exchanges, and even supranational governmental structures. Calling instead for “a *different* form of globalization, involving global citizenship rights” (della Porta, 2005), activists prefer terms like global justice, new-global, or words with no exact English translation, such as *altermondialiste*, or *Globalisierungskritiker*.

This movement developed from a series of obscure transnational campaigns—often led by NGOs—organizing protests and counter-summits against global financial institutions (WTO, IMF, World Bank) and neo-liberal trade negotiations throughout the 1990s. Major UN-sponsored conferences during this decade brought feminists, human rights activists, environmentalists, and many other groups from the global North into contact with their counterparts from the global South. Activists in the Global Justice Movement seek to link Northern solidarity movements with myriad struggles for sustainable livelihood and self-determination in the global South.

A common thread connecting these groups is a shared critique of the dominance of neo-liberal economic doctrines shaping globalization:

Seeing market deregulation not as a “natural” effect of technological development, but as a strategy adopted and defended by international financial institutions...at the expense of social rights that, in the global North at least, had become part and parcel of the very definition of citizenship rights. (della Porta, 2005)

The 1999 protest that shut down the WTO meeting in Seattle marked a turning point for the movement. For the first time, blue-collar workers, farm workers, consumers, environmentalists,

* Although some of the intellectual leaders of these movements did and do make connections between the systems of violence and oppression linking race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, this has not necessarily led to alliances between groups working on these issues.

churches, feminists, pacifists, and human rights associations joined to address policy making at the global level. Seattle was followed by a series of large demonstrations at major international meetings through 2003. A globally coordinated wave of protests against the threat of war in Iraq culminated in an international protest with approximately ten million people in sixty countries on 15 February, 2003. While large transnational grassroots protests continue to shape negotiations around the WTO and other proposed trade agreements (such as the FTAA), they have not captured the same attention from the global media since the US-led invasion of Iraq. The emergence of the “Global War on Terror”, ongoing conflict in the Middle East, and other geopolitical developments (such as left-of-center political victories in Latin America), continue to influence the character and strategies of this maturing movement.

Of particular note is the World Social Forum (WSF), first held in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on the same dates as the World Economic Forum (an exclusive gathering of political and corporate elites, which takes place every January in the resort town of Davos, Switzerland). Convening a wide range of activists and NGOs from civil society in the global North and South, the WSF has grown from about 16,000 participants in 2001, to 52,000 in 2002, and 100,000 in 2003. In 2004, it was held for the first time outside of Porto Alegre, in Dubai, India, where more than 75,000 people participated, returning to Porto Alegre in 2005 with 155,000 participants. In 2006, in order to increase accessibility and worldwide participation, the WSF adopted a “polycentric” approach with meetings in Bamako, Caracas, and Karachi. In addition, local and regional forums have been held in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the US. These global and regional forums express the desire among activists in different movements to overcome fragmentation and create linkages between their various campaigns. However, also visible are “continuous divisions between activists of the global North and the South, as well as ‘old left’ and ‘NSM’ visions of the world, [that] are reflected in only temporary, and turbulent, alliances” (della Porta, 2005).

Limits of existing movements

Existing movements are the expression of the growing desire for alternative modes of global development. Although limited, they are the best efforts of today’s activists to develop networks; provide analysis, education, and general outreach; halt the march of corporate-led globalization; democratize emerging global institutions; articulate and manifest alternatives; and intervene on the global stage to capture the attention of the public.

This activity opens windows of opportunity for the evolution of a more systemic movement. For example, community, peasant, and labor movements in the global South continue to experiment with ways to ensure plural and diverse pathways to social transformation that rest on local culture and traditions—i.e., genuine development. However, these local efforts remain vulnerable to aggression by powerful economic interests, from local land owners to transnational corporations, as well as to abuse by national elites. Increasingly, social movements in the global North choose to work in solidarity with Southern movements, seeking to restrain powerful global actors that might interfere with the locally led processes. For example, the corporate social responsibility movement attempts to restrict transnational corporate activities that fail to respect basic human rights, undermine democracy, and pillage local resources, suffocating local economic initiatives.

However, despite the potential to build on natural synergies, existing movements are severely limited by current political realities. The process of building practical linkages between multiple actors requires continuous negotiation and dialogue, and most importantly a shared belief that

building a more integrated movement is critically important. Among social movements seeking to ally in the Global Justice Movement—e.g., indigenous, feminist, labor, peasant, human rights, environmental, socialist, etc.—it is difficult to move beyond reactive protest and articulate a common proactive agenda. Issues, priorities, and even goals often conflict. For example, feminism is fundamentally devoted to modernizing gender relations, while many indigenous groups and religious formations revere patriarchal traditions (Harcourt, 2006). Historically environmental and labor groups have struggled to find unity as one prioritizes the prevention of environmental degradation and the other seeks to expand jobs and increase wages often in industries dependent upon natural resource depletion. Furthermore, even among groups that share priorities, they can differ over the strategies and tactics endorsed. The need to overcome fragmentation and cohere as a movement capable of offering credible alternatives is hampered by organizational turf wars, competing personalities, different languages, racism, conflicting goals, and divergent priorities.

This challenge is exacerbated by the anti-intellectual “actionism” of youthful activists who decry the “paralysis of analysis” (Featherstone et al., 2004). Slogans, such as “one no, many yesses” or “diversity of tactics”, can cloak a dismissal of the need to engage debate between divergent theoretical and political analyses in an affirmation of the diversity desired in a just world. When so misused, such slogans are shorthand for arguments that value contingent alliances over the hard work of engaging ideological conflicts and developing shared insights into the root causes of systemic problems. Contemporary activists, raised on the post-modern discourse of the NSMs, are having difficulty finding unity beyond what was achieved in 1999 at Seattle (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001). For example, student groups at Evergreen State College in the US hosted a 2002 conference with the goal of “building a common framework rooted in a strong sentiment of respect that would further the autonomy of all movements within a greater context of solidarity”. One observer noted that the diverse groups could not agree, “valorizing the purity of ideology over the eclecticism of theory, on the one hand, or valorizing the primacy of action over the intellectualism of theory on the other” (Adams, 2003).

The success of the WSF in convening large numbers of individuals and delegates from existing movements throughout the world is a step toward increasing coherence, and demonstrates the desire for interaction among a wide range of activists. The great strength of the WSF has been its commitment to maintaining itself as a forum, refusing to articulate an official platform or resolutions that would endorse specific policy recommendations. By limiting the gathering for the exchange of ideas and information, the broadest range of social movements are able to participate.

Yet, this process is slow and flawed (Larson, 2006; Waterman, 2005). Sophisticated dialogue is the hard work necessary to reframe movements out of particular issue-silos into a common systemic effort. However, the leadership of the WSF—mired in ideological divides and factional power struggles that mirror the philosophical debates engulfing the movement as a whole*—has been unable to devise a process that facilitates real dialogue and engagement among WSF attendees. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of transparency and democratic mechanisms that could hold the leadership accountable to the interests of WSF participants. Rhetoric describing the WSF as a “leaderless self-organizing” event further obscures reality and undermines clear communication over the challenges facing the WSF (Waterman, 2005).

* Personal communication with members of the International Committee of the WSF (2005, 2006).

At the sub-national level, the challenge takes a different form. For community-based groups seeking sustainable livelihoods and new modes of development, the challenge of building linkages is closely related to the challenge of expansion and the need to scale-up nationally. For example, the empowerment of local actors has yet to translate into electoral power in countries like India or South Africa. Conversely, while on a global stage transnational protests are making a mark, nationally many of the most active groups have limited visibility and political influence. The expansion of social movements is constrained by the active opposition of entrenched powers, limited access to media and resources, and the extension of a globalizing consumer culture that fosters cynicism and resignation. Of course, these political realities vary from country to country and throughout regions of the world. For example, widespread social movements in Bolivia and Venezuela have led to changes in political power. Still, in both these countries, environmental concerns and the rights of indigenous communities are subordinated to the need to address poverty through economic growth and job creation. This is perhaps an example of how expansion, without systemic linkages, is not sufficient for the type of deep changes necessary for a truly just and sustainable society. Existing social movements are evolving, but they do not add up to a GCM.

Lessons for a GCM

The ends of a just and equitable world filled with cultural diversity and freedoms, must be alive in the means the movement utilizes to organize itself:

Building a coherent, systemic movement poses the difficult challenge of overcoming ideological conflict, regional antagonism and organizational turf battles in order to find common purpose. The diversity of the forces for a just and sustainable future provides a richness and energy that must be preserved. Indeed, the embrace of diversity has been a liberating theme of the last thirty years, replacing the stultifying top-down ideologies of earlier oppositional movements. But a global movement must begin to understand these various perspectives and initiatives as different expressions of a common global project. A genuine Global Citizens Movement would be rooted in a **politics of trust**, the collective commitment to balancing coherence and pluralism as the basis for a global movement. A politics of trust would emphasize a predisposition toward seeking common ground and tolerating proximate differences in order to nurture the ultimate basis for solidarity. (GTI Proposal, 2003)

The creation of a politics of trust requires transcending polarities that constrain the potential for effective action. People often construct a narrative of stark binary choices in order to emphasize a point, call attention to a problematic situation, and provoke others into choosing sides. However, such polarized debate can limit the generation of creative solutions. The most problematic polarizations for a politics of trust revolve around the question: can we find a legitimate means to balance the commitment to both diversity and coherence?

Proponents of diversity decry homogenization and emphasize that political and cultural diversity is a strength, just as biodiversity maintains the health and resilience of ecosystems. Conversely, advocates for unity decry fragmentation and insist that unity is necessary for effective action that can scale-up to effectively challenge entrenched powers and the direction of global development. Thus, a binary choice is presented between (a) a homogenized unification with the danger of authoritarian suffocation or (b) a fragmented diversity with the risk of a cacophony of ineffective voices. Obviously, as framed, neither option is desirable. While it is

easy to say a GCM needs **both** the strength of unity and the strength of diversity, it is important to understand why these concerns are historically pitted against each other.

The NSMs that emerged in the 1970s and '80s celebrate a “plurality of resistances, each of them a special case” (Foucault, 1980). The French philosopher, Michel Foucault, problematizing traditional notions of power, explained that everyone has power over someone else and therefore a unified struggle for social transformation would result in replicating oppression, silencing deviant minorities for the sake of “victory”.* In this vein, NSMs criticize the “old left” for attempting to subsume all efforts under the single banner of class struggle, without concern for the multiplicity of issues involving gender, race, or the environment (Wood, 2005).

Fear of tyranny of the majority and oppressive hierarchies dominates NSM strategies. There is an ongoing debate about the role of leadership versus faith in “spontaneous self-organization”. Leadership implies an organizational hierarchy that can be anti-egalitarian and limit the autonomy of factions within an organized structure—an oft-cited cause of the collapse of the bureaucratized socialist parties of the old left (Rowbotham et al., 1980). Many of today’s activists argue we are moving into an era where self-organizing networks of relatively independent, loosely connected actors will be increasingly important (Wood, 2005). While this claim has been around since the 1960s, recent examples abound, from the Internet (blogosphere, open source movement), to protests (1999 Battle of Seattle, Critical Mass bike rides), to the activity at the World Social Forum. However, others note that this rhetoric generally obscures very real mechanisms of authority, and a lack of transparency reduces accountability (Waterman, 2005). Ironically, for some, the anti-leadership orientation has become yet another ideological rigidity.

An antecedent of the contemporary call for unity around a shared vision is the writing of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian social theorist jailed in the 1930s for his anti-fascist organizing, who critiqued the fatalism of Marxists who believed in the inevitability of socialist revolution. Gramsci argued that the capitalist system did not maintain its dominance simply through economic power and coercion, but that it also manufactured ideological and cultural consent (Gramsci, 1971).† While Gramsci underscored the importance of a shared identity and vision in social transformation, he did not believe this could be authentically articulated by top-down leadership, but rather would have to be articulated by those immersed in the social conditions being contested.

There is no one rallying point (e.g., climate change, poverty, imperialism, justice, etc.) that will galvanize a GCM—as Foucault warned, all other struggles should not be subordinated to a superordinate cause.‡ Still, the problems we face are interconnected and cannot be solved in a piecemeal fashion. Those fighting for human rights, and those fighting for ecosystem protections, those seeking to forestall global warming, and those struggling to escape from poverty must all recognize that they are addressing different aspects of a unitary challenge of building a just and sustainable global future and their success is interdependent and requires a

* Although events are still unfolding, the socialist governments’ disregard for indigenous community concerns in Venezuela and Bolivia are perhaps good illustrations of this point.

† His argument that power must be contested in the cultural realm, ironically, has resonated strongly with the neo-conservatives and those active in the resurgence of the political right in the US (Epstein, 1991). Interestingly, some of the most prominent neo-conservative intellectuals had been active in the New Left during the 1960s, where Gramsci’s ideas had a large influence.

‡ Efforts such as the Apollo Alliance, which seeks to link labor, business, social justice, and environmental concerns by focusing on the agenda of energy independence, fall into this trap.

systemic shift. It is important to understand how each effort is part of a larger framework for analysis and action.

A shared framework need not be thought of as a static blueprint created by elite leadership. Instead, an effective and legitimate framework would need to be iteratively articulated through a dynamic process of dialogue rooted in the diverse experiences of participants. An effective process would require transparent and accountable leadership to facilitate the involvement of diverse peoples, and ensure the participation of historically marginalized voices. Instead of pretending there are no leaders, or no need for them, it is important to acknowledge that what it means to exercise leadership is evolving. The models of steep hierarchy and command-and-control are increasingly questioned even in the business sector and some aspects of the military (Hock, 1999).

Increasingly, scholars distinguish the act of leadership from the role of authority (Heifetz, 1994; Williams, 2005). Authority figures are authorized by constituencies that put them in power to carry out certain functions, and in doing so they may, or may not, exercise real leadership. Real leaders are those who empower and inspire groups to engage unpleasant realities, work through conflicts, and generate new insights that increase effectiveness—regardless of what rank they may hold. Thus, although George W. Bush is in a role of authority as President, when it comes to preparing the US to face the unpleasant reality of climate change, he responds to the demands of his constituency (i.e., the oil lobby) and fails to exercise leadership. Leadership scholars emphasize that it is rare for authority figures to act courageously, and even rarer for them to purposefully disappoint their constituents' demands, as their primary focus is on gaining and maintaining their position. Real leadership—in the sense of mobilizing people and groups to deal with problematic realities on behalf of improving the human condition and generating progress—is needed at every level of every organization, and from the local to global level of action.

In sum, a worldwide movement of global citizens will need to draw strength from both diversity and unity. The latency hypothesis posits that the potential for the emergence of cosmopolitan identity is present in the historic moment. The upsurge of civil society activity, in the form of NGOs and social movements, over the past few decades can be understood as an early manifestation of the latency in the global system, and at the same time this transnational activity helps deepen the latency. However, existing social movements have not found a way to effectively balance the creative tension between pluralism and coherence to provide a collective framework for theory and action. Without a shared framework, it is hard to imagine how the latent potential would coalesce into a global systemic movement. The development of a shared framework will depend on new forms of leadership to facilitate engaged dialogue inclusive of diverse voices.

Contours of a Global Citizens Movement

Our analysis puts an emphasis on imagining a process by which diverse actors could come together to articulate a shared vision and framework for joint action. As we have shown, there already are many groups taking action on a wide range of issues. If a GCM were to coalesce, these groups would continue to be active even as new groups emerged—thus the level of activity would continue to increase. The challenge facing a GCM is not promoting action *per se*, but increasing the strategic impact of action as part of a common project—this means more space is needed for dialogue, analysis, and visioning. Without clarity of vision, tapping into the latent

potential of the concerned but currently inactive, and thus mobilizing the requisite numbers of people for a truly global movement, will not be possible. Many of the people in our lives are in this boat: they would love to be a part of a movement if they could find one they could believe in. Instead, they see cacophonous efforts that don't seem to be building in strategic fashion toward plausible solutions.

In its early phases a GCM can perhaps be thought of as a seed crystal, containing within the means it uses to organize itself the ends of a just and sustainable world. Organizing this seed crystal prior to any emerging global crisis increases the likelihood that, should crisis strike, the vision of the GCM could spread rapidly to inspire humanity's efforts toward renewal and hope (Raskin, 2006a).

A sustainable world is one of biodiversity and diverse, healthy ecosystems. Likewise, a just world is one of human liberation, filled with cultural diversity and creative expression and exploration. Thus the means by which a GCM is organized must honor the diversity of voices that give rise to its creation. The tension between unity and plurality, like many of the paradoxes in life, is not to be overcome; instead a GCM must somehow hold both truths simultaneously. This inherent tension between unity and plurality always persists—indeed it is the cause of political struggle in all societies—and gives rise to ongoing conflict. Thus a GCM will have internal conflicts; it will contain its own politics. Bounded by the container of a shared vision of a just and sustainable world, conflicts can be engaged through a politics of trust—i.e., “a collective commitment...emphasizing a predisposition toward seeking common ground and tolerating proximate differences in order to nurture the ultimate basis for solidarity” (GTI Proposal, 2003).

Creating an expedient unity—through majority rule or authoritarian leadership—is a form of tyranny counter to the vision of justice that would animate the GCM. Rather than replicating domination, a GCM must seek to create mechanisms for authentic partnership and cooperation between equals. This will require clear shared first principles that protect the rights of minority and deviant voices—identifying these principles creates a framework for justice claims to be negotiated and conflicts to be resolved. Similarly, informal, unspecified power structures have a tendency to be dominated by cliques and remain unaccountable—potentially corrupting into their own form of tyranny. Explicit, transparent power structures are needed to hold authority figures accountable and promote active leadership at all levels.

With the above lessons in mind, we can assert that in addition to a wide-range of ongoing activity with its diverse tactics, campaigns, and actions at local and global scales, an authentic GCM needs **a shared vision** emerging from a process of **engaged dialogue** effectively coordinated through **new forms of leadership**.

Constructing a shared vision

A shared vision would naturally rest on principles that were forged through centuries of struggle and are the heritage of all humanity: freedom, equity, democracy, and sustainability. Articulated in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, Agenda 21, the Earth Charter, and scores of other documents, these principles provide a framework for ongoing discussions on how to realize them in practice.

A GCM would continue the elaboration of these principles as the basis for a planetary transition. (See box for description of principles that could guide a just and sustainable society of the future.) The ethical foundations would be based on individual and collective responsibility for the well-being of others, the wider community of life, and future generations. The value foundations would be “quality of life, human solidarity, and ecological sensibility.... A culture of peace, reconciliation, and non-violence would infuse the new global movement” (GTI Proposal, 2003).

Local actors who adopt such ideals would of necessity imbue them with place-based meanings connected to local cultures and traditions. These essential values and principles form the boundary conditions within which we can imagine meaningful global citizenship that does not deny local diversity. Proclaiming these ideals of global citizenship could help a cosmopolitan identity coalesce.

An effective alternative vision must clearly articulate why we are at the present historic moment, where we hope to go, and how we hope to get there. It would tap into the latent desire for a hopeful framework for collective action if it were:

The Principle of Constrained Pluralism

(paraphrased from **Raskin, 2006b**)

The basis for unity amidst diversity is found in the principle of *Constrained Pluralism*, which resolves the competing imperatives of global responsibility and regional autonomy; and includes three complementary ideas: *irreducibility*, *subsidiarity*, and *heterogeneity*. *Irreducibility* means that certain issues are properly resolved at the global level of governance. A global society needs to ensure universal rights, the integrity of the biosphere, and the fair use of common planetary resources. *Subsidiarity* sharply limits the scope of irreducible global authority. To promote effectiveness, transparency, and public participation, decision-making should be guided to the most local feasible level. *Heterogeneity* validates the rights of regions to pursue diverse forms of development constrained only by their obligations to conform to global responsibilities and principles. These constraints do not resolve all gray areas. They leave open much room for contention and interpretation. Politics and debates would continue in a *Great Transition* world.

- 1) widely seen as legitimate—emerging from a process that engaged the full range of diverse voices that would be part of such a movement;
- 2) constructed with sufficient detail and rigor to be plausible, yet fluid enough to recognize the deep uncertainty of the long-range future and allow for plural viewpoints in shaping and reshaping the vision;
- 3) able to evolve and adapt to changing local, regional, and global circumstances; and
- 4) able to provide a framework that could be used to help individuals understand how they might effectively contribute.

Such a vision would not spell out solutions to every world problem in substantive detail—many solutions can only be discovered in the doing, and not in abstract contemplation. But it would provide a framework for thinking about specific issues in fresh ways. In turn, experience drawn from practice would enrich the vision. This interplay could play a powerful role in helping deepen and crystallize the latency for a GCM. “A living movement must be fashioned by participants in a process of adaptation to one another and to changing circumstance” (GTI Proposal, 2003).

The iterative articulation of a shared vision would rest in a process of engaged dialogue. Engaged dialogue means that conflicts are not avoided, but are approached with skilled facilitation and a commitment to a politics of trust, so they don’t become so disruptive as to cause disengagement. Constructively engaging conflict requires that all parties are open to transforming their identities in relation to new learning. In successful dialogue process, disputants learn to express their own voices (empowerment) and hear one another (recognition) (Bush and Folger, 1994). Identity is reframed from “I” to “we” as shared values and concerns are recognized (Rothman, 1997).

The WSF demonstrates the potential to convene a large number of actors to a space of dialogue, but it fails to generate the type of engagement necessary for a reframing of identity. An authentic GCM would have spaces in which conflicts are surfaced and relationships are transformed and strengthened through dialogue. Thus, a GCM would not be free from dissent and internal politics, but rather would express a new form of politics bounded by shared values. In fact, a movement that embodied diversity engaged in constructive dialogue would carry within it the seed of a new global governance system. Modeling such engagement would also create a plausible basis for hope and attract many more participants.

There are numerous examples of citizen involvement in complex policy making (Atlee, 2003). In one example, as a routine part of policy making in Denmark, a panel of fifteen ordinary citizens is convened to represent the full spectrum of diversity in Danish society. This panel interviews technical experts as it studies a particular complex social or technological issue to recommend policy guidelines. A professional facilitator helps this lay panel articulate a consensus statement that is then presented to the government and the press, and citizen study groups may then be organized throughout the country to discuss the report (Atlee, 2003).

During the transition to democracy in South Africa, scenarios proved to be a useful tool for illuminating choices and exploring competing priorities, helping adversaries reframe their conflict and find common ground (Kahane, 2001). Scenarios, which paint plausible images of our future and the pathways to get there using rigorous qualitative and quantitative analysis, have long been used to foster informed debate. The power of these examples is that they show how diverse and divergent views can be transformed through facilitated dialog into a shared vision that satisfies originally competing parties.

It would be possible to adapt such tested methods of citizen dialogue to the task of developing alternative scenarios as a means to explore and construct a shared vision of a GCM. Local citizens from Boston to Bogota, Uppsala, Bamako, Damascus, and Chang Mai might be convened by coalitions of existing social movement organizations to come together to create alternative scenarios consistent with a GCM framework and relevant to their local cultures and situations. Within any community, multiple scenarios might be developed as a mechanism for exploring the pros and cons of various options. Across communities, regional meetings might be places to examine the inter-relations of scenarios and to create relevant regional frameworks.

Numerous variations of visions, based on a set of shared principles, could emerge and evolve iteratively from hundreds of dialogues engaging experts, activists, and the general public. These visions would embrace multiple local and regional solutions expressing diverse aspirations, rooted in the cultural traditions that provide people deep meaning and identity. These images of the future would have to be continuously revised as conditions changed and the movement learned from its experience. Sharing scenarios through films, video games, books, articles, websites, courses, workshops, and lectures would provoke contemplation and conversation among the broader public. Feedback could be used to improve them, deepening their validity and acceptance across a widening spectrum of society. This process could generate its own momentum, as materials and images are picked up by the media, incorporated into educational curricula, and generally woven into the cultural matrix.

As it matured, a robust GCM could gain the social authority and political power to convene government, business, and NGO sectors in various regions of the world to discuss how its alternative scenarios might be expressed in regional development. These conversations could become the basis by which a non-violent movement begins to institutionalize its concerns in a new global society.

New forms of leadership

Rather than understanding the GCM as a single organization (e.g., as a global political party), we should bear in mind that, historically, social movements are composed of multiple, even competing, organizations. What binds a GCM is a shared identity, not a single organizational structure. A GCM would grow through widening circles of participation and dialogue as increasing numbers of citizens join in a shared vision and identify as part of a common movement.

A specific type of leadership is required that would have the authority and resources to convene and maintain the dialogues for developing shared visions and perspectives. A GCM might develop a new form of leadership—movement *diplomats*—that would complement civil society’s paid staff, charismatic visionaries, influential philanthropists, community organizers, and organizational heads. Trained and supported directly by organizations or communities, these diplomats would be charged with the task of building systemic coalitions. They would seek to translate the rhetoric of different factions, foster communication, and find common ground. They would provoke learning in their own organizations in addition to reaching out to form alliances. Ideally, this new evolution in leadership would include core competencies of facilitation, strategic dialogue, systems thinking, and familiarity with future scenarios and the requirements for a sustainable world. This new role of leadership would not replace other necessary types of leadership, but would complement them in helping to maintain the balance between coherence and diversity within a GCM.

This difficult work of diplomacy, often unglamorous and contentious, could become a highly respected and influential form of leadership. If such roles are given recognition and support, a network of movement diplomats and diplomatic training programs could help a systemic movement overcome barriers of language, class, region, and outdated “issue-silos”. It would be through the work of these diplomats that spaces for engaged dialogue would be developed, multiplied, and enhanced. Movement diplomats could be a key to developing coherence while avoiding the evolution of stultifying movement hierarchies.

Sharing an identity and constructing a vision through multiple spaces of engaged dialogue, the GCM would be an “ecosystem” of organizations, networks, and individuals all occupying the “niche” of sustainability and justice. This essential “biodiversity” of the movement encompasses a world with diverse cultures, regions, and modes of life. The diagram below suggests the relationships between elements of this ecosystem.

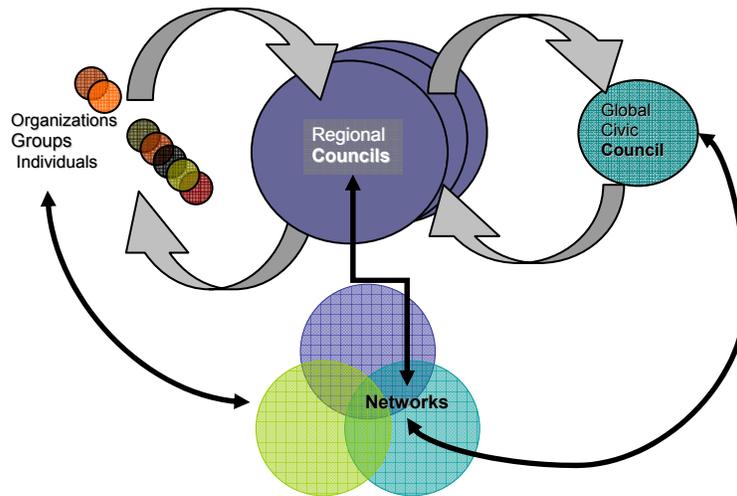


FIGURE 1: Ecosystem of a Global Citizens Movement

The upper left of the figure depicts the diverse organizations and informal groups that will continue to be active at local, regional, or global levels. This could include political parties, faith-based communities, and NGOs engaged in campaigns, protests, and construction of positive alternatives. Individuals would join the GCM by linking to existing groups or creating new ones. Taking advantage of increasingly high-powered information and communication technology, many local, regional, and global networks would continue to form on a range of themes. Importantly, those organizations with transparent, accountable lines of decision-making authority might more easily forge linkages among plural actors.

Regional councils governed by transparent and accountable leadership structures and funded by constituent organizations could be open to all who agree to the ground rules necessary to generate engaged dialogue. Scenario building methods could be used to develop consensus around regional visions. Delegates from community groups and organizations could be organized into discussion groups with a full range of diversity (class, gender, ethnic, age, etc.) to engage in dialogue with the help of trained facilitators. The results would be synthesized, debated, refined, and taken back to constituent groups for input and improvement. Councils would reconvene annually to repeat this process as conditions evolve.

The goal of this process would be to produce a broad consensus that was rooted in sophisticated analysis that rigorously weighed various options, guided by the values underlying the GCM. Different regional councils could develop their own cultures and might differ in their decision-making practices; importance would be placed on the engagement and dialogue across sectors and issues. These councils would be the operational hub of a GCM, and would have trained staff skilled in dialogue and facilitation, scenario development, and diplomacy.

To coordinate issues of global concern, regional councils would need to develop processes to select regional representatives for a global council. In an authentic GCM, the formation of a global council would be guided by the same principles that define the movement (e.g., equity, democracy, freedom, sustainability, reconciliation, nonviolence, etc.). Elected representatives would be held accountable and could be removed from office. However, elections that are decided on majority votes could perpetuate the historic marginalization of minority voices. Each regional council would have to engage these concerns, and solutions might vary (some might choose to guarantee slots to indigenous communities, women, and other historically marginalized groups). The power of the global council within the GCM as a whole would reside in the wisdom of its suggestions and whatever resources it could direct toward these ideas. As a body representative of the regional councils, it would have the moral authority to speak to the press, governments, and corporations on behalf of a growing global movement. As the GCM matured, this global council could offer clues for the establishment of a global citizens parliament.

While the communities, organizations, and institutions inhabited by global citizens would use a range of democratic decision-making structures, from representative democracy to consensus, the dominant ethic in all these endeavors would be to seek first to understand, then to be understood. This new mood of discourse and listening could allow the movement to transcend the stale dichotomy of highly centralized decision-making versus uncoordinated, weak alliances.

Conclusion

While more thinking is needed about the relationship between latency, vision, and social movements, it does seem possible that a positive feedback loop could be established. A vision that convincingly describes a hopeful image of the future and a plausible pathway for getting there could inspire more people to believe in the possibility of a sustainable global civilization and, thus, to take up the challenge of global citizenship. Strategic campaigns initiated by widening circles of activists in concert with this vision would inspire more people to believe in its possibility and this, in turn, would allow more impressive victories to occur, inspiring yet more people, and so on. The combination of a shared vision with clear victories expands the frontiers of the possible—hope is contagious and change happens quickly. As substantive gains are made and the lives of the poor improve, the solidarity of the peoples of the world deepens, and a new sense of identity as global citizens takes hold.

The future is not someplace we are going—it is something we are creating. Ultimately, the exact shape and form of a Global Citizens Movement is not to be predicted, but to be lived. A GCM must be able to contest power and shape the global future—without this there is no “movement”, just a lot of chaotic activity. It will take a tolerant, exploratory attitude and forms of governance based on democratic principles of participation, openness, transparency, and accountability to nurture a unified movement. A *Great Transition* is a vision of “plural solutions”—alternative local and regional approaches that are compatible with global responsibilities and citizenship. Thus, a GCM will have different local and regional expressions, but share similar values. Informal and formal leadership will be essential at all levels to help educate, coordinate, facilitate, and motivate.

Such a process can only be built in stages, as groups and individuals increasingly recognize themselves as a “we” and come together around a shared vision and framework for action. Each stage would mobilize more citizens and revise organizational structures and processes. This

movement would draw its energy from multiple sources. Certainly, local conditions and the struggle against direct oppression would be central. But more, it would be animated by concern with the well-being of the whole human family, with the fate of future generations, and with the sustainability of the broader web of life. Such a shift in consciousness toward a capacious cosmopolitan identity is a historic potential resonant with the objective conditions of deepening global connectivity. This is the hope of a global citizens movement.

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