



Prepared by
Richard Barrett

Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

Overview

All human group structures grow and develop in seven well-defined stages. Each stage focuses on a particular existential need that is common to the human condition. These seven existential needs are the principal motivating forces in all human affairs. The level of growth and development of all human group structures depends on the ability of the leaders to create the conditions that enable the members of the group structure to satisfy these seven existential needs. If these needs are not met, then the consciousness of the people in the group structure will stay focussed on these needs until they are met. The following diagram shows the needs associated with each stage in the growth and development of nations.



Stages 1 to 3, the “lower” needs, focus on the basic requirements of nations – protection, safety, and economic security at stage 1; a sense of belonging, loyalty and harmonious internal group relationships at stage 2; and efficient and effective infrastructure, services and systems that create order and protect the rights of all citizens at stage 3. These first three stages are the basic building blocks for establishing internal stability in a nation, and creating a foundation for a democratic society. When the leaders of a nation are unable to fulfil these needs the nation will be inherently unstable.



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

In **level 4**, the focus of national development is on creating governance structures that give all citizens a voice, and guarantee personal freedom and equal opportunities for all. This stage of development involves a shift from social relationships based on ethnocentric cultures of blood and/or class, to social relationships based on cultures of meaning. This will only be possible if a) there is a shift from belief-based decision-making to values-based decision-making, and b) all citizens are able to meet their basic needs as described in stages 1, 2 and 3.

Stages 5 to 7, the “higher” needs, focus on building the resilience of the nation and its long-term sustainability – developing a climate of trust and internal cohesion (shared vision and shared values) at stage 5; creating mutually beneficial regional alliances with other nations at stage 6; and collaborating with other nations to improve the global human condition and build a sustainable future for upcoming generations at stage 7.

Stages

STAGE 1: SURVIVAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The three major areas of focus or concerns in nations that are operating from this level of consciousness are: defence and the protection of borders; economic health and prosperity of the masses; and the health and nutrition of all citizens. The main focus defence and protection of borders is on the establishment of a military force that can protect the territorial interests and natural resources of the nation from incursions by other nations. The main focus of economic health is on the solvency of the nation and the elimination of hunger and poverty. Of particular concern is the ability of the nation to create job opportunities for economically active citizens and provide economic safety nets for the poor through the taxation of the wealthy. Dysfunction in this area leads to unemployment, corruption and environmental degradation and large income disparities between the rich and poor. Crime and violence ensue as those who are closest to survival attempt to meet their needs in any way they can.

The main focus of health and nutrition is on the provision of clinics and hospitals and basic health care for all mothers and children; immunization against preventable diseases; and food security. Dysfunction in this area leads to persistent outbreaks of disease, a high incidence of infant deaths and the general morbidity of the population.

Other signs of dysfunction at this level of national consciousness include: the sanctioning of the military or police by decision-makers to oppress and brutalize citizens; the formation of secret police departments that spy on citizens; and the curtailment of the freedom of the press. These types of



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

control are usually found in authoritarian regimes. Nations are dysfunctional at level 1, when a) anarchy and/or violence are endemic, b) there is no freedom of speech or right of protest, c) corruption is rife, and d) health services are non-existent, poorly managed or not adequate to meet the needs of the population and there is low life expectancy.

The keys to success at level 1 consciousness are, a) adequate territorial protection – safety from external threats, b) employment opportunities for economically active citizens – guaranteeing a minimum wage and minimum level of prosperity for all citizens, c) economic safety nets established through taxation of the wealthy, and d) access to medical facilities for everyone – the health for all citizens.

STAGE 2: RELATIONSHIP CONSCIOUSNESS

There are three major areas of focus or concerns in nations that are operating from this level of consciousness: the peaceful resolution of conflicts between individuals and groups; the creation of a sense of belonging that embraces all citizens, and the loyalty of citizens to the government of the nation. The main focus of conflict resolution is on the institutionalization of the settlement of disputes between ethnic or other religious sub-groups and the creation of inter-group harmony. Dysfunction in this area leads to inter-ethnic/inter-religious violence, the victimization or unfair treatment of minorities or sub-groups based on gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity, religion, etc. It also leads to the separation of towns and cities into ethnically defined areas. In the poorest of these areas law and order can become difficult to maintain if the stage 1 needs of the population in these areas are not being met. In level 2 nations, old racial, ethnocentric or religious wounds are healed in a spirit of reconciliation. Old fears are surfaced and publicly discussed.

Nations create a sense of belonging through the establishment and respect of traditions and rituals that build ethnocentric bonds. Respect for the traditions and rituals of minorities, by the majority, is essential for inter-racial/religious harmony. When issues related to belonging are not dealt with, the sub groups discriminated against feel a sense of exclusion. When citizens feel vulnerable or inadequately protected, loyalty and harmony evaporate. Loyalty arises out of a sense of being cared for. Whoever is doing the caring, earns the loyalty of the people. Thus, when the nation fails to care for its citizens, particularly specific sub-groups, then the loyalty of those groups cannot be counted on in difficult circumstances. Pockets of insurgency can easily arise and civil war can erupt when victimization, exclusion and discrimination reach significant levels. When specific sub-groups feel like second-class citizens then there can be no internal stability in a nation. Nations that have mastered this level of consciousness create conditions where foreigners and strangers feel safe.



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

Leaders must protect the safety and rights of all citizens if harmony and loyalty are to be maintained.

The keys to success at level 2 consciousness are, a) establishing and maintaining internal harmony, b) developing procedures for resolving conflicts, and c) respecting and honouring the racial/religious traditions and rituals of all groups.

STAGE 3: SELF-ESTEEM CONSCIOUSNESS

There are three major areas of focus or concerns in nations that are operating from this level of consciousness: establishment and enforcement of law and order; creation of institutions of governance based on efficient systems and processes; and provision of public infrastructure and services that enhance the productivity of the nation and the well-being and prosperity of the people. The main focus of the establishment of law and order is on a) drafting and implementation of codes, rules, regulations and laws that maintain order and protect the ownership, rights and civil liberties of all citizens of all religious denominations, b) adequate local enforcement of codes, rules, regulations and laws, c) appropriate levels of punishment for the transgression of the codes, rules, regulations and laws by individuals or organisations, and d) the right of appeal against public judgments to ensure fairness – social justice. Dysfunction in this area leads to a higher incidence of criminal activity and a lack of public protection from unscrupulous businesses.

This is where the creation of efficient institutions of governance becomes important. Without adequate enforcement, the codes, rules, regulations and laws that are designed to protect citizens fall apart or fail to do their job. Efficient institutions are also important for the delivery of public services and the collection of taxes. Dysfunction in this area is generally caused by bureaucracy, resulting in inefficiency that leads to issues of productivity or lack of delivery of services and benefits. In poor nations, corruption can also be a severe handicap to institutional efficiency and productivity. The impact of these dysfunctions is particularly noticeable in the provision of public services such as shelter, transport, electricity, telecommunications, health and education. Poor institutional performance decreases the competitiveness of a nation and undermines its resilience. This can result in a shift to survival consciousness.

Other signs of dysfunction at this level of consciousness are the restriction of religious freedoms, excessive use of power to maintain control, highly centralized decision-making, hierarchical structures of governance, the use of military to maintain order, governance by non-sanctioned elites, despots or dictators and excessive bureaucracy. Nations that have mastered this level of consciousness usually have secular governance structures; compete



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

effectively with other nations; and deliver prosperity to the majority of their citizens – establishing an upwardly mobile middle class. When these conditions are met citizens develop a sense of pride in the achievements and success of their nation.

The keys to success at level 3 consciousness are a) establishing laws, regulations and rules that establish order, b) enforcing these laws, regulations and rules, and c) ensuring efficient and effective taxation and the delivery of services to all groups.

STAGE 4: TRANSFORMATION CONSCIOUSNESS

The focus of the fourth level of national consciousness is on the consolidation of internal stability by creating a multi-cultural, non-discriminatory, egalitarian society that respects the rights of all citizens. Level 4 nations establish and protect personal freedoms, and seek to create equal opportunities for all citizens. They are democratically governed in multi-party political systems where every adult individual has a voice in electing local, regional and national representatives. Individuals are free to travel and have the right to a national passport. In nations that have achieved level 4 consciousness, boundaries between classes become diffuse. Elitism is frowned upon, and the influence of elites in governance is either eliminated or minimized. Decisions are made by consensus and compromise.

There must be freedom of movement, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom to grow, freedom to learn, freedom to become anything you want to become. At the same time, the freedom of one individual or group of individuals must not impact on the freedom of another individual or group of individuals. Citizens must act responsibly giving due consideration to the good of the whole. The leadership must be accountable for the results they achieve. They must have the readiness, willingness and ability to change. Leaders will not be able deliver stage 4 needs if they cling to rigid, bureaucratic, hierarchical, or authoritarian institutions of governance.

Level 4 nations view survival through the lens of adaptability and resilience building. They are in the process of mastering internal stability by embracing diversity and are now seeking to establish the conditions that allow them to establish external equilibrium. They focus on continuous improvement and continuous renewal – constantly learning, researching and modernizing. In a climate of freedom and equal opportunity, people are responsible and accountable for their own futures. Consequently, education and research are high priorities. Primary and secondary education is compulsory for every child. University and college education is available to all those who want it. By focusing on education level 4 nations enhance their ability to compete in the global market place. Re-creation facilities are recognized as important for the



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

well-being of citizens. Personal growth, personal development and self-actualization are encouraged.

At this level of consciousness the physically and economically disadvantaged as well as the elderly are adequately cared for through social safety nets. There is a natural structuring of society based on intelligence and merit. Wealth is redistributed through taxation. Those who make lots of money pay the highest taxes. Taxes are used not only to provide infrastructure and services, but also to provide safety nets for the poor. Level 4 nations protect themselves but they never start wars. They practice tolerance. They abolish the death penalty.

The keys to the success at level 4 consciousness are, a) to create a culture of responsible freedom, b) to create opportunities for all citizens to learn and grow and share in the prosperity of the nation, and c) to master internal stability and become agile and adaptable enough to maintain external equilibrium.

STAGE 5: INTERNAL COHESION CONSCIOUSNESS

The focus of the fifth level of national consciousness is on the deepening the internal resilience of the nation by focusing on fairness, openness and transparency and thereby creating a climate of trust. Above all there must be trust. Trust is the oil that lubricates commerce. Trust is the water that calms the fire of dissent. Trust can only flourish where there is no fear. Fairness, openness and transparency are the conditions that shed light on the dark spaces where the last vestiges of fear lurk. Trust occurs when people operate with shared values. This will only happen if there is a willingness on the part of government and its leaders to hold new conversations with its citizens that they have never had before – not conversations about beliefs, but conversations about the underlying infrastructure of the mind and what it means to be truly human. The inquiry must be about the values that unite citizens, not the beliefs that separate. There can be no topic that is off-limits. There can be no secrets. Everyone must be included in the conversation.

The strongest nations on the planet are those with the highest levels of trust, and a set of shared values and a shared vision about the future they want to create that gives citizens a sense of meaning and purpose about the role the nation wants to play in the world. These discussions – on values and vision, must occur at both the national and community level. Community values and visions must support the nation's values and visions. There must be an alignment between the head and the hearts of individuals, the head and the hearts of communities, and the head and the heart of the nation. There must be commitment, enthusiasm and passion behind the vision. The vision must have an internal dimension – what the nation will look like five to ten years



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

hence, and an external dimension – the role the nation will play in the world. It is important that citizens come together around a common cause. Citizens must feel that they are able to play a role in building the nation and supporting it as it seeks to build a better world.

Level 5 nations experiment with new forms of democracy. Citizens are more involved in decision making through dialogue, referendums or Internet polling. Experts play a more decisive role in national affairs by handling topics that all agree should not be subject to political agendas. Children are listened to and given a voice in the affairs of the nation.

The key to success at level 5 consciousness is enhance the nation's capacity for collective action by building a shared vision and adopting a set of shared values that build internal and external trust. Level 5 nations are cohesive, viable and independent. The nation's shared value system influences its foreign policies, its attitude to human rights, and its willingness to provide untied aid to support people living in poverty.

STAGE 6: EXTERNAL COHESION CONSCIOUSNESS

The focus of the sixth level of national consciousness is on building mutually beneficial strategic alliances with other nations that share similar values, and deepening the sense of internal cohesion in the nation that began at level 4 with materializing the values of freedom and equality, and continued at level 5 with the practice of fairness, openness and transparency.

Level 6 nations form strategic alliances with like-minded nations to enhance their economic, social and environmental resilience, to have a stronger voice in dealing with global issues, to build their capacity to withstand global shocks, and to create the conditions that begin to build global sustainability. Level 6 nations see the big picture. They see the systemic causes to the problems of existence and take steps to influence the social climates and habitats that promote the evolution of consciousness. They practice responsibility for the whole. They share information with other nations; they cooperate and collaborate with each other on solving common problems; and they are willing to give up aspects of their own sovereignty for the good of the whole. There is the beginning of the recognition of interdependence of all life.

Internally, level 6 nations focus on the beautification of the built environment, building environmental awareness among the population, and caring about the wildlife and the nation's natural heritage. Citizens are encouraged to care for the non-human species and promote animal welfare. Level 6 nations make sure that no community gets left behind.



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

The keys to success at level 6 consciousness are a) to give up certain aspects of national sovereignty to a regional decision-making entity so that the collective resilience, sustainability and environmental and ecological diversity of member nations is increased, b) to make sure no community within the nation, and no nation in the regional alliance gets left behind c) to care for and protect the natural environment and ecology of the nation.

STAGE 7: GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The seventh level of national consciousness builds on sixth level by expanding the depth and breadth of international cooperation with regard to solving the problems of humanity, and at the same time deepening the sense of internal cohesion in the nation by supporting the self-actualization of the masses and expanding the focus on social and environmental sustainability to include ecological sustainability. There is recognition that it is not just humans that are interconnected, but all life forms. And, the survival and well-being all life forms, including the human species is dependent on the health of planet. At this level of consciousness, the concept of Gaia becomes real. There is compassion for all life. This recognition of the interconnectedness of all things impacts the nation's perspective on globalization. At this level of consciousness, the world is seen through the lens of interconnected energy streams – the fundamental quantum building blocks of the material world. Science, religion and psychology are seen as interconnected streams of the same ground of being.

Level 7 nations do not subscribe to the notion of separation. They see every aspect of life through the lens of interconnectedness. There is a deep understanding that the problems of global existence cannot be fully dealt with by either a national or regional decision-making authority. A new and more integrated global system of governance is promoted that supports our collective humanity and the Earth as humanity's common life-support system. Nations relinquish aspects of their national sovereignty to regional authorities and the regional authorities in turn relinquish aspects of their sovereignty to a system of global governance that focus on creating the conditions that guarantee the sustainability of humanity and of the planet. Nations and regions are willing to give up the aspects of their sovereignty that deal with external equilibrium because they recognize their inability to control issues of global survival and resilience from a national or regional level. They understand that they can only create the conditions that promote the survival, safety and success of their citizens if all citizens in every nation can do the same and that the human species can only survive if the majority of the masses can achieve self-actualization. There is recognition that service to the whole is the same as enlightened self-interest; that giving and receiving are the same when viewed through the eyes of unity consciousness.



Stages in the Development of National Consciousness

The key to success at level 7 consciousness will be the actualization of a new and deep understanding of how our energetic quantum existence impacts our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual understanding of life.

FULL-SPECTRUM NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

On the optimistic side, we are perhaps decades away from creating our first full-spectrum nations. On the pessimistic side, it may take a century or two to achieve this objective. However long it takes, it is certain that the process will be painful. History shows us that human group structures and individual human beings frequently require a significant wake-up call before they are willing to effect the changes they need to develop a new way of being.

What we have seen over the past few centuries is a consistent pattern of evolution which coincides with the seven stages of evolution of national consciousness. At one end of the spectrum, the nations of Africa and some isolated communities of the East are struggling at the survival level. At the other end of the spectrum, the Scandinavian nations together with the Netherlands have been relatively successful at building a strong level 4 consciousness while also laying foundations for level 5 consciousness. However, this progress has been achieved in relatively homogenous ethnic group structures. The openness of these societies to receive large influxes of deprived "foreign" citizens has exposed the level 2 shadow aspect of these cultures. They are now dealing with issues of racial disharmony and potential discrimination which will require significant attention before these nations can continue their journey to level 5 consciousness.

Meanwhile, in the United States, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom diversity issues have been at the forefront of domestic policy for decades. However, both these nations, and the majority of Anglophone countries are in various degrees still attempting to manage the shift from level 3 to level 4 consciousness.

What is likely to accelerate the shift to full-spectrum consciousness is a global melt-down of the financial systems, serious environmental issues caused by global warming, a global energy crisis, or global food security or global water shortages leading to widespread hunger and poverty. At this point in time the structures we have for dealing with these issues are primary national whereas the issues we are now facing are global. The United Nations together with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have to date, been largely ineffective in dealing with such issues. It is only when the pains of existence are experienced by the majority, and in particular the wealthy nations, that we will see a significant upward shift in the development of national consciousness.