Leadership, Evil and Future-Generations Orientation

Towards a Global Conversation of Cultures

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ABSTRACT

In the context of civilizational approaches to economy and polity, this essay explores models of leadership. These models include: the taoist-sage; the tantric-sadvipra; the islamic-caliph and the western-liberal. The potential of these ideal-types to decline to evil is discussed, particularly when they evolve outside of democracy and inclusiveness. Leadership is considered the link in creating institutions that are committed to all future generations.

Democracy and Development

Standing tall in the Kuala Lumpur sky are the non-lit words,[1] VISION 2020. This logos represents the vision of Malaysia's — and other industrializing nations — future. Even with the current financial crisis, the target of becoming an industrialized state by 2020 still appears possible although with recent arrests and tortures of the proponents of the *reformsi* movement in Malaysia a certain darkness has come over the future. Ignoring the current crisis for the moment, the reasons for the "success" of these economies are many. For Lee Kuan Yew, former Prime Minister of newly anointed industrial state Singapore, and now roving Asian wise man, they are the following:[2] (1) a non-litigious culture, wherein conflicts between individuals and cultures can be quickly and preferably administratively resolved; (2) an external dynamo which helps transfer technology, management and expertise (earlier the US and now Japan); (3) dramatic land reform ending feudalism; (4) a philosophical worldview focused on this world and not the here-after (leading to high savings instead of immediate consumption, to a culture of engineering instead of a culture of philosophers); (5) a competitive export economy; and (6) non-representative democracy.

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Surprisingly enough, democracy, as in one-person, one-vote is listed as one of the impediments in pulling oneself out of poverty, in creating a better world for future generations. Partly this is so since in feudal states, the landowning class yields disproportional coercive power. As Lee Kuan Yew states, "*It is more difficult for democratic government, elected by groups which includes landlords who themselves become powerful political players in the game, to bring about such a transformation.*"[3]

The power of a particular class is augmented by the lack of a unified political culture. One-man, one-vote wherein the majority vote to suppress the minority leads to disaster, especially when the minority is a creative minority committed to future generations.

Democracy is also disastrous when basic prerequisites are not met. Bangladesh, for example, is considered a democratic success story. Yet votes are routinely bought, attendance at political rallies is based on financial sponsorship, and the democratic process has led to endemic strikes. As one Bangladeshi says: "*Forget politics. Forget voting. All we want is the money to feed our families.*"[4] But for the elite, democracy is necessary to assuage foreign institutions like the International Monetary Fund and to ensure the spoils of victory lead to government jobs. Writer Andrew Robinson in his piece titled "Who Says Democracy is Good for Bangladesh? Foreigners" concludes that "*American concepts of democracy and economic freedom have as much resonance in the Bangladeshi psyche of today as they might have in the 18th century. Or the last millennium.*"[5] Democracy can thus function best where there is a sense of a shared community but when groups contest that very framework, the system cannot work. As Lee Kuan Yew says: "*When people challenge whether they are a part of the system, how can the system work*?" But what if the system is fundamentally corrupt as with Marcos' Philippines, Suharto's Indonesia or Mahathir's Malaysia?

Stated historically, can anything be done for Third World nations, whose borders have been administratively drawn up by departing colonial powers and where landlords and/or the military remain the ruling elite, where a civil society has not yet burgeoned, and where foreign colonialism has been replaced by crony capitalism? Is creating the possibility that one's children will be better off an impossible dream? Not only for the Third World is the lack of unity a problem, disparate multiciplicities have become a defining part of the global postmodern condition. We do not have a global community, and as the West continues to self-fracture, liberalism as a guiding ideology of the next century appears in doubt. Worse, the lack of unity is used by local nationalist leaders to suppress genuine dissent. Those committed to a more balanced and fair society are seen as enemies of the state. Instead of the enlightened leader that pulls all upward toward a shared vision, the leader, as with many Asian nations, for example in Pakistan with Bhutto and Nawaz Shariff, pulls society downward.

Leadership and Cohesion

But for Lee Kuan Yew wise leadership can create political and cultural cohesion. Leadership combined with an appropriate worldview (focused on this-world, on future generations) and the desire and appropriate institutional structures to help acquire skills, knowledge and technology can create miracles. To change cultural behaviors and in-grained historical attitudes (even behavior such as spitting) one needs "*a determined leadership and a population with a certain sense of community and a consensus*," argues Lee Kuan Yew.

Yet, an analysis of the globe as a political unit or the many nations of the inter-state framework will quickly reveal that those three factors — leadership, community and consensus — are missing. How can we then hope or expect the world of tomorrow to be any better than today?

Malaysia was well on its way partly because of the absence of representative democracy. This does not mean the State is unresponsive, indeed, political life is active. But for all practical purposes there is a one-party system run largely by one ethnic group. In Malaysia it is the Malays. Indians and Chinese have access to capital and culture but political power remains autocratic albeit shared among a small elitist community. VISION 2020 has partly been about expanding the community to include others in the context of a growing pie. However, unskilled migrant workers have recently found out that during economic downtimes this does not include them (it is deportation that awaits them). Singapore silences the issues of ethnicity and difference by opting for Confucian modernity. Even though it is a parliamentary democracy, there is no functioning opposition.

However, recent events in South-East Asia point out that, while the Western system of democracy may be inappropriate, rule of society outside definitions of decency is equally problematic for the polity. The arrest and beating of Anwar Ibrahim, the arrest and torture of Munawar Anees, former editor of the journal *Periodica Islamica*, largely so that crony capitalism can continue, have led Malaysia to a crossroads.[6] While both Ibrahim and Mahathir imagine an industrialised Malaysia by 2020, the former is committed to authentic multiculturalism, to a grand conversation between Islamic, Confucian, Buddhist and Christian civilizations while the latter remains lost in anti-Western propaganda, and has apparently lost his mantle of leadership.

The paradox for Mahathir is that for him to succeed to the next level of industrialism, that is the vision of Malaysia has a hightech information centre — cyberjaya — he must keep the Net open, and allow the emerging knowledge businesses to grow in a climate without fear.[7] However, to do so means the loss of his power; a position he is unwilling to relinquish. At essence this is a test of leadership — will Mahathir decide in favor of all or choose, as he is currently doing, his own clan of billionaire Malay businessmen. While local newspapers

report events from the view of the State, the Net gives a far different picture, that of a man increasingly out of touch with reality, willing to personally participate in the torture of the nation's citizens.[8]

And it is this Net that he can do little about.

While eschewing Western notions of democracy to the current stage has not meant that future generations have been impoverished, however, without a dramatic overture to inclusiveness, Malaysia will not only be unable to join the world's rich but will be unable to offer an alternative model of development. Still, so far by narrowing the polity, wealth has increased. But it is distribution of wealth that is now the key. Anwar Ibrahim understands this and represents a strong middle class which includes anti-capitalist intellectuals and international agencies, and others, while Mahathir represents big national capitalism. President B.J. Habibie in Indonesia represents the same class. He is a technocrat to Suharto's great man. But while Suharto is gone in Indonesia, with the next phase of revolution about to begin — anti-bourgois and anti-military — in Malaysia the great man remains.

To succeed in the future, it is a return to invention/education that the Tigers need instead of the battle to build the world's largest building. Indeed, it is the former that got them to their current wealth levels. Perhaps one anecdote says it all.[9] In a meeting with foreign experts decades ago, the visiting delegation asked Asians what help they desired. In contrast to other nations, which asked for nuclear power, so as to become modern and provide security for their own future generations, Malaysia asked for assistance in developing and exporting rubber, for creating the bases of wealth development. Thus while other nations such as Pakistan and India focused on the politics of the curse, on resolving ancient and recent blood scores, Malaysia (and Singapore) invested in education and health systems, in the needs of future generations. Yet, it might be that for the next run of economic development, a climate of experimentation, of safety from government control, needs to be created. Mimicking is one thing, but creating new global technologies requires a creative minority. But what cannot be created through the state is being created by the *reformsi* movement, that is, either there is reform through trauma or through transcendence, inclusion.

Still, the commitment to future generations is so strong that Malaysia's population policy ends up being antithetical to India's. While India is facing the demanding task of reducing its population, Malaysia is attempting to increase its. For Malaysia, more people "*means more workers and consumers for more products and services.*"[10] This is partly explained by its triple Asian heritage (Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism/Buddhism), as well as by the politics of people, most likely the Malay Muslim-led government wanting more of its own type.

Future Generations-Orientation

Concern for future generations from an environmental, social justice and human rights framework — Western or Asian — is also a problem. Central to industrial growth has been the use of non-renewable resources such as forests for quick economic growth. The process of development has also endangered the survival of tribal peoples. Their cultural metaphors, their gifts to past and future, are now problematic. Thus while Tigers are future generation-oriented in the sense of creating wealth which then can lead to a higher standard of living, with better physical infrastructure, and greater disposable income, they are not future generations-oriented with respect to preserving the ecology of nature and culture (with including the other). Again recent events have shown that at a time when the state needs to absorb more viewpoints, it has settled on a politics of denial, of law and order to deal with the unruly masses, instead of seeing events as part of an evolutionary framework.

However future generations-orientation should not only be seen as environment preservation-oriented, it is also growth-oriented. When judging future orientation of a nation or collectivity we thus need to ask not only is the current generation robbing future generations by using physical resources (the traditional environmental argument) and borrowing from the future (the national debt) but also if the current generation is limiting the choices of future generations by forcing them into poverty, that is, by not following economic policies and practices that encourage the formation of wealth, that break up feudal landholdings and inefficient State bureaucracies. We must thus also be concerned if current generations doom future generations to poverty by remaining in traditional ossified cultures and structures.

Concern for futures generations should be as much about the transformation of current conditions as it is about creating sustainability. It must as well be about new models of development/growth. Elsewhere, we have argued for a model that uses as its central metaphor, *prama*, that is dynamic balance.[11] Only focusing on balance or harmony, while environmentally sound, is often conservative. Only focusing on transformation, ignores the dimensions of past that must be returned to so as to create the future. Prama means a dynamic balance between past and future, between the sectors of the economy (agricultural, manufacturing and information) as well as between the dimensions of the self (physical, mental and spiritual) and of theory (theories that address material and spiritual factors instead of only focusing on the former or latter).

However, while we can be critical of Malaysia and other Tigers for excluding issues of environment, culture and rights, still, they rank much higher than South Asian countries where future generations thinking is non-existent: survival, the politics of the past, environmental degradation, corruption, are the norm. Savings are low because money is spent on day-to-day survival, on conspicuous

consumption, and on bribing local officials. There is no agreed upon national collective project. Moreover, as Lee Kuan Yew argues, whereas South Asia excels at ideational or philosophical based systems, issues of growth have been less important — Allah, Nirvana and Moksa stand as the true goals. Indian philosophy, in particular, focused not on *artha* (economic gain) or even on *kama* (pleasure) but on *dharma* (virtue) and *moksa* (individual liberation from the cycle of life).[12]

But attaining dharma has not been a facile task. It has become particularly more difficult in modern times. Moral behavior is considered the most desirable, yet because of the structure of South Asian society few are able to act in a virtuous manner. What results is a devaluation of culture and identity as one cannot meet the demands of one's value system. Morality remains the goal but instrumental power politics and competitive market pressures force immoral actions. The result is cultural denial (our civilization has no problems since it is God-centered) or cultural escape to the West (since structural transformation is impossible). What is passed on to future generations is a deep inferiority complex often masquerading as moral superiority. While the rhetoric of following the *Shariah* (Quranic law) or a return to the mythical *Ramaraja* (Kingdom of Rama) might continue, more often than not it is used as a weapon against others, not as a civilizational ethos to better self and other.

But what about OECD nations? How might we judge them from the view of future generations' perspective. Western nations, as opposed to Third World countries, which envision futures based on desired and imagined histories, have perfected the art of the short view. Instead of saving for a rainy day, buy and spend now is the organizing ideology of liberal capitalism. Indeed this is seen as the way out for Japan from its recession, that is, through consumption. Instead of protecting the environment, grow and pollute, clean up later! Instead of using material that are long lasting, that are soft on the Earth, use the materials that are the cheapest, irrespective of long term impacts, remain usual practices. And even though the language of internationalism, of democracy for all, is used, the world is not seen as a family, the West is seen as morally superior with the hordes of East and South threatening the American and European way. Essentially capitalist, that is creatively destructive, sustainability is a misnomer — except amongst the rising Green movement — since the natural is constantly reinvented. Problems are not owned, rather they are exported to nature and the Third World, and when pervasive, left on the alter of technology to solve.

Thus while all East Asian nations — with the dramatic exception of China — can be seen as committed to future generations (focused on education, the needs of children) partly because of their Confucian heritage, the model of development they have followed is inimical to nature and sustainable economics. Moreover, like the West they export their problems (often back to the West), however, they have managed to become industrial without becoming democratic. They have followed

a different path to modernity, to excellence. As one Western writer notes about Chinese art, "*For human happiness, democracy may be all very well; but for the visual arts, nothing beats 4,000 years of rigorous bureaucratic feudalism presided over by a lofty elite of scholars with a divine emperor on top.*"[13] Their economic success, even with the current problems, has forced the world to examine their culture and history with new eyes, with eyes not distorted by European hegemony. Among the results of this re-examination is a transformation of the idea of the future to the notion of future generations, to a familial, collective, intergenerational, cyclical view of temporality and culture. The linear theory of history, democracy and development, where all nations must travel the same road to modernity is no longer seen as universally valid.

The Sage and Democracy

Democracy then should not necessarily be seen as a precursor to future generations-oriented governance. Governance for future generations based on the East Asian political model rejects representative democracy as practised in the Western liberal democracies. The model that appears to allow for future generations thinking is the Paternal "Father Knows Best" or rule of the wise person.

More important than liberal democracy is a unified vision of the future of the nation. The nation is constructed as a family, the corporation as an extended family, with the fundamental mission of the family being the creation of moral wealth for generations to come. It is not just wealth for wealth's sakes but wealth as part of the drive towards the ideal virtuous person and leader. The strong leader, and the absence of a strong parliament and opposition, allow short term gains to be sacrificed for the long term. In the case of Singapore, this is philosophically legitimated through the idea of the Sage-King as developed in the works of Confucius and Chinese macrohistorian Ssu-Ma Chien.[14] The sage-king, it is argued, is in harmony with the finer forces of the universe, with the principles of yin/yang. Reflecting both the ideal of the Tao — the way of virtue — and the wishes of subjects, he can best lead his people. The sage-king is not subject to short-term concerns and thus can be future generations-oriented. Short-term concerns are emotional, but the sage-king is wise. He is wise but as he is a king, that is, has coercive and persuasive authority, he also can ensure that his policies are implemented. However, remaining a king is not a guarantee to perpetual power. The sage-king must act humbly, must reflect the wishes of heaven, must honor ancestors — he must reflect the tao and the people.[15] "*The sage has no mind of his own. He takes as his own the mind of the people*," says Lao-Tsu in the *Tao-Te-Ching*.[16] Linking the idea of the sage with modernist democracy, South Korean political scientist Sang-min Lee makes this stunning observation. "*For practicing democracy, above all politicians and people should become democratic*

persons. Because the self belongs to the social individual, personality is connected to sociality…. The object of democracy shall be self perfection based on the awakening of the self. [The] awakening self means that the individual accepts the subject of self-regulating opinion. Self-perfection is the same as the subject of conscious behavior, namely, a man of virtue,"[17] The leadership represents the collective good, not necessarily the good of the individual. However, and this is key, the leader represents the higher or wise nature of the individual. If the sage forgets this, that is become maniacal, eventually he will lose his power. Unfortunately as in the case of Mao, the cost was the life of millions of people, alerting us to the limits of collectivist thought and more significantly to the problem of delinking spiritual thought from political matters — Mao found Stalin far more inspiring than Lao-tsu. Mao's vision was not a balance of heaven or earth or of yin and yang but an exaggeration of male extroversial power.[18]

The Balanced Mind

But it is not just from the ancient Chinese thought where we are offered a model focused on leadership and the wise sage. Indian philosopher P.R. Sarkar gives us a similar entry into a leader who can be future generations-oriented.[19] Far more sophisticated than Ssu-ma Chien's sage-king is Sarkar's *sadvipra*.[20] While we are unable to translate this sanskrit word into English, it roughly means the virtuous intellectual, the pure or good or moral intellectual. Sarkar's ideal leadership is based on the complete mind, one that has the characteristics of physical, protective, intellectual, and financial service to others.[21] Thus the ideal leader must be service-oriented, courageous, intelligent-visionary and comprehend the material world of resources. He imagines sadvipra leadership as primarily moral and social leadership, less concerned with government but more with ensuring that society has a direction, a vision, that the rules are fair, that humans treat each other well. Sarkar's leadership thus is an attempt to mix physical power, cultural power, and economic power into a new type of political power. Sarkar sees these leaders as foresight-oriented, that is, they anticipate the movement of the social era — the movement of history through various epochs — and as exploitation begins, they help bring about the next cycle. Sarkar imagines this cycle as rotating between worker (or brute, chaotic) power, warrior (or expansionist) power, ideational (or the rule of priests or technocrats) power and capital (capitalism) power. Each epoch transforms the social conditions of the previous era. The church (intellectuals) wrested power from monarchies (warriors), for example. Capitalism has reduced the power both of priests and of ideologies, constructs of intellectuals. But the cycle in itself cannot be transformed, that is, a perfect society is not possible, only a good society, where the periods of exploitation gradually decrease. The eschewing of the perfect society is important as it allows an escape hatch. The

search for perfection is partly the inability to deal with difference, with chaos and complexity. The cost of perfection is a collectivism, a tyranny of the mass, under the direction of an imperial leader. Both Islamic and Western political theory have been burdened by the ideal of perfection. For muslims, the Medina State at the time of the Prophet represents the ideal polity. Unfortunately, the Prophet's later successors used the structure of the State without engaging in *shura* (consultation) and *ijma* (consensus) that the Prophet and the rightly-guided caliphs did. All sorts of authoritarian rule, all sorts of horrors were justified by rulers because of the ideal of perfection. As El-Affendi argues: "*By setting unattainable standards, it was easy to pass from the conclusion that perfection was impossible to the claim that all imperfect situations were equal... Classical (Islamic) theory then gave advice on how to tolerate tyranny.*"[22] Islamic political theory did not offer any recommendation on how to dislodge the caliph. Since the caliph (ruler) came to represent perfection, all others were by definition less pious than him. Tyranny was authorized and the pious waited endlessly for the saint to deliver. The result was passive ineptitude instead of the development of institutions that could mediate evil, structures that allowed the community to resist tyranny without resorting to violent assassinations. Western political theory has had similar problems but at a broader level. While the Enlightenment gave rights to ordinary citizens, it did not remove the racial basis for the rise of the West. Democracy was fine for the few, particularly those in the West. Others could be eliminated, enslaved, colonized and developed. Perfection as heaven has been theoretically achieved with liberal democracy, the task is merely to fill in the technical details. History thus ends with modernity since all others have been judged by the blinded eye of the West as *apriori* inferior, backward.[23] It is this distorted imagination of the Other that results from a particularistic but universally applied view of the perfection society.

However, in Indian philosophy, it has been the perfection of the self, and not society, that has been the project. Sarkar combines this traditional organizing variable with the modernist call for social transformation and imagines the concept of the sadvipra. While the sadvipra would certainly struggle against anarchist, monarchist, theological or capitalist forces (for example against feudalism in south asia and against capitalism globally), since there is no perfect society to be created, there is less of a possibility of the persecution of the other in the name of a grand ideology. But the sadvipra, while a grass roots leader, does have official standing. This is quite different to the shaman, the person outside of all knowledge categories. Much like the taoist, the shaman threatens the stability of common sense interpretations of life, work and love, by locating reality on the boundaries, by interrogating official power and language.[24] For Sarkar, destabilization is only one of the activities of the sadvipra, much more is demanded of her/him.

Leadership is not solitary but articulated in the context of society. For Sarkar society is the family. It is a family moving together on a pilgrimage. "*Society is like*

a batch of pilgrims that gather a strange power of mind in travelling together and with its help, solve all the problems of their individual and social life."[25]

In this sense, following the East Asian model, society is the family writ large. It is thus not surprising that Sarkar, like East Asians, does not believe that overpopulation is the central problem of the future (seeing it as a symptom of global imbalance of the use of material, intellectual and spiritual resources). Where Sarkar and Lee Kuan Yew might differ is that Sarkar would place far more emphasis on the cooperative economic system — as opposition Islamic parties in Indonesia are currently calling for — while Lee would focus on multinationals and the State as drivers of change. For Lee, it is technocrats guided by Confucian morality that must rule, not sadvipra.

While Chinese political theory places the scholar above other categories raising him to kingship, as with Ssu-Ma Chien's sage king, and while Indian political theory has been the struggle between the ksattriyan (warrior) and the brahmin (priest) as to who should rule[26], that is, who can lead society forward, Sarkar comes to a different conclusion. The ksattriya in itself is incomplete as his focus is only on technological and territorial expansion, on protective and coercive power, while the brahmin is incomplete in that his focus is only on theory-building, on ideas, on cultural power. A more complete form of leadership is needed; leadership with the complete and balanced mind.

The Fear of Tyranny

For Western thinkers — instead of assuming that man was good/sage-like, balanced between yin and yang, between the eternal natural principles or in a struggle between *vidya* and *avidya* (internal and external influences as with Sarkar) — the assumption was that men were evil, that power led to corruption. The fear of monarchy, of rule by the one, led to the creation of power sharing institutions and collective leadership. Through intermediate powers, the possibility of authoritarian rule was reduced. Authoritarian rule, it was argued, would, even if it claimed allegiance to future generations, more often than not follow policies aimed at maintaining State power (*l'etat, c'est moi*). Confucian thought alternatively has focused on the cyclical nature of leadership. Leadership begins as wise but over time it degenerates. Evil is a part of life, of history. Ultimately, however, the wise leader returns and the relationship between men and between men and Nature, and men and heaven is set right. The issue is not to reduce the power of the leader through intermediate governing bodies as in liberal democracy but to develop pedagogy that creates wise individuals, pedagogy that ensures that learning and governance remain unified. Indian political thought, in contrast, has been focused not so much on treatises as to how to govern as in Machiavelli's *The Prince* or

Kautilya's *Arthashastras,* but with social and moral responsibility, what is the right thing to do so that individual enlightenment can be achieved.

For Sarkar, the Western model, while the lesser of evils, does not provide a solution to capitalist hegemony, that is with the social good. One-person, one-vote degenerates into one-dollar, one-vote, or one-bullet, one-vote. Money and power are used to distort elections such that even though there is official participation, the ultimate winner (in this epoch) is always the capitalist class. Democracy cannot be understood separately from capitalism, believes Sarkar. What is required is for the curtailing of capitalist power. A sadvipra-led society, that is, a society where the social and the spiritual dominate governmental power, could accomplish the transformation of capitalism. It would do this by locating democracy at the economic level (encouraging worker's democracy, the cooperative system) and setting up electoral colleges where political franchise would be a right, but one granted after appropriate education focused on literacy and critical thought. While imaginative and far-reaching, the practical problems with creating sadvipras make Sarkar's work appear fantastic, not realizable.

But from two different perspectives, we do gain similar commitments. For future-generations-oriented governance, leadership is central. Leadership is not necessarily democratic. In Lee Kuan Yew's successful model, democracy is a hindrance, while in Sarkar's theoretical model, it is clearly not the ideal state since it cannot move the social cycle forward. Democracy, while avoiding tyranny, also eliminates wisdom.

The Judicial Branch

But we do need to remain in these perhaps idiosyncratic non-Western models to continue our argument. Dator, for example, has argued (and found supporting evidence) that in the United States, the judicial branch is often the most future-oriented precisely because it is not bogged down with issues of re-election, with the necessity of making decisions that are immediately positive.[27] The judicial branch can play the role of prophet, can make unpopular (but future generations sensitive) decisions, and not risk less of immediate power and long term authority. Recent reports on the Indian Supreme Court support this view as well. In Indian politics, issues of corruption, environment, caste prejudice, human rights have been intractable. No party or government has been able to make any progress. However, with the Indian Supreme Court becoming an activist court (to use the language of American judicial system) suddenly problems that appeared unsolvable are being solved. As Peter Waldman writes: "*Court action in such matters as cleansing the nation's air, rivers and blood supply to commandeering a bribery investigation of high public officials [give] India a singular advantage over rival countries in the global-development race*."[28] Their decisions are not democratic but they

are responsive, they are fair, and they are considered legitimate, certainly able to concretely benefit future generations unlike the myopic party-politics of the Executive and Parliament. It is this last criteria that is central. In the Pakistan case, the Supreme Court was not democratic but neither was it considered fair or legitimate. It consistently approved of executive decisions even when they blatantly violated human rights.[29] Popular opinion over time stopped supporting that court since it lost its legitimacy, what Chinese thinkers would term the mandate of heaven.

Leadership as the Link

Leadership, to use the ideals of our exemplars above, becomes the linking factor in creating concern for future governance. In *Creating a New History for Future Generations*[30], Kim and Dator argued that participants at a conference on the needs of future generations tended to either focus on issues of consciousness or issues of structure. Those along the consciousness camp focused on increasing awareness of the needs of future generations (of the environment, of culture, of the weak); while those of the structure camp suggested that these ideals must be institutionalised, in, for example, a court of future generations.

Structure is concerned with institutionalizing ideas and behavior. It guarantees repeatability, thus equal opportunity, since it routinizes individual decisionmaking. Consciousness is focused on individual attitudes. It calls for a rupture in history, in structure, arguing that it is in our minds that transformation is possible. Leadership points to the possibility of transformation by individual example and through action that coalesces persons and groups so that attitudinal change is possible, so that new structures can be built. Leadership is the link then between structural and consciousness transformation.

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LEADERSHIP

myth and inspiration

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STRUCTURE	CONSCIOUSNESS
institutions and repeated behaviors	ideas and attitudes

In John Gardner's landmark study on leadership, he identifies numerous crucial criteria of a leader that are useful for this discussion.[31]

  (1) They think longer term — beyond the horizon;
  (2) They think in holistic terms, understanding complexity;
  (3) They reach and influence constituents beyond their jurisdiction, beyond conventional boundaries and categories;

(4) They put heavy emphasis on the intangible of vision, values and motiva-
     tion and understand intuitively the non-rational and unconscious elements
     in the leader-constituent interaction;

(5) They have the political skill to cope with the conflicting requirements of
     multiple constituencies, and;

(6) They think in terms of renewal. The leader seeks the revisions of process
     and structure required by ever-changing reality.

Certainly we could paraphrase this as saying that leadership must be future-
generations oriented. Particularly from an Asian sense where the leader is a
paternal/maternal category, where the leader has responsibility **for** others and only
indirectly **to** others.

Perhaps it is not so much that democracy is the problem but that leadership
is the answer. Wise leadership provides the possibility for the long term to not
be mortgaged; it allows for dreams and visions to become institutions. It nurtures
attitudes so that they become widespread. Wise leadership as well knows when
retire and tend to flowers, to inner growth. But perhaps most importantly leadership
can draw talent and excellence, helping create new know-ware. Gardener discusses
how the great leader ensures that around them are even more leaders, that is
ensures that his or her power does not become myopic, self-absorbed. "*All too
often they [leaders] recruit individuals who have as their prime qualities an
unswerving loyalty to the boss and no power base of their own that would make
insubordination feasible. When those criteria prevail, what might have been a
leadership stems becomes, all too often, a rule clique or a circle of sycophants*."[32]
But that type of leadership would not be able to create institutions or consciousness
transformations. *What is needed is the ability of activating widening circles
of supplementary leadership. Such an extended network reaching out from the
leadership centre carries messages both ways. It can be equally effective in letting
the intentions of leadership be known or in receiving a broad range of advice and
advocacy*."[33]

Evil and Leadership

But even then leadership can be fascist, as proponents of individual responsibil-
ity remind us. Lee's model can be authoritarian, Sarkar's model can easily decline
into a rule of ayatollahs (becoming Maoist, calling for revolutions to maintain their
own power instead of curbing exploitation or imposing their own "complete mind"
on us lesser souls), and Gardner's model would do little to prevent the fascism of
the former Yugoslavia.

This becomes the central problem. Taking Gardner's categories or categories
from futures literature, the issue of evil is not adequately addressed. For exam-
ple, Richard Slaughter describes four reasons why thinking about the future is es-

sential:[34] (1) Decisions have long-term consequences; (2) Future alternatives imply present choices; (3) Forward thinking is preferable to crisis management; and, (4) Further transformations are certain to occur.

We can add other statements that are valorized in the futures discourse. "The future is something we should be concerned with since it has been taken away from us," "unless we create the future it will be created by others," or "the future must be recovered from the homogenizing spaces of modernity."

While at one level these are quite reasonable organizing principles futurists are committed to, these are also the platform for the Serbian Socialist party, which was instrumental in recent ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. Nazi leaders would also find these issues unproblematic. Indeed, Wendell Bell argues that the origins of the futures field are partly with the "*social engineering in the early days of Communist Russia, fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.*"[35] Certainly thinking about the future or even future generations is not a sufficient criteria for a good society, nor is leadership.

The strength in democracy is that it allows other voices to peacefully find expression. Its patience, always settling on the mediocre, prevents the monstrous. The weakness in leadership models, even those that advocate servant leadership is that in the quest for transformation, oppositional voices are often forgotten or co-opted through charismatic manipulation. Authoritarian systems indeed are more future-oriented than liberal, individualistic, short-term oriented democratic societies. However, whether socialist or fascist or religious, their commitment to future generations is accompanied by a cost, often the exclusion of other future generations. Indicted Serbian war criminal Dragoslav Bokan, who gained fame by forcing Croat civilians to walk through minefields, and gunning down those who refused, says that "*All I care is how much I can use my influence with the young to inspire future Serb generations.*"[36] Ratko Mladic who will be historically remembered as eliminating all the muslims males in Srebrenica did so for the well being of past and future serb generations — in one genocidal stroke, both history and future were cleansed.

Inclusiveness

This then becomes the next crucial criteria: **inclusiveness of the other** (a deep democracy perhaps, not a shallow liberalism). Not "more of us and fewer of them"[37] but a future generations-orientation that brings in other diverse cultures and viewpoints. Future orientation or future generations-orientation is then not enough of a call for transformation since groups desire to expand their own culture and curtail the world of other's. Fortunately in Sarkar's model, inclusiveness is central. While Cosmic Consciousness is a given (and thus for secularists his perspective is not all that inclusive), Sarkar argues for a vision of the future where

our commitments are towards all humans, plants and animals, a neo-humanism. "*In human society, nobody is insignificant, nobody is negligible. Even the life of a 100 year-old lady is valuable. In the universal society, she is an important member — she is not to be excluded. We may or may not be able to make a correct appraisal of her importance and we may wrongly think that she is a burden to society, but this sort of defective thinking displays our ignorance*."[38] But not just humans have rights, believes Sarkar. "*The Universe does not consist only of human beings; other creations, other animals and plants also have the right to live. So our universe is not only the universe of humans but the universe of all — for all created entities, both animate and inanimate*."[39]

Future generations means all future generations, not just, those that are healthy, that fit into our definitions of normality or, as in our earlier case, Serbian (or Croat, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, secularist) future generations. Inclusiveness becomes the safety mechanism that balances leadership and the parental, wise-person, governance model (what democracy tries to do in Western industrial societies). Without that, we have the politics of Iraqi Saddam Hussain or Serbian Slobodan Milosevic, where historical metaphors are used to create a visionary politics of the future that denies all but one's own group rights. Hussain appropriates Salauddin, the heroic Muslim leader, and Milosevic evokes the Serbian defeat in the battle of Kosovo in 1389 as a rallying cry. Both use the past as symbols for recreating a new future that is visionary, mythic, participatory, authentic and long-term oriented. They break with the present recovering values silenced by instrumental modernity. But we can ask: isn't this the platform of every progressive NGO? However, while apparently both leaders at the surface can be seen as futurist leaders, when placed alongside the issue of inclusiveness, they fall short. Milosevic, but not Hussain, even meets Gardner's criteria of creating a second level leadership around him. Indeed, it is this second-level leadership that directly participated in the massive ethnic cleansing of Muslims throughout the former Yugoslavia, as mentioned earlier.

Moving away from a modernist concern for explaining society, the issue becomes how are symbols used for political purposes. At one level Confucianism explains the rise of Singapore (as do other contesting theories such as world systems theory which locates Singapore in the changing world capitalist economy); however, at another level, such a reading only reifies social phenomena. Confucianism — meaning respect for tradition, hierarchy, political leadership, education, care for the entire group — was evoked by Lee Kuan Yew so as to create a cohesive nation. Since there always was historical allegiance to it in Singapore it was possible to gain quick legitimation. However, Taiwanese democrats have been arguing that Confucianism is not in any sense the only choice, the prearranged future. Concerned more with breaking away from China, they evoke democratic theory. Confucianism would call on Taiwan to respectfully follow the path of the

mainland and not contest its leadership, whereas through democratic theory, alternative frames of sovereignty are possible. Taiwan can choose if she wishes to remain part of China. Similarly, student leaders in Beijing evoked not Confucius but the American statute of liberty in their quest for transformation. Mao evoked Marx, Lenin and Stalin in his revolution. Milosevic evokes past defeats to create a Serbian nationalism so as to gain land and power. Sarkar wishing for transformation within hinduism and world materialism articulates a spiritual concept of leadership that can resonate with Tantric/Vedic history. Each uses past and futures to create alternative renderings of what can be.

Ideologies, traditions, and futures are thus not only explanatory factors but symbols used by leaders for their own normative purposes. Certainly, Lee Kuan Yew might have used a different ideology if he was in current Taiwan's position. Indeed, in a recent interview in *Time* magazine, Lee Kuan yew argues for a modernized Confucianism, reminding that the best antidote to corruption is not wisdom or tradition but transparent government. "*There are certain weaknesses in Confucianism. From time to time in the history of China, whenever there was weak government and favorites, Confucianism led to nepotism and favoritism. Conscious of that, we have established checks through an open, transparent system, where aberrations can be spotted, highlighted and checked.*"[40] Events in Southeast Asia can perhaps be read as revolutions against not one-person or wisdom rule but against tyranical rule. The overthrow of Marcos and Suharto were not class revolutions but revolutions against excess. However, in Indonesia the process has yet to play itself out with the possibility of a real economic and cultural revolution, with the possibility of a progressive socialist Islam vying for legitimacy.

Future Generations Discourse

Future generations thinking to articulate its own non-Western, amodern, politics of the future evokes the importance of inter-generational solidarity and unity with ancestors. Cyclical notions of time, premodern time, are also evoked. While at one level, one can barely argue with such a position, especially when the sentiment of indigenous peoples views on history are evoked. However, in both the Hussain and Milosevic cases, the misery of their ancestors, the cycle of history, is one of the direct reasons why others are currently eliminated. As S.P. Kumar argues, they exist in epistemologies in which the ontology of the curse is effectively functioning.[41] The love of one's ancestors is thus not necessarily an organizing principle that can guarantee a bright future for humanity as a Confucian future generations-orientation discourse might argue. More often than not, the curses of the past are used to ensure that future generations will be even more miserable. But returning to the Yugoslav case, just because Croat fascists killed Serbs fifty years ago, does not mean that Serbs now have the right to slaughter Croats of this generation. The

ideal of a united Yugoslavia was an inclusive State in which ethnicity was forgotten for the larger nation. However, with the break up of Yugoslavia, local leaders used the politics of fear and the past to derail inclusiveness and create a polity of imagined ethnic purity. Fear of the other was the potent force to guarantee an electoral mandate. The result was the victory of the politics of the short-term, of barbarism.

Inclusiveness is a long term struggle and project. But all of us place limits on the other. Inclusiveness, in the form of bilingualism, for example, as we learn from United States House of Representatives Newt Gingrich is dangerous to the future of the American state.[42] It threatens the nation-state, since it challenges the stability of one language, one people, one text, and one vision. By bringing in cultural chaos and complexity, the success of the US as a melting pot is imperiled. Caucasians, as the real indigenous Americans, are under threat of losing their way of life to Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asian Americans.

Perhaps Gingrich is right. Multi-culturalism does threaten the nation-state. Malaysia and Singapore, as well as other Tigers, have partly succeeded by sublimating the race and language issue, by exporting Otherness out of the country. Economic growth that leads to enduring benefits for all culture's future generations has been a priority. The hope is that from Malay, Chinese, and Indian, a new Malaysian identity can emerge. Culture is allowed at the level of mosque, temple, church in terms of religious preferences but English has become the language of business and Malay the language of the polity. Once industrialdom is reached, these silenced issues will sneak back in. Tamils and Chinese will want their cultural categories largely quieted in the rush to development, placed on the nation-building agenda. Will VISION 2020 then be able to continue? Hopefully by then Malaysia's leaders will embark on a VISION 2050 that focuses on cultural diversity and globality as the central pillars of a post-industrial society, where the richness of many leads to the development of greater regional and planetary unity. But this level of post-nation building thinking is lost on Lee Kuan Yew and others. Homogeneity leading to economic wealth has been the mission. The future cost will be the soft fascist state where a standard of living is achieved, where there will be a happiness criteria, what one commentator has called the future as a grinning mouse.[43] Singapore will be a socially engineered disneyland. Future generations might be happy that they were given education, health, housing and wealth but it will be in museums where they will have to go to see difference, since all culture will have been engineered.[44]

Conclusion

Future generations thinking means thinking about the future in terms that include the cultural, the global and the other. But it is too easy to state platitudes

about desirable states, ignoring the problem of evil. This said, there is a great deal that future generations-orientation does add to current perspectives.

A futures generations perspective changes how population is perceived. In liberalism, individuals are not seen as resources, as brains, as spiritual beings that can contribute to the world, but as machines that create problems, as future drug addicts or mass murderers (especially the Third World within and without the West). Future Generations thinking rethinks population and thus it is important. Based on a Confucian Asian heritage, it brings back the idea of the larger extended family as the guiding metaphor. It also brings back the idea of moral and wise leadership as a way to harmonize the many types of power (in Sarkar's model) or as a way of creating a brighter economic future (in Lee's model). But for future generations thinking to have any impact, it will have to go beyond futuristic platitudes, since these are useful for sinner and saint alike, indeed, fascists tend to be more futuristic than liberal democrats, since liberals focuses only on short-term market forces. Future generations thinking will have to be inclusive if it is to be of any importance to the current world crises. Being inclusive means both global and culturally rich, finding ways for a global conversations of cultures and of finding unity among the differences that we are. What this means is a commitment to chaos and complexity, to order and disorder, and to emergence, to the view that something other than who we are today can emerge. Whether this means post-human sapiens is debatable, but it does mean post-war human sapiens, post-genocidal humans. Structural institutions such as a court for future generations (as well as strengthening of the World Court, particularly the war crimes commission, and perhaps the establishment of an Asian Human Rights Court) are necessary conditions in the march to a future generations-oriented governance. Without these we will continue to be left with human carnage. One Red Cross official describes her memories of the damage man's inhumanity towards man can do (in this case referring to the problem of land mines): "*You see a woman working in the fields, trying to hoe her crops, and she has no legs. She is up to her waist in mud.*"[45]

Changing our attitudes from a focus on the present, on the short term, to the longer term is also a necessary condition. Nurturing leadership that can coalesce consciousness and structure — and is concerned with growth and distribution, environment and culture, and that is inclusive and global — is the necessary and sufficient condition. Examining these concepts in terms of how power uses the past and future for its own status-quo is the safety hatch.

<div align="center">NOTES</div>

1   From 1994-1998, Dr. Sohail Inayatullah was senior research fellow at The Communication Centre, Queensland University of Technology. Box 2434, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001. Australia. Tel: 617 3864 2192. Fax: 61 7 3864 1813. S.Inayatullah@qut.edu.au and sinayatullah@hotmail.com. He is a fellow and board member of the World Futures Studies Federation

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4 Andrew Robinson, "Who Says Democracy is Good for Bangladesh? Foreigners," *Global Times* (Vol. 4, No. 13, December 15, 1995), 20.

5 Ibid., 21.

6 For more on this, see www.dranees.org. This site is devoted to the Dr. Munawar Anees and his brutalization by the Malaysian police. Mahathir claims to have personally interviewed Anees and argues that only friendly persuasion and not torture was used. Also see, Tim Larimer, "Blackest Hours," *Time* (October 12, 1998), 60-62. Nisid Hajari, "Out of the Bottle," *Time* (October 5, 1998), 48-51.

7 See Alvin Toffler, "Upheaval dims hopes for Mahathir's Silicon Valley." www.drannes.org. This article is copywrited by Global Viewpoint and distributed by the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. In it Toffler argues that the Malaysian Multi-Media Super Corridor was to leapfrog Malaysia to the ranks of developed economies. However, writes Toffler in a letter to Mahathir, "The Internet cannot deliver its full economic and cultural benefits in a climate of political fear."

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