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Cultural Shift in Germany? Some Observations about the Development of Germany

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“We don’t need new organisations, we need new thinking. I believe that it makes no sense to spend a lot of time in attacking the present realities. It is a time to create new models which have within the complexity to make the old systems obsolete.” Don E. Beck

Germany, July, 2010. The World Cup is over. With third place the German team won high recognition, praise and enthusiasm for its style and its performance. The highlights were: high team spirit, competence, respectful contact with each other, cultural variety, and joy to play. And often we hear the sigh straight through the country: Why cannot our politicians play their game so, too?

Even if it is another game, let’s have a look at the teams and their conditions in the political arena. To start with here are the members of the team: For the first time Germany is governed by a woman, Angela Merkel—from the former GDR (East Germany). Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle confesses to his homosexuality as did the—just retired—Governing Mayor of Hamburg and the Governing Mayor of Berlin. The Minister of Finance sits in a wheel chair. The Health mMinister is Vietnamese by birth. The most popular politician in the country is the Minister of Defence—in Germany, the country maybe mostly obliged to pacifism in the western world! Still, ten to fifteen years ago similar constellations would have been hardly imaginable. Today, two thirds of the Germans see mostly the variety and the vital pluralism of their country.

In the moment we have less populism in Germany than in many other European countries. The party—“The Left”—that serves the clientele of the disappointed and underprivileged, is quite wisely attended to by most media. In addition, Gregor Gysi, party leader of The Left in the Bundestag and intellectual engine of the party, enjoys recognition as a person and politician far into the middle class camp.

The business barometer is rising—in the moment! There were no mass layoffs this year, as had been expected. The unemployment figure sank even again. Germany is called the economic railroad engine of Europe. German citizens on average have less debt than citizens in many other European countries. The financial crisis seems mastered for the moment—seems! Most Germans recommend a drastic savings course for the government to rescue public finances and to diminish the mountain of debt, instead of accumulating more debt.

Until some weeks ago, Angela Merkel was widely recognised and appreciated as Chancellor. She was certified as the only party leader in the country who has modernized her party and prepared it to be more open for change. Merkel herself describes her worldview: “The Christian image of men means we accept not only, but we find it a joy, that people have different gifts and weaknesses, strengths and abilities.“ About her political style she grumbles: “I am with certainty no ad-hoc decision-maker, because I understand processes as a whole and ask about many decisions where they will end“. (Quotes DIE ZEIT, No. 15, 8th of April, 2010, p. 2). She shows herself mostly more interested in the results than in quarrels or self-representation. As a scientist she enjoys complexity and appreciates chaos because she thinks that a new order may arise out of it. Her distinctive autonomy and independence is called one of the secrets behind her success. In her speech in front of the US congress at end of last year she was enthusiastic about the fact that it is now time for tearing down walls between different life concepts and within minds. She is appreciated for not being very much ego-inflated and is praised for her politics without enemies and her broad understanding of many things. Also her respect toward political opponents and her capacity for making the best out of every partnership are recognised. All this until a few weeks ago!

Today, growing discontent, irritation and disappointment can be found in all social areas, in particular concerning the politics of the government parties. The political barometer for the government coalition has drastically fallen,. The liberals—Free Democratic Party—in surveys are only at five percent of support; last year the party had been elected with 14 percent. The other big party SPD) Social Democratic Party, does hardly better, even though in the moment it profits from the bad image of the government.

Two of the smaller parties turn out relatively solid. Why?

The party of The Greens represents a part of the new worldview that slowly wants to go mainstream, in particular with regard to the subjects of equality, ecology, sustainability, peace, enlargement of freedom and political and economic power of all citizens. The party of The Left represents many socially underprivileged humans who do not feel seen and supported by other parties. They represent a part of the society that is not integrated and feels left behind.

Change from What to What?

The parties are in a quarrel against each other and within themselves. The general disorientation is deplored and of course it is blamed first on the boss, meaning the Chancellor. Especially concerning the upcoming budgetary cuts there is trouble. Angela Merkel recently emphasized that there is a big chance to connect the cuts with necessary and sensible changes of the society. Great idea! Yet up to now we see practically nothing of it; the chance for change is hardly used. On the contrary, little change is taking place.

The question is, of course: Which change? Change from what to what?

As Spiral Wizards, appreciating the metaperspective of Spiral Dynamics integral as a very effective compass in the jungle of global complexity, we first ask some questions in order to understand the dynamics and the big developing streams so that we are able to participate in a process of co-creation.

So, which dynamics are working in Germany? Here is a short overview to get us on the same page.

In Germany, as in most of the so-called industrial countries, we recognise three big creative forces that in each case have developed one after the other in history, though with different weighting and cultural coinage. In

the post-war Western Germany order and morality (in spiral language: Blue) were socially decisive. In the GDR at that time a closed ordinal system (Blue) dictated development. In the 70s the values of freedom and materialism dominated in the West (in spiral language: Orange). Order and morality as creative forces stepped into the background, yet were an essential foundation for the new developmental streams. With the fall of the wall and the unification of the country new values were growing stronger in the core of the society—values like equality and equal rights, care for nature and the environment, pluralism and a sense of community and unity (in spiral language: Green). This partially found its expression in the formation of the party, The Greens.

(See for the understanding of the developing spiral the graphics in this issue Alan Tonkin's column, Global Values Update.)

Thesis: Mainstream Wants to Change to Green Thinking and Creating

My thesis is: We are at a point of development where we are at the beginning of a cultural shift from the domination of materialism and unstrained freedom for the economy and finance markets to a new level of existence—a level of existence with Green thinking, Green values and Green structures in society.

What signs do we see of that? Here are some examples.

Maybe again, football. Already in 2006 the whole atmosphere of the World Cup in Germany had created a new light and playful German identity. In 2010 the game and the values of the German team want to be set as standards in the political, social and economic arenas of the society.

In some big media a notable change appears in the tone of reporting. We see less interest in finding scandals and showing their IQ by destructive criticism and more interest in understanding and searching for cohesion. The reports are more about feelings rather than only about facts.

In a study of German Identity of the Identity Foundation in Germany we read that nearly two thirds of all Germans express their wish for a stronger We-feeling.

Green concepts boom, for example, Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, Social Entrepreneurship, Guaranteed Basic Income and so on. The majority of the population wants protection of the environment and the earth and a growing number is also ready to engage actively.

After the excessive materialism of Orange a new spirituality is emerging and spreading widely.

The exploration of the interior of self and others has become important. Feelings are perceived, accepted and expressed publicly.

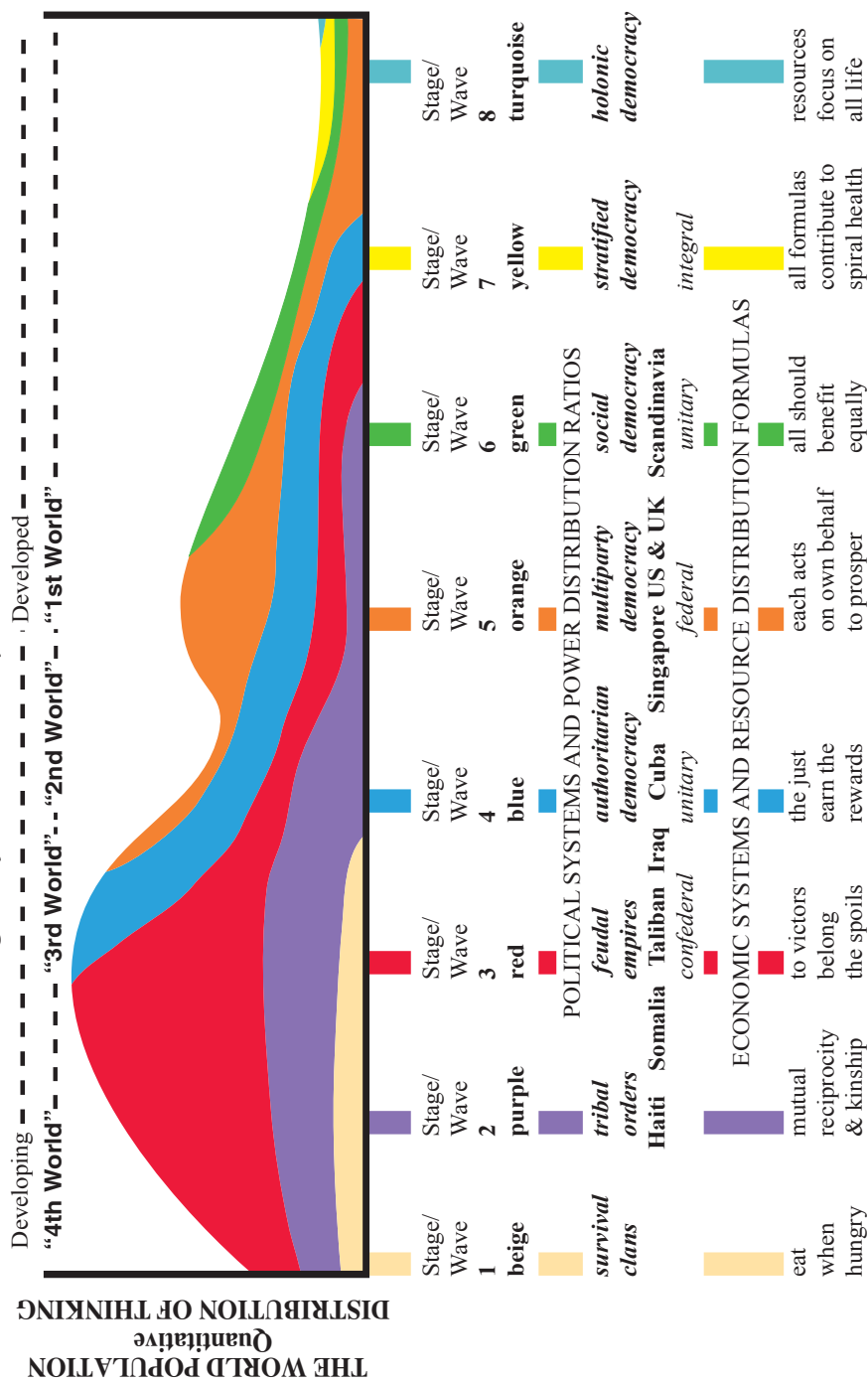
Like all memetic forces, the creative force of Green will find its way in all areas of life, until it has become mainstream. This is just a matter of time, and depends on how this evolutionary drive is nurtured or blocked.

If Evolutionary Dynamics are Blocked, Crises Arise

Crises, disorientation, heavy debates around the future and the way to it are natural in times of paradigm changes and transition to a next level of existence. The old thinking is shaken and does not function any more. New thinking emerges, yet it is only starting. Mostly people in charge try to do more of the old, to use concepts

Stratified Democracy*

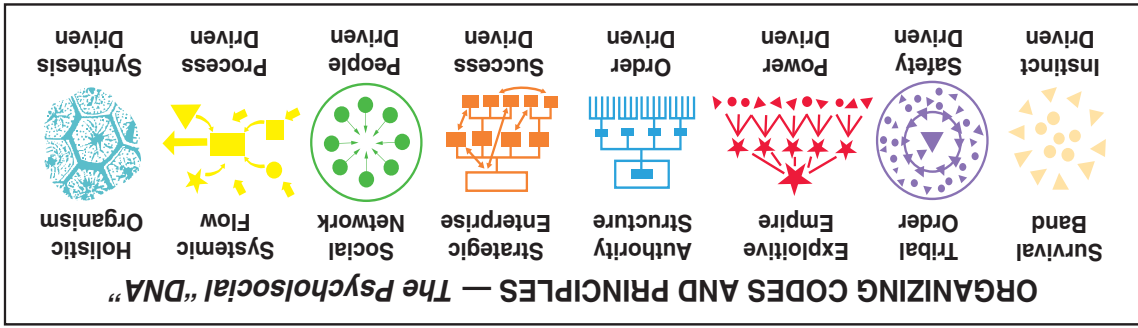
The Emergence of Governmental Systems and Structures Over Time



* Democracy or "rule by the people" can take many different forms and expressions. These are influenced by the natural habitat, the patterns of genetic and memetic migration, the unique set of life conditions, the impact of wild cards, the mesh of people and cultures, and the quality of leadership in all aspects of society itself. These Systems and Structures emerge in response to the unique set of problems of existence in each society. Movement may occur in the direction of greater complexity or less; there is no ideal or universal form; attempts to impose the model from one set of circumstances onto others are futile.

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Stratified Democracy



that have functioned up to now or earlier. The free flow of development is thus blocked. And the old concepts will, of course, produce the old consequences.

How about the dynamic flow of the creative forces in Germany?

Order, clear borders against arbitrariness and egocentrism as well as reliable structures (healthy Blue) offer an ideal frame for freedom (Orange). Bureaucracy, means too much of Blue order, grows through detailed control of the society and blind sets of rules. For example to create a business in Germany is still highly complicated and hindered by endless rules and laws.

Freedom and prosperity (Orange) offer an ideal frame for social equality and for an enlargement of humanity toward valuing feelings, sympathy with all beings and care for nature and environment (Green).

In these days and years we are—not only in Germany, but internationally—in the phase of the decline and too-much-pathology of Orange. The unrestrained freedom of market, money and capital, of humans, who live and move in these structures promoting their behaviour and protecting them from being responsible for their acts, brings now whole states to the edge of financial ruin, creates huge environmental disasters like the climate change, the oil plague in the gulf of Mexico, and now also in China, or in the dramatic effect of smog on human health—these are only some examples.

Equality of course does not mean the same for everyone:



“For the sake of justice everyone of you gets the same task: Climb that tree!”

Equality means for example, equal rights, abolition of social privileges and many subsidies for lobbies to power, sharing society’s resources among all, liberating humans from greed and dogma.

Needed: Integral Leadership and Natural Design

The current cultural Shift from Orange to Green and its opening to even the next level of existence—Yellow—requires integral leadership or as we say, Second Tier Leadership (see also the graphics of SDi in this issue). It is about a metaperspective of the big evolutionary streams in a society and an understanding of what to create and shape and what to leave for natural development and emergence.

What does natural development mean?

It is about a paradox: Natural development by creation. We call it Natural Design. Concretion is an emerging creative force, as integral philosopher Jean Gebser already stressed. It means for example, instead of focussing on ideologies and abstract concepts look exactly at what is and ask the people, who need to be able to develop to their best possibilities. Then give them space and facilities to create their living conditions for themselves. In other words, identify what is needed to guarantee the necessary frame and order for living together. Specify as little as possible in order not to hinder the free flow of evolution by detailed control and subsidies in structures and institutions that block the flow.

Some Points for Concretion

A new political communication culture could change the whole climate in the society. The coach of the national football team, Joachim Löw, emphasized as a central factor for success, respect for each other! Wouldn't that be a very helpful approach for the political class too? The constant mutual accusations and finger pointing are only a caricature of that what once was meant with the system of parliamentary democracy.

What a huge push in creativity and released energy would arise, if the parties started exploring their interactions with each other. Instead of ritualized competitive fights and the boring rituals of finding the hair in the soup, they might work out solutions in a playful competition for the best outcome for society. It would also be a pleasure if they would recall that they are elected to serve the society, not to serve their own pocket and power.

Any democratic party disposes of its own potentials and is obliged to be committed to certain basic values that are essential for the society.

The Christian Democrats—CDU/CSU—under Merkel have some big integration challenges on their agenda: East and West Germany, the relationships among German and immigrant fellow citizens, modern and complementary medicine in the health service—instead of one-sided service for the lobby of the pharmaceutical industry, health insurance schemes and state organisations of the physicians, cuts in conjunction with opening society for the change that wants to occur—to name only some. As a traditional party of order they could play an important role to encourage a new higher purpose in the society and to expel excesses of freedom without responsibility with laws and other measures. Conservative thinking prevails as an essential creative force preserving the values and structures that give the necessary ordinal frame to the society for development.

The Free Liberals—FDP—have liberalism and freedom as central values. In other words they value less bureaucracy, tax simplification, and the search for subsidy traps. These would be extremely helpful for the challenges ahead and this is also expected from them when they are elected.

The Social Democrats—SPD—stand for social justice. Yet, instead of celebrating the endless energy-robbing and outdated ritual of wage fights, they would have a helpful role to investigate new concepts for an economic world with more social justice, for example the concept of guaranteed basic income.

The Greens would have a big job to use ecology as a creative force beyond educating people and asking for more laws. An excellent example is the innovative concepts of Braungart and McDonough, known as “Cradle to Cradle” in which they indicate new ecological nutrient cycles. In other countries, for example the Netherlands, their concepts, copied from nature, are already assumed and widely put in practice.

The Left would now have a chance—heck, even the Dalai Lama says, he is Marxist!—to put more constructive solutions for a fairer society in the centre of its politics, by taking responsibility for the society instead of playing victim.

In the present crisis a huge momentum lies in using the necessary budget cuts for opening society for more justice, autonomy of the citizens and sustainability. Examples would be the cut of subsidies, which would bring billions back for the state. These would include subsidies for coal mining, for agrarian and food export in developing countries that ruin the local farmers there, reining in the controlling of people’s private decisions with money, going ahead in the direction of one European army instead of national armies, a project, which by the way is very popular, etc.

Steps toward a life affirming future are needed instead of looking with the old narrow lenses of how to save money by cutting achievements and thus getting by through the crisis. Seeing money as the primary and often the only management tool gets increasingly dangerous since it builds up structural pressure that often can be avoided by a single person, since he or she knows better. We see it in the current tragedy around the Love Parade in Duisburg or the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico where security was ignored in favour of profit, resulting in considerable damage for many humans, animals and nature.

The creation concept of Natural Design emphasizes the need and the elegance of changing life conditions instead of looking for culprits and trying to educate people. A higher consciousness which acts in respect and esteem for itself and others emerges naturally, if it finds a frame of order and structure instead of pressure in which it can unfold its potentials and where its responsibility is required. That’s the challenge!

Visions in Action Needed

Alas, these are few guidelines for the design of future development. One can expect that a government show at least a clear direction for its politics. Sooner or later the political parties will have to become partners with all social creative forces. According to the study of German Identity every third German is ready to engage for the society—not necessarily for the present course, but rather to change it. Clear orientation and visions, no final state, are required for a process of seeing Germany as an intelligent adaptive being in creation.

The pragmatism of Angela Merkel might be a good starting point for innovations since she feels less obliged to ideologies. If she sees some high potential way, she might be ready to go ahead. The politics of the smallest common denominator, however, is no longer helpful in times like these and already has caused quite a lot of damage in the government coalition.

Angela Merkel would probably have to decide on developing a vision for her Chancellery that contains more than increased prosperity, education and climate protection, as she describes it. Her emphasis for reforms currently, however, basically focuses more on the international arena. Reasons for this may be found in the present political climate of the local parties and of her own, where a brief look triggers depression. Of course, it is also very uncertain how far her own party might follow her on a courageous course. She tried this several times and failed. In the beginning of 2010 she said: “We need new thinking! Yes! We wait. No, we can’t wait!”

We wish that she would find her courage again. In this accumulation of crisis that she is confronted with more guidance by spirit becomes urgent. She has what it takes.

One more word to the new Federal President and his project of a Think Tank for Germany. We would prefer something more like a Wisdom Council. We have a lot of skill in thinking in Germany. Combining wisdom, inspiration and power, bringing together people with CAPI (Coalescent Authority, Power and Influence) and persons with visions and metaperspectives who can initiate projects and concepts from the vision through the steps of realisation, might be a strong dynamic for a cultural shift.

A lot could be done.

In the program of our Center for Human Emergence—Germany, Austria, Switzerland—we wrote down what motivates and moves us:

We are in the middle of a worldwide process which requires a deep change of our identity, our thinking, feeling and action. Many feel that we need new impulses, new perspectives and new paradigms for another being together in the global village...Our most important visions are now:

- A Cosmopolitan Europe that preserves and appreciates its variety and grows together, integrating to a bigger whole.
- An everyday culture where respect is called for all people, rights walk along with responsibility and co-creation is encouraged and challenged.
- Prospering enterprises that are aware of their huge creative power, understanding it as responsibility to create new standards in the economic life and feel responsible for creating a life affirming cultural sphere in their region.
- An education system that aligns the different abilities and needs of children and youngsters and promotes the joy of lifelong learning.
- A health care system that adapts itself with sustainable effect to prevention, uses the most modern medical achievements as well as complementary attempts and understands in its health care institutions, that body, mind and soul are a unity involved in every healing process.

In fact, quite another huge paradigm shift is on the move now. The late Clare W. Graves, former Professor at Union College, New York, and inspirer of Spiral Dynamics, has, out of his research, forecasted a quantum leap in human evolution. It's already happening for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Modern science, as old wisdom traditions did it for thousands of years, now opens a perspective on our world that shows how we are deeply connected with each other and creators of our reality. And furthermore, concepts and methods are given literally into our hands to integrate this new perspective in our everyday life in order to re-make ourselves and the world to become more healthy, whole and holy. To mention only one example among many, the research of the cell biologist Bruce Lipton as well as the new arising energy-medicine will, with certainty, change dramatically the whole health care system.

What resources in ourselves and in our world! We might use them with care and respect instead of exploiting them through short sighted and narrow egocentric motives. This means leadership to shape minds and hearts, with institutions and structures to open to the best possibilities of humans. Germany might develop this openness for the new world that emerges in front of our eyes. Our politics might provide enough space and the economy may come up with huge possibilities to serve the world with innovative and healthy products.

In addition, Germany has looked like maybe no other country in the Western world at its crimes in the past, has dealt with them and has taken the consequences. This experience might help us be more open for the now emerging developmental streams.

About the Author

Dorothea F. Zimmer is the co-founder and CEO of the Center for Human Emergence Germany-Austria-Switzerland, a certified Trainer of Spiral Dynamics integral, a coach and consultant in SDi, Human Potentials and Energy Healing, and author of many books and articles. <http://www.humanemergence.org/germany/html>