Social Holons: Exploring the pulsation of consciousness arising as individual and collective, part and whole.
“The Basic Moral Intuition [is] namely: protect and promote the greatest depth for the greatest span.

This ...does not say, act to protect and promote ONLY depth, or only the highest memes--not only would that represent less than 2% of the world's population, it overlooks the fact that the junior memes are components of the senior, and thus to ignore the junior is to kill the senior.

Nor does it say to protect and promote ONLY span, or only the lowest common denominator, because without the senior memes, the juniors loose much significance..”

-- Ken Wilber
Ground value

“Every holon, just as it is, is a perfect expression of Emptiness, a radiant gesture of the Divine.”

Intrinsic value

“Every holon has intrinsic value, or the value of its own particular wholeness, its own particular depth

Extrinsic value

“But, every holon is not only a whole, it is also a part. And as a part, it has value for others... So, as a part, each holon has extrinsic value, instrumental value... because it is an instrumental part of so many other wholes.”
- Value as a whole individual

- Value as part of a group
Rights and responsibilities are inherent aspects of the fact that every holon is a whole/part.

One’s wholeness is a birthright:

“As a whole, a holon has rights which express its relative autonomy. Rights express the conditions for the intrinsic value of a holon to exist, the conditions necessary to sustain its wholeness, sustain its agency, sustain its depth.”

One’s responsibility to others is essential:

“But, further, each holon is also a part of some other whole(s), and as a part, it has responsibilities to the maintenance of that whole. Responsibilities are simply a description of the conditions that any holon must meet in order to be part of the whole. If it doesn’t, it won’t sustain its communions, cultural and functional fit.”
- Value as a whole individual and *rights* to your expression of that.

- Value as part of a group and *responsibilities* to that group.
These tensions live in our bodies and souls, and we hang in the balance.

My legs will trample the values and cultures that will not encourage development.

My heart feels for the people in my community, state, nation, continent, and the whole world. I want us to have a better life and live in peace and do well in entrepreneurship.
Can we bring greater consciousness to this?

- How can we afford all individuals the right to their own wholeness (unobstructed, un-tethered),...

- ...while also attending to their responsibility to the groups of which they are a part?

- How does the social holon weigh on individuals and influence them...

- ...and can (and how can) individuals at later stages act as strange attractors for the whole?
Greater depth, more significant (since it has increased in perspectivism)

Lesser depth, more fundamental (shared, common, universal)
Individuals are themselves whole/parts. There isn’t just one thing going on, but rather a great non-linearity is present.

The ‘Talk’, the ‘Walk’ and the ‘Shadow’ can be separate lines or combinations of lines.

Centre of Gravity - **Amber**

Centre of Gravity - **Orange**

Centre of Gravity - **Green**

Integral Without Borders - Gail Hochachka with diagrams from Paul van Schaik - Jan 13th, 2012
And if that wasn’t already complicated….!
What happens when those complex individuals come together to form a social group?

- The social centre of gravity (scog) or dominant mode of discourse (dmd) is made up of the ‘average’ altitude of the group members.

- Thus the make up of social centre of gravity will vary among groups and will change over time as membership changes or members transform/translate.

- These diagrams show the make-up of social centre of gravity for different groups. While they all have a center of gravity that is amber, they are very different.

- Every individual is embedded in this social nest, thus every individual stage is interpenetrated with the social center of gravity.
How does the individual and the social group relate?

The social discourse we are immersed in exert energy upon us in at least three ways...

1. Earlier stages (although they pulled us up at one point) now they pull us down.

2. Later stages lay down an emergent stage, is felt to be more ‘significant’, and holds a later discourse to which all previous stages tend to (must?) find ways to align.

3. Even later stages we can’t yet see are, on the one hand, alluring for reasons that are unknown to us, but on the other hand, they can also be confusing, since we can’t ‘see’ them and can thus easily dismiss them.
The earlier stages....

- are heavier because they are more fundamental, are older, carry archetypal information for us all.
- They also provide comfort, belonging, familiarity; this is where you go for tradition, to be with someone who’s known you a time, to connect with what is common and shared.
- They act as **ballast** for the whole spiral.
- They pull upon youngsters to the social center of gravity, but then weigh upon and place restrictions around individuals that begin to grow beyond.
- Their power is in the known, familiar, traditional, and the earlier voices in you.
The later stages...

- Are more significant because they carry greater depth.
- They are “lighter” with more possibility for true creativity (their grooves are less deep, with faint traces of footprints having gone before).
- Yet for that reason, they carry great responsibility.
- Their power is in their depth, perspectivism, and inclusivity.
- They act as strange attractors for the whole spiral.
- Gradually they influence the dominant mode of discourse and earlier stages tend to align to them.
The stages we can’t yet see (or be)...

- They too carry an energy, a pull, a luminosity we can’t even name.
- Although they can easily be misunderstood, dismissed, or disregarded.
- How will you know when you are dismissing the evolutionary ground you can’t yet see?
- How can you stay attuned to these potentials that haven’t yet emerged?
Nigeria: population 167 million
Individual action-logics at the end of year one...
...in a very different social center of gravity.
(the following slides depict animistic, magical, tribal and mythic-traditional expressions, all of which are ‘pulling’ on individuals at the leading edge).
Sometimes we aligned well though this leadership program (perhaps most of the time, given the good feedback we consistently got from participants). But, sometimes we didn’t. The following two slides show how a misalignment occurred with some of the integral coaching practices that were given to participants, as well as a third slide showing the spaces the One Sky team provided for people to work out how these could better align.
Coaching practice 1:
Every day you are to dance for yourself (ideally alone in your room).

Coaching practice 2:
You are to stand in a posture that will help you become more energized and stable.
This was seen to be too orange (modern level of consciousness) for the amber (traditional) social center of gravity.

This was seen to be too magenta (magic level of consciousness) for the amber (traditional) social center of gravity.
One Sky Workshopping how the practices could align better with the culture and social center of gravity, particularly how the practices could be held in such a way to not go against their religions (Christian or Muslim).
One of the only contentious and difficult issues that arose over the three year leadership program was how these leaders could hold the tension between their religion and the secular discourse of international development. Creating space to work out a *post-secular spirituality* became something we addressed (and embodied) continually. Here, to practice skills in conflict resolution, we went into the difficult question on faith in a secularized global discourse.

Example 1: Reckoning with the downward pull of the social centre of gravity on individuals.
Those leaders must deal with the pull of the social centre of gravity downwards, they are simultaneously leading with new perspectives and values in their country. The next set of slides depict this in the area of good governance. As a new social discourse forms around modern, secular values, earlier stages have to align with them in one way or another.

Example 2: Laying down a more mature discourse to which earlier stages must find ways to align.
GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHT GROUP PRESENTS CONSTITUENCY STAKEHOLDER'S DIALOGUE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FORWARD Elected REPS
The breakthrough initiative on good governance began small, but soon grew into larger and larger audiences.
Example 3: Sensing a later stage of consciousness, and then finding ways to align with that from one’s own perspective and meaning-making.
Climate change is something rural Salvadorans hear all the time, without any scientific understanding of what it actually means. In this project, using photo voice local people could discern what it means in their day to day lives, from their own perspectives, and in relationship with their own cultural expressions and social centre of gravity, depicted in the following photos.
1.) How do you relate with social holons that exert a downward pull?

How do you maintain your own wholeness and depth as your birthright, while also sustaining your responsibility to your relations?
2.) How do you honor your own insights and depth, and hold the higher ground of a mature consciousness?

Do you notice when you give in and give up? What about the moments where you articulate greater depth... can you feel the room shift? you can feel the subtle alignment of earlier stages towards a higher, deeper truth occur?
3.) What about the stages we can’t yet see (or be)...

How do you stay curious with that which you can’t yet see? How do you know when you are legitimately passing over an earlier expression or when you are tragically dismissing a later one, simply because you can’t recognize it yet?
Later Stages: Tender responsibility; great truthfulness.

"New structures in consciousness are being laid down right now - they are just faint footprints on the face of the cosmos. So your behavior to the extent that you live up to your highest, is actually creating structures that future humanity will inhabit. Therefore choose your acts very, very carefully. Make sure that the next thing that you say comes from your highest self.”

Ken Wilber

"Because, you see, the alarming fact is that any realization of depth carries a terrible burden: Those who are allowed to see are simultaneously saddled with the obligation to communicate that vision in no uncertain terms: that is the bargain."

Collected Works of Ken Wilber, Vol. VIII, One Taste, p. 311
"And therefore, all of those for whom authentic transformation has deeply unseated their souls must, I believe, wrestle with the profound moral obligation to shout from the heart -perhaps quietly and gently, with tears of reluctance; perhaps with fierce fire and angry wisdom; perhaps with slow and careful analysis; perhaps by unshakable public example -but authenticity always and absolutely carries a demand and duty: you must speak out, to the best of your ability, and shake the spiritual tree, and shine your headlights into the eyes of the complacent. You must let that radical realization rumble through your veins and rattle those around you. ... And this is truly a terrible burden, a horrible burden, because in any case there is no room for timidity. The fact that you might be wrong is simply no excuse: You might be right in your communication, and you might be wrong, but that does not matter. What does matter, as Kierkegaard so rudely reminded us, is that only by investing and speaking your vision with passion, can the truth, one way or another, fully penetrate the reluctance of the world. If you are right, or if you are wrong, it is only your passion that will force either to be discovered. It is your duty to promote that discovery -either way - and therefore it is your duty to speak your truth with whatever passion and courage you can find in your heart. You must shout, in whatever way you can."

-- One Taste , p. 35f