

Global Report 2013

GLOBAL DYNAMICS AT THE DAWN OF 2013.

Lionel F. Stapley and Chrissie Rickman.

Abstract.

On or about 9th January 2013, under the guidance and coordination of OPUS, Listening Posts aimed at providing a snapshot of the societal dynamics of each country at the dawn of 2013, were held in twenty seven different countries around the world (Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada (2 Reports), Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy (3 Reports), Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, South Africa (2 Reports), Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, & UK . These were all reported in a similar format (see 'Britain and the World at the Dawn of 2003' in *Organizational & Social Dynamics* 3 (1): 165-169), researched and analysed by the authors, to produce this Global Report.

The authors self-defined their task as follows. To research and analyse the National Reports with a view to:

- (a) Identify common themes arising within the twenty eight Reports;
- (b) Explore relationships between themes and to reduce these down to major or dominant themes;
- (c) Collate supporting information from the Reports for analysis of these themes;
and
- (d) Formulate hypotheses arising there from.

For the sake of brevity this Report will only document the major interrelated themes identified, followed by an analysis and hypotheses regarding each.

Key Words.

Listening Posts, Global Dynamics, Societal Dynamics, Social Defences Against Anxiety.

Introduction.

The current experiences of members of societies throughout the world is that they are still struggling to make sense of their world; are fragmented and fleeing to the comparative safety of individualism; unable to form any collective response; a tendency to regressing to the paranoid schizoid position with splitting, aggressive and violent responses; and lacking in almost any form of community. There is a strong dependency on political leaders who are experienced as incapable of providing the required responses, possibly because they also do not know how to react to the problems facing nation states. A result is a loss of trust and sense of being failed by politicians and the unmet dependency is located in the family or in local initiatives.

There is now a realisation that the changes are of such a depth and breadth that piecemeal change is not going to be sufficient. The experience is that this period continues to be one of formative changes in the structure of the world economy. For example, we see an increasing influence of organisational bodies such as the G10 and the G20; the World Economic Forum; the International Monetary Fund; and the World Bank. There is a

realisation that such matters as the so-called ‘profit shifting’ by multi-national companies can only be dealt with at a global level, national governments cannot resolve this problem in isolation. A further example is the rapid development of new markets particularly those of India and China who are becoming more influential and powerful by the day. We might also consider the frequent take overs of organisations that now frequently become multi-national. There are also visible changes in the shape of societies and the framework of world governance. For example, immigration and mobility of labour changes the religious and cultural make-up of societies; at the same time the world is in our living room twenty four hours a day and it is impossible to ignore what is happening in Algeria, Syria, China or wherever. In terms of world governance all nations cannot fail to be affected by developments in the Arab countries and the likely outcomes of the massive changes occurring there. The rise of China as the predicted largest economy in the world and a move away from the dollar to a possible new reserve currency, simply adds to the complexity.

Some see their societies, as currently structured, unfit for purpose in this rapidly changing and increasingly global environment. It would seem that in regard to many issues national governance is incapable of resolution of those issues in isolation. The effect of this is that the established national governance which has been effective for hundreds of years is now, in large part, considered to be obsolete. There can be little doubt that coming to an acceptance of this position is going to be a difficult task. When we talk of changing the basic values and traditions of a national society, let alone political control, there is bound to be massive resistance. Perhaps the biggest task confronting societies is that the new way of life does involve an understanding that certain matters can only be dealt with by a system of world governance. When this is achieved, it seems likely that more satisfactory means of national governance will be developed.

As a result of global change and the economic crisis, members of societies experience profound (disorganising) levels of insecurity and uncertainty about the future. There is a perceived threat to survival (existence, identity, tradition), which evokes very primitive fears and dependency needs for “parental” containment, recognition and guidance. At a societal level, people look to authority (government, the church, employers, the police, health services and so forth) to meet these needs. Not only do these institutions no longer offer the desired (fantasized) leadership, they are also experienced as corrupt and abusive of the people they are there to represent and protect. This results in further confusion, helplessness, despair, and sometimes trauma. For members of societies the threat of fragmentation and annihilation becomes reality as we witness ordinary people losing their livelihoods, being forced to live on the streets, governments killing citizens who oppose them and so forth. Twenty four seven broadcasting on the Internet and TV exposes all members of societies to these images. These changes are mirrored in the patterns of relating between parents and children and in the dynamic relationship between members of societies’ internal child-like states and the hopes and fears for their offspring; the next generation. Relationships are ambivalent: This experience is further developed below in the first Analysis and Hypothesis –*Generational change and hopes and fears for children.*

Because of the experience of extreme fragmentation disconnectedness and loss of community, members of societies are left in a highly depressed and hopeless situation.

Attempts to relieve themselves of this unbearable experience has left them dependent and looking to institutional leadership for relief from their pain. However, doubtless because political and other leaders are sharing the same experiences as others in society, dependency needs are not met. A result is that members of society deal with this by splitting whereby they blame and scapegoat those they feel have failed them: the politicians. They accuse politicians of corruption and they lose trust in them. They regard politicians as being obsolete and self-interested. A result is fragmentation and a loss of society or community and a dire experience of a lack of group attachment. Old values are no longer valid, and the old institutions, especially the political are now regarded as largely obsolete. The only remaining institution that meets the needs of members of society is the family (as above). This experience is further developed below in the second Analysis and Hypothesis – ***Failure of Political Leadership: Loss of Community.***

Members of societies are becoming aware that existing institutions are irrelevant, not fit for purpose, obsolete, and not capable of meeting current or future needs. There is a growing realisation that the changes taking place, formative changes in the structure of the world economy, the shape of societies, and the framework of world governance are of such a depth and breadth that piecemeal change is not sufficient. Trying to prop up the existing institutions is experienced as betrayal and is met with a total lack of trust. However, there appears to be at least a beginning of a belief that what is happening really is a totally new way of living, one based on a global perspective. At this time nation states are still operating in an individual manner as if they can, for example, control the structure of the world economy in isolation when members of society are well aware of the global nature of these problems. This results in experiences of hopelessness and helplessness knowing that national governments can but have a limited impact on the matters affecting them. What is required is a mammoth task that involves the development of new institutions capable of operating effectively in a new global configuration. It is felt that until the political institutions change we shall not see the re-emergence of local communities. Once a new system of world governance has been developed nation states will come together to develop new cultures, new values and new ways of life that exist within the wider system. This experience is further developed below in the third Analysis and Hypothesis – ***Towards Global and National Governance.***

These three interlinked and progressive Hypotheses follow:

Analysis and Hypothesis 1. Generational change and hopes and fears for children.

Changes at a societal level are mirrored in the patterns of relating between parents and children and in the dynamic relationship between members of societies' internal child-like states and the hopes and fears for their offspring; the next generation. Relationships are ambivalent: Some members of society are having more children, perhaps reflecting hope for the future; others are having less reporting lifestyle choices and concern about affordability. In some societies the young people are leaving to pursue work and other new possibilities. Some members of society report trying to over-protect and hold on to young people in fear of the hostile world “out there”. For some the family still represents a secure base, for others perhaps a retreat. Some members of societies try and control

children in order to alive keep tradition in a world where increasingly young people are already living in a new era. Some members of society relate to their children as “friends” on Facebook; others report distance and alienation from a generation they don’t understand (or like). Young people are born into a technical world and relate to each other through computers and phones. Some members of society fear the loss of “real” relating and the dangers of withdrawal into a fantasy world; others see the possibilities of better albeit different forms of communication.

In Previous Listening Posts, young people appeared to hold the role for society of expressing anger, rebellion, disillusionment, disregard for authority and so forth. Now members of societies appear to be taking back some of these projections and expressing their own anger and lack of faith traditional institutions. This shift increases anxiety but also increases the potential for adult thinking and discussion as opposed to withdrawal. It is still hard for members of society to own the imperfect parenting, envy, hatred and abuse of children at a societal level, which attracts media frenzy when attributed to celebrities, priests, teachers and so forth. This is reflected in the following extracts from the National Reports:

Analysis 1.

Argentina:

In other times, our parents and grandparents built a "to-come" as immigrants, now there is a deterioration, not only in the quality of life, but also in what is going to come, ranging from magical realism and utter hopelessness... Because of the abdication of much of society to take responsibility, messianic leadership takes hold, and people does not intervene with fear generated by this messianic leadership... Because of the bid for power and the exercise of naked power the state is disappearing. Who has more power in the struggle between parents and children when children seek independence?... If the president is a woman identified as the mother, in this case the absent mother, who abandons the children growth through their acts of assistance, treats the citizenship as babies who cannot work and go out to earn a living, creating isolation and dependence on it, instead of providing a social space as a place for the free development of their independence.

Australia:

We’ve almost named every system we depend on – lack of trust in some of the most basic systems in society... You have to cook for yourself, think for yourself... Another social institution that can’t be trusted [the Catholic Church’s response to sexual abuse by priests]. A father who is angry with his son who goes home at 4.00pm to look after his kids instead of [staying at work] learning about the business... how fast kids are growing up....years 5 & 6 to be taught business management – do we want our kids to grow up like us? Guiding children...what do I say – thinking about the next generation asking “Why didn’t you tell me about ‘that man’ [Hitler]?”

Bulgaria:

Dependency in [work] relations, is relatively high ... The ‘vertical’ world view operates as an organizing model and values within each of us. For example we tend to stay longer within particularly close proximity, in a satellite-like relationships with particular

patriarchal authority figures, unchallenged by nobody, least by us – sort of ‘patriarchs’, founding fathers-like figures. Rigidity is being observed within some families where, sometimes, based on strong patriarchal values, presented as traditions children are over-controlled and as if insulated from some spontaneous contact with their peer environment and from society as a whole, whereas society itself is being experienced as menacing and potentially dangerous.

Canada:

(1) The very success of anti-aging methods in North America where the new 70 is 50 suggests that hope has been that the new results would fend off the inevitable deterioration and death for very long times. The result has been a system that ignores “normal” and has for a time treated aging itself as a disease.

(2) Because of the ever-present real and imagined virtual space, and ‘those’ who live in and persistently animate the space, and ‘those’ who do less so, but are non-the-less effected by it, members of society worry about the deployment of self as evacuation without responsibility, as attachment without intimacy, as affect without thought. This results in members of society having profound concerns about the forming of ‘a self’, a self that appears to transit an array of performative spaces addictively without being its own origin. Has the self disappeared into an unconscious fantasy, thought to be real but not.

Chile:

The crisis is the weakening of the mores, and there arises a questioning of the meaning of life itself, there is a lack of certainty regarding the traditions that provide confidence and safety... Lack of confidence affects everyday life... Justice, the Church, and Education; institutions that lose credibility and put people, youngsters, and families in a situation of confusion as to how to proceed and live within society... Education is a hot issue for society: how to form the new generations with justice, fairness, and quality. Currently, education in Chile is disastrous, particularly higher education, where private universities discredit tertiary education through a management geared to entrepreneurial profit with little or no concern for the quality of their students’ learning. The adolescent society may continue to long for and enjoy the fantasy that development is close. However, enjoyment is possible insofar as assuming adulthood is projected to infinity.

Denmark:

We emasculate young people by servicing them too much and in that way we underpin both the process of individuation and the breakdown of the role as citizens. At the same time we envy the young people their flexibility and the fact that they are competent and very good at getting hold of new fields and engaging in new communities. Envy is combined with bad conscience because so much talent might be wasted when the young well-educated people are kept out of jobs.

Estonia:

Young Estonians often seek to study abroad and find jobs from outside Estonia. There are not enough jobs for everyone in Estonia. The young adults experience incoherence in their feelings. Their parents are aging and need to be taken care for, but at the same time

to get along by themselves, find a job elsewhere (Australia, America, Finland, etc.). All at the same time, one must live independently and be “near – and that isn’t possible... At the same time one must appreciate that what has been done in the past and still break away from it.

The young adults feel guilty about wanting to leave the past behind, for example the old traditions in working and doing things. Aged people then feel that their work is not appreciated and are irritated by it. There is a gap seen between these two generations.

Faroe Islands:

Younger and younger children are seeking help because they aren’t thriving or are otherwise unwell. The authorities are trying to get the public schools to solve all these problems, but the teachers are drowning in an ever increasing workload, so the public schools doesn’t see themselves as capable of tackling these tasks. There are loads of issues are taboo in the Faroe Islands, amongst others are sexual abuse of children and alcohol abuse in families with children, and the Faroese are disposed towards trying to get rid of the problems by ignoring them. Even when everyone knows of sexual or alcohol abuse no one dares speak up. There is a strong wish that people would take more responsibility, dare express their thoughts and openly say that they were the ones who blew the whistle. People also miss public discussions and reflections about the issues that are taboo.

Finland:

The participants also shared their experiences with situations that had produced happiness and feelings of well-being when they began to react differently. One mother told that, when she decided to accept her child’s playing and also Play Station use rather than forbidding the noise that ensued, she began to sleep peacefully “next to the noise”.

France:

Large number of births ... People are bringing different children into a world that is already very different, and will be even more different in the future. This procreation does not signal reproduction... Digital natives” are very different from previous generations... They have never known a world without internet... They aren’t a generation born “with” all things digital, they live “in” the new technologies... They are in the here and now (or more accurately, “heres”, because they are simultaneously in the real and the virtual world)... They have jobs that previous generations hadn’t even imagined... They have become our contacts (even if some of them are still our students), whereas they used to be our children... They will soon be in power but will certainly have to face resistance from people “who don’t get it” but are already in place... Finance and money have become the norm for most of them... This raises questions of transmission: what will we bequeath to them? What will be of use to them? The worrying strangeness of a future that is already present... there is a magic expectation: the new generation will change everything... It also echoes the depressive position in relation to their aggression towards these young generations who are potentially bringing “salvation”.

Germany:

In spite of financial incentives for families less and less children are born in Germany. This disinclination may possibly have its roots in the public climate towards children: children as a disturbance.

Greece:

Perhaps there was an indirect acknowledgment of corruption being very much related to this unresolved confusion that belonged to childhood. The belongings that were threatened were reminiscent of children's rivalry over toys, where there does not seem to be an adult able to reassure and to facilitate growth. A child in us, who never understood why "State" behaved the way "he" did and who grew up and gradually adopted "State's" odd behaviour.

Golden Dawn was doing "good marketing". As a member highlighted, they spoke as if they referred to 5 year olds: "we nationalise everything, all for the people, come and eat". Their way also seemed to refer to 5 year olds; "the tough dad who comes and clears up". Members expressed their dilemmas. Not wanting to be blamed, but struggling to take up responsibility, to be with the winners or to be with the losers? To leave the country or to find a place where they felt they belonged? To be responsible by getting involved in politics or to withdraw? The person or the group?

Holland:

Society exerts a lot of pressure on the individual to conform. Conforming to the norm in order to achieve, in order to look a certain way, in order to have a paying job. It evokes the desire not to trouble oneself with these things, instead just to be, not to have to. A desire for the world of a cherished, young child who is still at home and does not yet need to go to school... The conviction to want to be yourself, to do it your own way arouses a fear of being left standing alone.

India:

Because of rampant consumerism and greed to have more, the members of the society empower themselves to take what they WANT and it results tricky behavior and injustice to others... People in the society do not know where to limit themselves and there are no consequences to these violent behaviors... Because of lack of parenting or inadequate parenting, the members of the society lack awareness of managing emotions, resulting in expression of aggression in violent ways... Displacement of anger... an act of inappropriate displacement of anger can lead to brutal murder or rape... Because of failure of the government/primary system, the members of the society take up the authority of moral policing, and it results in misuse of power by the masses.

Ireland:

Were we envious? Is that why we followed the path we did? The envy of the old of the young, the envy that blocked the older generation from parenting the younger generation in a responsible way. But a member pointed out how their children were so enjoying what now again are the advantages of privilege such as university. A sense of living in parallel universes of privilege and disadvantage and the unacceptable nature of knowing that some people never had a chance

Israel:

This was not a fear of individual survival but rather survival of the whole. This also contained the fear of losing one's way which is more of an internal threat... there was a link made between fear of survival and loss of identity to increasing fragmentation and tribalism

Italy (South):

The model of the extended family, a large system and with strong social links, as meant and experienced by our grandparents is no longer. Today our children cannot make this experience... One gets to being 30/35 year old without the autonomy to buy a house, have children and starting a family. The risk to think only in short terms has been expressed through a metaphor "I feel as we are on a frozen lake in which you jump from one place to the other without knowing what will be the outcome of the jump". It is as if thinking the future is constrained by time. This is experienced also in the kind of employment available: short term contracts.

Italy (North):

While facing the 'scorfani' (awful beasts with cold blood), we feel 'orfani' (orphans that are realizing that the padroni – the owners and industrial leaders – are not padri – fathers)... The recognition of paternity as a major theme is both obvious and somewhat inarticulate... The children are sent out in a world felt as unsafe and destructive... On the other hand, we are guilty – the group says – because we have not been able to think about the present situation and to worry about our children's future. We have not been able to protect them, without understanding (let alone fighting) what was occurring in the world.

Italy (Central):

Parents, educators and executives in the room avoided mentioning their own authority in their roles and spoke about the poor Italian education system as a given and not something that was created. The discussion felt repetitive, characterized by long monologues with more complaints, like disappointment with democracy as being another empty shell. "I can park where I want" was quoted as an interpretation and understanding of democracy, reflecting an unsophisticated, selfishly fragmented society, sharing no responsibility for educating its young generations.

Lithuania:

For Lithuania that was one of most successful Olympic Games, we got new talent – Ruta Meilutyte, swimmer. What does it gave for us, for our country? What Olympic Games has inside, that all world, all people around the word is gathering together without any politic, wars, religion, etc... Why? What is in it what we're not using for everyday? If everybody – from down Africa, to Far East, everybody from around the world can understand principle of Olympic spirit? So the world would be better, same time continue compete, but reaching for more, for improvement.

What Lithuanians would be if we could capture that feeling after our "gold girl" gets another Gold medal and all world admits us, as small but strong nation (although everybody remembers our history and being annexed for 50 years). Then maybe our country could be as young not well known worldwide, but leader in some field, and bring

some positive ‘surprise’ to the world, which later would lead us to more satisfaction and better life to every inhabitant.

Norway:

The precariousness of individual life was elaborated upon and there was a rich collection of possible threats. There was, however, scant mention of potential feelings of guilt and shame resulting from Norwegian affluence and complacency in times of crisis elsewhere... It was stated that the overall affluence actually may exacerbate negative differences. Examples used were children feeling they have to lie about their origin in order to gain acceptance in the Norwegian “in crowd”.

Poland:

There is a recurring need for drawing happiness from motherhood and experiencing the peace connected to that period of life. People are more and more eager to find their own roots, traditions, bring back to life old customs, as if they wanted to rebuild the relation with universe, which has been violated. They seem to wish to maintain the continuity of humanity, justify the meaning of their actions by referring to what was in the past. They discover their own place/role/function in small communities, which they are part of. Communities for which they act and want to be proud of, and thanks to which, they create their own identity and sense of security... There is a greater sense of responsibility for the generations to come.

Portugal:

A further concern of the participants that was addressed was the huge demographic crisis that Portugal is facing at the present moment. For the past decades the number of births has been continuously dropping and in 2012 there was almost 10% less births than in the previous year which had already been an all-time low... increasingly more are individuals deciding to have only one child in order to be able to continue supporting the life style acquired... Such fact was mentioned as something very worrying and a participant commented on his fears that the future of the Portuguese population might be endangered. It was also mentioned how besides the demographic crisis, there is also a huge increase of emigration of young people who find it increasingly hard to find work in Portugal.

Serbia:

The participants were wondering how a country as small as ours could integrate into the world thoughts, world flow

Somebody said that he had a feeling as if information reached us belatedly, regardless of the internet and apparent connectedness. It seemed as if an additional effort was needed to even think... Voice of an individual / group / small nation – is it heard and by whom... Destructive forces within ourselves and others – how they hinder us from reflection... How to appease personal identity with the national identity in multicultural society... The young are tired of the burden of the past and are wondering how to find optimism

South Africa, Pretoria:

The youth seem to dissociate from the ‘old’ Mandela / rainbow nation discourse. Their interests are in electronics and social media, their self-development, careers and employment in meaningful jobs to sustain their daily and future lives. From the outside (neighbouring African countries) South Africa is seen positively - almost like a paradise where life is good. We often deflect this feedback by comparing ourselves to affluent countries (e.g. the US, UK, Europe) as if we can’t associate with our positive parts.

South Africa, Port Elizabeth:

The weight of the world weighs me down... These are the words of a song and express how several members feel especially there are frequent headlines of parents killing their own children. This happens so frequently that it seems to be the norm... Fear about what is going to happen and where it will all end as well as fears for our own children and grand children

Spain:

We are like a society of sheep... conformist and paralyzed by fear... There is a great feeling of anger and rage but it is very difficult to see it... The family as a social structure is containing the most critical situations. Without the support of the family many people could be out in the streets ready for violence with nothing to lose... The general impression is that there is no way to manage the angry feelings within the society, as if it could be that we can’t permit ourselves or that it is something extremely dangerous.

Sweden:

A lecturer in journalism perceived that many young students seem to struggle with (over)adapting in order to survive. One “must get your foot in the door – and do whatever it takes in order to get in”! One woman said that we move between different worlds – how do they fit together? The next contribution concerned the displacement of the generation gap. What did becoming “friends” with one’s parents entail? The group considered the meaning of the word “friend” that has one meaning on Facebook and another in reality. One woman described how the nature of her contact with her adult offspring was more of an equal “friendship” than that she had experienced as possible with her own parents.

Switzerland:

Because the world seems scary, overwhelming and complex people retreat into safe havens of familiarity to escape the constant stream of bad news and to recharge.

UK:

The Saville enquiry launched but we end up with a sideshow, which distracts us from the reality of child abuse... Saville was an abuser until he died. This was not confined to the 70’s - shocking that he didn’t ever stop targeting vulnerable people... I’m supervising someone who works in child protection. She is being blamed for a child being abused - rather than the parent responsible... There is displacement - more and more... it’s much more difficult now for institutions to deny. Saville is a corporate problem, which cannot be denied.

Hypothesis 1:

Because the scale of global change is so great and affects all aspects of societal life, members of societies experience profound levels of insecurity, which evoke feelings of fear, abandonment and anger, which is mirrored in the patterns of relating between parents and children. Relationships are ambivalent: Children and young people represent the future, which is perceived as alien, uncertain and frightening: Parents fear they have not been able to protect young people or prepare them but young people are finding their own way. Older people fear being left behind as young people embrace the new world. The future is already present and there is also a magic expectation: the new generation will change everything.

Analysis and Hypothesis 2 Failure of Political Leadership: Loss of Community.

Analysis 2.

The overall experience is one of hopelessness and helplessness. This is a situation where members of societies find it impossible to adjust their own needs to those of the actual world. Feelings of deprivation and distress are felt to be at a saturation point. Constant change leads to a loss of identity and members of societies are unable to voice their opinions. There is a concern that members of societies are emotionally damaged to such an extent that there is great anger and rage to the extent that they ask, 'why is there no revolt?' Such is the transition of values that members of societies are afraid to speak freely; they hardly know what to think and fear that they are being manipulated by politicians. The experience is that if you accept responsibility you are likely to be open to attack. Members of societies are paranoid but are not able to react through the medium of virtual space. Activity on line, brings about a low level of responsibility and decision making, no one is taking responsibility for themselves. It all seems foreign and incomprehensible, although we are relating to familiar things.

Members of societies experience global, economic and political relations to be at a tipping point. By comparison, this crisis is experienced as bigger than that of post-World War II, where there was a loss of social bonds. Here these bonds are experienced as much weaker and perhaps even lost. There is a loss of belonging and an absence of community. It is as if societies are fragmenting into even smaller groups. The much sought after attachment to community groups is unfulfilled and there is virtually no community involvement as in the past. It is experienced as a scary world that is so overwhelming and complex that members of societies retreat to safe havens of familiarity.

In all this members of societies become greatly dependent on political and institutional leaders but find their needs unmet. The experience is one of lack of governmental leadership; and feelings of a rift between politicians and people. There is a perceived lack of action by politicians. A result of this failure of leadership is that there is no interest in leadership: members of society have given up. Society is experienced as wobbling and members of society are seduced and bought by promises of politicians. The lack of political support and ensuing loss of attachment needs simply serves as confirmation of abusive politicians. This is reflected in the following extracts from the National Reports:

Argentina:

People are afraid to express their opinions freely, some for fear of reprisals, others because they do not feel heard by the government / political leaders, having to accept the distortion of unrealistic statistics and generating violence in the social climate. This creates a crisis of values: a sharp drop in the historical and traditional ones vs. dissatisfaction with the new ones emerging, clearly marking a transition period where uncertainty reigns.

Australia:

Because we are experiencing a breaking down of traditional authority arising from the emergence of a knowledge society, there is profound disillusionment with the reliability of authority, leading to mistrust and experiences of betrayal by institutions. Members of society feel scared, they experience latent anger and feelings of helplessness and some actively take these out on people who are different from 'us'. As a result, people are banding together with 'like-minded' people at a political-local level and communicating outside formal media sources. This is a defensive response of counter-dependency and a regression to adolescent-like states of mind.

Bulgaria:

The first impression is that social roles explored are, with very few exceptions, those of employees. Dependency, implicit in these relations, is relatively high and almost all of the participants experience themselves as the weaker part in these relationships. The 'employee' side of the social experience is manifest whereas the civil side of Bulgarian social experience remains, as a rule, in obscurity. The second impression is that despite of the relative high degree of responsibility of the roles explored their performers feel isolated and or misunderstood by the overall leadership of the organizations.

Canada:

(1) The internet is a potential but repetitive space. The question of how to characterize consciousness now in the midst of felt pain, in a time when society is paranoid but can't treat its psychosis, we cannot but look toward virtual space and how it used. However, this dense and abject space and our interaction with it, make it difficult to grasp the situation we are in and how we may characterize it now. What then happens for us in a social sphere that cannot acknowledge its difficulties, in which we are unable to recognize our 'selves' and 'others', our mental states. Does it then become easier to tolerate the self and other as thoughtless? With so much uncertainty, what happens to our mind when those thoughts come closer?

(2) The main focus was on how difficult it has been to change things in the face of highly consolidated economic and political power, the entrenchment of social and professional interests, and the increasingly fragmented ideologies. The re-election of Obama seemed to many a case of a weak and relatively impotent president triumphing over an excessively radical opponent. There was not much hope that Obama would be able to achieve very much of an agenda that could result in reducing inequalities, improving the environment, or even reducing gun violence in the United States – despite the Newtown shootings. Others felt that there have been some stirrings of change. There appear to be

some seedlings of citizen based reaction to such major forces as the large and self-serving corporations, and powerful professional lobbies.

Chile:

The crisis of confidence corrodes relationships between individuals and with groups, the sense of belonging is reduced to those who are closest and who guarantee loyalty. When extended relationships are no longer trusted, people find refuge in redemptive fantasies that presage the return of the Messiah who will establish a social order where trust will predominate among men in a natural way. The lack of trust fragments life, there is no communication between people, no-one listens to others, and there is a lack of interest in getting to know the reality of others

Denmark:

We meet bad conscience concerning doing too little for the community. It is hard to reach out and make a real change. The well-off middle-class (represented by the participants at The Listening Post Meeting) has enough social capital to create and fulfill their role and take care of family members suffering due to the crisis. We belong to the privileged and some fear a riot from the suppressed or distressed by the crisis, others worry how to get through to help these.

Estonia:

The relationship of an individual in regards to the surrounding world is changing from both ends. The grand system affects the individual considerably and creates new options for the individual, albeit forcefully. That makes the individual start to develop a new relationship to the grand system – the change is to more obey and live by the system, adapting to it instead of fighting against.

Faroe Islands:

A great rift between politicians and the people. Political decisions are made behind closed doors without public discussion and with disregard for expert advice. The politicians refuse to partake in public discussions and technical arguments are disregarded. People feels disheartened and experience a distance to the politicians, whom they suspect are getting away with corrupting the society. People are becoming indifferent towards the political leadership and are losing faith in the democratic process.

Finland:

In the new forms of everyday life, we are coming to the point at which it has become impossible for us to adjust our own needs, desires, and requirements to the diversity, fragmentation, and unfamiliar realities of the external world. The body's memory does not lie; instead it leads us to the edge, threatening our essence (memory and thought do not function, it is impossible to sleep even though rest is needed, our interaction with others decreases). As the attempts of social systems, safety networks, and organizations to win only create more chaos, but do not approach humanity, we have begun to take care of ourselves by making our own individual choices and decisions.

France:

The current situation relates to the worrying strangeness (*Unheimlich*) of the classroom, colleagues, workplaces, everyone's everyday behaviour. These situations, which are experienced as foreign and incomprehensible although they correspond to familiar things, cause deep anxiety in the people currently "in power" (parents, professors, managers and directors, etc).

These people are losing their points of reference; their knowledge no longer provides a satisfactory, useful support.

Germany:

Simultaneously there is a desire to belong. This may be evident in the tendency towards adaptation and conformity. This is shown in the preference of simplistic polarities such as right / wrong, good / evil. When someone accepts responsibility, he becomes visible and open to attack, risks may be encountered and there may be failure.

Greece:

At some point a member wondered whether we loved Greece and another added the question of whether Greece loves us. This is reminiscent of the avoidant-disorganised attachment towards the authority figure, which precipitates abuse. The child behaving like that then is hard to receive care by any other caregiver, who therefore fails to provide for that child what they possibly were prepared to offer. This is then experienced by the child as confirmation of the assumption that the parental figure is unreliable and unloving.

Holland:

The economic and financial crises, the changes in the global economic and political relations, sustainability problems, social justice...there comes a tipping point. This raises uncertainty and a strong awareness of the importance of the economic basis of our existence.

It evokes feelings of uncertainty, fuelled by memories of the frugal, post-war years and the stories from our parents about hunger during WWII. In society there are already new forms visible.

India:

Because of the failure of the government primary system, members of society take up the authority of moral policing, and it results in misuse of power. The inadequacy of the primary social system reflects on those who take up authority of 'moral policing' in turn forcing their own views, values and morals on to the masses.

Ireland:

A pervading sense of despair and distress was in the group and a member brought it back to the personal and asked if the situation we are living through in Ireland feels just too big to understand, where we buy a new house and then can't sell the house we have. "It feels like saturation point".

Israel:

Faced with the fear of survival and loss of identity Israeli society is holding onto multiple identities and is increasingly fragmenting and entrenching itself into ever smaller groupings. The two alternative extremes of integration: a Jewish theocratic state versus a single secular state which includes the Palestinian diaspora was deemed too awful. There was a fear of civil war and expulsion or a swallowing up of the Jewish population of Israel. The consequences of increasing fragmentation include a loss of ideology and a loss of feelings of belonging which extend to the outside world. More inward thinking gives rise to more nationalistic tendencies.

Italy:

(South). We are experiencing a crisis that is bigger than the one experienced by the post War World II generation. Community links existed then and from those it was possible to rebuild societies. We have experienced a model of society where individualistic drives have been strong and successful. This model was based on the absence of community links. Thus social links and bonds are weak or lost and it is harder to think of and take risk as a “together”. We have experienced individually the wealth before the crisis as well as we are individually experiencing the current crisis.

(North). The group is intrigued by the difficulties of developing and organizing the thinking processes. The formulation of a personal judgement is getting more and more complicated, up to the point that we hardly know what we really think. Amount and speed of data flux is such that we are in great trouble when we try to master it. On the other hand, we know that the system of information-construction and propagation is also manipulated and manipulative.

(Central). Bion’s basic assumption of pairing accounts for the lack of interest in leadership and for the strong projection towards the future and next generations. Leaders like Berlusconi or President Obama, both mentioned briefly, are disappointing for not fulfilling the fantasy of providing the ultimately meaningful society and security. There is a general hope in the future yet no curiosity is expressed, no relating to one another, and no investment in exploring connection that can generate the desired social fabric.

Lithuania:

Discussion was more about local elections and why society has “wobbling” effect – every 4 years going from political right to sharp left and back after 4 years. Why people are so easy bought by promises of politician’s? Processes of elections were discussed and momentum of believing in better future status quo, that is now. Is that programmed in all human nations to live on hope?

Norway:

Faced with an awareness of an increasingly complex and volatile wider society, as well as their own perceived vulnerability, members of an affluent and outwardly complacent Norwegian society withdraw from this complexity. This may result in a drift towards an individualized society where concerns with individual life, spending and consuming take priority. But this retreat is becoming ever more precarious as the crisis outside “the Norwegian bubble” is becoming more and more difficult to ignore, and as rifts in the

Norwegian complacency become more apparent. So the retreat is not complete, it is episodic and characterized by unrest.

Poland:

Thanks to general availability of network we have access to unlimited amount of information. We also have a tool to spread information ourselves. However, the lack of direct confrontation with the recipients makes it impossible for us to evaluate the influence of our on-line activity on the off-line reality. On-line activity involves low level of responsibility and decision-making. We can declare opinions and express our interest on-line, which at the same time, does not have to be reflected by our actions and decisions in everyday life. Our disapproval concerning on-line matters is not addressed to an individual. We express it impersonally and direct it towards a form/society .

Portugal:

During the Listening Post the first theme to emerge regarded how in other countries the persons seem to be very hopeful, even when faced with several difficulties. In Portugal, on the other hand, everyone seems to be feeling hopeless with the continuous impacts, on everyday life, of the economic crisis, although there still isn't present a generalized feeling that we must take responsibility, as a society, for the impact the crisis had on our country.

Serbia:

In these times of constant change it became very difficult to find and keep one's identity; therefore in this constant struggle in which our own voice was not heard by others, it became habitual to turn a deaf ear to other voices, even to such extent that when we are given opportunity to reflect together and speak freely to one another, many are unable to find words or their voice.

South Africa:

The idealisation of the rainbow nation is under attack, hope is minimised and fear and disappointment reign. The country feels emotionally damaged, fragmented, lost and de-authorised to create a contained space for all. Citizens have introjected a 'life is bad' attitude while the country is used as an object of envy in the projections from other African countries.

Spain:

The question that seems to be in the mind of us in society is, how it can be possible that with almost six millions of unemployed people why we are not in revolt? There is a great feeling of anger and rage but it is very difficult to see it. The family as a social structure is containing the most critical situations. Without the support of the family many people could be out in the streets ready for violence with nothing to lose.

Sweden:

The increased transparency leads us to experience ourselves as more visible. It becomes both easier and more difficult to control and govern the picture of ourselves we offer the world around us. It affects our feeling of own identity, feeling authentic, being affirmed

and receiving or taking up space. One way of coping with this can be to make oneself as visible as possible, e.g. through social media and in TV-programmes focusing upon the life of the private individual. Another alternative is to create a zone with its own manageable borders.

Switzerland:

Because the world seems scary, overwhelming and complex people retreat into safe havens of familiarity to escape the constant stream of bad news and to recharge. “On ne fait pas grand choses” is an expression on the lips of many to express a sense of hunkering down, of reigning in expectations and getting back to basics –good health, family, a sense of stability that can come from everyday living if one is reasonable as a reaction to the lack of stability in evidence in the external world.

UK:

Because it is too frightening to learn from experience/history members of society displace their feelings and activities on current distractions with the result that we are already dead (- so get over it!!).

Hypothesis 2:

Because of the changes arising from the mainly global influences members of societies experience the loss of traditions, values and identities both at an individual and societal level. There is a loss of belonging, attachment and community and a result is dependence on politicians who they rely on to lead them out of this distressing situation. Possibly because the experiences of politicians are much the same as members of societies, they are unable to meet the dependency needs of societies; instead, they are seen to increase regulation and introduce ‘society pleasing’ initiatives few of which achieve any real difference. Faced with unmet dependency and ensuing loss of attachment, simply serves to confirm the view that politicians are incompetent. Members of societies then give up hope in any form of leadership but they are then left with overwhelming experiences which they respond to by retreating to safe havens, mainly the family

Analysis and Hypothesis 3. Towards Global and National Governance.

Analysis 3.

Following from Hypothesis two, change leaves members of societies feeling confused, helpless, and hopeless and not wanting to listen while at the same time feeling that they are not informed about global events that they do not understand. There is a loss of personal and national identity and members of societies are stuck and unable to contemplate change. There is a lack of containment, and it is suggested that globalisation is creating increased tribalism and fundamentalism. While not knowing what to do there is a realisation that the old traditions are lost and serve no useful purpose in today’s environment. Members of societies turn their backs on old communities such as the church, the unions and politics. This crumbling of social movements, institutions and

political parties leaves a huge void in people's lives and it is suggested that rediscovering society could tip the balance. At the same time, this may simply be a desire to go back to old traditional ways of life as a means of escaping from the current environment.

Societal life and new progressive global views and practices force individuals to operate in a wider domain. There is a realisation that part of the global community system is outside the control of members of societies. The experience is one of fear and hopelessness and that governments are unable to take care of everyone. There is a crisis around the quality of institutions, and all seems lost when planning for the future. Regarding such social and cultural change there is a lack of responsible fathers (politicians). The wider global society is experienced as threatening and politicians are experienced as being incompetent to deal with these matters, they are therefore treated with a lack of respect, disdain and contempt. There is considered to be no political action regarding significant pressing problems at a global level. This results in a negative cycle whereby members of societies seek action from politicians, they in turn develop policies aimed at avoiding unpleasantness, this leads to disillusion, followed by a desire to crucify politicians. This repeating cycle leads to a loss of a sense of meaning and identity which is blamed on politicians. A result is that projections of members of societies own helplessness and incompetence are located in politicians. A knock on effect is that the ensuing insecurity of politicians leads to greater regulation. Members of societies blame institutional authority for failure to protect them and in the absence of the desired good authority look to the grassroots community for solutions. Having lost faith in politicians people are beginning to take local initiatives.

There is a growing awareness of current problems in the world and in society: An appreciation that there is an ever more radical change taking place, that there is a lack of control over the future and no understanding by politicians. The failure or inability of politicians to act leaves a gaping hole and a decision vacuum. A highly pertinent question is that of how does the world function? And an acceptance of a global reality only suggests the further question, how does this affect our human needs? At a societal level there is no contact with global matters. Ethical relationships globally are seen as such that members of societies can only act in resistance. The experience is one of being controlled by international lobbies; there is an end of current systems; which results in vulnerability and an experience of manipulation. The experience of any form of relatedness to global governance results in democracy being mocked. It is experienced as a world of open boundaries and shifting alliances that results in navigation of a global process being seen as an impossibility. By way of example, it was said that there is an expiration date for the Netherlands (as it is currently experienced) which can't last much longer. It was realised that traditional attitudes are no longer fit for purpose. Members of societies are experiencing a generation change of expectations and values; at this time we are as if on shifting sands; and when you move on it's not to Europe but to China. This is reflected in the following extracts from the National Reports:

Argentina:

Because of a serious crisis in the representativeness of our leaders and the deterioration in the quality of institutions, citizens feel lost when it comes to planning for the near future. They cannot find identification with a way of life that seemed to be holding so far. In other times, our parents and grandparents built a "to-come" as immigrants, now there is a

deterioration, not only in the quality of life, but also in what is going to come, ranging from magical realism and utter hopelessness.

Australia:

Because we are a local part of a global community, members of society experience their everyday lives as being sped up by systems outside their control, they are saturated with superficial information and feel there is no time to process what is being fed to them as news. Members of society struggle to determine their roles in a global community, feel increasingly vulnerable and blame institutional authority for its failure to protect them. As a result, they look to alternative and informal networks for nourishment and the hope for more nurturing authority that might come from grassroots community.

Bulgaria:

The third impression is that without exception participants in this Listening Post identify themselves as bearers of some new and progressive (more humane) practices and world views manifested by either an increased empathy, better alleviation of some suffering or something thing similar such as better learning of students

Canada:

(1) The discussion began on the eve of the Israel elections with one member's preoccupation with the impossibility of ethical relationality, not just in Israel, but globally, in the face of violent historical conflicts, war and extreme polarizations. The numerous political parties in Israel and clear abuses of power promote various political positionings, factions and power-brokering in which it is impossible to navigate toward ethical relationality. Canada is currently witnessing mass demonstrations from Indigenous communities across the country, in a movement called 'Idle No More', who are challenging the current and historical structures of nation-to-nation sovereignty, alliance and citizen rights. One member commented that this is really the first time in Canadian history that the legacy of colonization, violence and abrogation of entitlements and agreements is being seen and felt to such an extent in the country. But it can only act 'in resistance' towards systems in which there seems to be no capacity for reply.

(2) Technological Innovation and the Impact on Radical Change: There was a strong feeling that we are beginning to see the deeper effects of the computer age. The loss of privacy for individuals because of the growth of Big Data analysis was given as an example as was the capacity for crowd-sourcing because of the emergence of powerful social networking. These two changes have to major reconfiguration of political organization not only in western democracies but through the Middle East, North Africa and much of Asia.

Chile:

The fact that there is greater mass awareness of the problems in the world and in society, has the aggravating factor of generating a great crisis of confidence from which no one knows how to get out because we are programmed to act according to established codes, to contribute to the system's functionality in an orderly and precise manner. Individuals are not prepared to react in the face of something new that perturbs and surprises, of not knowing what to do when the human mind explodes in confusion. The crisis is the

weakening of the mores, and there arises a questioning of the meaning of life itself, there is a lack of certainty regarding the traditions that provide confidence and safety. The crisis of confidence sets forth the need to look for new, different things, to find new dreams, to create new internal and social realities.

Denmark:

We turn our backs to the old communities (the church, the union, government schools) and the role as citizen is changing. We both see more individuation and new communities being created. The responsible citizen who contributes to society is becoming rare. The government tries to appeal to the responsible citizen with slogans like ‘do what you can and take (only) what you need’. The language changes as well, we not only talk about ‘citizens’ in connection with society, we label people: consumers, addicts or simply ‘users’ in a slightly derogative way.

Estonia:

The societal life or the global life forces an individual to widen their operative domain and at the same time make choices on their values. The people begin to understand that the choices and decisions must be done more bravely, because it helps to get a better hold on life. One has to find new ways of living in the present complex world. One way is to live beyond national borders. Then, with the access on Skype and other equipment, a connection to home can be maintained. One learns to live in a diverse world, surrounded by all of its differing values. Unfortunately it brings along the fact that contact between people can decrease.

Faroe Islands:

In spite of, or maybe because of, the stagnation of the political arena, lots of changes are happening among people. People are taking initiative and aren’t waiting for the state to solve their problems. But these initiatives are often met with skeptical appraisals, since no one are expected to take responsibility or speak their mind.

Finland:

Through the examination and expression of their physical conditions and feelings, the participants sought to understand and determine just how this world actually functions, since it does not function with one voice (unanimously), according to no one right model, or an “either-or” ideal. When we realize that we are living in a global reality, are “virtual world citizens”, we are reaching for humane essence. Notwithstanding individual and national differences, people have much in common, for example, the basic needs produced by our evolutionary development and the means with which we express these needs. These similarities offer us the possibility to meet each other’s needs.

France:

Events suggest that an even more radical change is happening today, due to new technologies and globalisation. But the feeling of a lack of control over the future – which is already present through globalisation, information technologies, etc... means that the generations currently in power no longer understand, are no longer willing or able to act (gaping hole, decision vacuum) and the people who will be in charge of the

future (digital natives) are not yet ready (have not yet entered the market, or don't want to do so...)

Germany:

Access to never ending information (Internet...) whose sources are often dubious and impenetrable offers apparent space, yet also brings both insecurity and disorientation. These may be the causes of increasing (bureaucratic) rules and overregulation and ultimately of (violent) infringement of them.

Greece:

Because of the massive and constant changes that are happening in Greece at the moment, people come into contact with that side of themselves that does not understand, feels confused, helpless and hopeless. They chose *not wanting to listen* (to the news) and not to know, while at the same time they feel not listened to and not clearly informed. This makes them project their side that does know the side of them that does not listen onto the government, which knows but withholds, has a hidden plan, which is not for the people's interest and also to the omnipotent parties, which promise a quick fix of this very complicated problem. At the same time people project the contradictory "to listen and to not listen" onto the image of a government not listening and Golden Dawn pulling the government's ear to force them to listen.

Holland:

With confidence we are confronted with the challenges posed by time. These challenges are great, because there is an expiration date stamped on The Netherlands, Inc. It cannot last for much longer. Several organizations and processes are approaching their expiration date. Traditional attitudes about organization and control—the pressure of monitoring and centralized control—no longer fit in these times, they no longer work.

India:

What is in the civil society that is leading to such behaviour? Alternatively, what is missing in the civil society for such things to happen? He answers his question with another question that questions the role of fear in the minds of the members of the „civil society“ or the deterrent. Now what is the meaning of civil society? He goes on to state the examples of law and order in other countries like America that have strict regulations for such acts.

Ireland:

Irish resources and identity around values and a particular knowledge were lost. The Irish come from a peasant class, a colonised society. While we lived in poverty in the 1950s there has been a generation change of values, a generation change of expectations and of what is important in life. And after the boom and bust a wish to reconnect with our values as Irish people was expressed. We have been like shifting sands, we went with the wind. There is now a feeling in Ireland that if you want to move on in your career you don't stay in Ireland, you move on, perhaps not now to Europe but to China.

Israel:

There was a feeling that containment was a fantasy and was breaking down. The Euro zone is weakening and there is increasing forces to split into smaller country groupings whether in Spain or Scotland. These forces are also operating strongly within the former Soviet Union. As a reaction to globalization there is increasing tribalism and fundamentalism. This leads to an increase of self-preoccupation both individually and nationally. This is also strengthening the growth of nationalistic and religious movements across the globe as they call for more separation and fragmentation. Calls of disbanding the Euro zone is but one example of this.

Italy:

(South). We are witnessing the crumbling down of social movements, institutions and political parties. What is similar in this process is the theme of social links. Social links are crumbling in all the spheres of our societal life. It is perceived and expressed the emerging awareness of a time that is no longer and that is gone for good. Members of society are orphans of a “golden age”, e.g. wealth, wellbeing and rights for all. From an age built with a collective spirit for achieving common good (e.g. welfare) to a wild situation in which it is prevalent the idea that individual freedom leads to happiness. Today members of society are orphans of a social system that at the same time reassured and now has led to a form of deprivation. It feels as if only rediscovering forms of the societal can tip the balance.

(North). Trying to summarize: on the one hand, collective guilt feelings for unmet paternal responsibilities; and on the other, social and cultural changes have made more and more difficult to behave and think as responsible fathers. In the background, an open question about the sense of the processes of social change: are they to be seen as good and trustable? or are they not-good and untrustable? The very idea of progress is at stake.

(Central). Democracy is also mocked, and seen as an empty word that is just used so people can act selfishly and do what they want, “in democracy I can do as I like”. There is a strong sense of disillusion from a society that does not live and keep its promises, and finally actually based on raccomandazioni and connections, of mafia style. Can people working far from their home communities be accountable in their roles? Is it a privilege to be living in a world with access to different countries with open boundaries or does that result in fragmentation, isolation of the individuals (even when language is not an issue) and a lack of an understanding and responsible social network?

Lithuania:

And again were discussed that our nation is losing identity, culture, and traditions. As common agreement were agreed that our country is so big to fit a lot of immigrants, so we should be open, but regulate immigration. After it were clear that discussion went to cultural identity, history and values as nation we have (are losing). Can we as individuals or small group have an impact this? Can governments or nations have impact on this? Or this is globalisation processes and they will evolve more and more in future? Is it so negative? Maybe it's positive?

Norway:

Politicians were said to seem to deny the existence of war situations that has significantly affected war veterans in very adverse ways. Thus, when people are shot and tortured it seems cowardly not to accept that a state of war exists. Politicians thus emerge as cowards. Also the lack of content in the way politicians speak was used as an example of their lack of honesty. Another example was failure by politicians to advocate political actions which might strengthen the community and thus secure a viable network for individuals.

Poland:

There is a recurring need for drawing happiness from motherhood and experiencing the peace connected to that period of life. People are more and more eager to find their own roots, traditions, bring back to life old customs, as if they wanted to rebuild the relation with universe, which has been violated. They seem to wish to maintain the continuity of humanity, justify the meaning of their actions by referring to what was in the past. They discover their own place/role/function in small communities, which they are part of. Communities for which they act and want to be proud of, and thanks to which, they create their own identity and sense of security.

Portugal:

There was a social promise, after the Portuguese revolution, that the Government would take care of everyone. As long as everyone behaved properly than they would collect its benefits. And this idea of behaving was equated as not causing any problems or protest. At the present moment when the government is incapable of taking care of everyone, individuals are also unable to take the responsibility in their own hands, which increases the feelings of hopelessness.

Serbia:

Difficulties in appeasing personal identity (who am I) with the national one (where I come from) stem from the atmosphere in which the perception of many of those with whom we want to socially and economically connect in Europe and the world (where I want to be) is that Serbs should be not only accountable, but guilty for almost the entire legacy of the civil wars in the former Yugoslavia. This brings about deep feelings of injustice, pain and sorrow but also hatred and shame towards ourselves and others that extremely polarizes, entrenches and splits the society in two groups – those who are annihilating national identity and those who feel very proud. This polarisation keeps society in a feeling of being stuck, unable to find inner strength for change and for developing meaningful connections.

South Africa:

The new calendar year is testing us to stay focussed and not surrender to the overwhelming negativity and noisiness around crime, poverty, joblessness, corruption and chaos. Many concerned institutions arrange conferences, workshops and seminars about citizens' experiences of burning social, economic, health and educational issues. Yet, things do not seem to move towards action, solution and integration. The state seems to be busy with politics and infighting, and not to giving attention to the needs of the

people. Because of the perception that success is instantaneous, the people vote charismatic people into positions of leadership. When the voters become disillusioned they crucify the leaders

Spain:

We are controlled by international lobbies that are holding a system that is corrupted and perverted. The financial system crisis, the justice and this politic system of representation is showing signals that is coming to an end so the anguish of this systems is being projected to the citizens, that results in paranoid functioning and isolation towards them. The final result is that in society there is a greater sensation of vulnerability, distance, and manipulation of the citizenship that now have to manage, in one side their own desires of destructions and independence towards the system and in the other side the fear of chaos and the violence that this could generate.

Sweden:

Innovations arise in a way that we are unable to control. Old structures are smashed and new ones take their place. The illusion of the large public systems as invincible structures offering protection has been shattered. Even if the reports about catastrophes and misery in the world cause anxiety, they are kept at a distance by the possibility of also focusing upon opportunities and signs of positive development. This opens up the possibility of a type of cautious, balanced optimism regarding the capacity of people, nature and society to transform, find new solutions by taking risks, and invest in what one believes in.

Switzerland:

Living in this complex world filled with “input” from multi-media, the Web as well as people from many different walks of life was said to be challenging. How to differentiate between which inputs to pay attention to? And how to keep up with them all? There was a sense of being “got-at” by technology and with so many electronic forms of contact - email, phone, sms, twitter etc., face-to-face contact was said to suffer due to the endless stream of electronic interruptions.

It also led to a sense of shifting alliances as people associated different parts of their identity in different communities, some face-to-face e.g. neighbours, parents, friends and some more distant e.g. colleagues and even family. their identity in different communities, some face-to-face e.g. neighbours, parents, friends and some more distant e.g. colleagues and even family

UK:

There is a dumbing down in the current situation which means that history is ignored and wisdom from the past is forgotten. Capitalist society tends to isolate us - the individual as consumer - whereas in previous generations people were often members of groups where they could discuss issues together and develop creative solutions to problems faced. This was also true of tribal societies where the oral tradition maintained the sense of tribal continuity and identity. In a global context, without this membership of groups, and the decline in national identity, we can lose our sense of meaning and our potency. It is not yet clear whether virtual groups are able to replicate this opportunity.

Hypothesis 3:

There can be little doubt that coming to an acceptance that the current way of doing things, which has developed over a period of hundreds of years, and is now largely obsolete is going to be a difficult task. Managing change is difficult at the best of times, when it affects the basic values and desired culture of a national society there is bound to be added difficulty. That is the task facing national governments: how to provide the leadership and containment through a process of radical and fundamental change. It seems that there is a growing awareness that there is an even more radical change taking place regarding global matters such as the so called ‘profit shifting’ used by multinational organisations, that can only be dealt with by a system of world governance. When this is achieved, it seems likely that more satisfactory means of national governance will be developed.

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Publication of National Reports.

It is appreciated that readers may be interested in having access to the full National Reports. These have been published on the OPUS Web Site at www.opus.org.uk where they can be found under **Listening Posts**.

Concluding Remarks.

Members of societies are becoming increasingly aware that many irresolvable matters are occurring in the global environment and fail to understand how these matters can be addressed. The continuing threat of Al Qaeda and other similar organisations who far from being defeated seem to be even more involved over a greater geographical area; The Syrian uprising where no one seems capable of unilateral involvement; The nuclear threats of Iran and north Korea; The changes in economic power with India and China and a host of other emerging nations seemingly being capable of superiority in terms of industrial and economic performance; and the increasing influence of various global

organisations; all taken together are adding to the complexity of governing a nation state. More and more decision making seems to be out of the hands of national politicians who are then seen as failing to provide dependent members of societies with leadership. As has been shown above, members of societies confront these problems in a childlike way. It would seem that environmental necessity at a global level is taking us towards a new way of life that is perhaps dominated by a form of global governance. It also seems likely that when this is achieved, a more satisfactory means of national governance that provides for established customs, values and cultures will be developed. As has been said before, this period of world history truly is one of formative changes in the structure of the world economy, the shape of societies, and the framework of world governance. Who could possibly predict what will happen next? However, we can continue to explore and try to understand current dynamics in societies throughout the world.