

A New Economic Paradigm inspired by Gross National Happiness?

ICT and the *Global GDP Debate*

H.M. Jigme Khesar Wangchuck, King of Bhutan

“I feel that there must be some convergence among nations on the idea of what the primary objective of development and progress should be – something Gross National Happiness seeks to bring about”

- First International Conference on Gross National Happiness, Thimphu, Bhutan, February 2004.

GNH3

Third International Conference on Gross
National Happiness

22-28 November 2007

Nongkhai and Bangkok, Thailand

Farmers, Community leaders, Interfaith
representatives, YOUTH, Local, national
and international Government policy
makers, Academics, NGO's, Business
managers and Social entrepreneurs













Gross National Happiness (GNH)

Two perspectives:

- National philosophy of Bhutan
- 'Initiator' concept towards global transformation

Hypothesis:

Paradigm shift related to global societal development

- 'Economic growth' as the dominating paradigm of 'progress' is increasingly under challenge
- Growth of GDP is unsustainable and **does not lead to more happiness**
- We are in a process of **Redefining Progress and Global Transformation**
- Needed: Multi-stakeholder, multi-cultural and interdisciplinary as well as **participatory public support networks for an emerging new development paradigm**

Asia-Europe ICT research and cooperation

- ICT sector a **decisive steering mechanism towards global transformation** (example: presidential elections in USA)
- Need for an alternative perspective beyond mainstream throat-cutting competition between Europe and India/China
- The unique **case of Bhutan**, its status as a small sovereign state and a Least Developed Country (LDC in UN terminology), squeezed in between China and India, provides a counter-cultural source of **inspiration towards a new global development paradigm**
- **Inspired Asia-Europe ICT cooperation can serve as the axis of new global and participatory transformation networks**

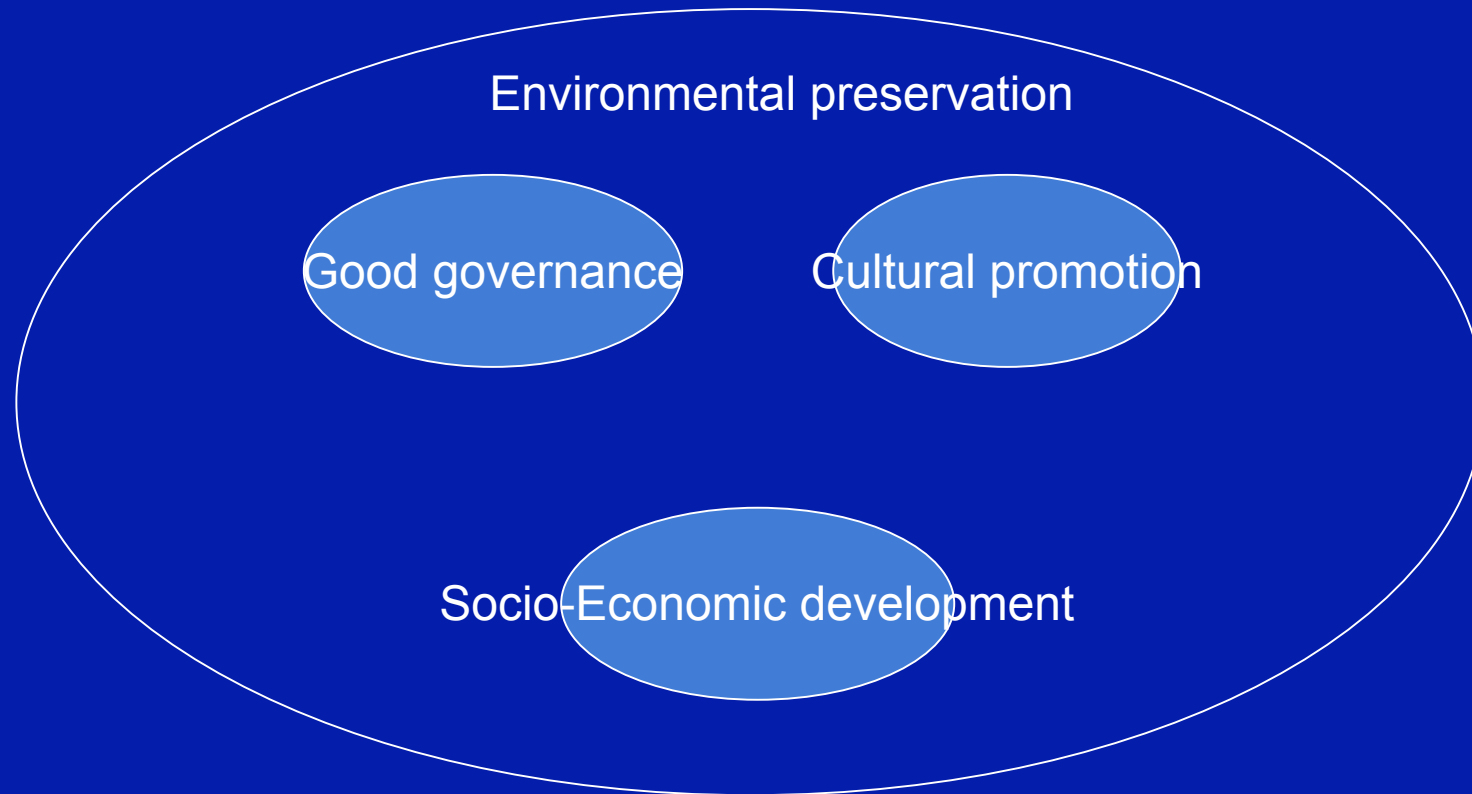
Exercise: 'GNH movement' from a global perspective

Starting point: **the Four Pillars of GNH**

- **Cultural promotion**
- **Good Governance**
- **Equitable economic development**
- **Environmental protection**

The GNH Pillars

The Four Pillars in perspective



Some dimensions of GNH

- Philosophic/religious/spiritual
- Historic
 - Evolution of Science
 - Socio-Political development
- Psychology/Human development
- Geographic
- Environmental

Philosophy/religion/spirituality

- **A Buddhist perspective**
- Interfaith perspective



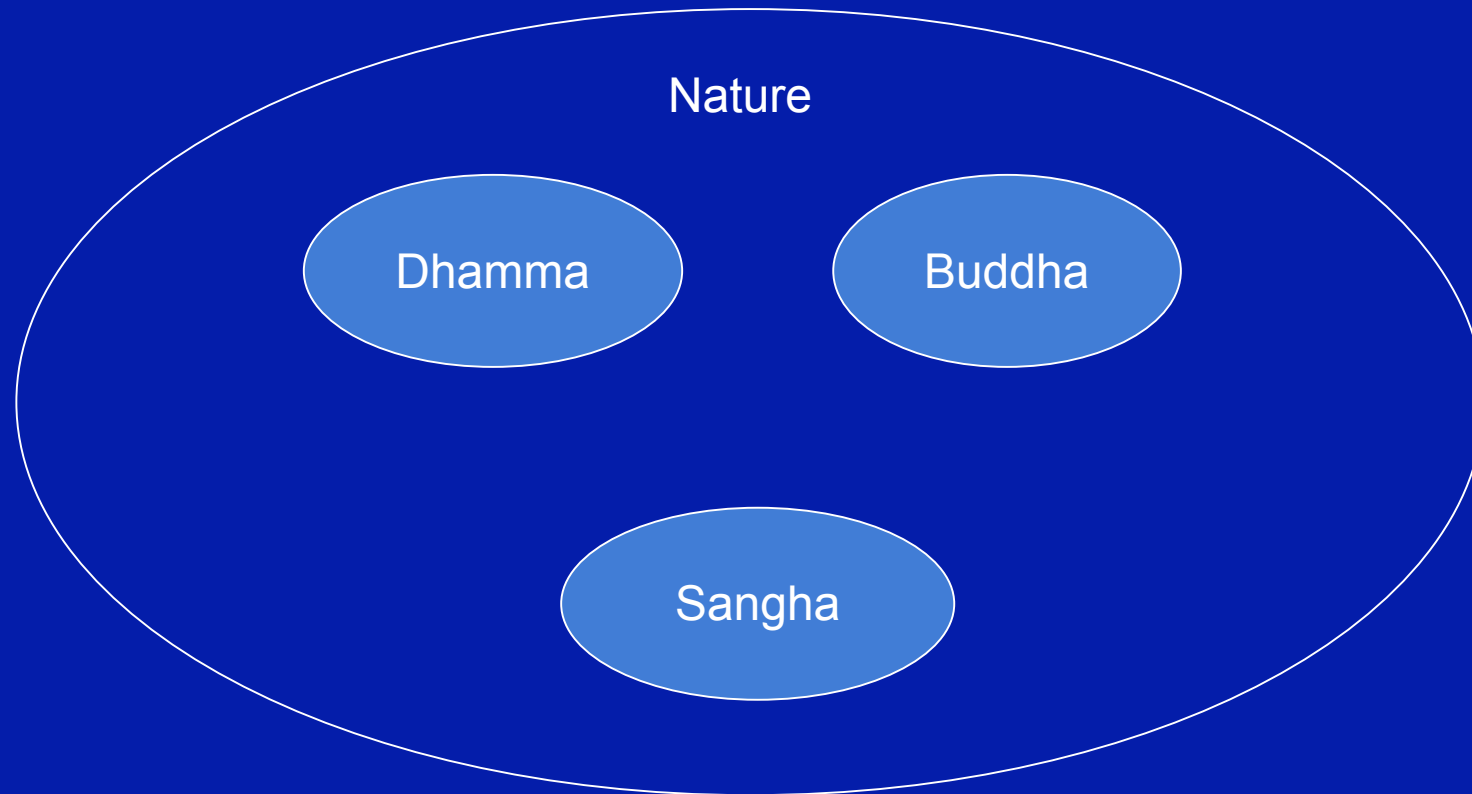
- Secular perspective: Happiness research

Buddhist perspective

- Principle of Interdependence, Interconnectedness, Co-dependent origination or the holistic world view.
 - **The whole is more than the sum of the parts**
 - **Awareness leads to Vision**
- Triratna, Three Refuges, Three Jewels
 - **Buddha**
 - **Dhamma**
 - **Sangha**

Exploring correlations by intuitive thinking

- Buddhist concept of Three Jewels



Historic perspective: science

- ICT sector
 - 1543 Copernican Revolution: separation of Science and Religion
 - Divide between Spirit and Matter
 - Reductionist materialism
 - Industrial Revolution
 - Extreme utilitarian perspective to serve Self Interest
- Happiness research: Messages from a New Science
- In Buddhism: Contemplative Science

Questions on Science

- Interpretation of '**Gross**' National Happiness
 - Is the aggregate of sum-totaled individual happiness scores fully representing collective happiness fulfillment?
 - Averages hide inequalities as in GDP
 - How can we apply the holistic principle in statistics methodology

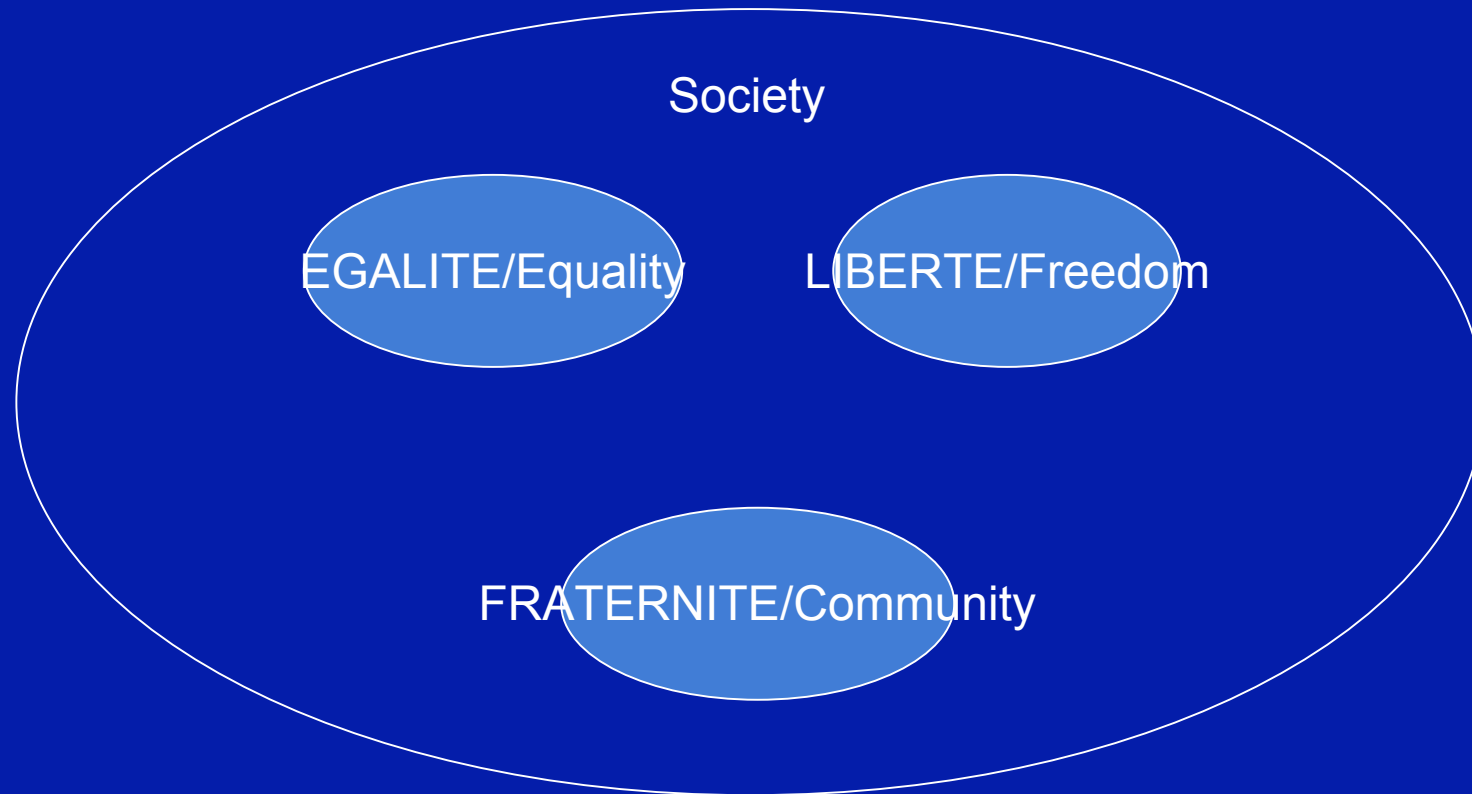
Historic perspective: socio-political evolution

- Bhutan – Switzerland
- Thailand – France
 - French Revolution 1789: Republic
 - Revolution in Thailand 1932: Constitutional Monarchy
 - 2008: First democratic elections in Bhutan

Can formal democracy alone bring about sustainable development?

Transformation in Europe 1789

- The French Revolution



Human development/psychology

- Maslow: Hierarchy of basic human needs and self realization
- Happiness and poverty
- Cause and effect: is happiness a result or a 'drive'?
- Happiness = capability



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'GNH movement' in geographic and sociological perspective

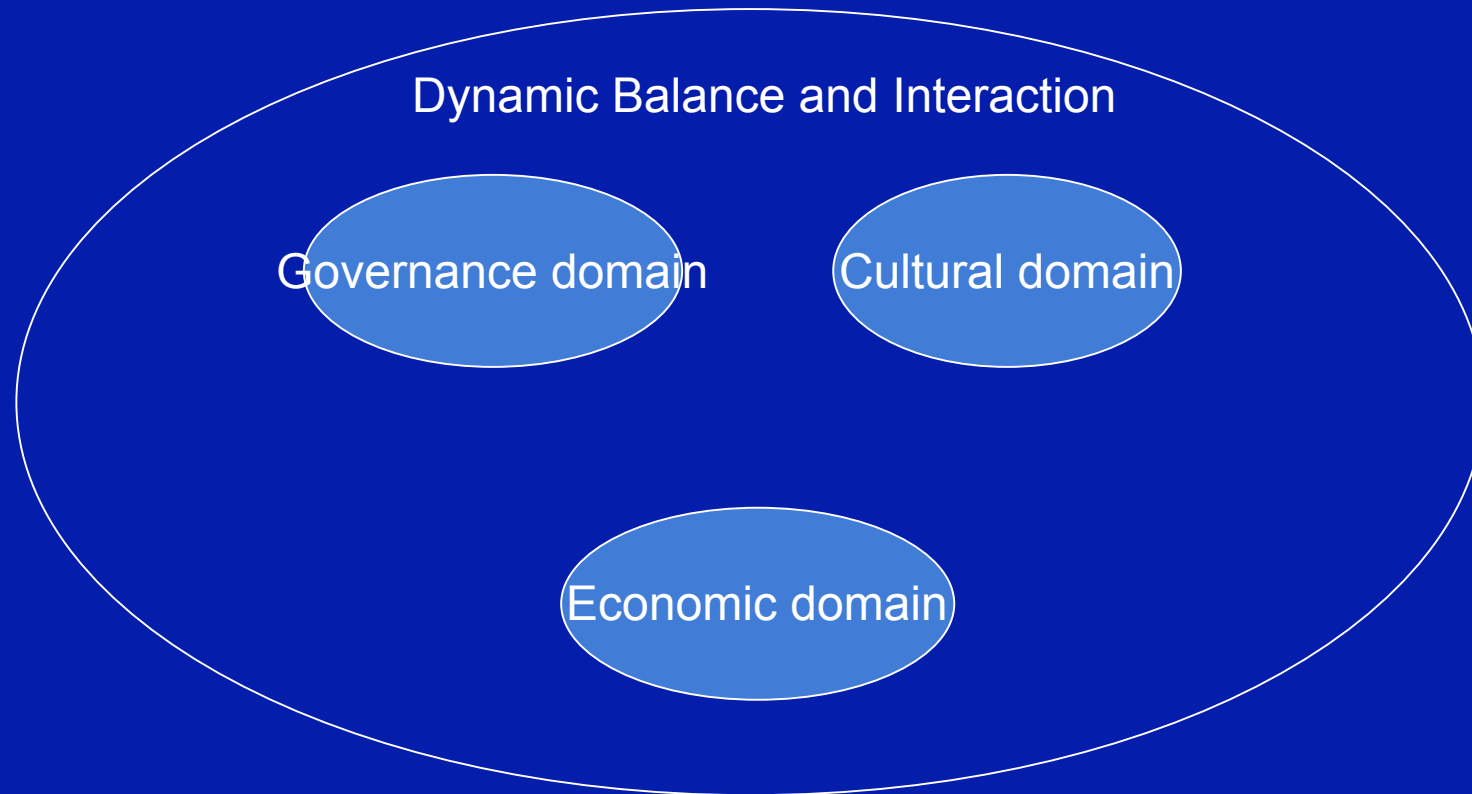
- 'GNH' or 'Quality of Life', 'Wellbeing' of communities, regions, nations, corporations, sectors and of humanity

Environmental perspective

- Global warming: confirmation of interdependence principle, within a materialistic world view.
- Save our Forests, Save our Rivers
- Food security, Renewable Energy and Organic Agriculture: Planet Diversity
- Cost-benefit analysis not yet accurate

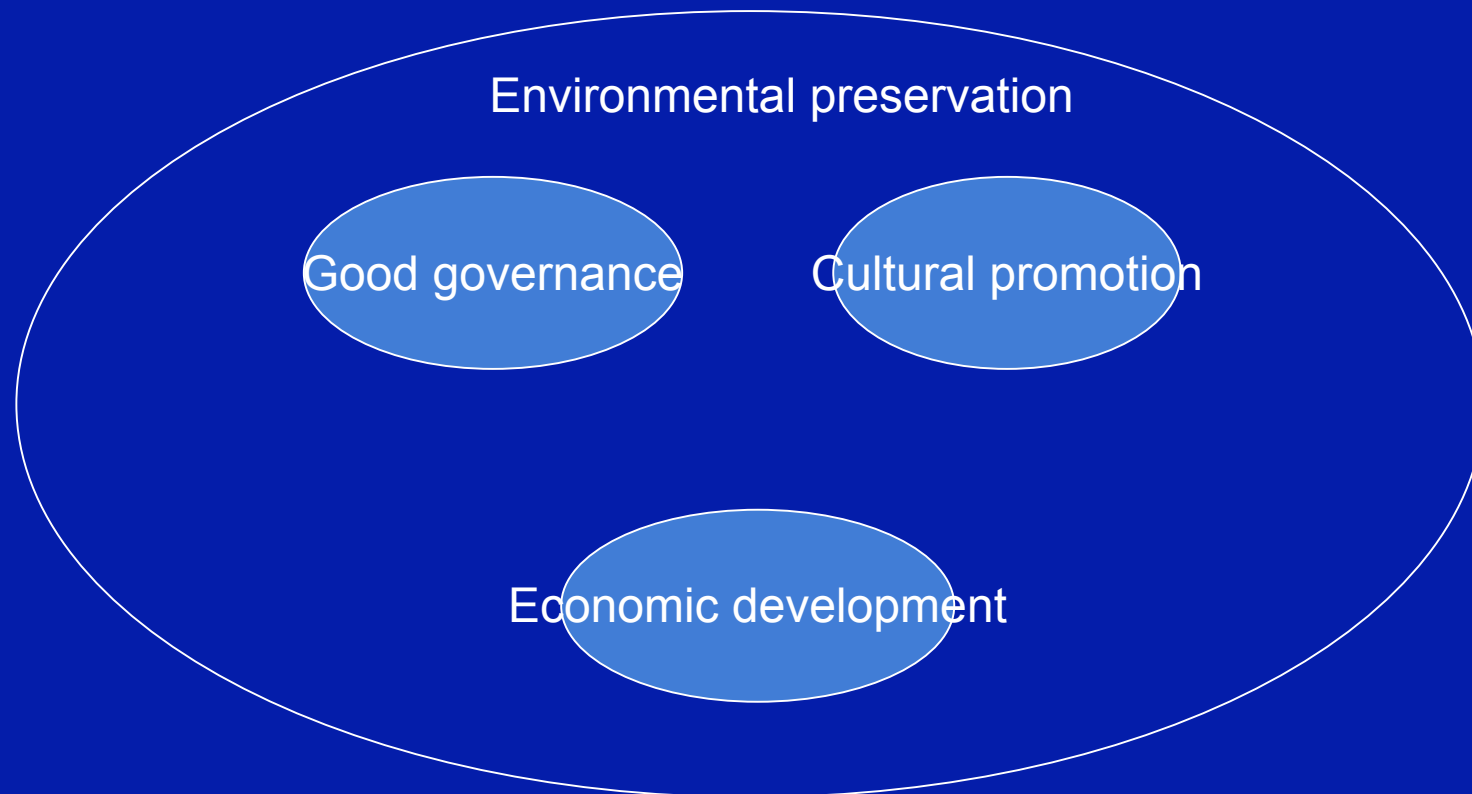
Threefolding: underlying structure to enable transformation towards Peace

- Rudolf Steiner 1912



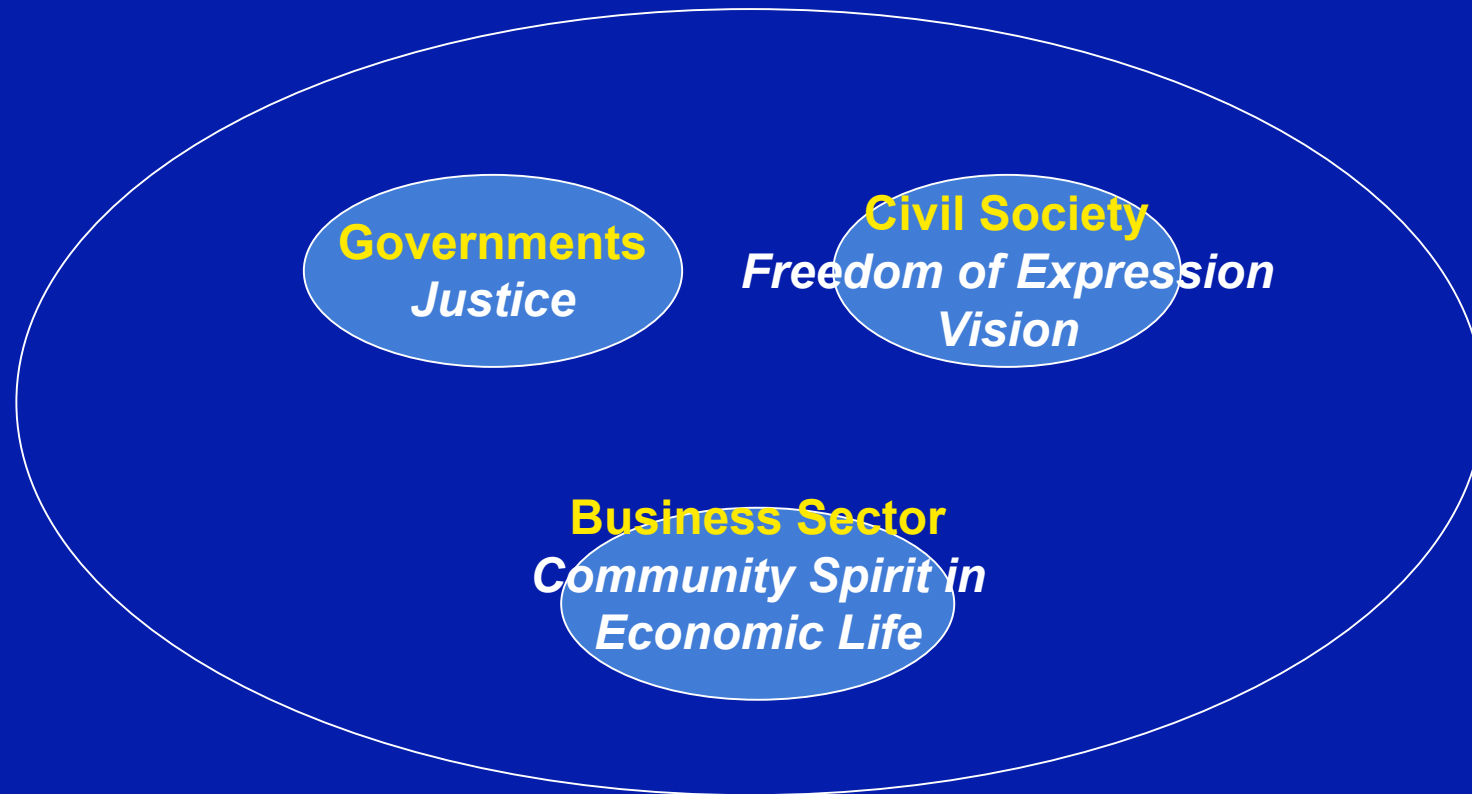
Holistic development: a dynamic balance between three dimensions of social life

- Nicanor Perlas *Re-shaping globalization*



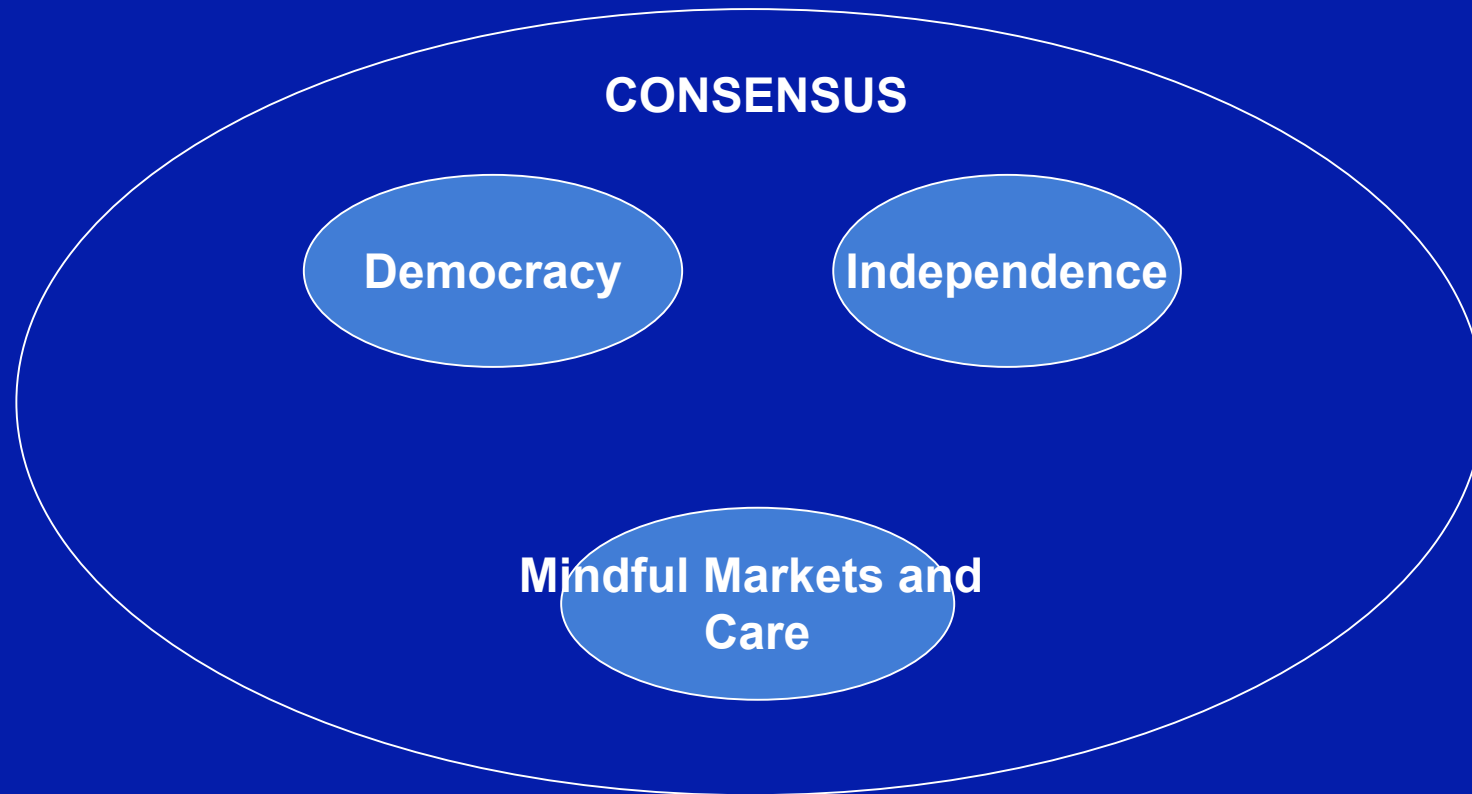
Tri-sector Cooperation

- Autonomous but overlapping missions



Distinct Modes of Decision Making

Complementarity



New Economic Paradigm

- Business leadership shaping mindful markets and mutual care
- Within a framework of Consensus Building

Summary: three new paradigms

- From reductionism to holistic approach:
The Whole is More than the Sum of the Parts
- From: **Divide and Conquer** to **Unite and Serve**
- From: **I Buy** to **We Care**

Micro historic perspective

- 1972
 - Gross National Happiness (Bhutan)
 - Limits to Growth (Club of Rome)
 - Buddhist Economics (Schumacher)
- 1992 – UNCED, Rio de Janeiro
- 2002 – Johannesburg
- 2004 – 1st GNH conference, Thimphu, Bhutan
- 2008 – 4th GNH conference, Thimphu, Bhutan
- 2008 – 2012: ICT Pilot Project

Identifying strategic research directions

- Pilot Project and Action Research: **Shaping the *Global GDP Debate* applying integrated ICT approach**
 - Media interest in happiness of people; awareness building
 - Shaping the communication on existential issues as debated by world leaders, opinion leaders, grassroots movements
 - Access to statistical data for verification and application of interactive scenarios in educative and research settings + art of animation
 - Contemplation on paradigm shift and innovation of new world fora
 - **new consensus with the help of ICT**

Conclusion

From *Global GDP Debate*

to

Global GNH Debate