

Towards Integral Citizenship

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Abstract

Citizens play three roles – client, customer and agent. These roles are paired with different models of public administration and these role pairs correspond roughly to pre-modern, modern and postmodern thought.

Client: Traditional public administration presents hierarchical structure which treats citizens as clients. Clients receive and depend on services and institutions. Public interest is defined by politicians and experts through laws. Government *rows* or produces programs directly.

Customer: New public management presents a more citizen-centred structure which treats citizens as customers, buyers of goods and services. Public interest arises through consumer choice. Government *steers* or incentivizes markets to provide services.

Agent: Under public value or new public service models, citizens as agents (directly and through civil society) participate actively in governance. Public interest is co-created through dialog and deliberation. Government *serves*, negotiating and brokering preferences and creating shared values and services across networks.

All of these citizen/government role pairs are legitimate but partial. What is presently missing is an overarching or integral perspective which transcends and includes multiple paradigms, rather than fighting about them. The imperative is to move from pluralism to integralism. This paper explores the application of integral theory to citizenship as a means of restoring coherence.

Key Words: Role of citizen, leadership, Integral Theory, Ken Wilber.

1. Integral Theory and the Citizen

This paper describes Ken Wilber's Integral Theory and its application to political leadership and citizenship. The key components of Integral Theory are the waves of human existence (a series of unfolding stages of development, or holons) and a four-quadrant model which combines first, second and third-person perspectives.¹

The motivation for this paper was threefold: first, a feeling that Wilber is on the right track; second, a need to make better sense of the theory; and third, to test how these ideas might be applied.

There are four perspectives of reality which are always present and must be held in mind when attempting to understand any issue or aspect of reality. The axes of these are subjective-objective (horizontal) and individual-collective (vertical) as described below.

Table 1 – Four Quadrants

	Interior – Subjective (Interpretive)	Exterior – Objective (Descriptive)
Individual	MIND/INTENT (I) Why I Do	BEHAVIOR (It) What I Do
Collective	CULTURE (We) Why We Do	SYSTEMS (Its) What We Do

Spiralling through the quadrants are levels of development. Each level is a part/whole, or holon, which is a kind of hierarchy where each new level transcends the limits of the previous levels but includes their essential aspects. Culturally, each level is a meme; individually, it is level of consciousness. Wilber uses a variety of stage conceptions; this paper will apply the red, blue, orange, green and yellow memes of Spiral Dynamics.²

In Figure 1, these five stages of development are described within each quadrant, thus creating an all-quadrant, all-levels (AQAL) view of the roles of citizens and their development context.³

The three roles of a citizen (client, customer and agent) have evolved with the stages of development. At first, citizens were predominantly clients, exchanging their allegiance for protection and order, or as in clientelism, exchanging political support for goods and services. To be a *client* means to have dependency. Human agency in citizenship as client was episodic rather than continuous. Most citizens saw little opportunity for choice or action, other than through occasional revolts.

The citizen as client arose with the blue meme (authoritarian) some five thousand years ago. Over time, the relationship between citizen and state came to be implemented through hierarchic and bureaucratic forms of organization, dating from antiquity and culminating in what has been called Traditional Public Administration. Public administration became organized around legislative and functional domains: in modern terms, it is production-centric.

The citizen as customer arose with the orange meme (scientific, materialistic) over the past three hundred years, with pluralist thinking. To be a *customer* means to have choice, to obtain results or value. As customers, citizens want more choice about what services would be provided by government or others, and more economic discipline in providing these services. This led eventually to New Public Management or “Reinventing Government”. Public administration became more citizen or customer-centric in its organization, and more oriented to consumer rather than producer.

The citizen as agent arose with the green meme (communitarian, egalitarian) over the past hundred years. To be an *agent* means to choose to act (human agency) in the sense of being able to advocate and co-create change in response to social needs. This differs from the somewhat passive agency of the citizen as customer. Theories of public administration moved towards Public Value – which blended some market ideas (public managers as entrepreneurs, multiple bottom lines) to maximize public value added, that is the benefits of government action weighed against the real and opportunity costs⁴ – and towards New Public Service, with the imperative to service citizens not customers.

The public interest is the result of a dialog about shared values, rather than the aggregation of individual self-interests. Therefore, public servants do not merely respond to the demands of customers, but rather focus on building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens.⁵

Government organization tries to become more oriented to networks of stakeholders, but is challenged by the reality that it is just another node on the network.

Just as population is distributed across memes, so there is a distribution of citizens who see themselves dominantly as either clients, customers or agents, and of public administration theories and their organizational forms of hierarchies, customer service and networks, and related activities of rowing, steering and serving.

2. On Becoming Integral

No society will ever simply be at an integral level, because the flow is unceasing . . . the major problem remains: not, how can we get everybody to the integral wave, but how can we arrange the health of the overall Spiral, as billions of humans continue to pass through it. . . In other words, most of the work that needs to be done involves ways to make the lower (and foundational) waves more healthy in their own terms. . . Second-tier thinking, in other words, is instrumental in moving from relativism to holism, from pluralism to integralism. . . Without second-tier thinking, humanity is destined to remain victims of a global

‘autoimmune disease’, their various memes turn on each other in an attempt to establish supremacy. This is why many arguments are not really a matter of the best objective evidence, but of the subjective level of those arguing.⁶

Integral is the first second-tier meme, the first stage of development in which humans will be able to accommodate all lower (and higher) memes, rather than deny or choose between them. Perhaps nowhere is becoming Integral more important than when applied to politics and citizenship. Society is a collection of memes in a Spiral whose average stage of development varies between cultures. Typically, Integral is at the leading edge of the Spiral.

The shift to Integral is essentially about a sorely needed change in the practice of leadership, and perhaps followership, too. Most leadership styles have not been sufficiently integral, consciously or historically.⁷ Popular leadership theories are overwhelmingly collective-exterior. Integral leadership requires greater breadth of inquiry and expansion of perspectives from which inquiry can be made.⁸ Leaders should be integrally informed. Integral leaders must navigate through irreconcilable demands and be of multiple minds. They must become more adaptive to fundamental change without threat to personal identity. Leadership should be a ‘field of awareness rather than a personality trait or mental attribute.’⁹ The challenge of Integral leaders is ‘to discover innovative and relevant ways to diagnose issues and address them from an AQAL perspective.’¹⁰

Becoming Integral is based on a Prime Directive, which is the health of the overall spiral, not preferential treatment for any one level.

Each meme – each level of consciousness and wave of existence – is, in its healthy form an absolutely necessary and desirable element in the overall spiral, of the overall spectrum of consciousness. . . . All of those waves have important tasks and functions; all of them are taken up and included in subsequent waves; none of them can be bypassed; and none of them can be demeaned without great consequences to self and society.¹¹

The prime directive includes a Basic Moral Intuition to increase as much evolutionary depth as possible for as many holons as possible, which means to let each meme live its life to its fullest potential, to be curtailed only when its agenda threatens others.

In practice, since we cannot wilfully rearrange the interiors of individuals or societies (though we can coax these via education), Integral Politics would take interiors into account mainly by creating the objective (exterior) conditions that would allow a maximum of interior development for individuals and society.¹²

It also includes a Gentle Pacer of Transformation for the full spectrum of human resources, ‘inviting people to grow and develop to their full potentials –

interior and exterior – to the best of their abilities.¹³ Transformation means moving between levels, which also requires a direction of change, as opposed to translating or broadening within a meme.

Integral Politics is based on a vision that is capable of integrating opposites and holding them as non-dual.¹⁴ This is about integrating dichotomies, such as new forms of social organization that can deal with opposites. Integral Politics includes integrating the interior and exterior, and understanding stages of development which give rise to different ideologies. Liberals espouse right-hand causality, conservatives left-hand. The first step toward an integral politics that unites the best of liberal and conservative is to recognize that both the interior (values, meaning, morals, conscious development) and exterior (economics, material well being, technology, social safety net, and environment) quadrants/factors are real and important.

Integral Politics is also a new type of critical theory.

The integral paradigm will inherently be critical of those approaches that are, by comparison, partial, narrow, shallow, less encompassing, less integrative. . . . Yet the very attempt itself does raise the interesting question: can a truly integral vision exist in today's climate of culture wars, identity politics, a million new and conflicting paradigms, deconstructive postmodernism, nihilism, pluralistic relativism and the politics of self?¹⁵

3. Integral Citizenship

The development of Integral Citizenship parallels that of Integral Politics. The Integral Citizen will recognize and embrace the legitimacy of the roles as client, customer and agent and will seek to strengthen the spiral, as will the Integral Politician, through the characteristics listed in Table 2.¹⁶

Becoming Integral will mean the return of hierarchies (as holarchies), universals, meta-narratives. It will seek outcomes including: prioritizing flexibility, spontaneity and functionality; integrating differences and pluralities into interdependent, natural flows; complementing egalitarianism with natural degrees of ranking and excellence; and ensuring that knowledge and competency supersede power, status or group sensitivity. "Viability must be restored to a disordered world endangered by the cumulative effects of the first six memes on the earth's environment and populations (since all of those first-tier memes are at war with each other)."¹⁷

Table 2 – Characteristics of Integral Citizens

Characteristic	Description
Holonic perspective	Attend to the dynamic relationship between “the parts” and “the whole” (the members of a community and the whole community; conflicted political positions and the whole field of opinion around an issue; our many facets as individual human beings and our essential wholeness; and so on.)
Coherent Inquiry	Include and balance the entire four quadrant inquires, namely truthfulness and justness (individual and shared understanding, interior); propositional truth and functional fit (explanation, prediction and control, exterior.)
Vision	Given the prime directive, Integral Vision should be a view ensuring the overall health of the spiral. This vision would give rise to planned and emergent goals and strategies.
Leadership	Facilitation and process is very important. People manifesting different developmental stages or worldviews often have a hard time relating to each other. But the capacity to do so exists if it is allowed to unfold.
Dissonance	“Sides” are just partial expressions of a larger whole yet to be comprehended. Dissonance is a resource for moving to a new, more coherent whole.
Conversation	Conversation is the medium through which different parts of a system can find coherence. Individually, it is a complex responsive process of dancing together. Meet people where you find them with genuine compassion.
Participation	Integral citizenship means more than mass participation. It means a high quality engagement of diverse perspectives and a process that is actually capable of generating useful, integral results.

So, when talking about Integral Citizenship, what is the problem to be solved, and which properties should emerge on the Integral Citizenship holon?

The problem to solve is political decay. From a Spiral development perspective: the blue meme provides institutions; the orange provides democratic institutions and pluralism; and in its present form, green provides pluralistic or moral relativism - a contemporary worldview which differentiates systems but cannot integrate them¹⁸ and deconstructs institutions but cannot build them. In many liberal democracies, there is a perception of what Fukuyama describes as political decay, illustrated by decreased adaptability, autonomy and coherence of institutions.¹⁹

The desired properties of Integral Citizenship might be as follows.

Mind/Intent: An Integral citizen seeks synergies to strengthen the Spiral through personal responsibility. As civil, political and social categories of

citizenship have evolved, there has been a shift in citizenship from duties (behaviours) to rights (privileges) which are both external. It is now time to complement these with a renewed emphasis on responsibilities, i.e. ongoing internal states of mind. The Integral Citizen must conceive responsibilities genuinely, and reduce the distance between citizenship and responsibility. For example, just as “responsibility to environment” supports the health of the Spiral, so also “responsibility to the economy” must be considered as an existential imperative to the health of the Spiral.

Behaviour: An Integral citizen builds a functional niche to strengthen the Spiral, by extending agency beyond advocacy towards a greater sense of governance in a true public interest. Pre-modern citizens contribute to public interest through obedience, modern citizens through self-interest, and post-modern through advocacy of special interests, either intrinsically or as true but partial realities. The Integral Citizen as agent should seek holistic truths about public interest through governance as ‘a matter of re-structuration and re-conceptualization. The goal is to decipher the new rules of the social game even as they are coming into existence.’²⁰ Integral Citizenship behaviour is about co-producing better outcomes and being accountable for doing so.

Culture: Integral citizens encourage the application of many formulas to strengthen the Spiral, and apply these through holistic institutions which balance values and worldviews, to resolve paradox and dichotomy. One critical paradox is trust, for example ‘increasing dependence on experts and, at the same time, declining trust in these same experts and, consequently, declining trust in our major social institutions.’²¹ Institutions must seek balance ‘to ensure that progress on some democratic criteria is not unduly sacrificed for progress on others.’²² Integral political leadership and citizenship will learn to better apply formulas such as what Beck and Grande called *cosmopolitical* realism which ‘calls for neither the sacrifice of one’s own interests, nor an exclusive bias towards higher ideas and ideals.’²³ Thus, Integral Citizens are issue framers and visionaries who develop culture and translate it into action through institutions.

Systems: Integral citizens learn how to understand and engage in systems of autonomous complex adaptive systems, and nudge them towards defining, agreeing to and accomplishing common agendas. They develop expertise to better understand and act on systems through increased Systems Intelligence²⁴ which is an extended form of The Fifth Discipline²⁵ with rationalist-formative causality. They come to see citizenship as process rather than status, and better understand how to act in systems through human Complex Responsive Processes, with a transformative causality ‘in which continuity and potential transformation arise at the same time.’²⁶

In short, the motor of social change must be based on meaning in all four quadrants and at all levels. Agency is important, but not as agency of the self- or special-interest but as agency for the whole-interest. Integral Citizens must take

complex perspectives, be aware of these perspectives in themselves and others, and develop authentic insights through these perspectives. Integral leadership incorporates the ability to operate on metasystems to create new paradigms; acknowledge and cope with inner conflicts in needs, duties, and values, and recognize reality as multifaceted and complex; become a coordinator of the institutional aspects of life; develop/adopt universal ethical principles.²⁷

Indeed, given the apparent failure of most political leaders to do more than “defend their meme”, one hopes that Integral Citizenship might be the training ground from which Integral political leaders might emerge.

	Mind Interior - Individual	Culture Interior - Collective	Systems Exterior – Collective	Behavior (Of Citizen) Exterior - Individual
Red	Egocentric – Survival • Live for now	Power Gods / Egocentric • Dominate others; to the victors go the spoils • Institutions for feudal distribution	Empire (feudal, tribal) • Whatever the boss says	N/A • Assert and exploit
Blue	Absolutistic – Security • Live for the future	Mythic Order / Authoritarian • Right way; the rewards go to the just • Institutions for basic living through hard work	Authority Structure (authoritative democracy) • Justice and fairness for the right, good people who follow rules and traditions.	Client • Obey and conform • Depend
Orange	Multiplistic – Independence • Live for gains and pleasure	Scientific and Materialistic • Autonomy; each acts on his own to prosper • Institutions for free market	Strategic Enterprise (multiparty democracy) • Give-and-take pluralistic politics within a check-and-balance game of economics.	Customer • Pragmatically get results • Choose
Green	Relativistic – Affiliation • Live for causes	Communitarian – Egalitarian • Mutual growth; all should benefit equally • Institutions for communal distribution	Social Network (social democracy) • Everybody shares equally in making consensus decisions to care for us	Agent • Respond to human needs and situations • Advocate
Yellow	Systemic – Existential (First second-tier stage of development) • Live for synergy	Integral – holistic • Self-worth and fit with the living system; all formulas contribute to spiral health • Institutions for value-added throughout the Spiral	Systemic Process (stratified or holonic democracy) • Process of integrating the majority of interests in expediting flows up the Spiral.	Integral Citizen • Build functional niche for responsibility under the prime directive • Co-produce common interest

Figure 1 Citizen Role AQAL (John Fallows)

Notes

¹ Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000).

² Don Beck and Ken Wilber, "Spiral Dynamics Model", in *Center for Human Emergence*

<<http://www.humanemergence.org/images/Spiral%20Dynamics%20model.pdf>> [accessed 14 November 2012]

³ Prepared by the author will materials from Graves (1974), McGregor (2010) and D. Beck (2000)

⁴ Mark H. Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁵ Robert Denhardt and Janet Denhardt, "The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering", *Public Administration Review*, 60 (2000): 555.

⁶ Wilber, *A Theory of Everything*, 109.

⁷ Jonathan Reams, "What's Integral about Leadership? A Reflection on Leadership and Integral Theory", *Integral Review*, 1 (2005): 118-32.

⁸ Clint Fuhs, "Towards a Vision of Integral Leadership: A Quadrivial Analysis of Eight Leadership Books", *Integral Leadership Review*, 3 (2008): 157.

⁹ Reams, "What's Integral about Leadership? 123.

¹⁰ Susan Wright, "An Exploration of Integral Leadership", in *The Coaching Project Inc.* <www.thecoachingproject.com> [accessed 14 November 2012] (11)

¹¹ Wilber, *A Theory of Everything*, 56.

¹² Gregory Wilpert, "Integral Politics: A Spiritual Third Way", *AQAL Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, 1 (2006): 80.

¹³ Wilber, *A Theory of Everything*, 169.

¹⁴ Wilpert, *AQAL Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, 1 (2006): 80.

¹⁵ Wilber, *A Theory of Everything*, 2.

¹⁶ Tom Atlee, "Integral Politics as Process", *Integral Review*, 6 (2010).

¹⁷ Ken Wilber, *Boomeritis: A novel that will set you free* (Boston: Shambhala, 2002), 114.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*, EPUB ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), Ch. 29.

²⁰ Ulrich Beck, Wolfgang Bonss and Christoph Lau, "The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme", *Theory Culture Society*, 20 (2003): 3.

- ²¹ Aaron Doyle, "Trust, Citizenship and Exclusion in Risk Society", in *Fernwood Publishing* <http://www.fernwoodpublishing.ca/website_pdfs/riskandtrust.pdf> [accessed 14 November 2012]
- ²² Russell J. Dalton, Susan E. Scarrow and Bruce E. Cain, "Advanced Democracies and the New Politics", *Journal of Democracy*, 15 (2004): 137.
- ²³ Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, "Varieties of second modernity: the cosmopolitan turn in social and political theory and research", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61 (2010): 436.
- ²⁴ Raimo P. Hämäläinen and Esa Saarinen, eds., *Systems Intelligence: Discovering a hidden competence in human action and organizational life* (Helsinki: Systems Analysis Laboratory, Helsinki University of Technology, 2004).
- ²⁵ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990).
- ²⁶ Ralph Stacey, *Strategic Management and Organizational Dynamics: The Challenge of Complexity* ([n.p]: Prentice Hall, 2006), 265.
- ²⁷ Clint Fuhs, "Towards an Integral Leadership Vision: Part 3: Developing Perspective and Presence Through Structure-Stage and State-Stage Growth", in *Experience Integral* <http://www.experienceintegral.org/uploads/media/Fuhs_Structure_and_State_Development.pdf> [accessed 14 November 2012]

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