

BUILDING A GLOBAL SUPERORGANISM: A NEW PARADIGM FOR THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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The growth-oriented economic strategy that has largely prevailed in Western societies over the past two centuries is literally a dead-end. Nor is our global system of independent, deeply competitive nation states a viable strategy for the future, despite the current trend toward increased nationalism. As I argue at length in my forthcoming new book, we are facing a collective choice like none other in our long, multi-million-year history (and pre-history) as a ground-dwelling bipedal ape. We have only two paths going forward. We must either create a more integrated and cooperative global society and political order or else our species will very likely be consumed by lethal conflict and perhaps even devolve and go extinct. Only an organized process of cooperative social, economic, and political change on a global scale offers us genuine reason for hope. Many biologists use the analogy of a “superorganism” as a way of characterizing a socially organized group in the natural world. In my book (titled *Superorganism*), I provide an outline and a roadmap for how to achieve a new, more legitimate and sustainable economic and political order on a global scale -- a global “superorganism.” A key element of this roadmap is a proposal for a new “social contract” designed to create a legitimate and fair global society, along with increased global governance. Among other things, this would include a “universal basic needs guarantee.” If we follow the proven pathway in humankind of cooperation, innovation, and creating new synergies, there is every reason to hope that we can make the necessary changes and build a sustainable global society for the long term. But this will require bold leadership and broad public support, a very tall order. The supreme question before us, as the great Walter Lippmann put it 50 years ago, is “how men will be able to make themselves willing and able to save themselves.” The jury is still out.