SIMON ANHOLT
FOUNDER OF THE GOOD COUNTRY INDEX

# The GOOD COUNTRY EQUATION

## How We Can Repair the World in One Generation

# Contents

# Preface

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW MUCH TIME WE SPEND WORRYING ABOUT the state of the world these days? Even before the pandemic struck, we were forever discussing the global challenges, speculating about the future of humanity, voicing our fears about the fate of the planet and the plants and animals we share it with. In one way or another, we are constantly asking, "What's gone wrong with the world?"

Not surprisingly, there's no shortage of theories, explanations, and solutions. The number of books published each year that try to explain and resolve our global difficulties just keeps on growing.

I try to read them because I'm fascinated and appalled by this subject, but I'm ashamed to admit that I don't always finish them, and often start skimming after the first chapter. This isn't because I think the authors don't know what they're talking about—on the contrary, I'm deeply impressed by their knowledge of society, politics, public health, economics, history, culture, and human nature. Usually, it's because I just find

them too dense, too difficult, and frankly too depressing to read. This doesn't seem right. If COVID-19 has proved anything, it has proved that the way countries work together—or fail to do so—is not a subject for experts alone; by definition, it's a subject for everyone, everywhere. We all need to understand, because it's going to take all of us to avoid these kinds of problems in the future, and to tackle the ones we already have.

So in this book I've tried to explain where I think we've gone wrong in terms that most people I've ever met can understand and enjoy: a book about the present and the future of humanity that doesn't require a degree in economics or political science to read.

And I've tried to make it as fun and interesting to read about the issues as I have found it fun and interesting to learn about them. Just because these things are serious doesn't mean they have to be boring.

I also have some concrete suggestions about what we can all do to make the world work better, in one generation.

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# From an Equation to an Invitation

FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, I'VE WORKED AS AN INDEPENDENT policy adviser to the presidents, prime ministers, monarchs, and governments of more than fifty countries. Most of them have invited me to help them engage more productively and imaginatively with the governments and populations of other countries, although we've often ended up spending our time on very different challenges from the ones they thought they were facing.

In my discussions with them and with thousands of their citizens, from religious and business leaders to students and factory workers, I've always challenged them with the same basic questions: What is your country *for*? What is its gift to the world? How can it make a difference to the whole of humanity, not just to its own citizens? How should a country *make itself useful* in the twenty-first century and so earn its place in the world?

I suppose that very few people have ever had a job quite like mine, and nobody could lead a life like the one I've led without forming some views on where we humans stand today, how

we got there, and where we're going next—unless they were fast asleep.

But I've been wide awake since I first started working with countries, and on the plane on the way home from each foreign trip, after a glance at the newspaper with its usual crop of frightening headlines, I've found myself asking that same question: *Why doesn't the world work?*

How is it that, despite all the experience, power, technology, money, and knowledge that humankind has accumulated, we still seem unable to defeat the biggest challenges facing us today: climate change, pollution, mass migration, overpopulation, corruption, disease and pandemics, extremism, slavery, war, terrorism, drug trafficking, hunger, weapons proliferation, species and habitat loss, prejudice and racism, unemployment, water scarcity, antibiotic resistance, human rights abuses, poverty, illiteracy, infant mortality, and inequality?

What a daunting list that is! From Afghanistan to Kazakhstan, from Austria to Bhutan, from the Faroe Islands to Mexico, and from Latvia to Botswana, this book tells the story of how I began looking for answers to that question and gradually built up a worldview, a philosophy, and at last a formula that I believe really could help make the world work better.

## What Is the Good Country Equation?

The theory behind this book is the Good Country Equation, a simple summary of what I've learned about the world so far. The equation consists of a problem and a solution.

Yes, the Good Country Equation is a much simplified account of the state of things. The simplification is deliberate because, over the years, faced with a world that seems to become more bewilderingly complex and unstable with every month that passes, I've learned to revere simplicity: not the simplicity

**PROBLEM:** All the grand challenges of today are caused by the way **countries** and **people** behave. **Countries** compete more than they collaborate, so there are never enough resources to meet those challenges. And we still educate **people** in ways that only made sense before humanity became interdependent and its problems interconnected.

**SOLUTION:** We can change the way **countries** behave by proving to governments that collaborating to build a better world doesn't mean national or political self-sacrifice: it boosts national standing and thus promotes growth and innovation. We can change the way that **people** behave in just one generation, starting with a new global compact on educational values.

that comes from seeing only the surface of things, but the simplicity that comes from seeing *through* the surface.

I hope I've avoided the trap of expecting too much of humanity, or crediting it with more compassion, intelligence, foresight, or imagination than it really has. An objection I sometimes hear from critics of my work is that I don't make sufficient allowances for people's innate selfishness, their mistrust of each other, the greed and corruption and shortsightedness of politicians, the stupidity of crowds, the innate tendency of all humankind toward prejudice and tribalism.

Well, in one sense I am guilty as charged. I can't help liking people and trusting in their capacity for good sense and kindness, even though these qualities aren't always on show and have a frustrating tendency to emerge only when it's too late for them to make much difference.

But I hope that my prejudice in favor of humanity is not based on naivete or sentimentality. I have always taken great

care to test it repeatedly with objective research, observation, and study. Thanks to my unusual job, that prejudice is reinforced by direct experience of getting to know a great many people from all levels of society in many countries and a relentless compulsion to seek out and hear the people whose views and values differ most from my own. That's not virtue: it's plain curiosity, and a serious addiction to variety.

One further point I'd like to add before we get started: Just like every one of us, I have my own educational, social, cultural, and racial background, and of course it influences what I see, what I say about it, and the way I say it. I'm a bit of mongrel, and I'm proud of the fact that several histories, cultures, races, and religions form the background to who I am; and an even more varied and colorful professional and family experience over the last thirty years has added to my worldview. I have both overlords and underdogs in my family tree, citizens of a colonizing power and victims of ethnic cleansing. My personal experience of the world has been a privileged one, thanks largely to the hard work of my parents and grandparents, and the good luck of being born male in a rich country in peacetime with an appearance similar to that of the ethnic majority.

But culture, language, human nature, and human society have been my lifelong passion as well as my study. I have learned that it's a mistake to fight the fact that my background shapes me; but it is also my duty to be constantly conscious of this bias and to factor it into my understanding of the world. My parents and my schools taught me from the moment I could understand it that the playing field I was about to enter was not a level one. The expression "Check your privilege" didn't exist then, but it's exactly what they had in mind. I haven't always succeeded in following their advice, since putting yourself in other people's shoes isn't always easy, but I have always tried and will continue to do so.

## Globalization: Curse or Cure?

One of the main reasons we're facing all these challenges today is the same reason we're capable of solving them: globalization.

Globalization is much more than a recent tale of corporate and financial overreach: in some respects it's the story of our species. Ever since the first humans walked out of Africa sixty or seventy thousand years ago and stopped being a single tribe inhabiting a single territory, facing a single set of shared challenges, one of the stories of human endeavor has been the story of us trying to get back in touch again.

Today, thanks to our technologies of transport, communication, and computation, we're nearly there: a single species inhabiting a single planet, once again facing a single set of shared challenges (all of which we've caused ourselves). It's been a difficult journey and the path ahead looks frightening and unfamiliar, so it's hardly surprising if, at times, we seem poised on the point of slipping backward again.

Globalization means many things, good and bad. Most of our progress and most of our setbacks have been both the cause and the consequence of our increasing global connectedness and interdependence. For me, one of the most positive consequences of globalization is the way it constantly stirs up human invention and creativity. Our species comprises many cultures, beliefs, languages, traditions, histories, mindsets, and ways of being in the world, and the more those elements are mixed together, the more new ideas we produce and the more progress we make. That's how innovation and culture work. On the other hand, growing inequality is stretching the tolerance of humanity to the breaking point, and globalization is deeply implicated in that process.

So while the problems we're facing today look, and are, truly daunting—in part because for the first time in our history we're

acutely and instantly aware of all of them, and they're connected in a thousand new ways—we are also armed with an infinite variety of new solutions to those problems, precisely because we're so well connected and the combination of our different skills and experiences, and our imagination, is so formidable.

The extent to which we choose to increase and make use of those connections, to work together, to acknowledge how all our problems are shared, and to deliberately stir up our innovations and our solutions will determine how successfully we tackle the challenges facing us today.

We've allowed many parts of globalization to spiral out of control, and there are failures and responsibilities that need to be acknowledged before we can press Reset. But there are also many aspects of globalization that deserve to be celebrated, and it's critical that we make the effort to see both sides of the story.

Many of us are in danger of allowing ourselves to become discouraged and downhearted, even cynical and fatalistic, just when we need the most hope and the most energy. Despondency is one of the habits of our age and a temptation we must resist. I hope that reading this book may help restore redress the balance between realistic concern and justifiable optimism.

The way I've written this book is a little unusual. It's an autobiographical travelogue which incorporates research, analysis, and case studies, but it's also a call to action, ending with some specific proposals that I intend to pursue with, I hope, the help of many of my readers. In other words, it's the story of an unfinished journey and an invitation to continue it together. I hope that the story of where I've come from will interest and encourage you enough to join me where I'm going.

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# From Sierra Leone to Afghanistan

IN 2009, KATE PICKETT AND RICHARD WILKINSON PUBLISHED *THE Spirit Level*, a book that did much to support the theory that inequality is the reason for much of what is right or wrong in any given society, and that it can literally drive people to crime.[14] Wealth and poverty have far less to do with it, which is why the United States and Nigeria, for example, suffer from similar social problems, despite the huge difference in their GDP: they have similar levels of inequality.

Working in Sierra Leone at the invitation of Tony Blair's Africa Governance Initiative, I heard tell of people there who had spent their life savings on a refrigerator they couldn't even use because there was no electricity in their village. The trappings of a developed-country lifestyle—like keeping your food in a big shiny refrigerator—had become familiar images throughout the world wherever people had access to media or were exposed to advertising. This created desire, and once desire is triggered in humans, the process of attempting to satisfy that desire must run its course, whether it leads to happiness or to destruction.

Obstacles along the way, like not having money or electricity, will be ignored or circumvented. This is how we're all made, and it's one of the fundamental drivers of the world we live in.

So it occurred to me that the dynamic of inequality leading to social problems of every kind, as described in *The Spirit Level*, is also played out globally on a daily basis. Thanks to the globalization of media, the sight of prosperity in the rich world drives social problems in the poor world.

And yet the amount that a society has to offer the world can have remarkably little to do with its economic prosperity, and there are so many things other than refrigerators that can form a country's gift to the world. This point was emphasized for me on the day that Sierra Leone's president, Ernest Bai Koroma, missed a meeting we'd been scheduled to have because he had to travel back to his village where a baby had been born. I assumed that this was a grandchild or nephew, until he explained to me that it was no relation at all, just somebody from his village, but in Sierra Leone there's no difference between the two. It was impossible not to wonder how this value might look if elevated to the global dimension.

It was in a conversation with President Koroma, discussing the benefits of collaboration with a wider range of countries than Sierra Leone's habitual donors, that the idea of "randomized multilateralism" occurred to me. Working together is always more productive than working alone, and the more dappled the mixture of national experience, culture, background, traditions, and worldview that each collaborator brings to the mix, the more unusual and exciting the results are likely to be.

Producing randomness is a fun game as well as a perfectly serious approach to collaboration. I suggested to President Koroma that we might start by making an international mutual problem-solving collective based on the initial letters of

one's country or city: why not put together a team consisting of Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Saint Louis and South London, and get them all working together on their common problems? The combination was guaranteed to be fresh and consequently to produce guaranteed fresh outputs. President Koroma even suggested that since Mercedes-Benz produces a car called the SL, we might ask it to sponsor the initiative. This seemed like an excellent idea to me.

It's well understood that disrupting conventional thought processes is a good route to innovation—what Edward de Bono called *lateral thinking*.[15] And what looks like a trivial word game from one angle can be the mechanism that releases new ways of perceiving and resolving deeply entrenched problems.

In Africa, one is never far from the evidence of how much first-world philanthropy has gone astray and creates perverse effects at the receiving end. There's an old West African saying: "The hand which receives is always beneath the hand which gives," and this is surely the central problem of aid.

So many of the rich world's attempts to help the developing world are still based on a nineteenth-century principle of philanthropy: that the world is divided into two hemispheres by a line called the equator, and all the problems of the world can be summed up by the observation that there are too many dollars above the line and too few below it. If therefore we can simply transfer as many spare dollars as possible from above the line to below it, runs the logic, all the problems in the world would be solved. This is the dominant fixation of North America and Western Europe, and it drives and distorts the whole conception of "economic development" worldwide. Only a civilization that worships money could make the mistake of thinking that money plays such an exclusive and fundamental role in the way the world works.

I can't help feeling that a more equal conception of the hierarchy of nations is an essential step forward in human development. The notion that rich countries have an obligation to help poor countries, especially since the rich countries are, in many cases, responsible for creating and even maintaining the wealth gap, is irrefutable. But at a level beyond the strictly economic, this system reinforces a world order that's based on economic competitiveness, and so entrenches inequality as well as making the tragedy of the commons inevitable.

Since the survival of humankind hinges on collaboration, then at some level it is necessary for *all* countries, rich and poor, to accept their full and equal responsibility for the future of humanity and its home planet. Responsibility has been unequally shared in the past, but to carry that inequality into the future is to accept and prolong the injustice. For the international community to treat developing countries with full respect, and not patronize them forever as victims, it is necessary for them to accept their shared responsibility for the future of the planet.

That doesn't mean closing down discussions about the past (and I mean the *whole* of our human past, before eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonialism, before the slave trade; I fail to see the logic or honesty of debates about historical guilt that have arbitrary cutoff points). Nor does it mean arguing against apology and reparation where apology and reparation are due; it certainly doesn't mean that aid should stop. But it does mean that the community of nations must move forward as a community of equals.

## Afghanistan

When the British government asked me if I would visit Afghanistan and write a report for the foreign secretary suggesting what the country's supporters might do to help it overcome some

of its long-standing challenges, I jumped at the chance. There was some risk involved in visiting what was then an active war zone, but I was reassured that I would be given ample security training and be looked after by the British army while I was in Helmand Province. What really made me want to go was having a chance to actually contribute something to the issue rather than remain one of the millions who could do nothing except read the newspapers and feel shocked and helpless. That's quite a privilege.

As it happened, somebody got the dates muddled and I never did get my security training, but I rather doubt it would have made much difference if I had found myself under attack. Predictably, I was more worried about flying to Kabul than getting myself shot once I arrived, and as it turned out, justifiably so.

My colleague from the Public Diplomacy Board, Chris Powell, and I flew to Kabul on a UN flight from Dubai. The journey was uneventful and the scenery spectacular. Looking down over the dry, empty, rugged mountains of Iran and Afghanistan, the deep shadowed valleys, the impassable ranges, and the very sparse and barely visible signs of human habitation, I could only wonder how such a land had ever become settled, could ever be governed as a nation, or indeed ever perceive itself as a nation. There seemed to be the merest sprinkling of humanity on the surface of a vast, beautiful, inhospitable alien world.

And then we began our descent. Nobody had told me beforehand (just as well or I'd have never got on the plane) that flights arriving into Kabul, because of the risk of rocket attacks from the ground, performed what is known in the trade as a corkscrew landing. The name says it all. The pilot threw the plane into an erratic, steep spiral dive, culminating in a high-speed touchdown after which the plane appeared to *accelerate* down the runway toward the terminal building, with several wheels off the tarmac. When we finally came to a halt, there was

a moment of complete silence, followed by a burst of nervous laughter from the less experienced passengers. I didn't laugh, as I was rather busy restarting my heartbeat, breathing, blood circulation, and certain other essential motor functions that had become temporarily disconnected during our descent.

We drove through Kabul in a heavily armored vehicle to the British embassy, where we were to be the guests of the ambassador. Every time we slowed down (the driver preferred not to stop at traffic lights) the car would be surrounded by boys of eight to twelve years, smiling and laughing as they banged on the windows. I waved and smiled back, charmed by their happy, intelligent, lively faces, so like my own young son at home, but the soldier sitting in the front told me they couldn't see inside the vehicle. It seemed so odd that we five grown men, three of us heavily armed, all of us wearing helmets and bulletproof vests, were shielded from the dangers of the city in this blacked-out, air-conditioned armored vehicle, while the little boys, in bare feet and cotton robes, were dancing and laughing outside in the hot sunshine. No wonder they teased us by tapping on the windows, grinning and making faces. And how terrible to think that few if any of them would live to see thirty.

We stayed with the ambassador in his residence for a few days, meeting Afghan officials, diplomatic and military personnel from the other International Security Assistance Force missions stationed in Kabul, and various Afghan academics, entrepreneurs, journalists, and politicians. The hospitality of the Afghans was exquisite, their courtesy almost overwhelming.

One evening, we were invited to dinner at a popular restaurant where we briefly sat outside—a rare treat—and watched the sun sink behind the ragged mountains that ring the city. High on one hill we could see the Olympic swimming pool that the Soviets had built during their occupation. I could just make out the white concrete diving boards. The pool was never used

for swimming, but as an execution ground by the Taliban. Yet there's something so beautiful about Kabul—a certain quality of the light, especially in the evening, which makes you realize that under happier circumstances this city could and should be a place that people would be happy to visit from all over the world once again: a place that feels somehow princely, and you can see why it was one of several cities vying for the soubriquet "Paris of the East."

My reverie was interrupted by a loud crash. Everybody in the crowded restaurant jumped, several actually to their feet. A waiter had dropped a tray of glasses. I suppose that one is in a permanently heightened state of alert in such places, and it is surprisingly tiring after a while.

## Onward to Helmand

After a week in Kabul, we were flown at night to the military airport in Kandahar in a Hercules troop carrier, where we sat facing sideways on metal seats, packed in tight between camouflaged troops, all of them sleeping without any apparent difficulty while sitting bolt upright. It would be worth joining the army just to learn that trick. I felt self-conscious in my neat civilian clothes and my little blue luggage trolley (I had missed the email telling me on no account to bring a suitcase and to pack everything in a carryall), but the flight was pleasant enough. The nice thing about propeller planes, I was thinking, is that there's none of that reckless nonsense about flying above the clouds. I had the agreeable feeling that if I fell out at this height I might even survive. (I later discovered that the Hercules flies at the same altitude as a passenger jet, and if there had been windows and I'd been able to look out of them, I'd have seen the snow-covered mountain peaks, blue in the moonlight, thousands of feet below us.)

I spent the night in a sort of shipping container at Kandahar base, surrounded by fifteen-foot concrete blast walls, and the next day was taken to Camp Bastion, the British army base outside the provincial capital of Lashkargah. My home for the next week was another shipping container, surrounded by blast walls and HESCO barriers. We took our meals in a vast tent with thousands of soldiers (the food was abundant and very good), had dozens of meetings with various military and civilian officials, went out on patrol once, and visited members of the provincial government in the nearby town, where they gave us mint tea and we discussed the plight of their region, the poppy harvest, and their views on the Taliban and the ISAF, the Afghan police, and the army (whom the British military were training to take over responsibility for keeping the peace).

In a maternity hospital near Lashkargah which the British had built for the use of the local population—brand new, shiny, fully equipped, and totally empty—the question of misdirected aid reemerged in a different form from the way I'd experienced it in Africa. When I asked the director who was proudly showing us around why there were no patients in the hospital, he explained that of course no Afghan women would ever come there to give birth because they knew they'd be shot by the Taliban if they did so.

It was noticeable how USAID's projects carried the prominent slogan "a gift from the American people" while the maternity hospital and other gifts from the British had none. The question of how much credit one should seek for the assistance one provides was, at the time, the topic of much soul-searching in UK government and aid circles. The idea that a gift loses some of its value if the giver promotes the deed is common to many cultures. But the question ran deeper than slogans on stickers. I later discovered that we and our allies were building unnecessary schools, instead of providing essential teacher training,

simply because you can send home a photo of a new building, but a man sitting under a tree surrounded by children doesn't look as if it costs anything.

On my penultimate day in Lashkargah, I was taken out on a reconnaissance mission by helicopter. I sat in the jump seat in the Chinook just behind the pilots. One of the crew told me to sit on my helmet as it would "protect my privates" from gunfire from the ground, but I think he was teasing me. We flew over the emptiest landscape I have ever seen anywhere in the world. It was a completely flat, completely featureless gray-yellow desert, with the faintest markings of ancient watercourses, all dry now, swept and scoured by the winds of uncountable ages. In the very far distance, I could just make out a range of snow-capped mountains.

After a while, we stopped still, very high over the infinite, empty plain. One of the pilots told me we had to wait a few minutes for some jets to pass in front of us. I watched ahead and strained my eyes to see, but nothing appeared: I wasn't sure if I should be looking for a pinprick or for recognizable aircraft. We stayed there for what felt like hours, and eventually I asked the pilot if the jets had been held up, and he told me they'd passed ahead of us forty minutes ago and we'd been flying at nearly two hundred miles an hour ever since. It was the empty landscape, he said: without visual clues, you have no way of knowing whether you're moving or standing still.

On the way home, I was sitting near the door gunner on the rear ramp. We came in very low and very fast over a small town and, just a few dozen feet below us, an old man and his granddaughter (or it could have been a middle-aged man and his daughter—when people's lives are very hard, they age sooner) were standing in the empty, dusty yard behind a dusty little square house. They looked up, with the strained faces of people who have lived in fear for too long, and our eyes met for

a moment. Then they disappeared into the swirl of dust that we raised as we passed. I knew we were there to help, but somehow I have never felt so ashamed in my life.

On the last day, the brigadier insisted on "taking us sightseeing" about an hour's drive from the camp. We left the vehicles at the foot of an escarpment and climbed up. The heat was exhausting, especially since I was obliged to wear, at all times, a metal helmet and a bulletproof vest lined with heavy steel plates at the front and back. My close protection officers—one of whom, remarkably, came from the tiny village next to mine back home in England—were looking about with evident concern, fingers on the triggers of their automatic rifles. They clearly didn't approve of sightseeing.

We reached the top and stood on a rocky outcrop, gazing over a vast plain with the Helmand River snaking through it far below. Without a single road or building as far as the eye could see in any direction, nor a tree nor a bush nor any sign of life, I felt transported back to some far earlier era. If a mighty host of foot soldiers in flapping robes and sandals holding spears and lances, flanked by horses and camels, had appeared out of the hazy distance in a cloud of dust, led by Alexander the Great or the emperor Ashoka, I wouldn't have been in the least surprised.

Soon, our close protection officers asked us to move down from the summit as we were prominent targets and making them anxious. After exploring an ancient underground water cistern and disturbing about a million bats in the process, we returned to our vehicles to find that an elderly man had appeared. This was miles from the nearest village and indeed from the nearest road passable by an ordinary car, so I have no idea where he came from, or how he even knew we were there. But he was ready and waiting for us, having set up a little stall on a folding table, and had laid out on a cloth a scattering of sandy

relics: fragments of statuary, some shards of pottery, a pretty turquoise bracelet.

What caught my eye was a little figure, a bit smaller than my thumb, representing a four-legged animal. It could have been a horse, but it had such short chunky legs and such a large head, I rather think it was a hippopotamus, carved simply but with unmistakable artistry from a hard grayish-black stone, very slightly sparkling and surprisingly heavy. It had the look of an object that had been lying in the sand not for mere centuries but for millennia, a silent messenger from the most remote antiquity. I asked our Pashto interpreter to ask the man what he knew about it, or where it came from, but he either didn't know or wouldn't say. Anyway, I bought it from him for five dollars and took it home to England, where it sits to this day on my wife's bedside table, still wreathed in impenetrable mystery, with grains of sand from the Registan Desert still glittering in its crevices.

## The Four Appetites of Society

My report to the foreign secretary and the US secretary of state, "Letting the Light In," suggested, among other observations, how normality (and especially normal commerce) might be the best and only remedy for Afghanistan: the superior competence of the military over any other group present in the country had resulted in the project being framed as a military campaign, whereas in fact it was clearly a development task—and the military was the first to acknowledge this.

I kept thinking about the last sentence of Voltaire's *Candide: il faut cultiver son jardin* (one must cultivate one's garden), which I have always taken to mean that men need to be kept busy in order to be kept out of trouble.[16] To spend one's life in innocent cupidity, chasing after a few possessions and a better

lifestyle, perhaps even an education for one's children, is infinitely less harmful than almost any of the available alternatives. This is surely the saving grace, perhaps even the ultimate point, of capitalism.

Afghanistan made me wonder about what a society needs in order to be healthy, and it occurred to me that the basic requirement for any human community is that provision must be made for satisfying what I consider to be our four basic appetites: a cultural appetite (for art and heritage and social meaning); an intellectual appetite (for using and exercising the mind); a spiritual appetite (for using and exercising the soul and seeking a deeper meaning in life and death); and an animal appetite (for food and drink, sex, shelter, and the acquisition of possessions).

Sometimes, astonishing amounts of energy can be unleashed into the satisfaction of these appetites when hunger for any of them is felt. Few modern societies allow all of these appetites to be satisfied, and there is evidence that hunger in the areas of culture, the intellect, and the spirit is making itself felt in many "developed" societies today: our tummies are full but our souls keep rumbling.

But this is just the natural cycle of human civilizations: they rise, they flourish, they become strained and decadent; they decline and they fall. Large parts of human civilization are in the process of decline or fall at the present moment. All that's new is that this time we have the power to take most of nature down with us.

Another thought struck me: nearly half the world's opium comes from Helmand Province alone. Remembering Mexico's narco-trafficking problems, half a world away, I became intensely aware of the interconnectedness of our global challenges, standing at both ends of one of the subterranean pipelines of crime and greed and dirty money that straddle the earth in every direction.

# About the Author

**SIMON ANHOLT** is an independent policy adviser and researcher from the United Kingdom who has worked with the leaders and governments of more than fifty nations to help them improve their economic, political, and cultural engagement with the international community.

In 2014, he launched the Good Country Index, the first survey to measure how much countries contribute to humanity and the planet, outside their own borders. His TED talk launching the Index passed six million views in 2019 and was ranked by TED viewers as the fourth "most inspiring" ever. His seven TEDx talks have accumulated 1.5 million more views. In 2016 Anholt launched the Global Vote, a platform that allows anybody in the world to vote in the elections of other countries: more than 100,000 Global Voters from 130 countries participated in its coverage of the 2016 US elections.

Anholt, who devised the concept of *nation brand* in 1998, is founder and publisher of the annual Anholt-Ipsos Nation

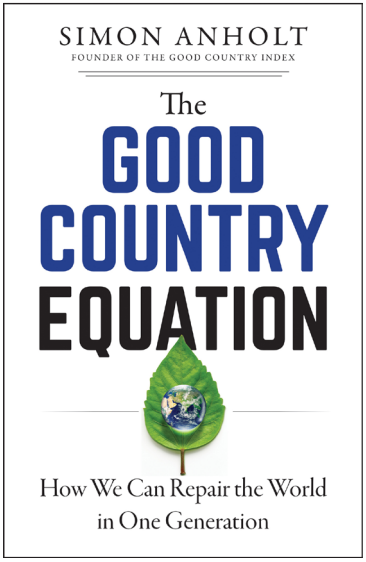
Brands Index and biennial City Brands Index, which poll twenty thousand people in twenty countries to monitor global perceptions of fifty countries and fifty cities. He was vice chair of the UK Foreign Office's Public Diplomacy Board between 2000 and 2009.

His first company was World Writers, an international strategy firm which he founded in London in 1989 and ran until its sale in 2002. It is still the world leader in its sector today. There, he developed culture mapping, a new approach to international marketing strategy based on an anthropological analysis of global consumer values and attitudes, for more than a hundred companies.

Anholt is the founding editor emeritus of the quarterly journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*. His previous nonfiction books are *Another One Bites the Grass* (John Wiley & Sons, 2000), *Brand New Justice* (Macmillan, 2003), *Brand America* (Cyan Books, 2004, 2009); *Competitive Identity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and *Places* (Palgrave Macmillan 2010).

Anholt has a master's degree from the University of Oxford and was a parliamentarian of the European Cultural Parliament. He was awarded the Nobels Colloquia Prize for Economics in Trieste in 2009 and the Prix d'Excellence du Forum Multiculturel pour un Développement Durable (Award for Excellence in Sustainable Development), at the seventh multicultural forum at the Palais de la Découverte, Paris, in 2010. He was appointed honorary professor in political science by the University of East Anglia in 2013.

**We hope you enjoyed this excerpt from Simon Anholt's *The Good Country Equation***

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