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I think it important to recognize that we are actually engaged in attempting to re-write global society's dominant cultural narrative. At its core, this narrative contains the materialistic, growth-oriented neo-liberal economic paradigm.

In effect, we are involved in a process of conscious social engineering.

One might fairly ask: "how do we socially engineer an entire society?" and some people might respond: "It's hopeless, we can't". However, that's both too glib and not entirely accurate. In fact, it has already been done---remarkably successfully in that the desired effect has been achieved while the objects of the exercise remain largely ignorant of the deliberate and purposeful process by which they have been manipulated.

The example to which I refer is the unprecedented success of the conservative right over the past forty years in directing the US national political dialogue (and increasingly the global dialogue) and in reshaping popular notions of society itself. Much of the impetus apparently came from a memo written in 1971 by corporate lawyer, Lewis Powell to the US Chamber of Commerce. (Powell was soon to be appointed to Nixon's Supreme Court.) In this note Powell warned of the threat posed by elements of the radical left ("...college campus, the pulpit, the media, the intellectual and literary journals, the arts and sciences, and... politicians") to corporate values and the stability of the American economy.

No doubt Powell would group our NDP effort with the "radical left".

Powell urged the leaders of corporate America to organize formally to defend themselves against the spread of liberal values (civil rights, environmentalism, feminism, greater social equity, etc.) and their influence on regulatory regimes and the business climate generally. As Powell saw matters: "The overriding first need is for businessmen to recognize that the ultimate issue may be survival — survival of what we call the free enterprise system, and all that this means for the strength and prosperity of America and the freedom of our people."

Various analysts credit Powell with galvanizing the business community to begin what became a wide-ranging program of public re-education rooted in ultra-conservative thinking. The goal, of course, was to re-frame political dialogue in support of the business/corporate agenda and turn everyone into compliant consumers, both of which required simultaneously eroding the very concepts of community and 'the public interest'. Today's plethora of right-wing think tanks and policy institutes, rampant anti-intellectualism, strident climate denial, etc.-- many of the things that stand in the way of progress toward a sustainable future--owe at least part of their present strength to Lewis Powell's original insights.

So-called 'agency capture', the effective take-over of regulatory agencies (such as the Food and Drug Administration and the EPA) by the parties they are supposed to be regulating) is a logical extension of Powell's corporate program. You can find Powell's memo and an introductory analysis of same here: http://reclaimdemocracy.org/powell_memo_lewis/

Here's a quote from the analysis: "Though Powell's memo was not the sole influence,

the Chamber and corporate activists took his advice to heart and began building a powerful array of institutions designed to shift public attitudes and beliefs over the course of years and decades. The memo influenced or inspired the creation of the Heritage Foundation, the Manhattan Institute, the Cato Institute, Citizens for a Sound Economy, Accuracy in Academe, and other powerful organizations. Their long-term focus began paying off handsomely in the 1980s, in coordination with the Reagan Administration's "hands-off-business" philosophy. Most notable about these institutions was their focus on education, shifting values, and movement-building..."

In short, we in the NDP process have a template for constructing popular perceptions that has been well-tested in practice. We know exactly what we have to do to re-engineer society to be more ecologically sensitive, socially responsible and better focused on our collective interest in survival. All we need is a few hundred million dollars and several decades—social learning, particularly the deliberate construction of an entire cultural paradigm can be an enormously expensive time vampire.

Too bad the neo-cons got there first.

Finally, let me reiterate the key elements of the paradigm constructing process as originally laid out in my paper, *The Power of "Paradigm"...* submitted to you earlier in the year:

- *H. sapiens* is by nature a culturally programmable species. Humans live out of socially-constructed 'stories' (disciplinary paradigms, political ideologies, religious doctrines, traditional myths, grand cultural narratives) at every level of social organization.
- These mythic constructs are a major determinant of political life and the fates of entire societies.
- Once fully entrenched, a seemingly successful socio-political paradigm will be virtually impermeable to new data, better understanding and reasoned analysis if the latter undermine its core premises and values.
- Societies may therefore become highly resistant to significant change. And because of systemic lags, they can exist for extended periods in denial of the emerging biophysical hazards and growing social tensions that ultimately take them down.
- The political right, particularly in the United States, has been much more aware of these realities than the left. Powerful individuals and corporations have spent millions annually for nearly half a century on the purposeful construction/reinforcement of the existing growth-oriented free-market capitalist paradigm with its emphasis on individual self-interest; the virtues of greed (e.g., trickle-down theory); the deification of economic efficiency; the marketplace as well-spring of social values; globalization and liberalized trade; and the evils of regulation and government generally.
- As the prevailing neo-conservative construct has taken hold in many nations, we have witnessed the erosion of community; the rending of the social safety net; massive economic restructuring; the weakening of the middle class; the

widening of the income gap; worsening ecological trends and accelerating climate change.

- Accompanying this has been the development of a well-funded disinformation industry, including the creation of hundreds of ideologically conservative think tanks that are fundamentally anti-intellectual, anti-science and particularly hostile to the possibility of anthropogenic climate change. Simultaneously, conservative forces have increased their lobbying efforts to the point where they dominate policy-making in the capitals of many market democracies, thus undermining democracy. This is particularly the case in the US where the political right and corporate America have purposefully constructed the ideological and institutional infrastructure for both right-wing propaganda and systemic denial of global change.
- The result – again, particularly in North America – is that the past two generations represent the *most successfully socially engineered generations of people ever to walk the planet*. The neo-conservative myth is so powerfully entrenched that millions of people have been induced to vote against the data and their own short and long-term interests.
- At the heart of the neo-con project is the materialist sub-myth that happiness and well-being spring from technological progress and continuous economic growth (ever-rising per capita consumption). This is an integral part of the increasingly global cultural paradigm and hence a threat to long-term global ecological stability and life support systems.
- We must recognize that, in attempting to define a new development paradigm, we too are *necessarily* engaged in a process of deliberate social (re)engineering.
- Some people may resist our efforts precisely on grounds that focused social engineering is undemocratic or immoral, forgetting or denying that: a) all peoples are, in effect, socially-engineered whether deliberately or not, whether conscious of it or not and; b) that the present generation is perhaps history's most extreme example (see previous points).
- We should not expect governing political and economic elites or others with vested interests in the status quo to accept our analyses of the state of our cultural and biophysical environments. Some will strenuously resist our efforts to advance solutions consistent with our analyses.
- It follows from all of the above that a major focus (target population) of our present effort should be youth, i.e., on young people who are still questioning the meaning of life; who have not yet bought into any particular development paradigm or cultural narrative; who are the most persuadable; and who have the greatest stake in the future.
- We should also target other civil society organizations that already exhibit loss of faith in the mainstream paradigm and are intent on constructing more adaptive alternatives: for example, Occupy Wall Street; the Transition Towns and related re-localization movements; the eco-cities movement; the 350 movement (a global campaign to address the climate crisis); and many others.

- Positive *and* negative scenario-building is an essential component of our effort. We must play to people's visceral emotions as much as to their intelligence. Both hope and fear will become important motivators of behavioural change as conditions worsen.
- A point to stress in our scenarios is that while environmentalists are often accused of preaching doom, it is actually the established mainstream paradigm that is precipitating potential apocalypse – staying our *present* course is potentially catastrophic. We can actually build this point by drawing on recent reports on the risks of climate change by such mainstream, generally conservative institutions as the International Energy Agency and the World Bank.
- By contrast, a development paradigm based on ecological reality and social justice offer real hope – ecosystemic stability, economic security, and greater social equity – to everyone.
- Let us keep the faith – dramatic systemic change is possible, particularly as more and more people are directly affected by global change (from sea-level rise to loss of income security). Jared Diamond (2006) has shown that societies in crisis that have historically avoided collapse were culturally nimble societies. They were able to reassess and reject the core values and beliefs that brought them to the edge of the abyss; they succeeded in constructing an alternative paradigm more consistent with contemporary biophysical reality.