

PUSHBACK!

AN ACTION MANUAL

VERSION 1.0.



A 21ST-CENTURY AMERICA!

A NATIONAL CHARACTER PROGRAM!

SMART GOVERNANCE!

JOIN THE TEAM AMERICA!

HOW THE LITTLE PEOPLE EARN BALANCE, MEETING, AND RESPECT!
HOW AMERICA BECOMES A SMART 21ST-CENTURY NATION!
YOU READERS CAN COMPLETE THIS INTERACTIVE, REAL-TIME STORY
AND BECOME HEROES!

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Pushback! The Action Manual

by New Ideas

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by New Ideas

the small life company, inc.

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The Action Manual

A Story of How Public Citizens Get Balance, Meaning, and Respect

Introduction

There seems to be two parallel worlds in early 21st-Century America. In one, the “Life is Sweet” world, a relatively small set of self-interested individuals and Big Businesses (a type of political-economic elite) acclaim record high incomes and corporate profits, record high stock values, and a booming market of luxury goods and services. Many of them flaunt their membership in that world with an in-your-face, “Masters of the Universe,” snicker at lesser humans. They more sedately cheer (among themselves) a thoroughly-tamed population of workers and consumers and a dominant state military presence which they direct both internationally and domestically. For them, life is about as good as it's ever been.

In the other world, the “Grind It Out” one, are multimillions of ordinary Marys and Johns, the so-called “little people.” Many of those people barely get by economically, exist like worker bees before they die, and get disrespected nearly every day of their lives by Big Businesses and a lot of those living the Sweet Life. They experience insecurity, frustration, anger, and broken spirits much of the time. Some know, and many others only *feel*, that they are being unfairly exploited, although they complain only meekly, mostly among themselves.

Members of each of the worlds are right. The elite *is* at an apex of social and economic dominance and, indeed, are masters of our universe. The little people accurately perceive that they are being unfairly shorted out of the enormous bounties produced by the world's most educated and economically productive nation. And, no matter how hard they work, circumstances for the little people are getting worse rather than better. A great many of the Marys and Johns feel that “Something should be done about this,” but they don't know what.

Doing something about it is mostly what this Action Manual is about. It explains why this situation is as it is and who and what is responsible for it. It addresses the issues of why America (“The World's Greatest Nation”) still governs itself politically and socially by 18th-Century institutions and principles and how severely that status holds back national achievement and modernization of how we govern ourselves and relate socially. It explains why prior efforts by a lot of somebodies to ameliorate class disparities and to reform governance have failed and why the time is right *right now* for new forms of action for change. It suggests what that change ought to be like and how to get it.

The difference now for the little people is that they have much more information about the political economy and society. They now have new powerful technological tools to help focus, motivate, and organize large numbers of people. They can draw upon lessons from some earlier movements by underdog groups for social change--like those for civil rights, feminism, and gender orientations--which *have* been largely successful and can function as models. Of course, there certainly is no shortage of *interest* by many Americans in significant social change, although they vary considerably in what that entails. Regardless, it does seem pretty certain that most people merely want some measure of economic security, to have more time to be human beings rather than mere workers/consumers, and to get some respect just for being good people and good citizens.

As asserted in this book, what may be helpful, even crucial, to obtaining significant social change is a new and more sophisticated political-economic *vision* than what we've seen before and a better, *practical* plan to implement it. The Action Manual articulates new ways of seeing and thinking about American political-economic realities which leads to a social ethos composed of a *collective* culture and

of a new and different set of public values. It details a comprehensive plan to fix things, so to speak, for all Americans really, but especially for the little people.

"Fixing things" essentially means balancing private selfish interests with public interests, prioritizing human meanings over economic system ones, and especially being respected for living the "small life" well. It means establishing an environment where the little people obtain Balance, Meaning, and Respect ("BMR") in their lives. It also means updating and rationalizing our governance institutions and principles and creating new ones administered, in part, by the little people themselves.

The Action Manual aims to establish *smart* governance and *smart* social relations, i.e., guided by a collective focus and rational processes appropriate for a 21st-Century society. That includes overcoming our creakingly old governance institutions and principles by establishing a set of national councils representing a collective interest and operating under a new set of public values including collective fairness, rationality, inclusivity, greater respect for science, and other attributes. It includes evening out, so to speak, the political-economic playing field between the elite and the little people so that way more people get to meaningfully participate in political affairs and enjoy the benefits of our tremendous national productivity. It means that Americans as a whole learn to be one proud group (i.e., the "American Team") for purposes of public policymaking instead of remaining a collection of separate individuals and small groups (i.e., "solos") competing, exploiting, and bickering among themselves, and even hating mostly everyone else to scratch out advantages and benefits, as in primitive tribal-like competition.

The vision and plan (i.e., the "National Character Program") doesn't intend to replace or tear down what we already have but to *complement* it and make it all *smarter* and more modern. It doesn't contemplate class conflicts but instead promotes harmony among classes (even if an uneasy one) where everyone sees a positive role in the unified American Team. It's the lower classes--the little people--however, who have to get this started. The elite class is mostly content with things as they are and lacks the perspectives and sensitivity, in any case, to do things right for the rest of us.

After experiencing previous, mostly successful, social change events like the civil rights movement and others, for instance (each primarily concerning new ways of *seeing and thinking* about social life), the little people as a class may recognize themselves as just another underdog group--like blacks, women, and gays--and realize that it may be *their turn* for a major change in social status. The Action Manual explains why it *is* their turn and shows the little people *how* to reshape their lives and society with a comprehensive, practical plan of action.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the vision and the plan as a *story outline* of how the little people become aware of their class characteristics, learn to organize themselves into a sort of informal "shadow government," and develop a focus on renovating our economic and political systems into being *smart* and collectively fair. Smart in this context means public policymaking guided substantially by a collective perspective and fairness standard; reason, facts and data; and advanced planning strategies guided in part, by professional experts. Essentially, that means having a "brain" in governance. That's the opposite of how things are done now, which is as a haphazard, uncoordinated process of millions of self-interested individuals, egotists, and special interests (none of whom may have policymaking expertise but only *willfulness*) negotiating and/or competing cut throat-like for *themselves*, regardless of what results for any common good.

Collectively fair means that macro-level economic-political decisions and actions derive from new institutions (i.e., a collective brain) which takes a perspective considering *all* citizens. That means acting on behalf of an American Team, so to speak. Americans will be encouraged to become "public citizens" having a healthy balance between self and community interests and between the interests of the individualist/capitalist system which controls us now and the human beings which populate it.

Readers are challenged to flesh out the **story outline** with themselves as characters, putting themselves into the setting, and shaping the narratives with their own decisions and actions. This will be an interactive story with an open ending to be determined *by the readers themselves*. Will there be a Happy Ending? Will there be a Grand Accomplishment? Will there be an exciting Journey and Life Experience, at least, for readers and participants? Or might the story Never Get Completed? You readers (i.e., characters) may determine that.

Chapter 2 describes a base set of **characters** for the story—economic classes, political parties, Big Businesses, special-interests, groups of all kinds, and most importantly a unique category--private and public citizens. Readers will be able to place themselves in those two latter categories and determine for themselves whether they are (or want to be) private or public citizens and what that means for them personally and for society in general.

Chapter 3 describes the **setting**—our 18th-Century based American culture of individualism and capitalism. Those philosophical concepts condition nearly everything about our lives including our work, consumer, and family relationships and the nature of the communities we live in. Those concepts also primarily determine our political, economic, and social outcomes and ultimately, our happiness levels. If you are one of the little people and/or if *your* happiness level is not as high as you think it should be continue to pay attention. There may be a way to fix that by modernizing our systems of governance and social relations.

Chapter 4 lays out the **back story**, so to speak, with a historical perspective of American reform/change efforts, an explanation of why they didn't work, and a consideration of the *possibility* even of significant social change. There may *not* be any possibility. Some people think we have it as good as we can get it. Others are not sure, or don't know what to think. What will *you* think when you are done reading the book?

Chapters 5 through 9 outline **narrative elements** of a new early 21st-Century story of how significant social change can come about from a new movement called the National Character Program. These chapters discuss the functions of the program, its set of new public values, what specifically the American nation and the little people need in a renovated society, and details the structural components of a new kind of movement for significant social change. That program includes (among other things) setting up a shadow government of informal institutions run mostly by the little people themselves to monitor and influence existing legal government. The final chapter, Chapter 9, entitled “What's Next?” discusses in detail the process elements of what has to be done, by whom, and in what order. It ends with an appeal to readers to write the **denouement** to the story.

Everyone likes a good story, especially one with a happy ending. If the story of how the little people make America into a grand 21st-Century nation never gets written or completed, the elite will have their *own* story for us. You already know what that plot is like and what the ending will be! It would be a shame if the little people wasted a great opportunity *now* to help themselves. What's intriguing and compelling about *this* story outline is that no one knows how it may play out. It could be another dud like most of the failed social reform movements we've seen so far. On the other hand, it could be a Grand Story like that of the end of the monarchies and the rise of democracy in the 18th-Century and the achievement of full legal status for blacks and women in the 20th-Century. It could mean a “disruptive” (but peaceful) movement) leading to an advanced 21st-Century nation.

The ending could be spectacular! It would mean the leveling out of the political-economic playing field to the benefit of multimillions of Americans. It would mean a permanent state of Balance, Meaning, and Respect for nearly everyone. It will happen if enough people are prompted to see their lives and their society with new perspectives and realize that they have the capability of re-making their lives and modernizing their nation.

Regardless of how it plays out, writing the rest of the story can be an immensely meaningful experience *right now* for millions of Americans just in the adventure. Standing up for one's rights and dignity, showing good character as an example for one's children and grandchildren, and having pride in attempting a grand achievement in national improvement are meaningful benefits all in themselves.

The main story outline touches on some fairly complicated ontological philosophy—i.e., "What is social reality?" and "What is the natural order of things?" It does this as a matter of necessity. It has to satisfy those who think at an intellectual level that the social movement is indeed theoretically sound. And, it *has* to be theoretically sound for the plan to work. Rousing even millions of people to protest their situations like some have done ends up empty without a workable vision of what substance is to come next.

The philosophical matter is explained in greater detail for advanced readers in Appendix A. Appendix B contains summary outlines of representative kinds of special problem-solving *approaches* to some major social issues, like reducing the United States military budget and abortion. Those approaches represent "templates" useful for the smart governance processes the program intends to implement about a lot of issues in contemporary American life. Appendix C has contact information to help readers and supporters start collaborating in writing the rest of the story and engaging in the Grand Adventure.

Note: Sooner or later, readers will realize that no one ("New Ideas" is a pseudonym) has claimed authorship of this book. That, of course, is unusual and a bit strange. The anonymity is intended, as the focus has to be on the *story*. And, *you readers* are the true focus of the rest of the story as you are expected to write most of it in any case. Let's keep it at that.

Also, there is an associated "Lite" version of this book called The Action Manual, Lite. It is a condensed summary of this book containing mostly just talking points. It may be useful for those who have a use for a summary version or for those who, for whatever reason, won't read the considerably longer full version.

The Action Manual

This book provides the vision and a plan.

Readers and supporters influence the public.

Producers, managers, administrators, and ordinary citizens organize and run the infrastructure.

Public citizens run a shadow government and the Local Council of activists.

1. The Story Outline

How the little people learn to pushback on the political-economic elite which dominates their lives and get Balance, Meaning, and Respect, together with Smart governance and social relations.

2. The Characters

They include the economic classes, political parties, Big Business, special interest groups, and a unique category—*private interest citizens and public interest citizens*.

3. The Setting

It is contemporary America where an individualist/capitalist ethos dominates economics, politics, and most of the rest of social life.

4. The Back Story

We have experienced years of elite dominance and many failed efforts by the little people to change that status.

5. The Narrative

This is an imagined narrative of a *new social movement* called the National Character Program. These narrative threads include:

- a description of the Program's functions
- a description of a new set of public values
- an itemization of what the little people need
- a detailed description of the Program's new institutions and processes
- a detailed list of what needs to be done, by whom, when, and where, with a timetable of what we can expect

Chapter 1 The Story: An Outline

Let's see if we've got this right. Millions of quiet Marys and Johns have worked hard all their lives, made decent homes with families, been good neighbors and helpful members of their communities, have never taken advantage of anyone else *ever* and now have lost their pensions and most of their savings, make the same (inflation-adjusted) earnings as they did thirty years ago, pay much of their own health care costs, no longer can afford college educations for their kids, can barely make ends meet, and expect to die with nothing.

On the other hand, mere thousands of Leonards and Lloyds (mostly men) aggressively play the free enterprise system. They recklessly set up and market highly-leveraged investment "dogs" and almost certain to fail financial structures by deceptive means, musical chair-like, duping unwitting consumers, governments, and non-profit organizations. They take tax breaks no one else can and trade on their own accounts with inside information. They produce an astounding amount of profits for themselves. When their own investments turned sour as in the 2008 Great Recession, they "convinced" taxpayers—the Marys and Johns—to reimburse them for their losses as they continue to live like royalty. After exploiting nearly everyone, they haven't even found a need to say "Thanks," to the American people for the bailouts they received. Life is Sweet!

A lot of people feel that this is not right. Why, they say, should a large majority of innocent people be exploited and suffer loss of homes, jobs, and more due to the selfish, aggressive behavior of a distinct minority? Is this the American way? Is this the natural state of things? If this really is the capitalist way--and it is--can we at least fix it so that the little people (the Marys and Johns) do not get beaten up so often and so badly?

For the little people the bad news is that this *does* appear to be the American way and it certainly is the capitalist way. The good news is that this is *not* the natural state of things and, "Yes!," we *can* fix this problem, if we are smart and persistent. This book starts a story of how collectively-minded people in America ("public citizens," or "We" people) pushback on the Leonards and Lloyds ("private citizens," or "Me" people) and obtain what they need and deserve—balance, meaning and respect (i.e., "BMR") in their lives. (See later in this chapter and Chapter 8, "The Program," for more explanation of what "pushback" means and how it will work.)

In short, balance means that society promotes and rewards collective interests as well as individual ones. Meaning is when real human considerations like family and community relationships, cooperation, spirituality, and relaxation (being off of the system's "treadmill," so to speak),—among others—are supported by the political-economic system instead of being ignored or considered counterproductive drags on "efficiency." Respect means that quality social character traits like good citizenship, good parenting, and community spirit (among others) are appreciated as much as moneymaking and financial status.

What follows below and in the next eight chapters--The Action Manual--is a *story outline* of a new and unique social movement. There are descriptions of the characters of the story, the setting, and the back story; an explanation of what can be done, why, and how; an itemization of what the American nation and ordinary Marys and Johns need and want; a vision of an advanced 21st-Century America; and a feasible plan to make it happen. That's a lot of material but it's only the beginning of the story which requires *you*, the reader, and others like yourself to complete, if you want. The Action Manual is intended to convince, inspire, and guide you to do just that. Let's see.

Individualist/Capitalist Philosophy: Self-Interest, Aggression, and Competitive Will

The 2008 worldwide financial collapse was a major historical crisis and hurt multi-millions of innocent people. Sadly, the same essential underlying economic and political circumstances have existed in America (and elsewhere) for generations and continue to exist. A small minority of self-interested, aggressive people referred to as a private citizen elite (see Chapter 2, "Characters," for a detailed discussion of private versus public citizens) have regularly imposed their wills and satisfied their private interests at the expense of the vast majority of us. Not only that but they've shown a self-satisfied disregard for any sense of a public interest and a common good. (Those who believe in and support a public interest and a common good are considered *public* citizens.)

This elite own most of the capital resources, they control government and politics mostly, and they make the basic rules which regulate our lives. For everyone, they have decided that the acts of producing and buying are more important elements for us and society than those of family, community, and spirituality. (See Chapter 6, "Values," for why this is so.) These private citizens deliberately use their dominant influences over most of our society to impose a political philosophy which cannot even *contemplate* a sense of a public interest or a common good. The only interest it contemplates is self-interest.

That philosophy maintains an economic system based upon principles of individualism and competition which makes self-interest, aggression, and competitive will the primary virtues. Its supporters champion an outsized sense of individual freedom and liberty which for many of them *really* means that the most self-interested and aggressive get free license to dominate the rest of us economically and politically. When they talk about small government and fewer regulations many of them really mean less impairment of their ability to impose their wills upon the little people in the market, workplaces, government, and everywhere else which suits them. (Before anyone gets the idea that this book is a screed against the wealthy refer to Chapter 2 where it is explained that the financial elite are, in a sense, "innocent" and controlled by system dynamics nearly as much as the little people are.)

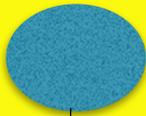
These private citizens have cleverly devised a highly effective (but false) worldview--an ideology called capitalism--to convince people that the private citizen system of rules is a given, that is, it is "natural" and reflects the practical and moral relationships of free individuals anywhere. Furthermore, they assert that this system is fair and just and superior to any alternative system (which might *not* allow them to impose their ids and egos upon the rest of us.) In other words, a small elite class of private citizens have rigged the system to benefit themselves and have convinced many of us that this is good for all of us.

Some people may be reminded that only 150 years or so ago plantation owners (a major part of an elite then) convinced many that slavery was good and natural for black folks as well as good business. Only about eighty years or so ago, some of the elite made the case that hard, miserable, manual labor was good and natural for poor children as well as good business. It would take a big list to itemize the discriminations suffered for many generations by women as a gender which, too, have long been asserted as natural. For all of those historical periods, as it is today, this private interest elite was and still is comprised mostly of white males imposing *their* rules by force of hand and egos upon even their own wives and daughters. It's useful to view the little people of today as a distinct class, having much the same status as slaves, poor children, and (even wealthy) women of not too long ago.

While the capitalist system may indeed be natural in the sense that people in primitive, unregulated circumstances (like those in the caveman days) may feel compelled to act with self-interest and aggression, that doesn't mean that people can't or don't learn to adapt to each other and develop social order, rules, communities, and moralities. Being in some sense natural doesn't make it practically or ethically superior, or even justified. It's natural, of course, for plant life to grow willy-nilly but that doesn't

preclude gardening strategies. Wild animals are trained and domesticated. Humans develop sophisticated environments with governance, political structures, and rules of social morality. A lot of what some people consider natural is only what *they* want to preserve, usually for their own interests.

The Game of Individualism and Capitalism



Lloyd:

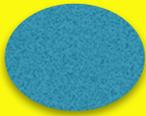
-the self-interested, self-maximizing rational actor competes with everyone else for (philosophically) scarce economic goods

Game Strategies:

- self-interest
- aggression
- competition
- exploitation
- consumption
- acquisitiveness



Winner!



Mary:

-the socially and community-minded, balanced Individual

Game Strategies:

- balance of private social
- community
- the common good
- a meaningful life
- respect for social character



Wimp and loser!

Individualist/capitalist philosophy: Disregard of Social Relationships and Human Meanings

The individualist/capitalist ideology has a fundamental assumption of everyone as a "rational self-interested individual." It conceives of every person, including everyday Marys and Johns, as having the mindset of a robotic, calculating, small businessman working ceaselessly to maximize his own self interests *and* without having any emotions or other human and social traits. Employing workers at the lowest possible wage rate and denying them sick and family leave time, for example, is good business according to this view regardless of the negative implications for the workers and those they have to support. Just think, too, about working parents who are inhibited by employment expectations in participating substantially in their children's early development, high-level corporate officers who never get real vacations, and modern workers digitally tethered to their jobs 24/7 whether they like it or not.

This individualist/capitalist system's dynamics enormously influence much of social life and have created a culture which makes it very difficult for people to find meaning in their lives outside of that imposed by a consumerist economy. All other human needs and activities are immaterial for it. Doing "the right thing" for their families (balancing work and family needs), communities (balancing individual and community interests), nation (being a team player with other Americans), and planet (being good stewards of the environment in the medium-long terms)--among others-- means public citizens taking lumps in the economic and political worlds.

Being a good parent (especially as a mother), for example, often means being disadvantaged in a career and the workplace. Being a responsible steward of the environment usually imposes a cost disadvantage to a business versus those companies which willingly exploit the environment and can get away with it. Our social lives, in other words are fundamentally diminished and subordinated to an intense and focused game of economic competition at the expense of nearly everything else, including family and social relationships, personal meaning, and even spirituality.

Most of the incentives of the system are directed to two primary activities: *producing* and *buying*. As some people like to say about capitalism, "He who has the most goodies wins! We are what we buy! Live to shop! Etc." The rules of that capitalist environment have modeled a society where nearly everyone is directed in a competition to maximize financial gains in an ongoing series of economic transactions *without stop*. (See Chapter 3, "The Setting," for a detailed explanation of why capitalism cannot survive without a permanent process of consumer transactions no matter if everybody's *every need has been satisfied!*) The only relevant incentive for private citizens is competition and the only relevant morality (short of the criminal laws--there's that pesky government again!) is, "Every Man for Himself." The ultimate justification for even the slimiest of business practices is "Business Is Business!"

Those people who try to obtain a balance between private and public values in their lives and incur economic and political disadvantages are known by the private citizens as chumps, as well as losers. (See Chapter 6 for more discussion of the balancing of private and public interests.) Where are the incentives to simply *be* with family and friends, to relax and enjoy life, to exercise moral duties, etc? If any of those things get accomplished they are done in *spite* of the system, not in conformity with it.

Individualist/capitalist philosophy: No Respect for Economic Losers or for the Little People

From the individual/capitalist winners' perspective, the little people (especially public citizens) get no respect because they don't deserve any. Where the system prizes the "most, biggest, best, rarest, etc.," the little people have none of that. They lack the wealth, power, egos, wills, accomplishments, and "proper" focus to compete and be successful (by individualist/capitalist standards.) Where private citizens and special interests, for example, see the public purse as a buffet table to grab and scarf as much as they

can as quickly as they can, public citizens may think to take only what they need. They will be considerate of the wants and needs of others and of the collective as a whole. Private citizens believe that if public citizens want to direct focus on what they think of as social and community values (and consequently suffer economically and politically) that's *their* free choice and don't blame them. In other words, the system itself defines who deserves respect and, measured by status and outcomes, the little people haven't earned any. That's how things are supposed to work.

Balancing Private And Public Interests

It is important to note that the political-economic elite (as mentioned throughout this book) refers only to those private citizens who selfishly impose their egos and ids upon society, almost as a matter of right. Merely being wealthy and prominent does *not* by itself mean membership in this group. Indeed, as detailed in later chapters, there are wealthy and prominent people who *are* public citizens and may support some or all of the ideas in this book. The key distinction is one of *attitude*—self-interest *or* balanced interests between self and society. (See Chapter 2 for a detailed explanation of the nature of this private citizen elite.)

Individualism and self-interest have their place in personal lives and society, of course, and no one reasonably denies the philosophical legitimacy of anyone to assert their self-interests. But most people (especially public citizens) believe that individualism and self-interest should not occupy nearly the *whole* place. They believe there should be, in addition, sufficient consideration for a common good. They believe that respect for the individual should be balanced with respect for the social groups we live in. After all, we *all* are members of families, neighborhoods and communities, a nation, and a global citizenry.

From one perspective, the individualist/capitalist system makes some sense for those whose set of personality characteristics primarily include self-interest, aggression, and egotism and who possess (or obtain by whatever means) the resources necessary to succeed in political-economic competition, i.e., capital and influence. However, even for these people, the extreme individualism characteristic of capitalist American society (according to philosophers, social scientists, theologians, and all right-minded people with life experience) results in an imbalance in their *own* lives. That status marginalizes subjective elements required for healthy human life, including social and community elements and participation in a common good. As some say, money does not equal happiness! High social rankings do not equal respect! You can't buy real love!

Many of those same philosophers, social scientists, and others believe that excessive individualism and self interest in a capitalist society almost inevitably leads to a set of major social developments:

- 1) The establishment of a dominant political-economic elite and a social hierarchy typically rife with class exploitation, unfairness, and injustice.
- 2) A political-economic context where everyone is compelled to be “in business” for themselves. That means that there is no one, and no institutions, looking out for any common good. That context makes for an anarchic, socially-inefficient, and often dysfunctional system of governance (sound familiar?) which works pretty well only for a small number of (short-sighted) victorious competitors.
- 3) An environment where human meaning is constrained to that of producing and consuming for an *abstract* economic system in which little of *human* importance is valued.
- 4) A social ethos of “Every man for himself” and of winners and losers in business, governance, and social relations which creates a perpetually-stressed population conditioned to be insecure, distrustful, calculating, and cynical.

Politics and Government

Private Citizens vs.

Public Citizens

Private Citizens

- self-interest
- aggressiveness
- special interest
- short-term orientation
- intensity
- less regulation
- government subservience to economics

Public Citizens

- collective interest
- relatively relaxed
- general, collective interest
- mid-long-term orientation
- collective focus
- enough regulation to protect all citizens
- government to protect the general public from the worst characteristics of humanity



ME people



WE people

5) A large segment of the population comprised of intellectuals, artists, “helper”-type personalities, and others who don't fit well (or don't want to fit) into this ideological context and who become compromised, frustrated, resentful, and alienated. (See Chapter 3 for an elaboration of these points.)

Politics and Government

While disagreeing with the analysis presented here some might argue that, regardless, the little people can rely upon the government and informal social rules which act to soften some of the harsher effects of the individualist/capitalist ideology. America is a democracy, after all, a one man-one vote political system in which the so-called little people have a great majority of voters. Arguably, they can influence politics and society as they see fit, if they want to. However, people intellectually honest and knowledgeable about American politics know that the mere formalisms of governance and majority rights hardly make any difference in social outcomes, for the most part. Even the millions of those who may not have a deep intellectual understanding of political science have *feelings* about their experience with the political system and are skeptical about their ability to influence much of anything. The elite seem to always find ways to maintain vastly more influence and obtain vastly better outcomes. How can that be?

In the individualist/capitalist competitive win-loss system it is characteristic of entrepreneurs, businesses, and other private citizens to aggressively seek economic advantages. Too often that means exploiting unfairly environmental capital, public resources, labor, and other elements for individual profits. Those same people, together with other individuals and groups acting for their own interests (i.e., “special interests”) apply similar strategies in the *political* sphere. The American political system is essentially derivative of fundamental capitalist principles and it reflects much of the same characteristics of the capitalist economy.

That is, it favors individualists over social and community groups. It favors self-interest over collective interests. It rewards intensity of interest of even tiny minorities at the expense of majority interests and it is short-term oriented at the expense of mid to long term futures. Self-interest, competition, aggression, and willfulness are the chief virtues of political victors as well as economic ones. (Forget about quality policies, managerial and strategic competences, and public-service duties towards the nation. Those things are for losers!)

Like in the economic world, the “Big Boys” (a political-economic elite) have both the tangible advantages and the overwhelming competitive will to win. They do win most of the time. They get labeled “blue-chip” citizens while those who don't succeed (perhaps for their own good reasons) are just losers and remain little people. In the American political world, where *money and time* to devote to political activities are so important to obtaining influence, the nearly unlimited resources of the elite (via powerful political action committees and the like) are clearly vastly superior to those of any Mary or John. The little people have little or no money to devote to political influence efforts and the same amount of free time. Even though there are multimillions of Marys and Johns, multimillions of nothing *still* adds up to nothing.

Since the system by its very nature allows for only a relatively small proportion of winners, the result is a social hierarchy where multi-millions of little people get the short end of the stick. When they think about it, most of those Marys and Johns either know or suspect that they are being exploited economically, dominated politically, and regularly disrespected at work and in the consumer world. They generally don't like it but mostly feel helpless to prevent it.

Many private citizens, on the other hand, think that the economic and political outcomes that occur for both the elite and especially for the Marys and Johns (as dismal as they are), are only fair and natural. As *they* think of it, the capitalist rules are “The Rules,” and those who play them the best ought to get the benefits. It's just too bad for everyone else. (See Chapter 6 for a discussion of what fairness means for

public citizens.) Others, who understand the limitations and biases of the individualist/competitive worldview, see things differently. They recognize that the little people acquire economic value way less than that which should be expected given their numbers and efforts.

In the political world, too, they see *ostensible* democracy in America really as dominated by heavyweight economic and special interests (particularly the financial elite.) They know that the capitalist set of rules is not natural or even superior to an alternative system. The capitalist rules discourage cooperation, favor only a few, and ignore the humanity of people. They even short the human needs of the elite class itself whether it realizes it or not. (Some of the elite, for example, declare openly that they “rue” the pressures to subordinate families and parenting to business demands. See more on this point in Chapter 2.)

Nevertheless, those rules have been fixed in place by the elite class to favor *their* interests. Even though most of the little people work hard and try to improve their situations they are regularly defeated by a system which is subtly and cleverly rigged against them. (See Chapter 3 for more discussion of *how* private citizens make the rules of the system work in their favor.) The little people have been getting the shaft for a very long time and still are.

Many people think that our governments, especially the national government, are meant primarily to serve and protect the general public but that is not true. The architecture of the American political system as a whole from its 18th-Century beginning was generally intended to protect *individual* interests and *property*. Since the economic elite knows how to assert its own interests more aggressively than everyone else and, of course, has the most property to protect, it has established a political system which best represents its interests. The federal government, which originally was given the function of acting for the national interest (which is not the same as the *public* interest), was deliberately designed to have limited power and even that power, diffused. The institution of Congress was designed to represent *separate geographic* areas (and their elite-dominated local interests) and not any common good. For the Founding Fathers, mostly, the common good was merely an aggregate of the welfare of separate individuals (especially of the elite.)

Furthermore, our governments at every level are remarkably open in the sense that they have multiple access points. That trait facilitates ready influence into them by citizens and groups—not a bad thing in principle for a democracy, of course—but unfortunately that access too often is based upon money and other costs of admission (i.e., “pay for play.”) Those with the resources and dominant will to seek political advantages (as in the economic world) win nearly all of the time over less competitive, less intense, and/or less resourceful others. In addition, those with more focus and intensity (i.e., the elite) readily prevail over even large majorities (i.e., the little people) whose interests are diffused and less coordinated. (See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of the importance of focus and intensity.)

From the view of the individualist/competitive private citizen (and special interests) this openness presents irresistible opportunities. The public purse is viewed by them as an enormous, complaisant sugar tit available for those most willing and able to push to the front of the line. It is typical in our governance, for example, for aggressive private citizens and special interests to: 1) regularly tap into the public till to benefit their own private businesses and projects; 2) fend off regulations intending to prevent or limit them from excessively exploiting the environment, labor, consumers, etc.; and 3) secure special tax breaks benefiting themselves at the expense of everyone else, among other private interest-intended activities. As at an undisciplined family dinner table, “He who grabs gets the most!” (See Chapter 3 for discussion of how special interests dominate much of government by forming “Iron Triangles” capturing policymaking, appropriations, and regulatory processes for their own purposes.)

If everyone in society equally participated in this self-satisfying process, even just to protect themselves, there wouldn't be *any* common good at all. If everyone believes everyone else is grabbing for the goodies then anyone who doesn't want to fall too far behind is logically compelled to try to do the

same. (Some do, some don't.) Some who reluctantly *do* participate in this logic--they have bills to pay and families to provide for, etc., like everyone else, of course--are unhappy about having to do so. Those who don't participate at all in this self interest frenzy lose out economically, politically, and psychologically and resent those who do participate. Ultimately, citizens become cynical, governance non-functional, and society as a whole becomes worse off, although a small minority--the aggressive individualists and capitalists--make out very well, for the most part.

A similar logic applies to honest professional athletes who see their competitors drugging and cheating and have to accept the consequences of their morally correct decisions. That is, they become losers. That is not easy to accept and not fair. Ultimately, sport becomes filled with cheaters or loses credibility with the public. In politics, excessive individualism and competitive attitude logically lead to irrational policymaking and increasing governmental debt. Furthermore, it alienates multi-millions of citizens from the democratic processes. (See Chapter 3 for more discussion of these issues.)

For those people who believe in the common good and are sensitive to community and public values this economic, political, and social situation is awful. It's awful enough in the economic sphere (where it is consistent, at least, with capitalist philosophy and values) but it is worse when it affects governance, too, where it runs *counter* to what is reasonably expected by the public in a developed democracy. To most people, government is meant to protect citizens from the worst traits of humanity and to maintain at least some sense of a national common good. We are all Americans, after all, with a common citizenship, a common purse, and shared histories and culture.

In order for these pervasive private versus public interest conflicts and the geographical parochialism in our existing political processes to be balanced or controlled (at least somewhat), collective rationality would require broad-based, extraordinary statesmanship by our political leadership. That means having a large stable of gigantic personalities like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt exemplifying high standards of competence, leadership, and civic duty. Those kinds of figures are rare, unfortunately, and extraordinary statesmanship is something which has rarely been achieved in the Congress or American government in general (except, maybe, for some significant exceptions relating to waging wars.)

In other words, if we have to count on statesman-like governance we are f*cked! We can't rely on people, even the most upstanding personalities, as the system *itself* dominates personalities. There are no happy endings for any Mr. Smiths we've sent to Washington. We have excessively accessible governments (derivative of the individualistic/competitive economic model) and too few or too ineffective accountability systems which can represent a collective or national interest. We can't realistically expect Congress or any institution of government to regulate itself, especially when they are hounded by special interests at every entrance, day and night.

In both the business world and in government the attentive Everyman has to ask himself: "Why does the morality here in American society seem to be only "Every Man For Himself?" Where is the common good? Where is professional governance? Where are the "brains" of our society? Where is the trust?" How did our country get on the wrong track? How do we get it back on the right track? What *is* the right track?

Some critics see what is going on and understand that what we have is a flawed, irrational, dysfunctional, governance model. It is an 18th-Century model. It is based on Old Ideas (see below.) A well-run, intelligent system of governance will have sufficient consideration of a common good. Policymaking would be made from a *collective perspective* on the basis of facts, data, and reason. Appropriations would be based on merit. Political officials would not be in persistent positions of conflict of interest. There would never be any publicly-funded "bridges to nowhere" as we have now, nor any other similar pet projects, earmarks, and white elephants benefiting only special interests. Someone, or, more likely, some *trustworthy* institution(s), would be thinking of and promoting the common good,

keeping an eye on growing debt levels, holding governmental officials to high standards of character, anticipating the future and planning appropriately, among other important goals of good governance.

The Old Ideas

The individualist-capitalist economic model and the American liberal democratic system of governance are based on a hundreds' year-old political philosophy and entrenched by long-standing habit. Here's what the essence of America was two and a half centuries-plus ago when:

- 1) food and material goods were scarce for most people,
- 2) families worked alone on their farms and were self-sustaining,
- 3) interaction among separate small family-based communities was nil,
- 4) most economic and social activity was distinctly local,
- 5) most people's neighbors were related by blood or marriage, and
- 6) knowledge of common human traits and culture was nearly nonexistent.

Under those special circumstances it made sense for individualism to be the dominant attitude. There wasn't any common good or need for one as there was *little in common*. It made sense for each family to learn to be self-sufficient and for each little community to be self-governing with its own set of officials, operations, funding, budgets, etc. With little in common with anyone else and few or no interactions, there was little need to work together, commingle, regulate much of anything, or explore the values and virtues of collective activities. (The *family* group and the small *family-based* community were major but significant exceptions to the predominance of individualism. See Chapter 3 for more discussion of the relationship of the individual to the collective.)

A Changing World

Material conditions have changed radically in the 230-plus years since then and the divergence of the objective basis of the early political-economic theory and our present global material realities has become great. Now, the chief units of analysis are no longer independent individuals and families but mega-cities, multi-national businesses, and multi-national institutions, governmental and nongovernmental. These mega units are tightly integrated by greatly-evolved transportation, financial, business, communication, administrative, managerial, scientific, and technological systems. People now clearly share way more in common than not and are way more tightly woven together than ever before and in so many ways (whether they like it or not.) Consider (in America and across the globe):

- 1) the dramatically increasing ratio of urban to rural residents,
- 2) the many cities of multi-millions in population,
- 3) the many multi-national corporations,
- 4) the Internet, Facebook, etc.,
- 5) thick, deep, and broad systems of commerce, finance, and management (including the engagement of nearly every person and area around the globe),

The Present State of American Governance and Social Relations

- vast economic wealth inequality and injustice
- divisive and paralyzing partisan politics
- elite class and special interest domination
- substandard global ratings in education, crime, happiness levels, etc.
- low level of consideration for the collective
- low-quality governance
- low trust levels
- high degrees of tribalism
- 18th-Century political institutions and processes
- 18th-Century values of individualism, competition, and achievement

6) McDonald's in Mumbai, Madonna in Moscow, Sikhs in South Carolina, samosas in Sandusky, Toyotas assembled in Texas with parts made in a dozen or more countries, etc.

People across the globe now, by necessity for the most part, live and work together; trade with each other; read the same news and share similar experiences; share much of the same concerns about economics, environment, and politics; and watch the same movies, TV shows, and Internet entertainments. There is now a huge, growing, unavoidable set of business, news, entertainment and cultural, and natural environmental spheres constituting, at least in some sense, a public interest and common good (both theoretical and practical) whether some people recognize or accept it or not. (If they don't they ought to wake up! Failing to address this change out of fear or habit is ultimately a losing strategy and just holds back everyone else.)

That sphere of common interest is expanding continually and nearly everything in the entire world is changing drastically *except* for our systems of governance and formal social relations. While our basic American political system--characterized by local geographical and parochial structures, decentralization and diffusion of governmental power, emphasis on individualism, and dominance of economic elements over the political--is over 230 years old, our transportation, financial, business, communications, administrative, managerial, and science and technology systems are all brand-new (or nearly so!) When all of those early America material elements described above *no longer apply*, as is true now, it makes sense to revisit the fundamental philosophies of government and society and modify them appropriately.

Where are the New Ideas?

There has been *some* progressive development in American governance over the last century or so. The federal government's role in coordinating certain aspects in the financial and economic areas was enhanced in the 1930's and 40's (stimulated by the enormous disruptions and challenges of the Great Depression and the World War.) Its jurisdiction was somewhat broadened in the 1960's and 1970's when it assumed some additional responsibilities vis-a-vis state and local governments. That included influencing some degree of rationalization in the transportation, housing, social welfare, environmental, and even educational areas, but nothing on a level that can be considered *national* coordination or planning. Nor can that measure of enhancement be considered a significant raising of the level of rationalization in governance to match the great advances in *nearly every* other aspect of material life.

For the most part, there has been very little change in about *two dozen generations* in how we Americans govern and relate to ourselves even though there have been vast changes in who we are, where and how we live and work, and how and to whom we interrelate with domestically and internationally. It should be obvious that the individualist/competitive philosophy is deserving of some serious reconsideration. It is likely that many, if not most, fair-minded people will agree that it no longer fits very well with our 21st-Century governance or social relations needs. (Many private citizens, however, who are able to cozily isolate themselves from the riffraff are quite content with their current statuses and outcomes.) When nearly everything else in our world has progressively evolved to a fantastic degree our political-economic system remains as outdated as a black powder, muzzle-loading rifle and a coonskin cap. How odd is that?!

In the 21st Century:

1) Why do we have 500-plus federal legislators each advocating for their local constituents and parochial interests and *not one* person or institution at the national level advocating for a common good? (No, not even the U.S. President--see below.)

2) Why can we generate multi-trillions of dollars in deficits *without a single person or institution* designated as having legal and practical responsibility for them?

3) In the Internet age, with comprehensive communication networks and highly sophisticated management tools, why do we still need *multi-thousands* of separate governments--states, counties, towns, villages, regional entities, and special districts of all kinds--to govern pretty much the same number of people as we've had for generations?

4) Why do we continue to have literally thousands of differing sets of election rules (and ethical standards, compensation schemes, etc.) for our separate governments, departments, districts, and authorities?

5) How can our highly-developed, "leading" nation accept spending double the money per capita of other nations on healthcare and have *worse* medical outcomes and millions of citizens still with *no coverage*?

6) How can the country which has often referred to itself as the "World's Most Advanced Nation" have a political leadership which can barely function as policymakers, which seems to be *directed by* special interests and the popular masses instead of actually *leading* them, and which nearly torpedoed the entire world economy purely out of *partisan pique* (the fiscal cliff debacle of Fall 2011.) You know things are not running well when even tiny Cuba earnestly offered election observers to help us get through the mechanics of running a presidential election in year 2000.

There *are* reasons for this absurdity, of course, but not acceptable ones to a nation which is squandering its national and collective potentials. Like in the economic sphere, political actors in and around the government (including the multitude of special interests) work for *themselves*. Except for a large handful of "good government" activists, some academics, the Occupy Wall Street activists, and some of the Tea Party people, all of whom flail relatively haplessly against the special interest-dominated environment and the collective irrationalities, hardly *anybody* has the will and/or the time and resources to oppose or counter all of this obsolescence and irrationality. The truth is that *nobody at all* right now has enough heft, credibility, and influence to effectively prompt the maturing and smartening of American governance and social relations.

We Don't Have a Real Collective Or a Brain

While individuals, groups, and organizations can be rational for themselves and plan for the future, on a broad (national) basis there is *no* structure in American governance designated or effectively positioned to make rational decisions or plans for the national interest. The problem is that neither our constitutional system nor our indigenous political philosophy supports a "brain," so to speak. We have a highly-decentralized, mostly localized system of governance where there is no real collective presence and political power is highly diffused. The environment supports individualism and competitiveness not the common good or cooperation. What some might consider collective decisions are really only the aggregate of a multitude of specific individual decisions and actions. That aggregation is far from being true collective decision making in nature.

Viewing our cultural history, collective decision-making and national planning are almost *un-American*. Our political leadership, for example, has regularly ridiculed the three and five year national plans of communist Red China and the former Soviet Union as totalitarian and sees having *no planning at all* as a national virtue. Furthermore, there is a thread of opposition to government *itself* seen among many elements in society (although, arguably, that opposition is insidiously promoted by the elite class to further its interests. Remember, less government influence means more space for elite ids and egos to operate.) In essence, American society doesn't support a collective brain institutionally or philosophically. (See Chapter 6 for more discussion of rational collective decision-making and planning and Chapters 8 and 9, "The Program" and "What's Next," for an entire program of major social change.)

Isn't the United States President Capable of and Expected to Act as Our Collective Brain?

No! Not when the powers and influence of preeminent political and executive figures are highly constrained by the decentralization of power deliberately designed into our constitutional system. Furthermore, those powers are quite limited compared with those of Big Business and the private sector (as a matter of political-economic philosophy.) The President has a tiny voice in job creation, for example, and in capital investment decisions. Potentially massive federal expenditures are more the province of Congress (and its special interest friends) than that of the Executive Office. Even potentially creative presidential agendas are circumscribed when presidential candidates must rely on billions of dollars in campaign contributions (mostly from special interests) automatically compromising any credibility to the collective.

When President Obama, for example, accepts nearly \$1 billion of contributions each campaign from Big Business and special interests how can he *not* cater to their interests? He has to make promises to them in exchange for money and if he reneges on those promises he is a one-term president, at best, and would be subject to intense opposition thereafter from any disappointed special interests.

Despite the beliefs of many Americans, and contrary to the traditional teachings of elementary school courses on American government, many, if not most, experts on American government agree that presidential powers are relatively limited and more symbolic than real, the war powers notwithstanding. Former President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, is known for saying (paraphrasing) that, "When I gave orders as a military general they were carried out; when I gave orders as President, nothing got done."

For some experts the Presidency, at worst, functions primarily as a sock puppet for the dominant economic elite acting to facilitate the economic interests of private enterprise, especially that of Big Business. Its function is to symbolically pacify citizens from recognizing (and especially acting against) the extent of the hierarchy of the elite over the lower classes. From this perspective, it is Big Business which regulates the presidency (and government in general) and not the other way around.

If this wasn't at least largely true, would the business elite have entrusted high-level governance to personalities like Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, and Sarah Palin, people not known for being intellectual or executive heavyweights. Their role was to get elected and act as political fronts for the Big-Money Guys behind the scenes. Just look at the historical level of achievement of our presidential personalities. With the exception of Franklin Roosevelt in the distant 1930's, no president has had even a modest impact upon challenging the status of the political-economic elite. Those who actually tried hard to develop even just a *sense* of a collective—Jimmy Carter? Barack Obama?—were or are thoroughly disappointed.

The Weight of Social Habits

Once ruling out the Presidency and the Congress as effective representatives of the collective good or as representing a governance brain, there is absolutely no other person or institution in America which can take on that role. Even if an intellectual consensus was achieved now to modernize the philosophical concepts underlying American governance to: 1) decrease the significance of private citizen and special interest activity, 2) increase consideration of the common good, and 3) enable a brain to guide the collective interest, that effort would still likely be insufficient by itself to bring about the significant changes needed. Good ideas and concepts, even new and modern ones, won't necessarily effect entrenched *habits* of governance and culture.

We have a political-economic system not much different than that of George Washington's administration! That means 230-plus year-old institutions and ways of doing things spread over thousands

of separate jurisdictions. Like with the behaviors of people, governance and social activities develop into habits which, once formed, persist even when the rational basis for their existence changes or disappears. Activities in governance and culture occur in many instances because that's how they have been done over the generations, not necessarily because they make sense now.

Scientific studies show that human behavior operates way more out of habit than any other motivation, including reason. People rely upon habits, in part, probably because they can't give sufficient conscious attention to most of the things around them because there are *too* many things to attend to and they happen too fast. People have to go into automatic pilot, so to speak, most of the time just to get by. Good habits, of course, are useful in everyday life but are hindrances when the circumstances which made them valuable change.

People generally don't like change and breaking old habits even when people want to is hard. But some people *do* break bad habits, sometimes with outside help. Whatever it takes! If something is that important then it deserves focus and discipline to achieve it. At the governmental level, for example, we should not maintain an 18th-Century governance system just because we are used to it and it will be hard to rework. We should not rely on tough guy habits or emotions to wage wars, as we have been doing. We want to establish a process where it is necessary to stop, think clearly, and make deliberate decisions to get what we want done right.

There are both good and bad habits, of course. In the personal world, for example, exercising every day and making checklists of things to do are good habits; smoking and persistently complaining about life events without attempting changes, are bad ones. In political culture, emphasizing the rule of law is a good habit. A governmental organization—a bureaucracy--which (while sacrificing optimal decision-making) processes large volumes of customer demands well and consistently is a type of good habit. Maintaining multi-thousands of separate governments and thousands of sets of electoral rules in the Internet Age is a bad habit. Condoning persistent conflicts of interest by legislators and other elected officials, especially when the public purse is being regularly siphoned off and remains relatively unprotected, is a *really* bad habit.

Good habits may become bad ones when circumstances change but the behavior doesn't because it is fixed into practice. Either that obsolete habit is not recognized as obsolete for whatever reasons or there is *no* person or institution (as in American governance) which has sufficient "ownership" or jurisdiction to make the correct adjustments. (People with jobs in that obsolete bureaucracy or have business relationships with it have, of course, individual incentives to maintain it regardless of its failings.) No congressman, for example, wants to take ownership over serious reform of the tax code to eliminate outdated tax breaks (e.g., mortgage interest deductions, ethanol production incentives) as he is likely to butt heads with powerful special interests which savor those benefits. He will suffer an electoral defeat in his district in short order. No elected official wants to take on comprehensive budget reforms where powerful special interests—the pharmaceutical industry, Big Farmers, the military-industrial complex, for example,—are easily capable of torpedoing his efforts as well as his employment status. The built-in incentives in the political system favor maintaining habits, even *bad* habits.

Of course, even if there were recognition and sufficient ownership of all these matters, breaking bad habits when the time is right is hard even when the will and personal capabilities or institutional support *are* present. Like someone earnestly planning to quit smoking or to lose weight after New Year's Day, variables other than reason can stymie those intentions. For example, transitioning from paper records to digital ones in business or governmental offices often results in resistance from those directly affected, as either they don't want to or can't adjust to the new ways of doing things. Trying to close or consolidate underused post offices is resisted by noisy folks and their governmental representatives who just don't want to change their driving paths. Habits are powerful forces. They control, likely, most of our everyday personal lives and a good deal of governance.

Another example of the bad habits is the persistence of governmental jurisdictions. New York State alone has over 3400 governments--counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, utility districts, special jurisdictions, public authorities, etc.--each with its own set of officials, structures, rules, budgets, and elections and other processes. The current set of jurisdictions is pretty much the same set (or larger) as that of 100 years ago. There have been numerous efforts by some good government advocates, taxpayer groups, and academics to rationalize and streamline governments, but overall, they have amounted to little. And, New York State is no special case. Each of the states offer plenty of examples of similar excess of governments (and bureaucracies, processes, and costs) which exist, partly, because of social habit. (See below, for other, less commendable reasons why these governments persist.)

a) Do we still need 3400-plus executive leaders (with staffs), 3400-plus legislative bodies (with staffs), and 3400-plus budgets in New York State when we have advanced transportation and communication systems and the Internet?

b) Do we still need fifty state governors (with staffs), fifty state legislatures (with staffs), and fifty state DMV's when we have advanced transportation and communication systems and the Internet? (No disrespect to the Dakotas and Idaho, but why do these states still exist?)

c) Do we need thousands of separate sets of election rules and processes for jurisdictions all over the country when a well-conceived, uniform elections *template* can be shared very easily? (See Chapter 8 for a discussion of how uniform templates for all kinds of institutions and processes can easily rationalize and modernize a lot of aspects in the public and private sectors.)

Even if we assume that all of these jurisdictions made sense at one time, given extensive developments in transportation and communications alone, and not even considering the immense power of the Internet and a cost-conscious political environment, it should be obvious that mergers, eliminations, broad implementation of uniformity standards, and other similar rationalizations make very good sense now. Rationalization of jurisdictions and bureaucratic processes would save a lot of taxpayer money and time, decrease complexity, and increase efficiency. It would be smart and efficient and responsible, for example, to have model sets of compensation programs, performance standards, conflict of interest rules, ethical standards, etc. for all or most public servants having essentially the same duties and qualifications. Aren't the types of conflicts of interest, self-dealing, nepotism, etc. the same in Alaska as in Florida? Or in school districts and highway departments everywhere?

It's hard to conceive why any governmental body has to formulate its own individual ethics code when a single well-designed code (template) covering conflicts of interest, self-dealing, overreaching, and the like should be sufficient, *unless* someone wants to be able to get away with hard to uncover fiscal shenanigans. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of rational governance, efficiencies, uniformity, and simplification.) Currently, governmental reorganization rationalizations, efficiencies, and cost savings are not seriously on the agenda of anyone in a situation able to do something about it, at least to any significant degree. One (bad) reason is force of habit. Another is an absence of a deliberative and disciplined institution (i. e., a brain and/or a program) to take on the challenge of putting these things right.

Other (bad) reasons for calcified governance structures and behaviors (discussed more fully in Chapter 3) include governmental officials clinging to established fiefdoms and perquisites for selfish (personal) reasons; special interests maintaining cozy contractual relationships with local governmental entities and enjoying the economic benefits; political parties using these jurisdictions and organizations as patronage repositories for relatives, friends, and supporters; etc. Dealing with *these* kinds of issues to effect change will require a different set of strategies. (See Chapter 7, "What Do We Want," for more discussion of what can be done to fix these problems.)

As with individuals, appeals to reason alone to effect habit changes in governance and culture may not be sufficient. Changing these habits may require adaptations of personal change therapies—cognitive and behavioral approaches and other types of conditional strategies—to modify or eliminate entrenched habits and to form new and better ones. There needs to be a structural, permanent element in governance charged with “being Smart” about recognizing the need for change. It has to be armed with strategies—psychological approaches, conditioning techniques, etc.—to implement them. Those strategies would include pushback from the program's Local Council especially against private citizen motivated resistance to the change proposed here. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of change strategies by the Local Council and otherwise and for details of the Planning Council, an institution designed to deal with governmental change.)

The most significant (bad) reason, arguably, for the continuation of our 18th-Century vintage political structures and processes is that the individualist/competitive philosophy and the decentralization and diffusion of power in government works very well (for the most part) *for private citizens and the elite class*. If they didn't, they would have used their overwhelming power and influence to have imposed something different. From their point of view, the current system is fine as it is as they know how to play it and most ordinary people don't. What happens with the rest of us, to the collective, and to future generations is not very important to them as long as they get *theirs* now.

Many of Us Are Sick of What We Are

We've described our current American society as:

- 1) having an imbalance of private versus public interest,
- 2) failing to provide enough breathing space for essential human values and meanings,
- 3) being disrespectful of public citizen values and status,
- 4) lacking a brain, and
- 5) maintaining a governance system irrationally inflexible from generations of habit.

Except for the elite, which is still pretty much content with things as they are, most people find this to be a pretty sorry situation for most of us and a real squandering of potential for the American nation.

Surveys of Americans show that the vast majority dislike the consequences of the structural weaknesses noted above where:

- 1) the long-term performance of American society on a whole range of political and social achievement standards—education, employment, health, violence and crime, etc.—is inferior to and declining significantly compared to many other nations of the world (with the *financial performance of the elite class* a major exception),
- 2) special interest activity has nearly totally crowded out of society sincere collective values and actions,
- 3) quality governance is nearly impossible due to a structural partisanship situation which defies good personal intents, quality of character, and abilities of many of the participants,
- 4) trust in politicians and the political system as a whole, Big Business, and nearly every traditional authority institution in America is at historically low levels,

5) partisan politics has become as intense and cutthroat as capitalist economics, and

6) there is an absurd and embarrassing level of vitriol in the relationship between groups (which are way more alike than not whether they want to recognize it or not) which identify as either conservative or liberal. (See Chapters 2 and 6 for an explanation of how the conservative/liberal characterization is way less meaningful than the private/public citizen one.)

Most Americans (and all public citizens) want:

- 1) a society which appreciates and respects a sense of a common good,
- 2) professionalism, statesmanship, and competence in government,
- 3) a fair adjustment in the wealth/income gaps among the classes; and
- 4) an end to the intense special-interest nature of politics.

In addition, many people resent the fact that the more community-minded public citizens receive way less respect and rewards from society than the self-interested, aggressive, private citizens. (See Chapter 7 for an elaboration of these wants.) After all, we are living in a period where great discoveries and innovations in the *natural* and *scientific* worlds make news headlines quite often. We don't have much like that in the social sphere. Where are the great innovations and accomplishments in how we govern and relate to each other? The only notable innovation in many generations may be the American Constitution in the late 1700's and (on a lesser level) the New Deal program nearly ninety years ago. After hundreds of years of social experience are we to infer that progress in those areas has basically plateaued at an 18th-Century level of philosophies and institutions? Hopefully not!

Arguably, there is a major shortage in contemporary America of qualities of what can (and should?) be expected of *21st-Century* governance and social relations:

- 1) a collective perspective,
- 2) class and group fairness,
- 3) collective rationality,
- 4) professionalism in government,
- 5) efficiency from a collective's point of view,
- 6) statesmanship,
- 7) good character in public servants and Big Business leadership,
- 8) sincerity in government, business, and social relations, and

9) an appropriate level of social decency. (When the meaner-spirited members of the elite think of Americans receiving aid from the government—active and disabled soldiers, the seriously handicapped, the involuntarily unemployed, retired senior citizens, children, and the working poor—as self-pitying freeloaders without self respect, that indeed, is *indecent* by nearly everyone's standards.)

While most Americans probably have not thought about it in this way, what they probably want (in an overall sense) is a smarter, more rational, and fairer society. Maintaining a 230-plus year-old political-

economic system in the 21st-Century is not right. It is not working for most people. At worst, it is a disgrace and an embarrassment.

We've Tried to Fix This Before

Throughout history, people who have been treated unfairly, exploited, and disrespected have clamored for change. They get upset. And frustrated. And angry. Some try to do something about it:

- 1) they call and write to their political representatives,
- 2) they vote out political incumbents and vote in new blood,
- 3) they agitate for structural and procedural reforms and even total replacement of the system,
- 4) they wish for magical new leadership or new circumstances, or for miracles, or just haplessly rail at government and at anyone else they think responsible,
- 5) others merely mutter complaints, take out their frustrations on innocents, or use various methods of psychological escape like drugs, alcohol, or popular diversions. Many do nothing at all, they just suck it up and take it.

There have been a number of popular movements in America for major reform (usually in the form of the lower classes versus the elite) since the ratification of the original U.S. Constitution. That includes the 19th-20th-Century trust busting efforts and the various Progressive Movements; the formation of the great labor unions in the 1930s-50's period; the civil rights and feminist movements; the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street agitations; and (on a smaller scale) the current LGBT efforts for equal rights. All of those efforts were/are motivated by feelings of unfairness, injustice, frustrated ideals and hopes, and lack of respect.

Some of these movements have (more or less) correctly identified the true source of their problems as the class hierarchy and the capitalist political-economic system (e.g., the Progressivists, trust-busters, organized labor, Occupy.) Others--advocates for race, gender, sexual orientation rights--have identified their statuses (also correctly) as due to social ignorance and long-standing social habits. Most of the Tea Party folks have legitimate beefs with the economic/political status quo although they have primarily (and wrongly) blamed government itself for their unhappiness. We can say wrongly because if the political system and governmental institutions are indeed derivative of the underlying economic system (which itself, is dominated by an elite) as asserted here, the correct target is *that elite* and the *philosophical system* which supports it, not governance. Government, in the way it is supposed to work, is actually *the Great Friend* of the lower classes. (See Chapter 2 for more discussion of these groups and their issues. See Chapter 9 for more discussion of the positive role of government.)

People will argue over how well the *anti-ignorance* and *social habit* reform movements--civil rights, feminism, and sexual orientation--have succeeded but there is plenty of good evidence that they *have* accomplished a great deal. They have changed statuses, formal laws, and social attitudes although they may not have fully accomplished what they want. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of how these movements act as models for the broader, more ambitious movement contemplated here.)

On the other hand, those movements which have targeted the *economic*--the class hierarchy and the capitalist economic system--are clear failures, having won some (short-term) battles, perhaps, but hardly accomplishing most of their goals, especially considering the long term. The most successful of these has been the labor movement. Having blossomed in the mid-20th Century it achieved great things, like

fueling the development of the contemporary American middle class, but it has dissipated since the 1980's and is nearly impotent now.

The elite class developed a variety of responses to those populist opposition economic movements. Typically they involved a combination of resistance, using their control of government and the police power to undercut legal rights and activist leaders, and making false promises of change to pacify much of the populace. (Notably, the elite class did *not*, for the most part, resist in any deliberate way the ignorance and habit-based movements—feminism and LGBT rights, and even civil rights—the Confederate revolt in the mid-19th Century excepted—as *those* moments did not threaten much to alter the economic hierarchy or the governing philosophy.)

Those strategies have worked well for them. They have found sufficient ways to resist change and to appease the angry little people. They have learned, also, to be proactive. Even now, for the umpteenth time since 1789, significant economic and political change is still being falsely promised to the little people by the elite class, their cronies, and proxies (e.g., politicians.) “Change!” has even become a permanent campaign cliché now for candidates (including elite-proxies) for elective office, including incumbents! How many times can they cry wolf, so to speak, and maintain credibility? Nearly every time, it seems. Their clever manipulations cynically and cruelly manipulate the beaten-down, hapless, and desperate electorate masses and effectively work their foolery on much of the public. When elected, and feeling compelled by the rabble to “do something” for them, the elite-proxies enact *symbolic* legislation full of bogus high-mindedness but empty of content (like ethics reforms and alternative minimum taxes.) It's yet another strategy which sadly has been highly effective nearly every time in mollifying the lower classes.

The bottom line is that despite all of the promises, bleatings of reform, false hopes, assertions of rising economic tides and bigger economic pies, and the ideological deceptions and misdirections no significant change in the structures, hierarchy, balances, or outcomes in society among the classes have occurred, nor in how we govern ourselves. As always, the same people (the elite and private citizens) ride the tides and get the pies and the same little people get water-drenched while holding a few crumbs.

This is America in year 2016--a nation which has experienced enormous financial, business, technological, medical, and scientific advances over just the past century alone with great expectations of more. We are on the cusp of major leaps forward in so many areas relating to “object”—i.e., physical things. But when it comes to “subject” things--people, values, emotions, psychology (those elements which entail governance and social relations)--we haven't progressed very much in our history. (See Chapter 6 for more discussion of the discrepancy in *object* versus *subject* progress.) We still have the same basic economic system as in the 18th-Century, have the same political system as in the 18th-Century, have had the same class hierarchy nearly forever, and still have most of the same macro-level social problems, i.e., economic injustice, serious group conflicts, employment-related deficiencies and insecurities, educational disparities, etc.

Except for a brief period of progress for the middle class in the mid-20th Century, the little people have remained little people. The fact that the lower-class now has a somewhat superior material level (i.e., consumer goods) to those in the age of Thomas Paine is hardly satisfying. This status doesn't seem right especially when even the little people are better educated, healthier, have more experience of social matters, and have access to more information about others than ever before.

Maybe Human Beings Can't Change!

Maybe as a society we (or the little people as a group) haven't tried hard enough, or long enough, or have never had the right perspective to guide reform efforts. But, perhaps, as some people believe, there is a biological or genetic human nature which is fixed. That means we will permanently live in a state of

social hierarchy, sloppy governance, and group frictions. After all, we know that people have always had selfish tendencies and been laden with irrational emotional and psychological makeups. We have had a history of being relentlessly tribal, as well, resulting in continuous group frictions. We *can't*, skeptics say, improve the essential “quality” of people or how we relate to each other, not even by education, experience, training, technology, guidance, or conditioning.

These pessimists, including Classical Conservatives, will refer to the global historical record—wars, crime, exploitation, hate-based events, and discriminations of all kinds (all which have occurred at roughly the same rates over the past 2000 years) and conclude, “No! We can't improve humans; the flawed *essence* of human nature is a fact of life.” They will argue that there have been no obvious changes in human nature and behaviors, even though educational levels are clearly higher. Furthermore, scientists now even have some evidence of biological factors which are thought to hardwire human behavior towards aggression, social hierarchies, and tribalism which characteristics may resist alteration or control. There should be modest expectations, they say, of what can be accomplished in governance and social relations. Social progress, if it occurs at all, will be slow, modest, and irregular. Our current capitalist, liberal democracy situation even with all of its warts may be as good as it gets.

Others, on the other hand, dispute those positions and believe in human development and progress. Optimists, including Classical Liberals, can point to:

- 1) increasing educational levels,
- 2) development of political philosophies over the centuries rejecting feudalism, monarchism, and totalitarian governments and introducing democratic institutions and the rule of law,
- 3) vastly increased technological and production capabilities promising to provide for *everyone's material* needs,
- 4) continuing, incremental reduction of tribalist conflicts among groups due to the positive effects of economically-compelled and privately-sponsored interaction and globalization,
- 5) increased legal protections against discrimination for socially trivial differences among people (race, gender, etc.),
- 6) increasing numbers of cross-national cooperative structures like the United Nations, the European Community, multinational trade organizations, multinational corporations, and the like, and
- 7) at least several important historical models of major *social reframing*--specifically, the civil rights movement in America and elsewhere, the feminist movement, and the evolving toleration of differing sexual orientations (currently in rapid transition.)

And, when essential economic insecurity is no longer present and people have some ability to devote focus to other things--like governance and social relations-- the advances could be dramatic.

The major social reframing movements noted above will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, “The Back Story,” and Chapter 8 but they are solid evidence that even deeply entrenched social attitudes and habits can be changed by deliberate means (even if over relatively long time periods.) Many conflicting social attitudes and habits are primarily a matter of subjective *mindset* involving elements of limited perspectives, environmental conditioning, habit, and ignorance. The lesson of the civil rights, etc., movements is that those things can be positively addressed by alternative perspectives, education, positive environmental conditioning, and formation of new habits.

On the other hand, *economic* affairs (in the main, but not exclusively) involve competition for material goods where there is either an insufficient supply or a hierarchy of value, or both. These situations result in “two dogs, one bone” issues which invite sometimes unavoidable competition and conflict. These kinds of issues and the capitalist economic context in general are *way more* difficult to significantly change and there are *no* comparable historical models in the economic sphere of social reframing the type of which were seen in the civil rights, etc., movements. In fact, the capitalist economic system *may not* be susceptible at all to major change for a number of compelling reasons. Arguably, it has virtues we would want to keep in *any* case--the pricing system, much of its self-managing character, profit incentives, etc. (See Chapter 3 for more discussion of the *virtues* of capitalism and its almost inevitable role even in advanced societies.)

That being the case, there are compelling reasons why the movement contemplated here calls for *pushback* and not *replacement* of the individualist/capitalist system. The system is not going away and it's not capable of significant reform. We need to *work around it*, so to speak. The significant changes contemplated by any feasible social change movement will be in the imposition of a new public citizen *attitude* and a new set of *complementary public values* set against the private citizen attitude and individualist/capitalist values now dominating us. (See below, and Chapters 5, “The Functions of the Program” and Chapter 8 for more discussion of pushing back capitalism.)

The Vision and the Plan

1. A new social ethos with a new set of public values
2. A set of informal National Councils representing a collective perspective and collective fairness
3. The Councils:
 - National
 - Policy and Problem Solving
 - Planning
 - Information
 - Support
 - Local

The National University
4. The American Team, Comprised of Public Citizens, balancing private and public (Collective) Interests
5. The Shadow Government pushing back Individualism/Capitalism
6. Smart Governance and Professionalism

We Can Fix This Thing!

There are now reasons to believe that public citizens can radically improve the state of American governance and social relations and even flatten the private–public citizen hierarchy in society in significant ways, ways which were not available to proponents of change at any other time. Progressively-minded people now have access to unprecedented levels of information and data from online databases. They have new tools like the Internet and social media applications more capable than any communication means ever before. They have ways of organizing and mobilizing that were unheard of in prior times. They also can draw on historical models where social attitudes and perspectives (e.g., civil rights and feminist) *have been* radically altered.

Circumstances seem to be right for a new social movement to address most people's needs for Balance, Meaning, and Respect and to advance America into becoming a true 21st-Century nation. Certainly the events of the recent Arab Awakening movement where long-standing authoritarian regimes in the Middle East have been toppled by popular citizen uprisings are inspiring. The Occupy-style movements in America, Hong Kong, and elsewhere have also inspired many people everywhere to a new combination of pride and demand for respect. Similarly, rumbles of discontent and demands by ordinary citizens for change can be heard in the public protests of the Russian, Turkish, and Brazilian lower classes, the American Tea Party movement, and in the continuing insistence for respect by lower-class people (e.g., populist political movements and otherwise) nearly everywhere around the globe. There is a growing sense that it is time for the ditching and/or drastically reforming human relationship structures (political, economic, and social) which have not advanced much for hundreds of years.

The Start of a New Social Movement

Most Americans want real change but don't know how to make it happen. There is a constant drumbeat of critique of our status quo and calls for change from much of the general public (conservative, liberal, and other.) A lot of media-based political analysts and commentators, public intellectuals, academics, and labor and (some) business leaders, too, are clamoring for something better. We even have some elected officials voluntarily leaving cushy jobs in government service because of its dysfunction, extreme partisanship, and distasteful atmosphere. However, there are few, if any, worthwhile theoretically-sound and practical ideas on *how* to effect major change and what that change should look like. (See below, and especially Chapter 4 for more discussion of change ideas and movements.)

If enough of these frustrated people coordinated into a type of social movement with: 1) a realistic vision, 2) a well-conceived plan, 3) sufficient resources, and 4) the persistent will to reframe American governance and society in a way suitable for the 21st-Century they could lead America to becoming a Great Nation once again. Even better, we could be a *21st-Century Great Nation*. A 21st-Century Great Nation is one which: 1) balances individual interests with collective ones; 2) finds a welcoming place for human (not merely economic system) meanings; 3) institutes a brain to make decisions and plans for the collective; 4) smartly embraces reason, science, data, and technology for *social world* purposes; 5) embraces inclusivity; and 6) elevates social character and public values into prominent status. (See Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 for elaboration of these elements.)

This Action Manual starts a story of how the frustrated little people, especially public citizens, accomplish real change. These public citizens become protagonists of the story and rewrite the existing narrative of individuals living in the absence of any common good and competing dog-eat-dog into a new paradigm of society having a more balanced, nuanced mix of individualism and the common good. They insist that human meanings be respected as much as production and consumption considerations are. They develop a newly "edited" cultural setting where the small life contributions of ordinary Marys and Johns are appreciated and rewarded.

One major narrative theme is the implanting of a brain into our governance systems which will make rational policies, decisions, and plans for the nation. It will enhance and protect the common good. That brain will operate with a set of formal institutions, designed and run by public citizens themselves operating *outside of and in spite of* existing governments, acting as a shadow government. (See Chapter 8 for details of these formal institutions—the six major National Councils.)

The story offers narrative strategies for breaking archaic habits of governance and replacing them with those more suitable for the 21st-Century. It shows how the little people tamper down Big Businesses' domination over consumer and labor markets and offers “bridging” strategies to bring together groups now distinguished by essentially trivial differences (race, gender, religion, geography, etc.) into an inclusive American Team. Having that new affinity group will strengthen our social fabric, reinforce a sense of common good, and defuse unnecessary and irrational conflicts which are not only damaging to the participants themselves but also weaken the already meager political strength of the little people. One might think of this idea as *our* cultural version of the European Community where multiple nations, regions, and ethnic groups have developed a new citizenship. That already has made a difference for them in reducing wars and group frictions (among other benefits.)

The story offers a way for millions of Marys and Johns to write their *own* personal narratives and to flourish as public citizens using latent creativity and energies discouraged and suppressed by our current system. (See Chapter 8 for an explanation of how citizens supported by a new social ethos can blossom creatively.) Perhaps most importantly, it suggests how public citizen characters can establish a dramatic new set of public values--the primary ones being Balance, Meaning, and Respect to *counterbalance*, at least, the dominant private citizen values of individualism and competition. The Action Manual's Chapter 4 and its "Narrative" chapters (Chapters 5-9) are a roadmap of sorts showing where we are now as a society and why, points to where a lot of people (public citizens) want to be, and explains how we get from here to there.

After the full story outline is laid out here, *what happens next*—the real life character developments, the chapter narratives, the scenes, the details, the dramatic arcs, and the ending (especially)--depends on you readers (and followers.) You are the “good guys” who will flesh out by your actions narratives of a more balanced, fairer, more meaningful, and Smarter society. Some of you readers may, indeed, become public citizen *heroes*. (See Chapter 9 for details of the roles available in the program and how you might fit in.)

Unlike most stories, there are no real bad guys (as will be explained in Chapter 2) although there *will* be serious opposition to the story's progressive narratives with drama, conflict, suspense, and thrills! That narrative tension will come from: 1) private citizens and others who are content with the way things are now, 2) those disposed by irrational motivations to oppose progress and rationality, 3) chronic objectors who oppose nearly everything new almost as a matter of principle, and 4) the heavy drag of social habit.

By asking readers and supporters to participate the Action Manual it truly becomes an *interactive* story and a *real-time experiment* in contemporary human relations:

1. Will public citizen protagonists guided by intelligence; heart; pride; new tools for organizing and activism; and demands for Balance, Meaning, Respect, and fairness stand up as an effective counter-weight to private citizens and the individualist/competitive ethos now in control?

2. Will public citizens create a new and better society and a system of governance that most people will be proud of?

3. Will there be an explosion of suppressed creativity and energy from a public citizenry inspired by a new paradigm of social life which rewards them for public citizen activities and for having good social

The National Character Program

A New Social Ethos - Balance, Meaning, Respect, and Smart governance and social relations

A New Set of Public Values

- Collective fairness
- Trustworthiness in governance, business, and society
- Pride in oneself regardless of status
- Economic efficiency and meaning from a collective's perspective
- Enhanced respect for reason and science
- Consideration of multiple perspectives
- Humility in social engineering
- Insistence on quality of character
- Tolerance for trivial differences
- Inclusiveness

The Shadow Government

The National Council

The Brain

The Policy and Problem-Solving Council

The Planning Council

The Information Council

The Support Council

The Local Council

The American Team Players

The National University

character?

4. Will we leave a more advanced, sophisticated society better suited for the futures of our children and grandchildren and planet when we are gone?

5. Will we have accomplished something *no other people have done*?

6. Will the little people actually even the score, in a sense, with the elite?!

These are great narrative arcs! If you, the reader, feel that you have all the pride you think you can have in your system of governance and in your social communities—your neighborhood, your workplace, your nation, your planet—and in yourself as a member of the human race, and if you already feel you receive all the respect you deserve, then this book is *not* for you. This book is for those who want and deserve more, who believe intelligent people of good character can make a big difference in their own lives and in how we govern and relate to one another. It is for those who, with a (this?) vision and a (this?) plan (i.e., the National Character Program) will demand more and *make it happen*.

The National Character Program

What follows is an outline of an ambitious, audacious plan designed to change in important ways the economic, political, and social environment in America which is not working well for most people and never will. Ultimately, it is a sober rethinking of the fundamental political, economic, and social principles which have conditioned our lives, in most part, without much change from 230-plus years ago.

Vision, organization, and technology

That the goal is ambitious is obvious enough but the audacity is in believing that a vintage economic-political system which has been unsuccessfully challenged many times before by all kinds of reformers can be changed *now*. What has been lacking in previous change movements, maybe, is a theoretically-sound, comprehensive vision, a highly-focused (re?)organization of resources and effort, and a set of (primarily) technological tools not available ever before. The vision is of a new paradigm of society where a new set of public citizen values (“rules of the game”) are established *alongside* those of individualism and capitalism. The twin sets of citizen attitudes—private and public—will coexist in an (uneasy) balance. The focus involves coordinating (mostly) existing resources—progressive and good government organizations, activists representing a spectrum of social views regarding change, public citizens, new information sources and more, using new technologies.

The values and the organizational focus will generate a movement that will be like a state of mind or an *attitude* in some sense, commanding attention. That attitude will fuel the empowerment of a powerful public citizen network—the Local Council—which will act as the primary pushback mechanism. (See Chapter 8 for details on how this will work.) It will leverage the numerical superiority of the little people and their consumer power to influence governance, business, and culture. A set of five other national councils will provide strategic focus, policymaking and planning, problem solving, communications, support, and social conditioning and education functions.

Agents for change can now draw upon fantastically capable new technologies like: 1) software-hardware combinations like the Internet and mobile digital devices; 2) advanced organizational and communication tools including social media; 3) advanced management and administrative capabilities; and 4) a fast growing virtual world containing all kinds of useful databases. All of these things together facilitate obtaining and using information of all kinds (some never before available to anyone but insiders) and ideas in order to inform, educate, and mobilize activists and program supporters. Use of that

information can expose, prompt, pressure, and shame (as appropriate) private citizens, special interests, and obsolete institutions to wake up, shake up, and straighten out, so to speak. Those people will be guided to accommodate the needs and concerns of public citizens. If they don't do so voluntarily they will be subject to pushback. (See Chapter 5 for more discussion of program strategies and tactics.)

Values

Crucially important for potential supporters will be the appeal of a new set of public values. Social science research and historical experience show that value considerations are more likely to motivate people than appeals to reason or even self-interest. Most people will feel more strongly about fairness, respect, and moral issues than about anything else, sometimes even sacrificing their own lives for those values. For example, the popular protests in the summer of 2013 in Russia, Turkey, Brazil, and the Middle East are notable more for their emphasis on pride and dignity issues than on the more customary tangible deprivations. The public values driving this program for individual citizens are appealing in their own right, of course, but they have secondary value also in that they span parts of the value sets of conservative, liberal, libertarian, *and* socialist positions. That means that they may bridge large differences and fair-minded people (having even disparate political positions) could find a comfortable place in this movement. These public values may draw people together, preferably into membership in the American Team group. (See Chapter 9 for more explanation of bridging philosophies and strategies.)

The individualist-capitalist system we operate under now has its own set of values, of course, but they are not what we mean when we think of human or public values. They reflect abstract system needs, not human needs. People are subordinated to a *system* instead of the other way around. That seems upside down. What set of values, for example, compels the destruction of milk, food, and other consumer goods just to support a price structure for producers when real needs of children and the poor remain unsatisfied? What kind of values promote exploitation of consumer insecurities to sell products of little or no real worth? (See Chapter 3 and 6 for more discussion of the logic of capitalism.)

Public citizen values are human values and provide the social and community, psychological and emotional, and spiritual elements systematically absent from the individualist/capitalist system. Things like work-family balance; work-recreation balance; a recognition of “enough,” in the consumer sphere instead of “more, more, more”; respect for the environment and future generations; and more. (See Chapter 6 for an elaboration of the difference between private public citizen values.)

The values that a modernized, 21st-Century governance system ought to have include:

- 1) a balance of private–public interests,
- 2) a fairness standard based on an inclusive set of viewpoints of all classes and groups of society,
- 3) trustworthiness in governance and the private sector,
- 4) a reward system for public citizenship activities,
- 5) pride in oneself regardless of social position,
- 6) economic efficiency conceived from a common good perspective,
- 7) heightened respect for reason and science,
- 8) recognition and consideration for the *multiple* perspectives relevant to all knowledge and experience,

9) humility about the limitations of human knowledge and governance,

10) insistence on quality of character, and

11) tolerance for people differences—race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, geographical origin, and similar--which have no rational basis for disparate treatment in governance or social relations.

Problem Solving

The movement's concepts of the modernization and smartening of governance, in large part, are just an *approach to problem solving*. We can identify all kinds of substantive problems in America like a dysfunctional Congress and executive branch, corruption, street and white-collar crime, unaffordable healthcare costs, and the like but the program doesn't try to address these things directly. It doesn't promote or support a specific set of political or partisan positions on nearly anything. It doesn't take many substantive positions at all. It *does* want whatever problems and issues we have addressed in a *smart* way—relying on deliberation, facts and data, reason and logic, and a collective perspective.

Many of our major problems are due, in part at least, to the absence of a collective perspective. A collective perspective may make skillful potential into actual success. Imagine, for example, a football team made up of independent egos all wanting to be the “star,” without coaching, guidance, coordination, and *team* spirit. It will likely be a horrible failure and an embarrassment. The big question is not why does American society resemble this kind of team but why we continue to tolerate it?

The program aims to fix those defects. It acts as a corrective to the limited perspectives of our existing system which emphasizes the perspectives of independent people as mere citizens of a nation without including a collective one of the nation itself and an American Team. It brings a more philosophically valid way of thinking about complex matters utilizing multiple perspectives rather than be content, as we are now, with independent and limited perspectives operating in the *knowledge* world like special interests do in the political-economic one. Those program elements together equate to Smart governance.

The expectation is that if the *approach itself* is correct--i. e., being smart, inclusive, collectively-focused, and wise (meaning based on good *judgment*--see Chapter 9 for more discussion of this point)—then quality substantive policymaking will happen, good executive decisions will be made, and good outcomes for the collective will occur. We almost certainly will, for example, model our healthcare system after that of most of the rest of the developed world. We will transition the criminal justice system's “war” on illegal drugs into a social/medical issue. We will not wage wars based on partisan politics dynamics or on the egos of our leaders and/or the ids of the elite class.

If we focus on fixing *the process*, so to speak, then better substantive *outcomes* are likely to occur. Given this, among participants in our democracy, there will still be plenty of good faith, legitimate disagreements on specific policies and issues. No mere process, regardless of how comprehensive and good, can be expected to result in consensus all of the time. Some issues, too, will still be two dog-one bone issues. Those will have to continue to be resolved by our traditional liberal-democratic decision-making system, i.e., constitutional strictures and majority rule (albeit in a reformed setting-see Chapter 9 for how this may look.)

Pushback

The means to major change is by pushback *against* (but not replacement) of a dominant economic-political ideology of individualism/capitalism and obsolete systems of governance and social relations. The pushback comes from:

1) creating a shadow government of new institutions--the set of six national councils--run by public citizens themselves to provide the deliberation, rationality, planning, and collective perspective lacking in our present governmental institutions,

2) an activist Local Council (one of the six national councils) which will monitor formal government and the Big Business world and influence them to conform to public citizen values,

3) making a new set of public values a major focus of governance and social life,

4) asserting a new collective sense of fairness,

5) creating an accessible system of “templates”—guides, checklist, forms, etc.—to help people and organizations at every level of society to act smarter, better, more efficiently, and more meaningfully,

6) a reward system for public citizen activities and a permanent conditioning process to help people become better citizens, workers, public servants, parents, and community members, and

7) establishing an American Team group of public citizens acting as sort of a new affinity group for those supporting the movement, while making inclusiveness a public value. (See Chapters 8 and 9, below, for comprehensive details of the program and how to make it work.)

Conservative, Liberal, and Radical All at the Same Time

Although the program is essentially progressive in that it believes that intelligent people can substantially improve how they govern themselves and relate to each other it has substantial conservative, liberal, and even radical elements:

It may be considered **conservative** in that:

1) Its structural design is meant to work *alongside of* existing institutions instead of seeking to tear them down or replace them. (This is a nod to the conservative philosopher Edmund Burke's position that existing institutions—e.g., capitalism—are as they are for compelling historical and cultural reasons and that they are not easily subject to change.)

2) It is focused on *improving and modernizing*—not replacing—centuries of political economic principles, methods of governance, class statuses, and social habits while adapting them to 21st Century realities.

3) It has a fundamental emphasis on values (personal as well as public ones.)

4) It relies on individual citizens to take (at least partial) responsibility for the character of their own lives, communities, nation, and the future.

5) It accepts the dark side of humanity.

6) It has a sense of caution (but not *too much* caution) on the capabilities of government and reason to condition economic and social life.

7) It insists that there be more space in social life for matters other than that of the material/business/capitalist world, whatever that may be—family, community, spirituality, etc.

It is **liberal** in its emphasis on:

1) An active role of formal government to protect the little people from the ids and egos of private citizens (especially from the elite.)

2) An active role of formal government and a role for informal governance (i.e., the shadow government) in helping people realize their potentials in their individual and social lives and to achieve personal meaning and pride in themselves and their communities.

3) An enhanced emphasis in policymaking and implementation on the transformative value of science, technology, and fact-based evidence.

4) Social inclusiveness.

5) A belief that the essential good of people will be seen as outweighing the bad *if* there is a supportive environment for balanced lives and human meanings, incentives and rewards for public citizen activities, and respect for good social character.

It is **radical** in how it envisions:

1) A concept of a dialectically dual-focused citizen comprised of a capitalist "consumer" and a "human" being simultaneously, i.e., a *public* citizen.

2) Balancing and enriching social life via a complementary system of rules of the game, so to speak, by *adding* human meaning and social respect to the capitalists' set of rules.

3) Reimagining conventional class structure into a more useful and accurate conception based on private versus public citizen *attitude* instead of income/wealth and economic statuses.

4) The little people taking advantage of new technological tools to organize and assert themselves in potent ways.

5) The general public acting as an informal shadow government adding a new sort of checks and balances to our constitutional framework.

6) The development of an activist movement utilizing both bottom-up and top-down strategies simultaneously (modeling somewhat on open source software development patterns.)

7) Social conditioning strategies having scope over many aspects of society from birth to death, from home to school, from business and consumers, and to much of social life.

The movement's new subjective paradigm implies conservative, liberal, and radical themes all at the same time. It conceives of altering in major ways much of existing political, economic and social life not by trying to trash the institutions and principles we already have but by *changing how people view and think* about their reality. That implies respect for the conservatives' view of the significance of tradition and historical development, the liberals' embrace of progressive expectations, and the radicals' view that major change can incur from the means of mere alternative ways of seeing and thinking.

Not everyone will accept the radical view that structural change can occur without major changes in the *material* substructure like the ownership of capital, elimination of class hierarchies, and such. But, perhaps it can! Think of how race, gender, and sexual orientations are viewed now in America as opposed to the 1950's, for example. Neither skin color, gender categories, nor sexual orientation characteristics have *objectively* changed, only the way they are viewed and thought about. Race and gender have become

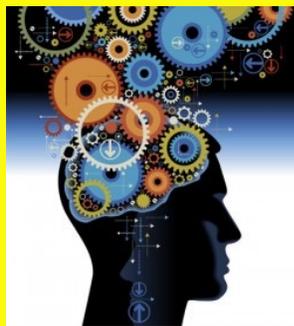
invisible (mostly) to government, business, and much of social relations in general instead of remaining distinct dividers. Sexual orientation character, too, is becoming irrelevant (mostly) in government, business, and some of social relations in general, instead of remaining illegal (in many places) and shunned. On a smaller scale, where the experience of smoking cigarettes, etc. once was socially invisible and widely unexamined and natural as that of eating and walking, smoking has now become a highly visible and an energizing matter of attention. It is now nearly as disfavored as are slurs and discriminations regarding race, gender, and sexual orientation.

The movement aims to turn the blithely *unexamined* attitude of self-interest and individualism which permeates society now and the “Business is Business” ideological justifications into ones which become highly visible (i.e., prominently noticeable in everyday situations) and recognized for what they are--parts of a primitive attitude out of touch with both public values and 21st-Century potentials. People will recognize them as but one attitude of several and disfavored ones at that, sort of like racism, sexism, homophobia, and even smoking are now disfavored. If we are successful, people will understand that there are at least two distinct social attitudes--private or public--and they can be satisfied that they can be public citizens and do the right thing and even will be rewarded for it. They will grow comfortable asking private citizens to constrain their excesses to themselves and their own environs (like we ask of smokers.)

The goal is to make the *balanced* private-public citizen attitude into the reigning moral standard for Americans. Like with race, gender and other re-framings new legislation, more compatible governmental and business decisions, and better social behaviors will flow almost naturally from just the attitude change. Material changes, too, will likely occur in a logical way from the new social ethos. For example, we can expect fairer allocations of the capital/labor productivity ratio, fairer tax policies, less corruption in government, etc. to result from the new *subjective* processes. (See Chapter 7 for more details of how this may work.)

Definition of a 21st Century Nation

- a healthy balance of private and public interest
- significant considerations for human meanings instead of system ones
- a brain
- emphasis on reason, science, and data
- inclusivity
- an emphasis on social character and public values



*A Brain for governance
and social relations*

It's An *Action* Manual

This book is not a thesis and does not contain much in the form of argument. It presumes that most of the factual statements presented are documented elsewhere and generally accepted by most knowledgeable, fair-minded people, partisanship and ideology put aside. (The *characterizations* here of some facts, positions, and events, of course, may be a different matter and not as well accepted.) Certainly, a large majority of Americans believe that an elite (of some sort) dominates the little people, that private business sector (especially Big Business) dominates government and culture, and that most ordinary people are regularly disrespected. Most social scientists who study these issues at the macro levels recognize the historical persistence of class hierarchies and their effects everywhere. They differ among themselves, mostly, only in evaluating how *benign or malignant* they are.

This book is not intended to argue political positions but to set out an intellectual frame of reference which can illuminate those kinds of positions within a new perspective. Good faith intellectual arguments can be made whether our American two major party political system is preferable over multi-party and/or parliamentary systems; or whether Canada's relaxed liberal democracy is better than the freewheeling, Wild-West style of the United States. Those kinds of evaluations are not what this book is interested in. It offers a different scheme of evaluation measuring nations, cultures, and people by how far they match up to their potentials and how well they are meeting the demands and opportunities of 21st-Century realities.

By that standard, the United States, for one, is a laggard and a slacker, in many people's estimations. While we've updated nearly every component of our culture—transportation, communications, business and management, etc. we still have 18th-Century institutions and ways of relating to each other. For a classical liberal democracy, our political system is remarkably undemocratic and dysfunctional on top of that. We are still remarkably disputatious and tribal. We have absurdly crude group conflicts not much different from those of primitive tribes in ancient jungles. A new perspective like this one illuminates aspects of life not ordinarily recognized and opens up opportunities to modernize and fix those kinds of things.

The book obviously takes the optimist's (and progressive's) position on the possibility of human and social progress. Its approach to governance and social relations exalts deliberation, fact-based evidence, and reason in governance and social relations. Those are components which are certainly *not* partisan whether as to conservative, liberal, or other political philosophies. Taking an *intelligent* approach to the facts and options (whatever they may be) and making rational decisions is just *smart*, even if one dislikes the idea of a collective perspective and collective fairness. Who can sincerely argue with smartening American governance and social relations? For the most part, the only objections to being smart come from fools, the extremely lazy or habit-based people, or the dedicated, self-interested private citizens who willingly will ignore or resist that kind of approach if it prevents them from getting what they want for themselves. That's part of why we have to pushback upon them and the other objectors. (Private citizens *do* have a philosophical basis for objecting to the collective perspective itself, as described in Chapter 2.)

An Intellectual Synthesis

The book doesn't presume to be breaking any new theoretical ground in the intellectual areas it covers. However, the *synthesis* of a large number of existing ideas into a National Character Project arguably acts as something greater than the sum of its parts. The book tries to bring together in a coherent, comprehensive way a set of recognized philosophic themes and contemporary social science concepts and organizes them into a new paradigm. The paradigm is a framework of reference primarily formed from a set of public values which nearly everyone can understand. If you can understand Balance, Meaning, Respect, smarter governance and social relations, and the difference between private and public citizens

then you can pretty much understand the paradigm. A similar practical synthesis of elements of current society applies to the practical plan. In sum, the plan contemplates organizing and focusing a whole lot of already active people, progressive and good governance groups, forward-looking social scientists and academics, social entrepreneurs, some ordinary Marys and Johns inspired by this story, and new technologies into one overall “brand,” so to speak.

All of these components comprising the intentions, desires, and actions of a whole lot of people come together as a unit of sorts guided by the simple-to-understand ethos of BMR and smartness. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for an explanation of how this may work.) The brand concept is crucial because pushback of the elite and individualist/capitalist ideology will require the leverage created by of a lot of people for a long time. For that to happen there has to be a *single* organization, an *accessible* attention grabber, and a *focus* on the basic public citizen principles—i.e., BMR/smartness. The program has to be (relatively) simple for people to understand its intentions and *easy* for them to participate in what it does.

Right now we have a lot of folks and organizations which seemingly want the same or similar kinds of change results (essentially) but they're doing their own things. There is little or no coordination, focus, or efficiencies. They are not readily accessible. They are each chewing up a tiny bit of what would be a large, focused budget. Instead of a lot of little Lilliputians with toothpicks poking at the Big Beast, so to speak (the individualist/capitalist system), we ought to fashion one giant club (the Big Stick) with enough focused leverage to swing *hard* at the Beast. Right at the kneecaps! That will be real pushback!

The theoretical vision and the practical plan dovetail nicely into the brand of the National Character Program. The power of this kind of synthesis with its focus and accessibility should not be underestimated. Although on a much lower level of breadth and complexity think, for example, of how Apple Inc. over the past decade or so has looked out at a landscape of already existing markets and digital technologies and worked a sort of magic synthesis. Before Apple, consumer products and components and consumer needs, wants, and fantasies in the desktop computer, music, telephone, and tablet industries didn't really add up to much, in a relative sense. Apple, however, reframed and wrapped all of those elements into smart, elegant, exciting, and effective consumer and cultural “spaces.” They made mere really nerdy machines (desktops), simple portable tape and CD players (mobile devices), dumb phones, and the like, into essential business, entertainment, and social ecosystems and major new industries and markets.

It wasn't really the *invention* of any of the precursor elements which made the Apple approach important but the *rethinking and reframing* of them. That approach involved particular elements of hardware-software integrity; consumer appliance-to-network systems; reorienting the relationship of machine to user (allowing consumers to be in charge of their products rather than the other way around); and emphasizing coherence, user-friendly design, attention to detail, and human user perspectives to “change the world” in a number of senses. The Apple “value added,” so to speak, was in the quality *synthesis and reframing*.

This book tries to do a similar synthesis and reframing, although with a considerably broader and more complex set of elements and a way more noble purpose. It makes a meta-level synthesis of components of political philosophy and economics, human behavior theories, and populist reform histories and combines them with an appreciation of the transformative abilities of modern technologies. Add those elements with the contemporary needs and wants of millions of Marys and Johns and of thousands of public citizen-oriented organizations already working towards change and you have the precursors of a program of major social change. The value added is in the new paradigm particularly in the format of a detailed National Character Program. (See Chapter 8 for a full description of the program.)

Dealing with Complexity and Uncertainty

As a new paradigm, the program has its own theoretical framework with its own concepts and ways of viewing things. For example, the categorization of people into attitude types—private versus public citizens—is a concept which is *crucially* different from conventional class or interest group categorization. Also different is the concept of a dual-focused citizen having multiple perspectives on her reality. There are a host of other similar new concepts or interpretations as readers may have noted already and more to come in later chapters. The reader will find references to some terms and ideas which may be emotionally and psychologically provocative (positive for some; negative for others)—elite dominance, Big Business, organized labor and unions, the collective perspective, an American Team, citizen activism, pushback, social conditioning, the “sandboxing” of religion, etc. Readers, please don't prejudge the paradigm when it refers to those things. Many of these items are treated from a new perspective and may have new meanings or more nuanced than conventional meanings.

Asserting a new paradigm with new ways of thinking is not an *ideal* way to excite people to support a movement of any kind as it requires some cognitive reorientation on the part of the reader (and supporters.) That can complicate understanding and evaluation. Besides, how many people have the time or the interest to broadly and deeply rethink their social lives? To decide whether they are (or want to be) a private or public citizen? What role would they like to play in the movement if any? What specifically could they get from the movement? What are the chances of the program accomplishing anything important? Why should anyone care?

For most people, life is way too complex and demanding already. Ideally, the little people would just wave a magic wand to effect change and then live happily ever after. Unfortunately, that option is not real and change which has a serious chance of success is not *going to happen by itself*. Those who essentially run the country now are happy with the way it is and they are working all the time at keeping it that way. The simple choice for those seriously interested in change is to: 1) flail haplessly at problems and unpleasant situations with *easy-to-perform* but *unsound* approaches, or 2) suck it up and work at a *hard-to-perform* program which has a good *chance* to work. (Most people, sadly, will do nothing (e.g., the so-called masses—see Chapter 2—and allow external elements to frame their lives for them.)

Most people *do* want to see change but how much effort can they devote to getting it? That's why they have to be presented with an option which both inspires confidence and is accessible. To be effective, a theoretically-sound and workable program has to be “real.” Real means addressing all of the complexities of economic, political, and social life; considering the right concepts; marshaling all the right tools, strategies, and tactics to get the job done right; making it *easy* for people to participate, and carefully timing things out, even over generations. It means some people (but not most) have to sacrifice, take on risks, and commit to the long-term.

This book is an Action Manual designed to provide a roadmap providing all of those necessary elements in basic form for people to start the process *now*. It's up to them to complete the story if they want to. The program is *not* simple but is intended to be as simple to understand and implement as it can be without *giving up* anything towards its potential effectiveness. Somewhat like in the digital world where there is no simple computer but only those *less hard* to use than others, the program requires some effort and focus to appreciate yet aims to be accessible and provide some easy options for those who want to participate. To be successful the program doesn't have to reach everybody, only a small subset of Americans (*as few as 10%*—see Chapter 9 for an explanation of why.) It *will* need lots of help from supportive people— influencers, activists, content mavens, and public relations and marketing experts, especially, to package it as a brand in a marketing sense.

The process of implementing this paradigm may have some similarities to the types of social epidemics articulated in Malcolm Gladwell's 2002 book, “The Tipping Point.” There, he argues that

certain social phenomena develop by a consistent process starting with a small group having a mere idea and progressing rapidly to a widely-based movement, sort of how a virus propagates. This program may develop in similar fashion starting with a sufficient number of the *right* people, under the *right* circumstances, and with *good timing*. At some point, there may be a critical mass of support and the movement will “flip,” so to speak, the private citizen attitude which controls us now to that of the private-public citizen one, which may make us happier. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of influencers and a description of the right people and the right circumstances.)

This book and the other materials describing the movement are designed to act on *multiple* attention levels addressing an array of ways people perceive new ideas—reason, emotion and psychology, and values. The material you are reading now is the primary text. It lays out with a fair amount of detail an intellectual level presentation of ideas. The primary text is supplemented by a simplified, concise “pocket” manual (The Action Manual, *Lite Version*) for those who only want a synopsis of the ideas. There may be online videos and other materials for those who like to take in ideas visually, maybe piece by piece, or in multimedia formats.

However, the ideas will also need to be promulgated in face-to-face interactions in the form of meetings, conferences, office Coke machine area chats, etc. and by street-level public relations methods similar to those which facilitated the civil rights, feminism, and other successful movements. “Influencer” types, especially, will need to engage people on psychological, emotional, and values levels. (See Chapter 8 for discussion of how the program may be presented to various audiences in various ways.)

Will This Work?

A graphic summary of the National Character Program and what it has to accomplish is set out in a sidebar in this chapter and a full description of the why, what, and how follows in the next eight chapters. But first, there is both good news and bad news:

The **bad** news:

1. The program has no quick prescriptions, no magic wands, and its story has no guarantee of a happy ending. There is no certainty that the program will appeal to anyone, much less the tipping point numbers needed to produce a successful movement. Even if enough people see merits in the conceptual framework, the program at this stage is a 1.0 version maybe having (fixable?) flaws and certainly lacking all of the detailed development of a later more mature version. It will surely benefit from the critique, feedback, and improvements from readers and supporters. That will take time and quality coordination.

2. Grassroots activists and supporters eager to start working will need patience while the *brand* concept gets sufficient attention and at least tentative support (assuming it gets any.) We will need some internal buildup in a structural sense by high-level influencers and “producer”-types to start out. That means setting up ways for supporters to communicate with each other, organize temporary structures, and develop tentative strategies and processes. The program is a “top-down first” process at least at the very beginning until fundamental *appealability* and *credibility* are established. (See Chapter 9 for a description of the early stages of development and the types of people necessary to build the program.) Early activists will start out with no formal organization, no leadership, no money or tangible resources, no hope for immediate or short-term changes society, and not much precedent for building the types of institutions and processes contemplated.

No one said this would be easy! It's entirely conceivable that the interactive story suggested here may never get fully written. Readers, please don't let that happen! This is *your* story, about *your* life and *your* communities. Let's make it great!

There are lots of positive things which have to occur before anything programmatic can be accomplished:

a) This book (and the Lite version) have to be distributed to a sufficient number of people who have the time and will to read it especially the creative, clever, and capable folks who can make positive things happen. A website, blog, social media and other collaborative tools have to be built to enable a focal point for discussion and for information and idea exchanges.

b) A sufficient number of people, especially at the higher-level--activist leaders, academics, high-profile media commentators, influencers, etc.--have to be convinced of the soundness and practicality of the program and confer upon it the public credibility that it needs. They will have to influence others to give the program serious consideration and to accumulate supporters in achieving our tipping point.

c) A sufficient number of executive producer, manager, administrative, and technical types need to step forward fairly early on to start building the infrastructure. We'll need that early structural initiative to start momentum on most of everything else. (See Chapter 9 for a description of these roles, the infrastructure details, an agenda, and timelines for building the program.)

3. The story outline presented here may be poorly "written," so to speak. The program clearly deals with big, complex social and philosophical issues which have generations of history. Wise men (philosopher Edmund Burke, etc.) recognize that long-standing institutions and processes (like capitalism and the individual/competitive ethos), even if flawed or disliked, have *sufficient reasons* for their persistence. That means, for example, they are in conformity with human nature; they fit the needs of their times; they are deliberately shaped and maintained by powerful human actors (e.g., an elite) via ideology, economic compulsion, and/or physical force; etc.

Major social change does not come easily, even with great visions and plans. Lots of previous reform programs attempting to change the circumstances raised here have crashed and burned, their failures due to flawed theory, flawed strategies and implementations, impatience, or by the effective resistance by private citizens and the dominant elite. (See Chapter 4 for more discussion of lessons to be learned from reform failures.)

Most of the *economic* reform programs have pointed at the wealthy and prominent as "the enemy" (Occupy's 99%–1% dichotomy, for example) and the lower class as the righteous good guys. That characterization, as seen here, is both misconceived and leads to unworkable programs. That may explain in part why those movements have failed. The private versus public citizen attitude conflict presented here is different. It seems a more valid characterization of the nature of both the wealthy/prominent and the rest of us. Not every member of the wealthy/prominent group is a private citizen and not every little guy is a public citizen. We have to focus on the right people and on the right ways. Whether the program sets up a more feasible plan of action or not is unknown. We'll have to try it and see. But, it seems certain that we do not want to have a fundamental conflict of the elite versus the rest of us. They likely will win, and besides, we need some of them to *support* the program or it will fail. (See below and Chapter 2 for an explanation of why this is true.)

Whatever, there is an element of a *leap of faith* here, not only in the program specifics, but in the possibility of significant social progress at all. No one can stare at a pileup of social movement failures and not be daunted by another challenge. Yet:

a) In the 1950's, when racism was firmly established and accepted in America and when blacks had few resources other than their wills and an incipient alternative morality who would have believed that a black man would be elected president of the United States?

b) In the 1960's, when gender discrimination was firmly established and accepted in America and the weaker sex had only their wills and new perspectives who would have believed that women would be CEO's of major corporations, members of the United States Supreme Court, serious candidates for President, and able to make hundreds of millions of dollars flaunting their long suppressed *sexuality*, of all things, on public prime time TV?

c) In the 1970's, when discrimination against gays was firmly established and accepted in America and gays had only their wills and new perspectives who would have conceived of the mayor of New York City presiding over a same-sex marriage?

d) In the 1980's, who would have imagined that a global communications network providing e-mail, chats, websites, digital file uploads and downloads, remote shopping, Facebook, etc., would exist and be readily accessible 24/365 to governments, businesses, and consumers (including children with little computers suitable for little fingers?) Even crazier, who would have imagined that the network would grow out of an intellectually-generous, share-and-share alike, socially-interested ethos held by hundreds and thousands of anonymous computer geeks? And, that network would be powered, in large part, by software made available to nearly everyone on the globe *free of charge*.

Wow! Almost nobody, on all counts.

Each of those developments show how the inconceivable and impossible managed to happen. And, every one of those changes occurred *because of new visions and different ways of seeing and thinking*. (The Internet, of course, also required developments in materials and engineering, but those elements were shaped in large part by human subjectivity, too—i.e., vision and a collective public citizen attitude on the part of both government and socialist-type geeks, to a large part.)

While the historical record of reform movements shows mixed results overall, there is present in nearly every experience a dialectic between object and subject where the conservative attitude of, “This is how it *is*,” is intertwined with the progressive attitude of, “This is how it *can be*,” in a sort of a yin/yang relationship. That is, “You never know until you try! You won't have change, for certain, if you *don't* try!” (See Chapter 9 for more discussion on the importance of the *subjective will* to effect change.)

4. The story may be "edited" or squelched by the opposition elite, and/or others. The elite is not likely to remain passive in the face of a major challenge to its hierarchical supremacy. They have a long history of successfully resisting change by: a) imposing superior resources in opposition to reformers, b) imposing legal and practical obstacles, c) utilizing ideological manipulation to undercut public support, and d) co-opting effective opposition leadership. Over the years, the elite so far has won most of the battles and all of the wars. Even without elite opposition there will be the formidable inertia of social habit which can stonewall even an intellectually and morally sound project. In short, there is no guarantee that the story will have a happy ending.

But before you get discouraged and depressed, the **good** news:

1. Assuming that there is some interest in the book and its ideas they can be distributed fairly easily to potential readers via e-mail, websites, and social media sites. Interested people can start communicating and organizing quickly. Twitter, Facebook, and other online tools have already demonstrated their value in informing, inspiring, and rallying people to a cause, e.g., the Arab Awakening events and the 2012 defeat of the proposed Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) legislation (the heavy-handed efforts of content producers to exploit intellectual property rights.) (See Chapter 9 for more examples of the use of these tools.)

2. The National Character Program proposed here, unlike many other reform movements, is no “Big Idea” program. It doesn't call for or need radical change in or replacement of existing institutions

and processes. It doesn't rely on any radical ideology (unless you think that having the *little people* obtain meaning and respect in society is radical.) It needs no massive organizing efforts of every citizen or big budgets. It doesn't require a remaking of human nature. It doesn't call for the common folk to storm the ramparts, to shut down governmental facilities, or to engage the police in street battles. It is no easily-derided "big liberal" grand theory. For the most part, it is a *subjective* reframing of existing ideas and a *refocusing* of existing organizations and activists.

There isn't even much of a grand formal design. The program is comprised of a skeleton of principles and plans upon which new informal institutions, functions, and processes are hung; new structural modules added from time to time; volunteers engaged; structures and processes built both from the top-down by intellectuals, activists, and producer-types and bottom-up by neighborhood and small community leaders and some inspired Marys and Johns. The whole thing will be tested and improved over time until the movement has shaped up into something demanding of serious attention.

Open source software development, the Wikipedia, and Google Maps suggest partial models of how the movement may be built organically by volunteers (mostly), guided by a small set of dedicated supervisors/editor types, and by ordinary Marys and Johns (at the Local Council level.) For the most part, people of every level of the movement will figure out eventually how to do their parts whether big, medium, or just clicking at a computer a few times per week. The professionals and experts in the higher-level Councils engaged in the planning, policymaking, and other substantive functions will be guided by simple program principles in performing in their functions—i.e., essentially being "smart" and collectively-minded. The smart part should be relatively easy for them.

The collective perspective part may need time to come together but a lot of academics and professionals already have some substantial community and public service sensibilities. They aid and/or run nonpartisan think tanks and social welfare associations, for example. Plus, there will be a vetting process for many of the upper-level positions which will sort out the right people for the roles. (By the "right" people we mean fair-minded, collectively focused, and possessing good judgment. See Chapter 8 for discussion of how the right professionals and experts may be selected.)

3. The program is a *positive and constructive* one—it builds new institutions and processes upon the context we have now and doesn't aim to replace or destroy anything. It envisions *complementary* new structures and processes operating alongside existing ones to provide a counterweight and a new sort of checks and balances to the (liberal democratic) governmental and (capitalist) business structures we have now. Furthermore, the movement aims to *build up people*, especially the little people, to allow everyone to have maximum pride in themselves and their social communities. It seems so obviously better to want to make nearly everyone winners instead of nearly everyone losers as we do now. Part of the new value ethos will be pride in "being the best one can be" (versus being better than everyone else.) That standard allows the opportunity for *everyone* to be a success, to be a winner—as a parent, citizen, spouse, or whatever. In addition, American citizens could celebrate enormous collective pride from achieving the program's vision of making the nation into an advanced 21st-Century society. We can be world leaders in that regard. (See Chapter 5 for more discussion of program goals.)

4. There are millions of Americans already doing things which are harmonious with the goals of this program and likely willing to support it. Many work through formal organizations, e.g., The Center for Public Integrity, Common Cause, Citizen Nader, etc. (Also, see the list of public citizen examples in Chapter 2.) Many of these people are just plain Marys and Johns—good parents, citizens, workers, neighbors, youth coaches, volunteers, role models, etc., just *being themselves*. They exemplify public citizen values already which makes them *implied* participants, in a sense, in the program.

These people already represent a fairly large and accessible program resource. These are the people (and the organizations, especially) that the program will attempt to weave into an energized and broader social fabric and to wrap into a *unified pushback structure*. Anyone can participate in the program at the

level of their choice, either directly as activists in the public sphere or, more indirectly, in their homes, workplaces, communities, schools, etc., as casual supporters in a variety of ways. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of focusing organizations and building the social fabric.)

5. The program operates from its *own premises* and avoids getting too caught up and distorted by the different frames and concepts of the individualist/competitive ideology. It is truly a new paradigm having its own language, in a sense, with new concepts--i.e., private versus public citizen, dual-focused citizen multiple perspectives, pushback, etc. That means it may appeal to a lot of people as something *fresh and original* and worthy of consideration just for that. It doesn't have the (failure) baggage of prior reform efforts because it *is* different and it doesn't require much of most supporters other than a bit of attention, some modest new habits, and some new ways of seeing and thinking (simplified and made more accessible by various conditioning and communication strategies.) (See Chapter 5 for more discussion of engaging the public.)

On the other hand, the program's paradigmatic character (i.e., new ways of seeing and thinking) may act as an obstacle for some as they may be unable or unwilling to buy into it because of its being *too* different and because it requires some flexibility in understanding multiple perspectives. Some people will lack the mental dexterity and some will just not want to give the effort. That's okay. No program is likely to engage everyone. We need to: a) convince only a tipping point number of current activist and progressive types, b) teach younger people especially to understand the new paradigm, and c) wait for a lot of hard-headed, single-minded folks just to die off. (As paradigm theorists recognize, some people will never change no matter what.) The program, too, is unlikely to appeal intellectually to everyone or even a majority of Americans, but it *doesn't need to*. Chapter 8 explains why the program can succeed with the support of *as few as 10%* of Americans active in public life. (Being "active in public life" excludes a large group of people who are almost always passive in public--the masses.)

6. While national level structures of various sorts, intellectual as well as institutional, should develop first, the movement's development will have "bottom-up" and "sideways" development similar to the way open source software development occurs. There will be no rigid structural blueprint that must be adhered to. Once the skeletal components are established interested people will find ways to add the organs, flesh, and muscle, so to speak, without much explicit direction. Much of the philosophical framework (and especially the conceptual details, institutional components and processes, specific tactics and strategies) presented here can develop piece by piece, module by module, and by various sets of people over time in no *absolutely* fixed order. (See Chapter 9 for a discussion of what kind of order is preferred.) Components will be built out in stages like complex software applications with alpha, beta, and mature versions and continuously tested and improved incrementally.

Local groups may form and join with other local groups. Regional affiliations may form thereafter all within the program's brand. The movement will grow more effective as membership increases and, eventually, a National Character Program brand will develop. That will increase the attention on at least the basic principles (BMR) and be accessible to a wide audience.

7. It will not require massive funding. To get the program started requires little more than a lot of computers, lots of bandwidth, and a couple of large handfuls of good leaders, producers, managers, and tech people. It will be developed and operated mostly by unpaid volunteers. Early "thought capital" (e.g., prototype designs, trial programs, and experiences) will be regularly fashioned into models and templates for generic use as shared resources. Online means, primarily, will allow for ready distribution to other activists and organizers. Proven models and templates will act as *intellectual dividends* building capital and providing even more leverage as we go along, sort of like investment money does in the economic world. That will facilitate efficiency and geometrically expand capabilities.

8. The program could, in principle, appeal to nearly everyone, provided an array of accessible explanations, inspirations, conditioning strategies, and marketing techniques are brought to bear to

accommodate the wide range of ways people of each class, group, and disposition can relate to new ideas. There will be value available for nearly everyone, including the elite (see below.) Private citizens, too, will have “skin” in the venture as even the most principled libertarian sorts are members of families, small and large communities, etc. and any enhancement of public and common interests will have *some* value for them, at least.

People Who Surprisingly May Support the Program

1) Private citizens, especially careerists trapped in a way by business practices and expectations and shotgun married to their jobs, could benefit by having new options, at least, in a social ethos which emphasizes balance and human meaning in personal lives. Some of them may welcome an opportunity to step off the system treadmill every now and then. There are many professionals, business people, and other workers rooted firmly in the private interest economy (nearly one half of the working population, at least—moms and other care-givers) who would like to balance their job responsibilities with the interests of their families, communities, and personal sanities. Stressed corporate executives, for example, constrained by demanding short-term business perspectives, as in high pressure quarterly earnings expectations, may enjoy a structural break.

Many who are now practically and psychologically captive to the ceaselessly “always be closing” private interest ethos might welcome the balance and meaning elements of the new ethos especially if they are given “cover,” so to speak, because the new ethos is being driven (safely) from the *outside* by others. In other words, when the boss raises his eyebrows when a subordinate asks to be off the treadmill for a while the subordinate can just say, “Hey! Everyone else is doing it. See the Employee Bill of Rights (one of *our* templates) posted on the Internet.”

There will be some (maybe a lot?) elite members who internally have sincere public citizen sensibilities but are constrained now by class and system mores which prevent them from contradicting expectations at serious consequences to their jobs, status, and continuing membership in the elite group itself. These folks may like new opportunities to do what they think is the right thing morally. The program will give these people realistic options to get outside of the extreme work and elite class cultures. They can be American Team members as well as Chamber of Commerce ones. (See Chapter 2 for more details of the program's appeal to a broad range of people, groups, and classes.)

2) The new social ethos should impact in some positive ways all those Americans who are not *totally* animated by the abstract rules of individualism/ capitalism and/or by private interest-dominated ids and egos. Let's imagine a congressman or other public official, for example, who has *truly* wanted to serve the public interest (instead of special interests) but can't due to the existing context he works in. He could now have the freedom (because of the program) to do the quality job for the public which he wants to do. A real “Mr. Smith” (and there are probably many of these sincere, earnest folks) could actually function effectively in a new social ethos as a true public servant where he is free of conflicts of interest, special-interest pressures, and need for electoral strategies which serve everyone's interests, except for those of the *public*.

3) There likely are marketers and public relations folks who would jump at the opportunity to use their talents to serve the public good—e.g., creating conditioning programs for public citizen behaviors and shaping a collective mentality, etc.—instead of merely pushing products and services which they may not really believe in upon reluctant consumers. If the program's ethos and pushback functions have their way it may give some of these folks opportunities they don't have now. The better creative types will find ways to both make money *and* do public good at the same time.

4) There likely are millions of people rooted firmly in the private interest economy who may willingly support rational public (collective) policies *even if those policies compromised their own employment or business situations* in some ways. They would be the dual-prospective citizens we've been

talking about. For this to happen, they would have to believe in the procedural fairness of the new program's policy processes; understand that they will benefit from rational governance indirectly, at least, as taxpayers, citizens, and members of the collective; and be assured of some sort of soft landing or other sufficient consideration for any sacrifices they would make for the collective good.

For example, there may be lots of fair-minded people—conservative and liberal, elite and lower classes—who would gladly accept even higher levels of taxation if they knew their money was being used wisely and especially fairly. Fewer people than now would object to even increasing social welfare benefits for the little people, as in educational subsidies, unemployment compensation, etc., if they knew that those programs were effective, free of fraud and corruption, and fairly administered. They would benefit at least indirectly from such governmental fiscal policies if merely as members of the collective. (See Chapter 6 for a description of the “*Grand Reconciliation Project*,” a comprehensive and fundamental problem-solving process designed to find common ground among disparate positions based on a social fairness consensus akin to a new social constitution; see Chapter 9 for explanation of soft landings and other similar accommodation strategies.)

5) There may be a fair number of people including some among the masses who have been alienated from public life for a long time who may be inspired by the program. They have taken their lumps from society for way too long and may see an opportunity to “even the score” so to speak. That means pushing back on those elements which they know have exploited and/or abused them. They may not intellectualize it as pushback upon the individualist/capitalist rules of the game as stated here but they *will* recognize achieving some new level of respect and self respect. Wow! *That* really could be very satisfying for a lot of folks. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of the reorientation of values and the class hierarchy.)

Why We Need and Want the Elite to Support the Program, Too

This is an Action Manual intended for the benefit of all Americans of *all* attitudes and classes, although the lower classes will benefit the most as they are the most numerous and the least benefited by the status quo. As noted above, some of the elite will benefit in positive ways from the program, too, but, more importantly, the program *will not work* unless there is some degree of acceptance by all classes, including the elite. Although the elite has waged a class war against the rest of us for generations (whether the lower classes have seen it that way or not. If not, they have *not been paying close enough attention!*) there will be no declaration of war on them. They would likely triumph over the lower classes if push came to shove in any case. (See Chapter 2 for more discussion of why and how the lower classes need to work with the elite, even if uneasily.)

More importantly, the program is *not* anti-elite and it is *not* anti-capitalist. It sees itself as a complement to them. Even if the program succeeds in all its goals and the little people see significant change for themselves, there *still* will be an elite, a class hierarchy, and income/wealth disparities. Even the capitalist system will maintain its prominent role. (Remember, the program means to pushback *only* not replace it.) There are virtues of the system which we want to retain and qualities of the elite personalities we will always need, as in entrepreneurship, leadership, and management areas. The elite will merely have to accommodate to pushback, even if reluctantly. (See Chapter 3 for more discussion of the virtue--and vices, of course--of class hierarchy and capitalism.)

Furthermore, the elite have resources and skills worthwhile to *any* advanced society and we want to use those things in support of the movement. We will need Big Egos, Planners, Entrepreneurs, and the like (as long as they respect our set of public values.) The program expects at least some of the elite to buy into it intellectually as it aims to smarten, update, and advance (*their*) liberal capitalist society. There'll be new opportunities for the elite to innovate, to lead, and to help manage new projects and programs in ways which may appeal to some of them. They will be able to take pride in having leadership

roles in making *their* America a great 21st-Century nation even if it requires a lessening of their predominance. (See Chapter 9 for more examples of how this can work.)

The program, of course, wants to form a real collective--an American Team. That implies bridging differences among *all* Americans--elite and lower classes, conservative and liberal, religious and not, Red state and Blue state, etc. It seeks to appeal in some ways to nearly everyone who is willing and able to be fair-minded, flexible, reasonable, and has a good-faith desire to change our existing political-economic environment. (See Chapter 2 for more examples of elite members who may be and may not be supportive of the movement.)

This Program is Worth a Try

Unless and until some other theoretically-sound and feasible program comes along, the National Character Program, even with its complexity (sophistication?), may be the best or even the *only* option to effect significant change. For many of the lower classes the existential choice is between sucking it up and working for significant change *now* or accepting a deteriorating social world where they are going to be unemployed (or underemployed); have fewer employment and governmental benefits; be more vulnerable to crime and violence; be more stressed, anxious, fearful, cynical, and distrustful; and be deprived of the last vestiges of their dignity and respect. Think of the lives of the characters in George Miller's 1981 classic dystopian film, "Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior"--distrustful and fearful of nearly everyone else, scrambling over a desolate landscape for food and shelter, nothing in their futures except for more pain and misery. We will be like them. That's the *objective* prognosis. Here is our choice: *Change or No Change!*

There is the *subjective* reality to consider, also. Existentially, everyone needs some basic meaning in their lives. That could be, for example, achieving financial, athletic, artistic or similar excellence; being a great parent or spouse; serving their God or nation; or even reinvigorating one's spirit just by completing the restoration of the 1965 Mustang long sitting in the garage. In some intimate sense, *it hardly matters what it is* as long as it satisfies emotionally and psychologically. In an increasingly difficult objective reality of work (or no work) and consumption and little room for anything else, it becomes harder and harder to make or to hold onto *human* meanings. Given that, the pursuit of this project can:

1) Be a social adventure in meaning for some, and a noble one. It could be a grand narrative adventure, where in union with like-minded others, they intimately participate in shaping their own futures and those of their families and communities. At best, the program offers an exciting, fantasy-like adventure that could culminate in a quantum leap in quality governance and social relations for all Americans, including future generations. When you think about all of the possible options to secure personal meaning, participating in remaking America into an advanced 21st-Century nation seems better than most.

2) Millions of youths, especially college-aged people, are entering into an increasingly negative adult society and facing (for many) dismal futures in which both the economic and political spheres are growing more unwelcome and unattractive. A chance to be part of *an enlightened and constructive generation* (or two) could be very appealing. Participating in a broad-based positive social program may be one of the better options they have. The potential benefits obtained from the program--economic and political advancements, and Balance, Meaning, And Respect--will fall primarily to them and their descendants. And, the subjective benefits of engaging in a grand collective adventure may be almost as rewarding. For all of those who find Teach for America, the Peace Corps, Volunteers In Service to America, the One World Youth Project, etc., stimulating this movement should be even more so, as well as being bigger, more ambitious, and more rewarding.

Historically, it has often been youths who have instigated social change and reform efforts as they have a good amount of leverage with their ideas, energy, availability, and enthusiasm. Think of the

1960's-70's counterculture, the Vietnam war opposition, the U.S. civil rights movement, and the Arab Spring events, as examples. If this program turns out to be a success these young people could be the next "Greatest Generation."

3) There likely are millions of ordinary Marys and Johns who have authentic pride in themselves and their communities and who just want to see things around them done well, including the governance and social relations of the society they live in. This program provides ample opportunities for these people to excel at doing what they do best—building, improving, and maintaining things. Many people may find appealing and worthwhile positions in the Councils envisioned by the program. There will be roles available ranging from high-level management to low-level local organization to simple online activism using a couple of mouse clicks every so often. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of these opportunities.)

4) Even if the program started right now many older folks who participate will die before any significant tangible benefits are achieved. But *no matter*, as the development of the movement can be a welcoming swan song for aging baby boomers (and others) who, partly because of their numerical heft but also because of their history of demanding changes, have influenced society in so many ways for the past half century. They are nearing the end of the line and, perhaps, have one last chance at achieving more significant meaning, even *greatness*, in their lives while leaving a legacy for their children and grandchildren.

In some sense, this movement may be an opportunity to reprise the spirit of the counter-culturalism of the 1960's and 70's which helped spawn the civil rights movement, feminism, humanism, environmentalism, groundbreaking creativity in the arts and culture, meaningful alternative lifestyles, proactive peacemaking, and more. That creative spirit reframed much of the culture of America for the better whether one agrees with specific elements or not. What it did *not* affect much was the all-potent capitalism system and its ethos of individualism and competition. Reforming *that* system, we know, is a much different and more complex challenge. But, it *is* doable and worth doing (especially if you're one of the little people.)

What's different now from the 1960's and 70's for the boomers is that they are smarter and wiser, wealthier, have developed more management and administrative capabilities, have an ingrained belief in progress, and can draw upon a history of social and cultural achievement. Many of the boomer parents want to instill in their children and grandchildren this demanding attitude of making change happen because it makes *good sense*. They will be doing for their offspring in a grand way what they have been doing for a generation or so already—nurturing, supporting, educating, guiding, and inspiring. What better legacy than by helping these young people, in one final joint life experience, start a grand mission which promises to do Something Great.

That spirit and vision, together with the technological tools and other advantages of today's world, can realistically take on the challenge of reforming even the existing economic system. Even if success is not guaranteed, and distant in any case, the boomers will have the great satisfaction and contentment of making meaningful their golden years.

Chapter 2: The Characters

Decide for yourself, reader, *whether you are a private or a public citizen*. If you are a private citizen you may not like this book. The activist program it proposes intends to inhibit you from asserting your “rights” at the expense of others having a collective interest. If you are hard-headed you can just plan your resistance strategies. If you don't want to chance being on the wrong side of a new social movement for change you might assess the program as a reasonable one and find a positive and useful role within it. If you're not sure what to think but are cautious you might just modify your behaviors now to draw less attention in the future from activists engaging in pushback efforts. Public citizens, hopefully, will be informed, inspired, and energized to carry out its program of balancing interests and bringing American governance and its social relations up to levels more suitable for the 21st-Century. (Chapters 8 and 9 detail what needs to be done and what roles are available for supporters at every level of participation.)

Private and public citizens

A private citizen is a self-interested person who sees himself as one individual among others and acts to maximize his own interests. This maximizing attitude means exploiting his resources and especially his competitive will against others and trying to beat them, in a sense, for profit, status, and influence. He is comfortable with competition and seeks “*win-lose*” situations where he wins. He understands and accepts it if everyone else is thinking of and doing the same thing. He does, however, like to transact especially with public citizens because they are *easy*, in his view, as they either don't compete as he does or as intensely. That gives him a big advantage. (See Chapter 3 for how this advantage works in creating an elite class.) He is not much interested in anyone's conception of a public interest or a common good. What we know as a “special interest” is an archetypical private citizen. It seeks a priority or advantage for itself regardless if it is at the expense of someone or everyone else. (See private citizen examples below.)

A public citizen sees herself as an integral member of a community where most people value a true public interest and a common good. She is a “We” person and bi-polar in a way having co-perspectives--her own interests and the interests of the collective. Her perspective of other people would see them less as individuals and more as members of families, neighborhoods, and affinity groups, including her nation. She thinks ideal action benefits both her and the community--a *win-win* situation. There are times where her actions will benefit the community at the direct expense of herself. She does this willingly. She knows some others, but not all, will do the same thing. (See public citizen examples below.) Sometimes she prioritizes herself, but on the whole, she wants to maintain a healthy balance between her interests and those of the collective.

Nevertheless, it is too simple to consider the two types of citizens described above as reflective of real people. The categories are only abstract types, that is, archetypes useful for illustration of a basic attitude and a decision-making approach. Almost everyone will have some measure of each type and any individual likely will exhibit one or the other attitude at different times and circumstances. Most people will skew, generally, to one type or the other. If they exhibit more of the individual attitude (like the many Wall Street heavyweights do) then we can consider them as private citizens. They are public citizens if they exhibit more of a community attitude (like soldiers facing our enemies.)

The concept of private and public citizens is not limited to individuals but applies, to a large extent, to businesses and organizations; ethnic, religious, cultural groups; and nations. The Salvation Army charity and the business, Wegmans Food Markets, may be examples of public citizen type organizations. Some might think the Scandinavian nations, for example, to be public citizen oriented given their extensive social welfare policies and relatively casual business atmosphere. On the other hand, the United

States with its individualism and its freewheeling, intense business environment reflects more of a private citizen attitude.

Even though the abstract types do not perfectly reflect real individuals, groups, or nations they are useful for understanding fundamental differences in the perspectives, decisions, actions, and outcomes of people in society. The types help to categorize some of the most important aspects of society—how economic value is allocated, how we govern ourselves, what political and social policies we support, our moral structures, what meaning we give to social life, etc.

Here are some snippets from new stories from a 2011-14 period which highlight examples of private and public citizens attitudes:

The Private Citizen Attitude

1. Wall Street firms continue a program of opposition to legislative efforts since the 2008 financial crisis to eliminate or minimize systemic risks to the financial system. (They made huge money in the run-up to the crisis, they got the world's governments—taxpayers—to backstop their own financial losses during and after the crisis, and they are now certain that they are covered if (?) and when they create another crisis. There is no good reason, as they see it, for them to accept anything but modest (even mere symbolic) regulatory impediments to their profit-making and then only to *pacify* the lower classes.)

2. Big Oil objects to proposals in Congress to curtail special tax breaks that they have now as “any curtailment will lead to increased prices for consumers.” (If the taxpayers don't continue to *indirectly* subsidize their private profits through tax subsidies, they say, they'll compel the public to pay them substitute value directly at the pump. In other words, citizens, in which end do you want to take it?)

3. Unionized musicians in New York City object to the use of recorded music at theatrical events as a partial substitute for live musicians as it reduces their employment levels. (Consumers should continue to subsidize through ticket prices, they believe, jobs deemed to be unnecessary by producers and, presumably, by consumers themselves.)

4. Military contractors and related special interests convince Congress to appropriate additional billions of dollars to continue an unneeded and unwanted (by the Pentagon itself!) alternative engine for the over-budgeted F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. (They expect taxpayers to subsidize complete waste for the benefit of certain business interests and job holders and, in some cases, the personal interests of Congressmen and their associates who receive enhanced campaign contributions, paid travel junkets, assured jobs in the industry, etc.)

5. Community and small banks object to consumer protection regulations which “could make them (the banks) less profitable.” (For them, the protection of private profit for a few investors trumps protection of multimillions of consumers from commercial exploitation.)

6. Owners of major professional sports teams (and many businesses everywhere in America) regularly use strong-arm strategies to obtain tax breaks and public subsidies to further their private interests by threatening to relocate their teams or businesses to other venues more willing to offer taxpayer money to support them. (This is the ol' whipsaw technique of playing one desperate-for-image-and-jobs public community over another thereby diverting public resources to private profit. This is a three part mutual benefit venture as the *owners* see it: taxpayers pay for the stadiums, training facilities, roadways, parking lots and utilities, etc.; customers pay for tickets, broadcasts, and merchandise; and owners haul away the public *give-away* money to their personal banking and brokerage institutions. Life is Sweet!)

7. Special interests, large and small and of all types—businesses, labor groups, organizations, and even certain governmental bureaus—act to defeat policies to rationalize the war on drugs, improve government efficiency, improve public health outcomes while cutting costs, improve tax policy fairness, and ending the hopeless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, among many other similar matters as doing so maintains their own interests in profits, jobs, positions, and influence. (It's every man—and organization—for himself even if it makes the whole worse off. And, forget about any consideration of the long-term interests of the nation (i.e., the collective) as these special interests are getting *theirs now*.)

8. In spite of national health concerns about obesity, diabetes, etc., producers of junk foods which sell to school districts resist efforts by educational and health officials to regulate sales, product choices, and portion sizes. (For them, profit motive trumps considerations of the health of children, responsible education, and costs to the health system and the taxpayers.)

9. Publishers supply educational materials to school districts including textbooks sponsored by or produced by private businesses (like the coal industry and others) slanting learning materials in favor of the public relations interests of these industries. For them, private interest trumps educational values and academic ethics. As they see it, the “subsidizing of the educational curriculum is our way of looking out for the best interests of our children.” (It is *their* way, sure, but what about the *right* way?)

10. Thousands of enraged citizens abetted by complaisant, cowardly politicians attempt to derail the federal government's efforts to increase energy efficiencies by regulating standards for lightbulb manufacturers. (Despite unambiguous, long-term economic savings and environmental benefits for all of society, these people object--incorrectly, even--to "the federal government telling them what to buy." Their irrational peevishness has the effect of trumping the objective interests of all Americans--including their own economic interests--and the environment.)

The Public Citizen Attitude

1. American soldiers and military personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice and have incurred an average of 58 deaths per month over the first 10+ years in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq while fighting for their country (i.e., the collective.)

2. Millions of people donate money and services to those suffering losses from natural disasters and similar events.

3. Engineers and computer geeks design much of the software and hardware which runs the Internet and provide for it to be used at no cost to users. Software and Internet designers maintain "open source" development programs for creating free software applications and tools which are distributed, upgraded, and maintained regularly by volunteers.

4. Charitable donations by Americans occur at a rate of \$308 billion dollars per year/\$1620 dollars per person (2008). Nearly 10,000,000 blood donors yearly contribute to the American Red Cross.

5. Buyers of hybrid and electric vehicles pay a premium for transportation while saving community-wide costs and promoting short and long-term environmental benefits.

6. Many consumers and businesses voluntarily recycle waste products on their own time and at their own expense.

7. Online volunteers create and maintain Wikipedia and similar crowd-sourced databases for free public use. Consumers contribute reviews, evaluations, and recommendations to online businesses and cultural sites providing guidance for all potential consumers. People with expertise of all kinds upload

free instructional videos and information for anyone to benefit from. Inventive software developers make useful “apps” for mobile phones and electronic devices and give them away free to the public.

8. Even the millions of ordinary parents who head households responsibly nurturing, guiding, and sacrificing may be considered public citizens.

Among these examples, at one extreme, you have an elite of high-powered, wealthy businessmen forcing taxpayers and other innocent citizens to cover losses arising from their own risky behavior. At the other, you have patriotic soldiers going into harm's way overseas to die and get wounded, in part, to protect the assets and untamed ids and egos of some of the same set of people--the elite--who exploited them and their families at home in the financial crisis. This huge discrepancy in citizen attitude, values, and especially outcomes can get some people justifiably outraged. Maybe enough to want to even things up somewhat. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for how readers can participate in a program of change.)

It's Not Just the Haves Versus the Have-Nots, or Conservatives versus Liberals, etc.

The distinction of private versus public citizen attitude in specific situations is not always simple and clear cut. Some of the examples given above may entail mixed motivations and competing values. Others can be considered simplifications of a complex reality but the *essential* attitudinal distinction should be clear. Also, private citizens do not equate *necessarily* to wealthy businessmen or even capitalists or the financial elite. Members of each of those groups may be either private or public depending on their intentions, their decisions and actions, and the outcomes they are responsible for. The Wall Street traders, for example, who made high commissions for themselves knowingly selling flawed and doomed investment products are clearly private citizens. A wealthy businessman, on the other hand, who markets quality products or services honestly, treats his employees fairly, and doesn't exploit the environment or other public resources (including regulatory and tax policies) may well be a public citizen.

Neither is the private–public distinction intended to reflect the popular notions of conservative-liberal, Red State-Blue State, Republican-Democratic, rich-poor, or upper versus middle/lower classes. Although, for example, there may very well be some high correlations between conservatives, establishment Republicans, the rich and the financial elite class and the private citizen type noted here, there are both private and public citizen types in *all* classes, parties, and groups. There are Blue State residents who lobby government for special interest benefits for themselves. There are working-class union members who fight to protect even socially worthless jobs to maintain their own positions, etc. All of these people are acting as private citizens (although they may not be rich, part of the elite class, etc.) Throughout this book the group referred to as the “elite” means the high concentration of upper-class citizens who are *private* citizens. The philosophically valid and practically important distinction is not wealth or position but *attitude*.

Occupy Wall Street's distinction of the 1% versus the 99%, while highly popular and enduring, is flawed, too. It reflects disparities of wealth and income *only* without including the multitude of other elements necessary for fair and accurate characterizations. For example, it is important to know if a rich person made his money fairly or whether he deceived or exploited to get it. A wealthy 1% er businessman (a Warren Buffett or such?) who has never harmed the collective interest and has done things in the “right way,” so to speak, may be a public citizen. Surely, it's not fair or intellectually sound to lump him with the wealthy Wall Street heavyweights--private citizens--who deliberately exploited multimillions of lower-class innocents.

In any case, many of the conventional social labels noted above are (given our current poisonous partisan environment) emotionally-laden to an excess. They are firmly fixed in irrational ways in much of the public consciousness. Too many people latch onto these labels as either matters of identity or of disdain rather than intellectually-sound categories of analysis. They are, therefore, not suitable for a new

way of looking at social matters emphasizing reason and clear thinking. We want to step out of that problem by setting out our own, more valid categories of social organization. The private-public citizen distinction is one of them. Others will be noted later, including the ideas of an underclass and an “American Team.”

Furthermore, those same social labels are not conceptually rigorous or nuanced enough anyway for the purposes of the new paradigm being articulated here. What does it mean, for example, for a “Red State conservative” to be for limited government but *also* for highly-regulated cultural affairs--educational curriculums, abortion and sexuality matters, etc.? How do we understand Red State conservatives being in favor of robust national security apparatus and law and order yet demanding of a high degree of individual freedom and privacy? Conservatives highlight their emphasis on low taxes but is *anyone* philosophically in favor of high taxes? (Clear-minded people will not focus on mere tax levels but on the *value* received from governmental expenditures.)

These examples suggest that many of our conventional political categories are contradictory, incoherent, and too ambiguous to be fathomed in any meaningful sense. (Some might point out that this is the point! Would someone/group—e.g., the elite?—find value in promoting these specific categories to confuse the American public and to obscure the *most* relevant category in society--that of a private elite versus the collective lower classes? That would be a devious but clever strategy. What do *you* think?)

There is a lot of philosophically-muddled categorization throughout our public discourse making it hard for clear-headed and fair analysis and even quality communication among groups. The *public-private attitude* distinction, however, is conceptually clear and, most importantly, it is philosophically grounded in the two fundamental, inescapable attitudes that citizens present as members of society--their own interests and the interests of the group. This not only is a classic philosophical dichotomy but it is key to aligning interests correctly in a program for major social change. Agents for change do not want to target the wrong group of people. That would be unfair as well as wasteful of an opportunity to *correctly* fix things. They also do not want to unnecessarily alienate potential supporters or squander any leverage we can obtain from those who may merely *look* like bad guys but are not. We've got to get the analysis right before we can act right.

It's Not Just The Good Guys Versus the Bad Guys Either

At the highest level of ethics philosophy at least, it is not justified or useful to assert that either of the abstract citizen types--private or public--is *morally superior* to the other. At that level there are *no* “good guys” or “bad guys” as people of each type can make a philosophical argument that they have the attitude they do for good and sufficient reasons.

At the private interest extreme are the Nietzschean Supermen and the Ayn Rand egotists who assert every right of the id and ego to act as they wish. They say, “There is no ultimate reason for me--a superior ego and talent--to allow lesser mortals (or a social morality) to restrain me from what I desire.” And, regardless of any superiority or not, “It's *my* life. Who's to tell me how to run my own life?” At the other extreme, arguably, would be idealistic socialists and, perhaps, religious figures like the Christian Jesus who might favor the creed “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” These people take an extreme view of the collective interest and of their personal sense of duty to their social groups and communities. They willingly subordinate themselves to the interests of the collective even if it results in costs to them personally. Consider, for example, military personnel who volunteer to assume risk of death and hurt for their country and martyrs for various causes.

If we are intellectually honest we will have to accept a sort of attitudinal relativity in all of this. In practical life private citizens will aggressively assert their interests, as that is their nature. Public citizens, even if it is against their nature, have a “right” to resist this aggression and even a duty to themselves and

their communities to push back. Each position is true to their nature or moralities leading to potential conflicts in the practical world. Private citizens, of course, expect conflict and are eager to compete. The multimillions of public citizens may *have* to learn to accept conflict and engage in the pushback efforts proposed here (*unless* they are content to remain unhappily dominated by a small set of self-interested people.)

Given this philosophic relativity there is no absolute ethical basis, it seems, to overly moralize actions of the Wall Street heavyweights, for example, who aggressively protected their own interests in the 2008 crisis at the expense of the general public. They accepted it if everyone else did the same thing. After all, these businessmen were only playing by the *existing rules of the game* which rules primarily define capitalism, individualism, and yes, the American Way. (Excluded from this private citizen group would be the many in the crisis period who went beyond *even* the capitalist rules into outright illegality. Even some of the capitalists would acknowledge *them* as bad guys.)

As private citizens see things, the rules make it every man for himself little different than as it is among the animals in the deepest jungle. As it's, "Dog eat dog," and, "Lion eat antelope," in the primitive animal world, in human relations it's, "Business is Business," irrespective of negative consequences to the losers—loss of lives, homes, jobs, dignity, etc. If some others don't play by the same rules, these private citizens say, that is *their* problem. They make their own existential decisions about how to live and act. If they take a beating from their own decisions they are chumps and deserving of what they get (or don't get.)

Logically then, if it's not the actual people who are most responsible for these social outcomes, *it must be the rules*. That's why it's crucial for us to focus on those rules and decide if they continue to be acceptable and worthwhile for a 21st-Century future. If not, then we need to decide what's next. (See Chapter 6 for a complete discussion of *who* should make our set of fundamental social rules and *how*; and Chapters 8 and 9 for a proposal of what's next. Readers will decide for themselves what is next for them.)

Most people, probably, fall into the very broad middle range of philosophies between the extreme private and public attitudes. If asked to intellectualize their beliefs, balanced citizens might say that the individualist/capitalist (i.e., private citizen attitude) rules of the game, while useful and even having some philosophical validity, are not by *themselves* sufficient for any healthy society. They fundamentally ignore much of what is important in human life. A healthy society has powerful and meaningful social relationships involving family, neighborhoods, communities, the nation, and a global citizenry. These social relationships include shared needs, wants, duties, traditions, and common emotional and psychological connections. They help comprise a vital social fabric, according to social philosophers and scientists, artists, and nearly everyone who has had the life experiences of marriage, childbirth, social accomplishments, and tragedies. Probably even the most hard-hearted capitalist knows, at least in his heart, that this is true.

For balanced individuals, letting the individualist/capitalist ethos dominate nearly every aspect of our lives is unhealthy, even primitive. It is *so* 18th century! Many people and especially public citizens see or feel that they do not fit in very well with the norms of the society that they live in. A whole *lot* of things in society don't correlate well with private citizen norms—the family unit, religious communities, teams of all kinds, and nonprofit organizations. Even public policies benefiting those least able to help themselves, like handicapped accessibility rules, run *counter* to those norms. Can we imagine a "healthy" family defined by individualist/capitalist rules of social interaction--self-interest, competition, exploitation—instead of by love, nurturing, sharing, and sacrifice? Not exactly the Cleaver or Cosby families!

How about a church organization comprised of competitive self-interested members seeking win-lose situations among the congregation? That church would not be much of a "community" in any religious, social, or spiritual sense. A sports team comprised of individual "entrepreneurs" would likely be

an ugly loser in most leagues. A nation which bases its economy solely on immediate personal gratification and short-term goals would generate an elite-lower class hierarchy, a mostly insecure and cynical populace, and an atomized and dysfunctional political environment. (Sound familiar?) Ultimately, that nation will lose credibility among more progressive national competitors. (See Chapter 6 for an extended discussion of the pathologies of capitalism.)

Despite the heavyweight power and influence of the elite class and the predominance of individualist/capitalist rules of the game, the far greater number of people (and social philosophers, etc.) stand by some alternative middle philosophical positions. These positions understand that *neither* of the two basic arch-typical attitudes (i.e., sets of rules) by themselves is characterized by *all* of these traits: 1) practical, 2) consistent with the fullness of human realities (economic needs and wants, emotional and psychological meanings, social management capabilities), and 3) morally acceptable for most people. If the individualist-capitalist rules have to stand, some would say, then a set of public citizen rules should stand, too, at least in some *complementary* way with them, for balance. That balance would make for an overall healthier and happier society.

A lot of people believe that a balancing of interests is the most fitting for our society even if knowing *where* to draw the line between one attitude and the other is difficult or confusing in some situations. Here are some attitude conflict examples: Should I work overtime and weekends as my bosses expect *or* spend quality time with the kids while they are still young? Should I accept employment with a marketing firm which specializes in exploiting consumer insecurities *or* lose out on a paycheck? Should I prioritize my own income needs and invest in high-earnings companies which make unhealthy products and exploit workers and the environment *or* settle for smaller returns by choosing only “socially-responsible” investments. Some people may have already found a comfortable balance for themselves and we should salute them, but most haven't. They haven't had *good options* or enough of them to fit their existential lives. Complementing our existing ethos with a new one having a set of public values will make decisions like those less tormenting and heartbreaking.

We also don't want to be fooled by those who want us to believe that they support balance when they really don't. Hard-charging corporations, for example, fund charitable organizations as their way of showing balance in their social roles. Corporate charity, however, is not *necessarily* a good example of the private-public balance being promoted here as it may merely be trying to offset an aggressive private citizen attitude with some pretense of public service. Cigarette manufacturers, for example, whose very business model facilitates great harm to the public health and yet contribute generously to the arts and culture are more hypocritical than balanced. Big Businesses which mercilessly exploit their workers but also provide support to social welfare organizations are both hypocritical and cynical.

True public service oriented employers, of course, would treat their employees well in the first instance making social welfare programs even less necessary. From the program's point of view, balancing evil with some good is insufficiently responsible. If the cigarette manufacturers, for one, had sincere public citizen intentions they would wind down their operations completely and evolve into different, more positive kinds of businesses. (See Chapters 3 and 9 for more elaboration of private to public citizen transitions.)

Culture and Environment

Besides the existential *choice* in philosophy each person has towards society there is some scientific evidence that these attitudes may have some neurobiological bases (perhaps evolutionary-based) and hardwired into personality. People may skew towards private or public-oriented attitudes by randomness of birth, or genetics, or mix of DNA switches (?) on or off. It may be that private or public attitudes, therefore, may not necessarily result from philosophical justification or even be deliberately chosen. However, like with social inhibitions controlling violent impulses, sex drives, and other id-like

motivators, biology doesn't completely control attitude. People can be expected to have, and do have, *some* control over social attitudes whether that control is cognitive, psychological, socially conditioned, or some combination of these.

Furthermore, as social and behavioral scientists are realizing more and more, personal choice makes up much less of decision-making than most people like to think. People are not the clear thinking, rational actors presupposed by individualist/capitalist ideology. They are primarily emotionally and psychologically driven, suffer persistent cognitive overload, and rely on habit to get by most of their daily lives. Most people generally *muddle through* life exhibiting instances of both private and public attitude in a less than fully principled fashion. In other words, they act first, and (maybe) think later. Often, things "just happen," either through circumstances, traditions, habit, conditioning, or just randomness. There are likely to be very few deliberately pure selfish egos and very few pure, principled "socialist" personalities.

While choice, biology, and muddling through all contribute to attitude, there is plenty of social science research which shows that personalities, attitudes, and actions are conditioned by *context* or environment to a greater extent than any other motivator. Major kinds of conditioning include child-rearing practices, schooling, and civic moral conditioning. The conditioning context also includes formal rules and laws, traditions and habits and, *especially*, a national social ethos (values.) (See Chapter 6 for more discussion of the role of values.)

Where the rules of the system are those emphasizing self-interest and competition (as is the case in capitalist societies), the individual will be influenced or even compelled, in some large fashion, to adapt to that environment whether he likes it or not. It's much harder, for example, to be a community interested "We" personality balancing interests in contemporary America than it is to just go with the flow and be a "Me" person, like most others seem to be. On the other hand, if the context tends toward favoring a public attitude, as in family, team, and community situations or as in the national cultures of countries like Canada and some East Asian and Scandinavian nations, the adjustments may be in the direction of supporting collective interests, as in being a "We" person, like most others in the culture seem to do.

The Character of Nations and Societies

However one looks at these attitude types—existential choices, biologically hardwired, or adaptations to context—the character of nations and societies is determined by the overall mix of these types. Among the archetypical liberal democracies, a nation dominated by private citizens would have this primary set of characteristics:

- 1) innovative,
- 2) creative,
- 3) productive (and "creatively destructive"),
- 4) individualistic,
- 5) aggressive,
- 6) warlike (the United States has been involved in wars/war-like activities for nearly *all* of its existence),
- 7) a large measure of insecurity,
- 8) limited perspectives (and a predilection for the simple and short term temporal perspective),

- 9) a high degree of economic inequality,
- 10) administratively and procedurally messy,
- 11) a relatively low degree of government regulation, and
- 12) coldly unemotional.

Think of the typical Big Business as an exemplar. Its *true* intentions (in accordance with the logic of capitalism) are to crush competition, impose monopoly power over its customers, avoid/evade taxation, fight off every regulation of its activities regardless of its value to everyone else, and impose its will upon government. Its corporate charter and the formalities of its legal status *require* it to service the financial interests of its stockholders *only*, regardless of the welfare of anyone or anything else anywhere. Its credo is, "Business is Business!," not anything like, "Business for the People!" It actually may be flattered in the corporate boardroom to be referred to by outsiders as a "Great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money." That sounds like confirmation that it is doing well what it is supposed to do.

A nation dominated by public citizens would be modeled more closely to family, team, and community values. Its primary set of characteristics would include:

- 1) security,
- 2) organization,
- 3) planning,
- 4) coordination,
- 5) multiple perspectives,
- 6) relatively lower levels of economic and political inequality,
- 7) harmony,
- 8) tolerance,
- 9) peacefulness, and
- 10) emotional warmth.

As to the family situation, think of your mom as an exemplar. She didn't charge you for your grub or your room. She didn't require reciprocal value for changing your diapers and driving you to soccer practice. She accommodated willingly to your needs and interests while still maintaining her own. She was a quintessential socialist! And, good thing for you, being unable as you were to transact as an individual/capitalist until later in your life. If she hadn't had the good balance of interests that she did, you would likely have had a cruel death very young.

No nation conforms 100% to either type of attitude but each skews somewhat along a scale of a private–public continuum. Among contemporary developed countries, the United States and Russia, perhaps, are closest to the private end; Canada and many of the nations of Western Europe, especially the Scandinavian ones, closer to the public end.

The Role of Intensity

The character of a nation is not necessarily highly correlated to its proportional number of private and public citizens. A large majority of public citizens, for example, don't necessarily make up a public-oriented nation. Citizen types have influence in society in proportion, more significantly, to their (capital) resources and especially their *intensities*. Experts in organizational politics know how readily even tiny minorities having exceptional focus and intensity can assert dominant influences over the diffused, less intense interests of even a substantial majority. Typically, those are private citizens and special interests (having only *one* perspective to deal with and that one limited to *self-interest*) despite comprising only a small minority of citizens.

Most ordinary citizens, on the other hand, have only a generalized interest in good government and don't directly participate in the political sphere because they have their own jobs, families, and lives to attend to. A special interest, on the other hand, knows exactly what it wants from government (or society) and sees its *job* is to be focused and intense and demanding. Its "opposition," so to speak, is everyone else, those ordinary citizens who have neither the resources, time, focus, intensity, or wills to resist it. The fact that there are multimillions of these ordinary citizens in (*potential*) opposition to special interest activities doesn't matter. Multimillions of diffused, unfocused, low resourced interests still equate to nothing.

Imagine a grand buffet table surrounded by special interests and ordinary folks. The uninhibited (special interest) grabbers push and shove to empty the serving plates. They get most or all of the goodies leaving crumbs, only, for the rest. When there are *so* many special interests all with outsized intensities as we have now in America, collective interests and the common good are starved. (See Chapter 3 for more discussion of how minority group focus and intensity trump collective interests.) Consider, for example, how the minuscule number of (focused and intense) elite members within nations everywhere have almost always dominated the multimillions of the lower classes.

Consider, too, the influence in American society of our own political-economic elite (representing 1-5% of the citizenry), the ethanol industry (and hundreds of similar industries and special interests) (<1%/each), the Tea Party (~4%), and the lobbying group for Israeli interests, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) (<1.5%). The tiny number of people in the elite group control around 65 percent of assets, about 35 percent of income, own most of the media industry, and thoroughly dominate the economy, government, culture, and media institutions. The ethanol industry (and its lobby) domineer multi-billion-dollar subsidy programs for a tiny number of Midwestern producers while multimillions of lower-class taxpayers subsidize them from the public purse and consumers pay higher prices for corn products. Some of the manufacturing special interests even impact high-level American foreign-policy resulting in anti-consumer import quotas, export subsidies, and even war-making decisions in Iraq and elsewhere.

The Tea Party was instrumental, among other things, in compelling the Republican Party's approach to the August 2011 debt ceiling negotiations which brought the whole *country* to the brink of insolvency and financial disrepute. It is responsible now, primarily, for the extreme partisan divisions in the United States Congress and its near impotence in responsible governance. AIPAC dominates U.S. policy regarding (tiny) Israel influencing high-level foreign and military policies and the allocation of billions of dollars yearly on behalf of Israeli (and Jewish) interests. Reports are that its influence makes most legislators cower. It is considered by some to be the most effective special-interest lobby in America, even more so than those of the oil or telecommunication industries having much broader constituencies.

Regardless of how anyone feels about the substantive positions of these parties, the point is that focus and intensity matter a great deal. Each special interest sort of "owns" its own little piece of the public policy world. When you add up the grabbing of all of these pieces, like at the buffet table, there is

little left for the rest of us and nothing for the common good. (See Chapter 3 for more discussion of how the “Iron Triangles” contribute, too, to special-interest influence on policymaking and regulation.)

Probably no group is as intense at maintaining its interests than that of the financial elite. It has the most goodies to protect, certainly, and is heavily invested emotionally and psychologically in its hierarchical status. The elite as a group, and its subcomponents in industry and the like, fight for what they want to get and keep in bare-knuckle fashion, if that's what it takes. They even engage lobbyists and public relations experts to resort to strategies involving emotions like fear, greed, and anger and turning them against opponents and the public in general. They dig up embarrassing information unrelated to public issues about opposing personalities to intimidate and co-opt them. They don't even worry about offending the public because, for them, asserting their interests is akin to waging war—*“By any means necessary.”*

Although they outraged most of the public over the financial bailouts in 2008 they got through the kerfuffle quite fine. Deception, lies, fear-mongering and worse are standard practices for them in both the economic and political spheres. Just look at the manipulative, crude, ugly, and mean-spirited campaigning which dominates our election seasons. It's sponsored mostly by the major political parties (both representing the same basic elite) and well-funded political action committees sometimes representing just a single (elite) person or family. (Where is the fairness? Where is the respect of the public?! Where is the shame?!)

Ordinary folks and even the most dedicated activists on the wrong side of these people not only mostly lack the resources but, more significantly, the will to face or endure those kinds of tactics or use similar ones even defensively. Certainly, the ordinary Marys and Johns, lacking the resources, focus, organization, and especially the will, could hardly stand up to or generate the intensity required to counter that of the elite and special interests. That being the case, they end up as losers.

Attitude Makes a *Big* Difference

In an arch-typical economic interaction a private citizen with his maximizing self-interested attitude will engage a public citizen having a different set of social transactional rules geared towards sharing and common interests. So, in a simple hypothetical, when (private citizen) Leonard and (public citizen) Mary meet and are faced with the so-called “limited resources,” e.g., an “economic pie” (not big enough to fully satisfy both of them) they think about a way to split it up. If given the chance, Mary will likely cut the pie into two roughly equal halves and will courteously let Leonard select his piece first. She instinctively wants her transaction with Leonard to be fair (as she sees it.) When they meet again and are faced with splitting another economic pie Leonard takes *his* turn to cut. He cuts into unequal sized pieces and selects his (larger) piece *first*. Mary is shorted. From Leonard's perspective, this result is fair, too, as Mary had her opportunity previously to do the same thing that he just did. She didn't. If Mary feels exploited in this transaction *it is her own damn fault*.

Interactions of this kind represent “take” versus “share” conflicts in which “take” regularly prevails. The private citizens are takers, exploiting for personal gain the mismatches between attitudes, intensities, and wills. This is how the political-economic game is *supposed* to be played, pursuant to the clear logic of the individualist/capitalist ethos. (If you don't believe this you haven't been reading enough economic texts!) When the Masters of the Universe on Wall Street got overheated over monstrous profit opportunities, put the financial health of the entire globe on the brink of disaster, and got the lower classes to bail them out, they played by the rules. Those rules *authorized* them to exploit and they did. Public citizens (chumps?) would never consider doing what they did even if they were in position to do so. They have, as private citizens would say, a failure of (capitalist) will.

The same concepts and outcomes play out in general society every moment of every day. For example, imagine normal business operations of an industry resulting in pollution which causes damages to people and the environment. Despite being operationally responsible for those damages, the industry doesn't pay for them as, often, there is *no legal duty* to do so. (Consider *who* is making these rules. See, also, Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of fairness in social rule making.) Either *no one* assumes responsibility for them and the damages remain and incrementally get worse or the government becomes compelled to step in. When the public has to assume responsibility for those pollution damages they are termed cost "externalities." That means that those damages are *not costed into the businesses' products or services* even though they were created by business operations. These externality costs most often are offloaded to the public. Businesses, in other words, get a free ride, in a sense--a public subsidy.

Typical external consequences which derive from normal business operations include: 1) making pollution; 2) using up "free" environmental capital, e.g., water, air, drainage areas, etc.; 3) operations which cause deleterious health effects to employees; and 4) negative side effects from sales of consumer products which contribute indirectly to obesity, cancer, and other pathologies. (Think of high calorie fast food, cigarettes, etc.) The concept and the consequences of externalities have generally been invisible to most ordinary people, including taxpayers. Big Businesses and their friends in government have not gone out of their way to disclose these subsidies or explain why the public is paying for them.

Businesses profit in two ways--from their ordinary profits from operations and from a *compelled public subsidy*. It is the taxpayers, workers, consumers, and the environment which ultimately pay for them in their own various ways. Ordinary citizens, not being so self-interested, maximizing, or aggressive as the private ones will have their interests doubly diminished--their own personal interests in the specific transactions and those as a general member of the exploited collective.

In a different (more collectively rational) world, these damages and costs would be priced out and factored into the businesses' direct costs. The true costs of business operations would therefore be made transparent and more meaningful for policymaking purposes. Economic allocations would be fairer.

Despite of all the aggression and self interest motivation, private citizen behaviors don't *always* mean exploitation of the rest of us. While private citizens by nature act *intentionally* to benefit themselves, sometimes these acts have positive direct (or incidental spillover) effects for others in the society. After all, self-interested, profit-seeking entrepreneurs make jobs, and create new products, services, industries, etc. Increased business activity and increased productivity *can* (but not always) produce higher living standards for even low-level workers and others. There is *some* worth to the idea that a "Rising economic tide raises all boats." As explained in Chapter 3, society and the program may need to rely a good deal upon an elite class, but we don't want it to be so dominant as it is now. (See Chapter 3 for details of what these limits may be.)

The Dominant Elite

There are billions of private and public citizen transactions and interactions over any extended period of time. Many of them are zero-sum situations where private citizens, competing vigorously and persistently, win most of them. Sooner or later in this individualist free-for-all, the advantages for private citizens add up, the disadvantages of the public citizens accumulate, and there is a growing disparity of wealth and influence. Private citizens acquire more than a proportionate share of economic resources; have an outsized influence over politics and governments; and control, in large measure, through dominant ownership of the media, the social and cultural spheres, as well. Ultimately, we have the formation of a permanent political-economic elite.

In contemporary America an elite of private citizens dominates to an astounding degree. This dominance is based partly on their having a superior set of the resources and attributes that are most

valued in a private enterprise system—capital, aggression, competitiveness, simple-minded focus, intensity--and partly because much of the population chooses not to play by the same set of rules for philosophical or moral reasons. They get beaten up because of it and eventually become "tamed." Being tamed means recognizing that participation in the political sphere is nearly worthless, hoping for meaningful differences due to leadership personalities or party change is foolish, and trying to get ahead financially means fighting a rigged system. They give up. Some withdraw into the small life of family and community, or watch escapist fare on TV or the Internet. Quite a few get numbed up on alcohol or drugs.

Some of the elite have developed an ego-driven sense of entitlement and a God-like identity status over the ordinary Marys and Johns. Only their *own* internal merit standards could justify: 1) Corporate annual salary and bonuses of hundreds of millions of dollars for Big Kahunas while many of the employees earn less than living wages; 2) Golden parachutes worth multimillions of dollars for some Kahunas even while the organizations that they ran go under (into liquidation or bankruptcy) stiffing creditors, employees, and the government; 3) Shamelessly obtaining bailouts from the taxpayers to cover their own reckless investment losses; 4) Showing outright contempt and disrespect for those on the low end of the economic status scale, especially those who need governmental help just to survive (like the notorious "47%"--children, the elderly, the disabled, and the involuntarily unemployed.)

Our American elite, not content merely to dominate openly the way that many plutocracies do elsewhere, go to a lot of effort to portray the rules of the game as something natural and inevitable. They utilize their vast media and public relations capabilities to instill throughout society a powerful political-economic ideology which misleadingly and incorrectly acts to *legitimize* their status. They: 1) drumbeat quasi-authoritarian pronouncements from elite class members—politicians, political parties, Big Businessmen, and media figures about the virtues of the free market and the evils of national planning, organized workers and labor unions, populism, and socialism; 2) use their media to perpetrate narratives sympathetic to them of how people should think about economic and political ideas. (The most durable ones are about little guys, who if only they work hard enough, will become big successes, and little guys giving the rich a little bit of fictional comeuppance every now and then. Think about popular movies like Rocky, Network, and Office Space--remember this doesn't happen in real life!); 3) use schools, workplaces, and other environs as social conditioning means (to mostly captive audiences) for making good consumers, obeisant workers, and tamed citizens; and 4) manipulate public psychology and emotions by serially propping up "bogeymen"—communists, terrorists, various hostile nations, etc.—to scare people into submissive and complaisant postures which dampen challenges to the hierarchy; among other strategies.

These are tried-and-true class control strategies which have been used successfully nearly everywhere for centuries to keep the lower classes passive, fearful, hopeful, divided, and in conflict with each other. They make it difficult for most people to see clearly the class hierarchy itself, its meanings, and its responsibility for the often unfavorable political-economic outcomes which affect them.

The General Makeup of the Public

Although there are various statistics kept for the makeup of nations in regard to class status by amounts of wealth, income, educational levels, etc., there are none for the category--private versus public citizen--we prefer to use here. Attitude is way harder to objectify and chart than financial and similar data. Nevertheless, both public and private citizens can be identified as such, in rough measure, because they are action oriented and have a higher than normal behavioral profile. That is, they pay attention to economic and public events, they act and react confidently, and they competently assert needs and desires. Examples include special interests, activist organizations of all kinds, and assertive personalities at every class level. A *very rough* seat-of-the-pants estimate based on news sources, surveys, and available statistical data is that private citizens in America makeup, perhaps, 5 to 15% of the population. A larger

minority, perhaps 25-40% of Americans, may be public citizens. (Remember, these types do not equate to the wealthy and the little people but span those categories somewhat.)

There is a larger group in society (45-70%) which can be considered neither private nor public. It is made up of people who do not actively participate much in society for a variety of reasons: 1) They lack sufficient id or ego to act. 2) They are overwhelmed time wise or psychologically by immediate economic and personal demands, feel beaten down, and can do no more than necessary to just get by in life. 3) They are impaired by disability, illness, or infancy. 4) They feel that they lack sufficient resources to compete against both a rigged system and the intensity of the elite and don't even try. A common term for a generally inactive, perhaps subordinate, population group like this is the "masses."

The masses are either indifferently affected by the actions of more assertive private and public citizens or they just helplessly and/or hopelessly accept the effects of what other people are doing whether it affects them good and bad. They just go with the flow and hope for the best. People in this group can populate any of the major economic classes--elite, middle, lower-- as financial status alone doesn't necessarily equate to confidence and assertiveness. But, most, probably, are lower-class as they lack the educations, experiences, and capital resources to compete successfully against those with superior resources. What else can you expect in a capitalist society? By nature, there *has* to be winners and losers. And, if you have a small elite class like we do, there has to be multimillions of losers, right?

What Does This Attitude Difference Mean for America?

In sum, the dominance of the private citizen attitude means:

1. Persistent, accumulating advantages for private citizens making for an increasing disparity of wealth and influence
2. The creation of an elite class
3. A plutocratic government instead of a democracy
4. The predominance of simple and short-term perspectives in policymaking and private sector behavior
5. Mostly unchecked resource depletion and environmental degradation
6. Increasing public debt
7. Creation of a large "socially-worthless" class of unemployed people
8. Increasingly dysfunctional governance
9. Increasing group conflicts, especially among the little people themselves
10. Increasing social pathologies like alienation, anxiety, insecurity, and depression
11. Growing public cynicism towards government and other authority institutions
12. A general breakdown of the social fabric

Wow! This doesn't sound good for most of us. A lot of people, on all parts of the political spectrum, see Americans as having created a great mess with no obvious way to get out of it. The little people are horribly frustrated at nearly every level of their involvement with society. The Mary's (of the pie-slicing

transactions with the Leonard's) will be unhappy about persistently taking losses and will be frustrated by the Leonards' (selfish) attitudes. Although the little people may concede the private citizen attitude as *philosophically* justified, they still see fundamental unfairness in these economic transactions.

The Marys have four options: 1) Give up their public citizen attitude and reject the whole orientation towards community and the common good and become private citizens themselves in a *totally* individualist/capitalist environment; 2) Suck it up and just accept the exploitative consequences of maintaining the public citizen attitude; 3) Attempt to persuade the (likely reluctant) Leonards to accept some balance in their attitudes and indirectly at least, accommodate to a collective interest; 4) Forcefully pushback on the (resistant) Leonards to enforce some measure of overall fairness in the society as well as some measure of self-respect.

None of these are great options for Mary's or public citizens. The first two options are an abandonment of principle or a surrender and make for serious existential grief. The third represents an improbable outcome based on the long history of the elite-lower classes hierarchical relationship. Option four implies conflict of some sorts, including the pushback strategy proposed here and most people want to *avoid* conflict. There may come a time, maybe soon however, when after two-plus centuries of domination, the little people of America will realize that the elite will need to be persuaded to be fair and to accept a collectively smart society. That means conflict of some sort may be unavoidable. (See Chapter 4 for more discussion of the pushback concept and Chapter 8 for how it is implemented.)

What This Program May Mean to Everyone in America

Let's apply what this program could mean to various components of the American public. How would each see it? How would it affect them? Can we expect them to participate in making the program a reality and, if so, how? We can break the components into classes, personality types, classic political philosophies, and specific groups.

The Classes:

A. The Political-Economic Elite: Since there is a moderate to high correlation between the financial/political elite class and the private interest attitude, many in this class are likely to see the program as a threat. They will oppose it as it intends to impinge a good deal on their superiority status in society. They may resent being subjected to a threatening pushback effort by the lower classes, of all people, especially since, (as they see it.) "We've given them jobs and welfare and they still want more?!" They could see this as ingratitude at best and dangerous populism at worst. We can expect them to label the movement as "radical, populist, socialist, communist, anti-capitalist, un-American" and the like in an attempt to deflect serious consideration of its concepts, analysis, and potential effects. They will go to extremes to undermine its credibility.

Think of how the elite and its proxies in government and the media have reacted to Thomas Picketty's 2014 book, "Capital in the 21st Century," which exposed generations worth of data proving the growing concentration of wealth and income in the hands of a small elite. First, they said that the facts were wrong. Then they said that if the facts are right, they were incomplete. Then they said that if the facts were right and complete, they were misleading. If they were not misleading, then they didn't tell the whole story. Even if the story was true, Picketty was a lefty and, worse, a commie. So much for that book! And, that was a reaction to an *academic* level book much less an *Action Manual*.

While misrepresenting the movement's nature (deliberately or not), the elite will correctly understand the threats: 1) The elite's relative free rein in the economic sphere may be significantly constrained. 2) Its domination of the electoral and political processes will end. 3) Its cozy relationships

with governmental officials and institutions providing them with sweetheart deals, subsidies, tax breaks and the like will shrivel up. 4) Its untoward influence over legislation and (de)regulation will likely be upset. 5) Its take of the national income will be somewhat lessened and its taxes increased. 6) It will not be able to rig the system as much as it can do now. In other words, if the program is successful, the elite will have to deal with a collectively fairer economic system, a more democratic political system, and a collectively-minded governance ethos.

They also may feel pulled down a peg on the hierarchical status ladder when even little people will get social respect (albeit of a different kind than that valued by the individualist/capitalist system.) *That* consequence, especially, may not sit well with some big egos, even if they remain high on that status ladder. Many elite members almost certainly will be hurt, insulted, and outraged. They will resist. They will try to crush the "story's" narrative arc. Supporters of the program will try to steer the story towards the denouement they want. Things will take a turn towards the dramatic! Conflicts will arise! The head-butting will begin! This could get quite exciting. Readers and supporters are encouraged to come up with narrative details of their own. (See Chapter 9 for more on how this may play out.)

Some fair-minded upper class individuals may support the program. Consider, for example, how the prominent and uber-rich William Gates Senior and Junior, George Soros, Warren Buffett and a good number of others have conceded publicly that the elite are way too dominant economically and politically for the overall good of the country. They are in favor of reforms of the current system (although not necessarily of the same type and on the order contemplated here.) While they see themselves as having played fairly by the existing rules and succeeded, they are not hard-core private citizens or ideologues and would welcome some measure of change in favor of the lower classes and for the collective interest. They admirably demonstrate an understanding of the dual-perspective idea that private and public interests can and should be balanced. They believe in a collective interest and a common good because each of them knows he is a part of them and owes some measure of his success to them.

Once convinced that: 1) the program's goals and methods are sound, reasonable, and sincere, (from nearly all points of view); 2) there are a lot of members of the lower classes who are willing to act for change; 3) even under the most extreme conditions they will maintain most of their capital and their privileges; 4) the government will continue to protect their assets while inhibiting any severe redistribution of wealth; and 5) there will be no lower-class rebellions with beheadings and such, the fair-minded of the upper class could be reasonably content with the program. The additional taxes they pay will go to worthwhile social projects (see below) and not be wasted. And, a more balanced society, class wise and attitude wise, will not be the end of the world for them. They will still be filthy rich and richly privileged.

There may even be unexpected positive outcomes for them. They will have opportunities to take new leadership positions (either directly with the program's institutions or otherwise) in advancing *their* society. A fresh look at society and its possibilities of being an advanced 21st-Century nation may provide the wealthy with new sorts of challenges different and more exciting, perhaps, than merely making more money. (After the first \$10 or so billion, making more money just gets stale.) The elite can put big money, top-level production skills, and managerial experience into sincere efforts to address social problems like the dysfunctional electoral and political systems, municipal infrastructure deficits, job creation and satisfaction matters, public education, social values conditioning, and others not being well addressed currently.

Doing great things like these may require new vision of opportunities now repressed or dormant because of the prevailing ethos. Imagine one of the moguls (or a group of them) taking "ownership" of public education issues like preschool factors which inhibit school performance or the infrastructural needs (e.g., functional improvements, beautification, signature architecture and public artwork, etc.) of areas where he lives. Some who now may be (low-profile) public citizens and run businesses upon a set of values the same or similar to what we propose here may have templates for replicating their structures

and methods for others. One *smart* public citizen like this could impact entire industries and entire geographical areas. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of these new opportunities.)

In principle, the money will be there (some perhaps in private-governmental partnerships), the managerial and administrative skills will be there, the demand will be there, and new forms of citizen support and rewards will come directly from the program's institutions. Elite leadership can sponsor a quantum increase in both tangible and social value for the nation sort of like the governmentally-sponsored WPA and other programs of the 1930's and 40's did with public buildings, infrastructure, cultural facilities, educational and employment opportunities, and more.

As no one likes their money to be wasted or unfairly given to or taken by someone else, the elite can also expect to see positive practical value in the use of their tax payments. New institutions and processes designed to ensure public credibility and trust including new forms of citizen monitoring of government and private sector activities may greatly reduce the theft, graft, special interest waste, and inappropriate use of taxpayer money which we have now under our 18th-Century appropriations and accounting processes. Taxpayer funds will be used for well-conceived and collectively valuable purposes. (See Chapter 8 for detailed descriptions of how the National Councils and the shadow government will function to build credibility and trust.)

Furthermore, it's not hard to imagine some of these moguls seeking alternative meanings for themselves in being great statesmen, social leaders, social project managers, public citizen role models, etc. It might not take much prodding to get some to move on from participating in relatively shallow individualist "scoring" games like being the highest-paid CEO or being on the *Forbe's Wealthiest Citizen List*. The new blue-chip citizens may not be those who have broken records for increased quarterly revenues for their businesses, for example, but those who *have taking ownership of a social problem and fixed it*.

Imagine, for example, wealthy individuals and corporations taking ownership of specific issues in their industries and fields of expertise and fixing them: 1) military contractors evolving their engineering prowess into non-military uses; 2) fast food businesses developing healthier menus, products, etc. and conditioning consumers to better dietary choices and behaviors; 3) the medical professionals sincerely focusing on preventive medicine and education; 4) individuals and businesses adapting to a holistic (ecological) view of their production and consumption footprints; etc. These are all plausible scenarios. A small but growing movement called philanthro-capitalism is undertaking these types of private-public endeavors now. They are typically small-scale projects but the idea is sound and can be made into a grand organized national scheme.

The value of elite participation will be in the form of social problem-solving, community building, domestic as well as foreign peacemaking and diplomacy, and tangible public projects. The new blue-chipper, dual-citizen attitude will be honored and rewarded by public citizens. Those moguls may become true National Heroes.

On a more personal level, some of the elite may be relieved to be able to take advantage of a new social ethos of the balancing of capitalist and human values. Public citizen values could offer a measure of freedom, for example, to CEOs and others from fiduciary rules requiring 100% allegiance to the company and 0% for all of the rest of life, continuing demands by investors for "more and more", and the always-on-call ethos which serves only *system* needs. If the program had \$50 for every time a Big Kahuna ruefully declared at a retirement or awards ceremony that he, "Regrets the personal sacrifices his demanding and intensely focused jobs and positions have required of his spouse, family, and communities," it may not need any additional funding! If these people really meant what they said about their families and communities then the program promises to give them the room to adjust their personal lives in meaningful ways. (See Chapter 7 for more discussion of the importance of human meanings.)

B. The Middle Class: As capitalism becomes more intense, meaner, and broader subsuming the entire globe and much of life within its dynamics, the middle class is being pummeled and diminished. These people are losing jobs, homes, pensions, medical insurance coverages, domestic stability, and political influence. Many, especially older and younger folks, are moving *downward* into the lower class. They are becoming losers economically and politically and their futures may be even bleaker. Even though the middle class has compelling voting numbers, compelling consumer power, and the potential (because of its size) to dominate civic and social mores, its members are instead frustrated by macro-level forces mostly out of their control. They are confused and distracted by the overall complexities and demands of life. They cannot cope well with the zero-sum political economic environment where they are mismatched against the elite because they are divided, unfocused, and have been ideologically manipulated by elite-sponsored strategies of control. As a class, they are punching way below their weight, so to speak, regarding matters most important to them, i.e., economics, governance, social relations, and personal meanings. They lack class consciousness as well as any vision and plan to right things for themselves.

Many in the middle class may embrace a program that: 1) intellectually challenges the tenets of free-wheeling individualism/capitalism and provides alternative perspectives, 2) is based on a new set of public values which should be appealing (e.g., balance, human meaning, respect, advanced governance and social relations), 3) gives them a chance to assert more control over their lives to maintain (or regain) middle class statuses, and 4) promises new measures of respect and self respect. Some have already been energized to some degree by the populist social change movements of the Tea Party or the various Occupy movements but may not see much hope for significant *positive* change in either of those movements.

They will benefit the most of all from the program:

- 1) Their allocation of the nation's income likely will rise,
- 2) They will have influence in the political sphere more proportional to their numerical superiority,
- 3) They will obtain balance in their lives between system needs and personal ones,
- 4) They will have opportunities to take ownership roles in their social communities and learn how to make them great,
- 5) They will be formally rewarded (as will all citizens regardless of class level) for public citizen activities.,
- 6) They may gain pride and a new level of respect for themselves as citizens of a 21st-Century nation.

Furthermore, the program will empower middle-class members *directly* in controlling their lives and statuses instead of having, as now, to rely upon others in traditional roles—i.e., politicians, political parties, Big Businesses, etc. They know or feel that they can't trust any of those parties to act sincerely on their behalf. They will be able to participate in the program at many levels of involvement from being activists to merely making a few mouse clicks every week or so with a special network application designed to make it easy for them to support the program. (See Chapter 8 for a description of the Local Council's user "Dashboard," a simplified computer application.) They will learn to leverage their numbers and consumer power to enforce pushback. Some will be members of activist organizations directly falling under the program's brand or members of the Local Council network itself participating in shadow government roles and/or pushback efforts. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of how the middle class can assert direct control of their lives.)

C. The Lower Class: This group, made up mostly of blue and pink collar workers and lower-level service people barely gets by in life. As capitalism gets meaner, these folks are significantly regressing as a class in most every way—economically, educationally, socially, and health-wise. They are incurring an unusually harmful decline in healthy domestic relations with fewer marriages, fewer double parent households, more multi-generational households, and unsteady employment. There are few upward paths to the middle or upper classes. Their threads in the social fabric are being worn and unraveled. They have little influence upon society as a group and close to none as individuals. Other than voting numbers and some modest consumer power they have near zero resources. Many feel a need to turn to petty (and worse) crime, substance abuse, and domestic violence to get by or to (destructively) escape their realities.

Expecting them to rely upon their own personal initiative and sense of personal responsibility to compete successfully with the more fortunate is like asking car wreck victims to extricate themselves from the crumpled steel, recover their health wholly on their own, and to get back to work promptly. We have to be real! In a system of perpetual win/lose transactions like we have it should be expected that some losers will eventually become close to helpless.

Instead of moralizing about the absence of personal responsibility, as some see it, we ought to help *bring these people up*, with financial and educational aid as a start. We have to engage long-term social conditioning techniques to guide or nudge them with behaviors so that they have a chance to be as good as they can be. That kind of help will ultimately help everyone. Costs of social services will come down in the long run; people will be more productive; etc. Sadly, the extreme private citizen has no empathy or sympathy and will have these folks scramble ugly at the bottom of society. Then they will belittle them and call them bad names, like the "takers" and the "47% ers."

Public citizens, on the other hand, will both emphasize and sympathize. They will recognize the potential in nearly all of these folks for positive personal and community outcomes. A lot of people just need help from whomever is willing and able to provide it (and it will *not* come from anywhere in the individualist/ capitalist system.) Regrettably, our governments are less able to help now as they are hamstrung by extreme party partisanship which has rendered them nearly impotent and unable to improve or add to the various programs we have now to help bring people up. They are facing decreasing resources and the efforts of the elite class to curtail even established and proven support programs. Many might say (probably accurately) that they even lack good ideas and fresh ones. Even more, the influence of private citizen moralists inside and outside of government is trying to change the role of government *away* from its crucial and maybe solitary role of protecting ordinary citizens from the harshness and brutality of aggressive men in unregulated competition (i.e., *our* system.)

Help for those who can't much help themselves will have to come partly from from government where it can and partly from the formal and informal institutions which will develop out of a new social ethos. Those entities will be mostly hybrid volunteer/private sector organizations designed to both smarten governance and engage conditioning strategies to *bring people up*. They will provide guidance and institutional support for the lower classes to learn to help themselves and to participate in (and benefit from) pushback strategies against those rigging the system against them. The program will provide these folks with an honest and deserved explanation of why they are as they are status-wise and offer pathways for them to have real influence in governance, the workplace, and their communities. It will develop local and regional groups to best leverage their voting numbers. It will promote worker organizations and collective bargaining to aid pushback in the workplaces. It will show them how to utilize consumer and public relations leverages to obtain influence in the private markets. Most importantly, it will provide life-long conditioning programs to help people get on the right track personally and reward positive changes in individual and family behaviors. It will help everyone be the best that they can be! (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of how this gets done.)

The lower class will likely experience many of the same benefits from the program as that of the middle class. They are likely to be better off financially, be happier, be more productive in the economy, have a decent say in the political sphere, enjoy more harmonious domestic lives, and have earned a measure of respect and self respect. The level of direct participation in the program by most may be relatively low, but not zero. People can't be expected to be very active in any grand social project when their resources are used up just to get by. Nevertheless, rather than just existing haplessly and helplessly as mere workers and consumers, as now, they will help the movement substantially just by being better people, parents, spouses, workers, and citizens.

D. The Underclasses: The underclasses here means racial and ethnic minorities, women as a gender, the nontraditional sexually oriented, the moderately handicapped, and other marginalized groups. This is a rather large set of people. While demographic trends are providing the Hispanic population, at least, with increasing group influence, the reality is that America is still dominated by wealthy white men. (Non-wealthy white men, too, have been subordinated although not denied the same rights and privileges as these other groups have been.) The underclasses have had to struggle variously against great obstacles just for the right to own property; civil rights; electoral, housing, employment, and public accessibility rights; and the right to safely experience their own natural biological identities. The long history of discrimination (mostly class and "outsider" based) that has held these groups back has left an economic and political divide between them and the reigning elite class inhibiting the underclasses from asserting sufficiently their unique perspectives in the social world.

All of the underclass groups have some beefs with an individualist/competitive system relegating them to subordinate or loser status. They have substantially fewer resources and less influence than their numbers should support. They are positioned in a competitive environment where the rules have been rigged against them. A small set of "regular" people have captured the best positions; jobs; own the bulk of the capital; have established dominant positions in the political sphere; and make up the financial, employment, and social rules. They *then* say to everyone else, "Let's compete!" How fair is *that*?!

The underclasses continue, to a large extent, to be second (or third) rate citizens although women as a class, for example, have *forced* themselves into a much better overall position in society in a lot of ways. Yet, despite at least two historical phases of feminism, women are still faced with serious gender-based obstacles in business, the workplace, and the home. Many are still tormented by conflicting business and motherhood responsibilities where there are serious negative consequences for skewing one way or the other (for family *or* employment status.) Motherhood and the capitalist system do not fit well together. If mothers had their way, that would change, perhaps by imposing the *multiple* perspective ideas of the program to insist on a quality balance of business and family values.

Other groups, too, are not doing well in the individualist/competitive system held back, in large part, by old ways of thinking and viewing social matters. Despite the election of a black man as president, blacks are still informally segregated by neighborhoods, schools, churches, and more. The rights and status of gays across America resembles some sort of checkerboard of positive and negative legal and social schemes.

That the program is designed to be *inclusive* should be appealing to these groups. Their unique perspectives of their own situations and about their society will be a positive part of what the program is and what it achieves. Collective fairness requires the perspectives of all. The program wants to build a social fabric made up of *everyone*. The underclasses, hopefully, will be grateful just to be *invited* into the club, so to speak, rather than having to force their way into mainstream society with all of the stress, frustration, and friction that entails. They will obtain not only a place in the club but a voice in the content negotiations about economics, politics, social balance and more. We can expect them to be willing team players in the American Team. (See Chapter 5 for an explanation of why inclusivity is worthwhile and necessary, and Chapter 8 for how the underclasses can participate in the Grand Reconciliation Project.)

E. The Defenseless Class: This includes children (especially from weak family structures), the mentally ill, the significantly handicapped, and many of the elderly. They traditionally have been at the complete mercy of government support (except for the small minority which can rely upon supportive families and charitable others.) From the *pure* capitalist viewpoint, these people are worse than worthless—they are an economic drain to the extent that we give them any support at all. Supporting them cuts some group's (the elites?) net incomes and diminishes their net worth. (Yes, that viewpoint is *that* harsh—just follow the logic.) It's only because of the presence of some informal *non-capitalist* perspectives (i. e., social and community ones) that these people are being taken care of at all, either by government or by private parties.

The program explicitly sees the defenseless class as just another of the threads in the social fabric. It intends to build a broad and dense social fabric and will leave no one out! These folks will be presented opportunities to participate in public citizen programs in creative (even if limited) ways if only in the nature of modestly reinforcing public citizen values. For example, they might openly show support for the program with survey signatures or display of program logos. For some of these folks the program may be the only thing tying them in a non-dependent way to something important and meaningful. These gestures may be more significant than they may seem at first as they can help strengthen the American Team not only by counting their membership in the club but in demonstrating to everyone the collective's scope of commitment to all.

Special Personalities

A. Alpha Dogs: In any large group of people there will be an uneven distribution of id and ego types. Some people are unusually demanding, competitive, or insecure (or not.) Some are very risk intolerant (or not) while others are driven by strong status, sexual gratification, or social acceptance impulses. These personality characteristics might underlie, in many cases, whether someone is a private or public citizen, a leader, an entrepreneur, a sociopath or whatever. A special type, termed Alpha Dogs, has more scope and intensity of personality than others which impels them to want to control or dominate. There is a socio-biological basis for that kind of personality in nearly all animal species—males tend to be dominant over females, for example, and some individuals need to be dominant in their social group (or "pack") regardless of circumstances.

A lot of the history of the individualist/capitalist system may be explained by the roles played by these outsized id/ego personalities. Human Alpha Dogs tend towards high-level business and political roles—entrepreneurs, CEOs, presidents and governors, dictators, mob and gang leaders, and the like. At their best, they innovate, create new industries, provide leadership during crises, govern firmly-run and confident governments and businesses, and act as potent symbols for nations, industries, and communities. At their worst, they are destructively impulsive and initiate conflicts and wars. They are big proponents of personal freedom because, psychologically, they *really* need their way.

There has been no shortage in the political world of Alpha Dogs, like former U.S. President, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Joseph Stalin, and autocrats all over the map. Consider, too, the intense neo-conservative "hawks" in and around the U.S. government who, arguably, have an overbearing need to impose their concept of American exceptionalism upon everyone else on the globe. They draw upon a Leo Straussian-inspired philosophy of Great Men righteously imposing their wills on others, especially other nations. Their concept of reality allows them to feel justified in appropriating their national assets, determining their (puppet) leaders for them, and dominating their policies and behaviors--to benefit American (elite) interests. In their own minds, they are doing everyone else a favor by imposing *their* sense of order and values upon them whether it is appreciated or not. It's sort of like how slave owners knew what was good for their workers; they didn't even have to ask.

Alpha Dog personalities permeate organizations which they head up, too. In the business world, think of Big Kahuna CEOs who inspire a corporate “style,” a Walmart, for example. That company makes a gigantic space for itself in the retail and supplier markets but shows disdain for employee rights and interests, crushes local competition, dominates suppliers, and otherwise acts as a \$420 billion (revenue) bully—“Greetings!” Some businesses on the list of The Best Places to Work have corporate styles, too, but different ones, where customers, employees, and the community are well-respected, as much as stockholders are. Alpha Dogs are willful and forceful and can be positive or negative and even dangerous. The hard charging entrepreneur and prolific philanthropist of the 19th-Century, Andrew Carnegie, represents both positive and negative. And if the contemporary neo-cons get the influence they want with the Commander-in-Chief, Americans likely will be engaged in more wars and military actions.

Many Alpha Dogs will object to any significant constraints on their vision of themselves and their roles in society. They want to innovate, explore, manage, take, and impose order and (their) values upon whoever and whatever they want. They don't want to be regulated by government or by anyone else. That's mostly what “liberty” means to them. They don't necessarily see, or care, that their freedom can act as impositions on others. (“My freedom may be your lack thereof, and vice versa.”) Our American financial elite may be the biggest, most assertive Alpha Dog there is. It pushes an ideology of “freedom, liberty, small government, choice, etc.” partly as a simple, limited perspective principle of the individualist/capitalist system but also to persuade ordinary citizens that constraining their ids and egos is unnatural and evil.

Of course, it would be ideal if the new opportunities for leadership, creativity, and problem-solving envisioned by the program motivated some of these Alpha Dogs to channel their ambitions, energies, and forcefulness in harmony with program values. They could have the high-profile they need, achieve personal satisfaction, and garner citizens' appreciation by doing the right things for the collective. They could be the program's most important people. They might be our executive producers, chief influencers, and problem solvers. (See Chapter 9 for explanations of these roles.) While we emphatically want team players, of course, some alpha dogs may be useful even if unevenly supportive of the program. As President, Lyndon B. Johnson, said of Alpha Dog, J. Edgar Hoover, when deciding if he had a role in the administration (paraphrasing): “It's better to have him on the inside pissing out than on the outside pissing in.” We still have to live with everybody.

For others who may not be supporters, whether in the private or public sectors, the program will try to put “speed bumps,” so to speak, in their paths to constrain excessive private interest. For example, we'll want seriously effective external supervision over the “too big to fail” banks and financial institutions, constraints on the use of the war powers by the President, statutory protections of worker rights, etc.

B. Libertarians and other similarly self-focused persons: There probably is no *high* degree of correlation between those people who tend to favor personal “liberty” (as the libertarians do to a greater degree than most people) and private citizens, as defined here. There is a conceptual difference between being self-interested and aggressive as private citizens are (i.e., having no problem exploiting the collective) and libertarians who, in principle, don't want to take anything away from anyone. They merely want to be themselves, let live, and be left alone by government and others. Of course, there is an overlap between the Alpha Dog libertarians (like the Ayn Rand novel protagonists) and private citizens where both types don't understand or care if *their* liberty tramples the liberty of anyone or everyone else. Whether some libertarians want to concede the point or not there is an inescapable trade off in principle of one person's liberty and another's constraints. (Chapter 9 has more discussion of this point and of libertarianism in general.)

At first consideration, most libertarians may be somewhat threatened by the activist program contemplated here. They probably will object to much of it, especially to the ideas of the common good, the collective perspective, and the social fabric. But they may want to think twice about that as even libertarians are part of a collective as members of families, teams, communities, and the nation. All but

the most isolationist types are inescapably part of these and other social communities and draw value from them in many ways. They may take for granted much of the value in these relationships.

Nevertheless, asserting due consideration of the common good and the collective does not necessarily impinge upon libertarian ideals. The program will have no beefs with those self-focused individuals who do *not* negatively impact the public by their personal choices and actions. The program only will pushback on those who impinge on the “rights” of public citizens. It also has no intention to compel *anyone* to support it or be a part of it. It doesn't care much what individuals do who just cherish personal space and just carves out new *complementary* room for those more socially and community-oriented.

The reality is that many libertarians *are* publicly-minded. Consider the Internet gurus who pioneered the free and open network concept of the Internet, worked in collaboration to develop open source software, engage in all sorts of knowledge sharing, and the like. Many of them are sharing and helpful folks who like membership in social (or virtual) communities even if still protective of their own spaces. There is no essential philosophical conflict in those types of voluntary associations and community activities and the voluntary activities of the many components of the program.

There are other harmonies, too, between libertarianism and the program. The program is principled and essentially humanist supporting many of the personal liberty values libertarians respect. The program will rely heavily on grassroots levels of development and participation; emphasize reason, science, and technology; and intends to be a populist counterforce to what many libertarians see as their enemies—*stupid* and *incompetent* governance and overbearing Big Business.

The project, of course, conceives of limited but smarter and *more valuable* government, new checks on both government and Big Business, and more rational public policymaking steered in large part by scientific and technological experts and professionals. Personal liberty interests may be rather *facilitated* by the rational and scientific essence of the program, too. By implication that might mean, for example, discouragement of irrational governmental or social restrictions on lifestyle choices, more rational regulation of guns and recreational drugs, and smarter choices in military and foreign relations (meaning collectively-based and not driven by special interests.).

Even the most doctrinaire but intellectually honest libertarian-types have to concede the need to accept a middle ground (or multiple perspectives) on a lot of the major contemporary social issues important to them. The official position of the Libertarian Party of America, for example, opposes *any* taxes at all, yet concedes that government (presumably with revenue from *somewhere*) is necessary for certain societal functions—national defense, criminal law enforcement, etc. What's up with *that*? Are we to have private-pay national defense? Law enforcement on an individual pay-as-you-go basis? Where is the *bright-line* principle anywhere separating the individual from the various collectives?

In actuality, the hard-edged principles of the libertarians break down when applied to a lot of real life issues. Analyzed properly, they manifest in *ranges of compromise* or implying acceptance of *multiple mixed* perspectives. Disputes regarding these kinds of issues presumably will have to come down to good judgment line drawing between individual and collective interests. For that, we have the seemingly acceptable processes of the rule of law and majority rights (supplemented by the rationality processes of the program) to work them out. On balance, it would seem that the program's emphasis on *smart, rational* governance would be, to most libertarians, superior to lesser, but still *bad*, governance.

C. Fundamentalists: These are people who combine serious lack of perspective and judgment with emotional and psychological intensity. They see issues in black and white, us versus them, and right versus wrong without nuance or judgment. Their focus, typically, is on what God? Adam Smith? Marx? or some other major eminence has (purportedly) said--"They believe it and that's all to it." They lack tolerance and either can't or won't reason (due to peculiar emotional or psychological makeups,

perhaps) and cannot empathize with the "other's" perspectives. Often when addressing political or social issues they take rigid and irrational positions, reject compromises, and refuse to reasonably play nice with other participants.

Fundamentalists will *not* fit in well with the program. Fundamentalists may not even *perceive* the program, in any case, on its own terms due to the peculiar perspective(s) they will bring to bear to economic, political, and social life. Fundamentalists probably cannot be expected to understand, for example, much less support, multiple perspectives, recognition of the "other," inclusivity, and respect for the role of judgment in both personal and social affairs. While the program emphasizes bridging strategies to draw people together there may be too much distance between its principles and the intense, inflexible anti-science, anti-tolerance, anti-progress elements as we see in some groups in the United States, for example.

If the fundamentalists are not too numerous and remain marginalized they may not be a major impediment to the implementation of the program. Otherwise, they can be obstructionist, if not dangerously destructive, not only to the program, but to society in general where they can maniacally bring everyone down, including themselves. The program will try to sidestep the fundamentalists, isolate them, and work to condition their children before it is too late for the young folks to become wisely open to the range and richness of social life. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of dealing with fundamentalism.)

D. Moaners and groaners: There always will be a small subset (maybe 5-10%) of the population which will be contrarian to nearly *everything* almost as a matter of habit. There is a psychological element, too, to this attitude which compels them to resist, reject, and grumble about any program regardless of its nature and virtues especially if it's new and different. It almost doesn't matter what the content is *even if it is objectively favorable to them*. (Think of the lightbulb energy-saving objectors, the cyclists who object to helmet laws, and the legion of grumpy citizens who object to the Affordable Care Act knowing close to nothing about it: "We object to the government requiring us have to have medical insurance." (Do we suppose that none of these people have governmentally-mandated car insurance? If they do, where was all of the squawking about *that*?) These are crazy, psychological reactions way out of proportion to the facts. The moaners and groaners will not be happy unless they are miserable.

This group is a different set of people than the political party and candidate challengers who act as an automatic opposition to incumbents purely for objective status or control reasons. That motivation, at least, makes some rational sense. The chronic opposition from the moaners and groaners is different in nature and intention. Everyone probably knows some of these types. These people will not support the program even it helps them but they will likely not hinder it much either. They will mostly just moan and groan but not act or react. The program will work around the relatively modest psychological drag that they will exert upon others actually working for positive change.

E. The Masses: By nature the masses will, for the most part, be indifferent to the program, or at least, act indifferently. Most of them probably will have opinions and evaluations but will keep them to themselves or complain only among themselves. The program doesn't need them but *wants* them to participate. It is conceivable that some may become activated by the program which will *go out of its way* to motivate them to help themselves. Chapter 8 will discuss some strategies to reach these people, promoting inclusiveness and personal pride, ease of access to program tools and tactics, and roles and opportunities for everyone including those only willing to do casual activity before a computer screen or mobile device.

Political Philosophies: Classical Conservatives Versus Classical Liberals

If you boil down the basic ideas of political philosophers from the last few centuries or so, two major positions on governance of civil society—conservatism and liberalism—are most prominent. In essence, the difference is on who “steers the ship” of society, you might say—the elite class which has had the incumbency for centuries (the conservative position) or the vast majority of ordinary people who have had little but numerical superiority (the liberal position.)

Classical Conservative supporters say that it only makes sense for the elite to steer as they are the only fit group to lead. They have: 1) the most stake in social affairs, i.e., the most capital and intensity of interests; 2) the most education; 3) the most experience; and 4) the confidence and will required to lead a nation. Classical Liberals say that: 1) the elite wouldn't have their capital and status without essential contributions from the lower classes; 2) the elite has a predisposition to steer the ship (*Everybody's Ship!*) in ways favorable only to them while ignoring (and exploiting) the interests of the lower classes; 3) no one is proposing putting the little people in charge but only providing them a *hand* on the steering wheel; and 4) "By the way, what are the rest of us multimillions of citizens? Irrelevant?" (Where is the respect?)

Upon first impression, Classical Conservatives may abhor nearly everything about the program especially its emphasis on enhancing democracy and increasing leverage for the lower classes in the economic sphere. They don't want the little people putting their unwashed hands on the steering wheel of *their* Ship of State. They will be skeptical that most people, especially the lower classes, can improve themselves or be improved either morally or practically by will, conditioning, or even education. Human nature is not going to change much, if at all, they believe, therefore, it makes no sense to allow the unqualified little people more influence on governance or economic matters. Conservative philosophers might grudgingly acknowledge that historical forces have made democracy (versus monarchical and oligarchical systems) a fixture in contemporary governance but they don't want to see *too much* democracy. They can tolerate some noisemaking from the peanut gallery but no real influence. That leaves the "superior" people—the educated, experienced, and willful elite—the only one suitable to govern.

Nor do they want the lower-classes claiming more of capital/labor value allocation as they haven't, in their view, earned it. Private markets should determine those things not equity or fairness concepts. They favor minimal size governments and low taxes to minimize redistributive effects from the elite to the lower classes which may result from democratic government preferences. In sum, for the Classic Conservative position, more democratic government where the lower classes have at least one small hand on the steering wheel of the Ship of State is practically and morally wrong. And, adjusting the capital/labor value allocation ratio more in favor of the lower classes is unfair as well as economically inefficient.

Regardless of all that, Classical Conservatives may find *some* value in the program's emphasis on a new social ethos based on values and the ideas of smart governance. Certain public values and high aspirations (e.g., personal responsibility and being the best that one can be) make up a good deal of what they consider a “good society” or a “good life.” However, it may take a showing of program competence and a period of actual results before these people realize the need to adjust their predispositions and offer a measure of support. For the most part these people are more likely to oppose than to support.

Classical Liberals may favor especially the concept of a more democratic political system and a more ambitious government striving to bring people up. They believe that more responsive government is the primary (nonviolent) way that the lower classes could exercise *any* influence and to be able to protect themselves from the excesses of the elite class. About the only thing the lower classes have is voting numbers and they could be worth something important if the political processes were more open and fairer.

For Classical Liberals, government may be the only friend that the lower classes have and the more capable and assertive the better. Without *any* government at all (or minimal government), the capital-labor value allocation ratio might be near 100% (capital) to 0% (labor), without even a minimum wage. (Hard to believe? Remember slavery?) Tax levels would be sufficient to fund the military and police forces and business-related infrastructure (to mostly benefit the elite, of course), and little else. It's clear why the elite favor limited government, low tax levels, and low measures of regulation. But, it's also clear why the little people need mostly the opposite (whether some of them realize it or not.)

Without capable government (either formal or informal as contemplated here), could the Marys and Johns successfully fend for themselves against the (elite) Leviathan? Have they ever? No, they haven't. The lower classes of the late 18th-Century seemed to have realized that conclusion themselves in the paradigm-shifting revolutionary fervor when the monarchical system was overthrown. Contemporary ones may want to take a fresh look at our existing class hierarchy.

Classic Liberals may favor the general thrust of the program in trying to enhance the status and leverage of the lower classes but not necessarily all of the processes or the details. They may not feel comfortable with the new councils or the shadow governance institutions or with the amount of class organization and focus arguably required to generate the leverage that the program believes it needs. They may even doubt the efficacy of maintaining the uneasy balance of private and public attitude. Possibly, they may think the program so unique that there is not much Classically Liberal about it, *except* for its basic goals. Nevertheless, if they are realistic they may realize that the program may be the best opportunity that they may have to achieve those goals.

A meta-level philosopher looking at the Conservative and Liberal positions who is comfortable with multiple perspectives would see virtues and weaknesses in each position (as in *every* frame of analysis.) The history of nearly all democracies over the past two-plus centuries shows that there has been an uneasy tension and give-and-take between the conservative and liberal positions, with countries skewing to one pole (plutocracy) or the other (popular democracy) and balances shifting back and forth mostly incrementally over time. Rarely has one position thoroughly eliminated the other (although plutocracies are much more common.)

This program borrows elements from both classic positions. In essence, the pushback function does not propose to replace the elite--that is neither necessary, practical, or wise. The elite will still have a big hand on the steering wheel (a conservative idea). However, the complementary informal governance institutions of the program (i.e., the National Councils), the reforms in our legal governments, the class conscious Local Council of the little people, and the professional brain implemented by the program (the Policy and Problem Solving and Planning Councils, etc.), are designed to get at least a small lower-class hand on that wheel (a liberal idea.)

Social and Political Groups

A. Progressives and liberals: Of all groups, the progressives and liberals will have the most to like about the program. They generally believe that Big Business (if not a distinct elite) exerts way too much influence over society and government. They generally value themes of social balance, collective fairness, and a common good. They respect science and reason and embrace inclusivity and tolerance. They believe that environment and context are the primary motivators of social attitude and behavior and that those motivators can be socially manipulated as conditioning strategies to achieve social progress. They believe that (good) governance can do more than it does now to help people improve themselves. In other words, if we improve the environment in which people learn, live, and work they will become better people.

However, while they may approve of the primary goals of the program, many may not believe that the overall vision and comprehensive plan proposed here are necessary or useful or superior to what they are already doing. They can point to the thousands of reformers, activists, and social critics working diligently for progressive change and the amount of money supporting them. They can highlight legislative and regulatory victories achieved over the decades. Their idea may be that each group can chip away at their own targeted areas, win some battles, and count on all of the activist groups to do the same resulting in an aggregation effect significantly changing the social/political/economic landscape.

Fat chance! The reality is that while their hearts may be in the right place they are never going to make much difference. Keep in mind that we are approaching nearly 300 years of private citizen and elite domination in America in spite of the persistent, dedicated efforts of activists for major social change. (See Chapter 4 for a historical perspective of progressive and liberal reform failures.) Today there are thousands of progressive and liberal activists mostly doing their own things, so to speak. They separately focus on a wide span of issues and areas. Some achieve modest successes here and there but they are "squeezing the water balloon," so to speak, where pressure on one small part of the system simply expands it elsewhere. Even the best legislative/regulatory successes have been riddled with loopholes and workarounds insisted upon and exploited by the elite class. These activists are acting exactly how the elite want opposition elements to act: separately, micro-focused, haphazardly, and inconsistently. Even after the efforts of all of them are added up the Leviathan is still there and breathing normally.

Collectively, there is too little focus and too little leverage. There's a lack of a vision of what major social change should look like and no comprehensive plan at all to make it happen, whatever it may be. As explained in this book, the nearly 300 years of futility is due, arguably, to a flawed analysis of the political-economic system and a lack of historical and practical perspective of how prior change programs failed and why. If progressives and liberals want to see substantial major changes they are going to have to recognize and deal with the Leviathan. That means the class hierarchy and the individualist/capitalist ethos. A proper analysis (perhaps as expressed *here*) leads to a proper vision of what we have, what can change, and to what (perhaps to the National Character Program.) Then, a proper plan (perhaps *this* Action Plan) can follow.

Agents for change have to challenge the Leviathan with a really "Big Stick" (i.e., unified and focused leverage) which can smack hard and hurt enough to get attention and credibility to make a difference. That big stick can only come from a new sort of organization and focus. The program conceives of consolidating all of these earnest and hard-working progressives and liberals together under a brand with a clear, accessible focus. Progressives and liberals could be the heart of the program. They will need to adopt a proper analysis, buy into the vision, rethink their particular approaches, and find their own niches within the councils and shadow government working together with like-minded people.

B. The Occupy Movement: This movement has almost magically made the traditional class consciousness concept a popular idea in America despite decades of unsuccessful efforts by others to do so. The "99% versus the 1%" concept has been the single most important frame of reference to wake up little people Americans and energize them in trying to understand how and why their society works as it does (even though it is essentially an *invalid* category, as explained above.) The Occupy movement has inspired millions of supporters who, at least on a gut level, know they've been had by *somebody* (if not the wealthy) not only in the 2008 financial crisis but in so many ways economically, politically, and socially for way too long. Millions are now seeing connections between the loss of jobs, homes, pensions, medical care coverages, and more and an ambiguous class of the wealthy, special interests, and special-interest proxies in governmental positions.

These people desperately want real change. They've tried electoral tactics, supported would-be political saviors, and, most notably, engaged in high-profile civil protests and demonstrations which have raised the consciousnesses of multimillions of Americans but which have had little to no practical successes. There are enough supporters with more than enough heart to drive a movement for change but

the Occupy Movement lacks an intellectual framework to adequately articulate its feelings and needs and a practical plan to actually achieve anything. Occupy has gotten hearts beating faster but the bodies have no direction and no place to go and no idea what to do even if they had a good place. Given this, the Occupy Movement can *really, really* use a program like this one which *does* have a sound theoretical vision and a practical plan of action.

Occupy supporters ought to be thrilled with an Action Manual to steer them in new strategic, organizational, and tactical directions. (See Chapter 9 for more description of the practical plan they ought to adopt.) A mashup of the theoretical and institutional elements of this program together with the heart, resources, leadership, and multimillions of supporters of the Occupy Movement could turn out to be very special! Occupy's major activists and leadership people potentially represent a vanguard group which could evolve from a mere (but important) protesting group to an effective *change* group. Like with the progressive and liberal groups described in the prior section the Occupy Movement may catalyze its virtues by working together with like-minded folks under the program's brand.

C. Socialists and Social Democrats: Socialists are a fairly diversified bunch with some tiny minority still clinging to 1930's style concepts of social and economic equality, authoritarian or vanguard party-controlled government, and a high level of governmental control of the economy and social affairs all guided by stiff political ideologies. To a large degree, those concepts are remnants of the failed political and economic experiments of the defunct Soviet Union and its satellites. (Almost no one, of course, sees Stalinism as a model for contemporary societies or even as an authentic socialist regime.)

Nonetheless, some people hold onto prototypical Marxist categories of analysis like class consciousness, class conflict, and the like (still quite useful) and Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyite political themes (pretty much wrong and not useful.) These backward-looking folks may view the program as expressed here as yet another doughy version of reform capitalism—"capitalism with a human face"—and think it unworkable as they believe that the dynamics of individualism/capitalism are just too powerful to be reformed. They want to see it wholly replaced and may find the program to be a distraction and a waste.

However, these folks have been hoping to organize the lower classes into an effective opposition force for *way* too long with little to no success and should rethink their ideas. But, more importantly, even if they *were* to organize the lower classes, they still have no practical replacement for the individualist/capitalism system and, arguably, there is *no such practical replacement*. (The reason for this is explained in Chapter 3.) Traditional socialists will either reject the program outright or, hopefully, be persuaded to adapt to it and become supporters. After all, the primary *goals* are nearly the same even though the theory, processes, and shape of the change endeavor vary greatly.

Today, academics, journalists, and ordinary people are no longer shunned or marginalized by criticizing capitalism. Even the "S" word—socialism—no longer has the ideological baggage it used to have among the lower classes. (Thank you, Bernie Sanders!) More and more people are learning that it actually means social rules benefiting people rather than an abstract system, as in individualism/capitalism. It favors alternative standards of economic fairness, enhanced political democracy, and humanist ideals. Classic socialism is not about unworkable forms of government or ideology but about the system benefiting humans not the other way around. The accusatory finger is currently being pointed toward excessive self-interest and capitalism, not by any wide-eyed lefty ideologues, but by ordinary Marys and Johns.

Forward-looking socialists may find a lot to like in the program even though it rejects the traditional class conflict concept central to most socialist frameworks. No matter, as the private-public concept is more valid intellectually and practically, and nicely avoids unworkable theoretical and practical conflicts of the wealthy versus the rest of the population. As argued here, wealth disparities by themselves are not morally wrong or even an issue we want to *directly* focus on. It is the excessive self-interest

attitude, disregard of collective interests, and single-focus on system dynamics at the expense of human meaning which *are* morally wrong and the major problems we have to address. If we address those things well, wealth and income disparities and other social ills will start to take care of themselves, by force of logic. For example, if we achieve a balance between private and public attitudes it is likely that a fairer allocation of the capital/labor value ratio will follow. If we push for more personal meanings then work-life balances will follow, too. Keep in mind that the program is primarily a *process* where smart and collectively-minded approaches to social matters are paramount. It doesn't support any particular outcomes but the *right* ones will derive from the process.

As a practical matter, no program attempting to eliminate or flatten the class hierarchy (or to even merely pushback capitalism) could succeed without the cooperation of a good number of the political-economic elite. If that is true (and it is), we do not want to deliberately butt heads with them. Fighting a zero-sum conflict with the elite is almost certainly a losing strategy for the little people (as explained in Chapter 1.) We need strategies to work with and around them. The program is designed to frame a (mostly) win-win situation between the elite and the lower classes.

It also seeks a partial harmony, at least, of the theoretical interests of Classical Conservatives and Liberals. That means a *negotiated* balancing of perspectives where the elite steer the ship but not in directions too far from the interests of the lower classes and the lower classes become weighty participants in deciding where the ship goes. The program goals of BMR and smart governance may be close enough to what most socialists and Social Democrats have been seeking for generations. The zeal of these folks can be of great use. We'll want to bring them into the movement, too.

In any case, a rough theoretical balance between conservatism and liberalism principles defines the situation of most modern liberal democracies *now*, especially those in the European Community (most with strong Social Democratic parties.) Most Social Democrats may see in the program's philosophy many similarities with the existing political cultures of the Western European nations, Canada, and some others. Although the private interest attitude makes up the primary bases for these political economies, they are healthily balanced by an ingrained cultural respect for a common good. The character of these nations includes a crucial focus on human meanings in private and social lives and a serious measure of respect for the little people.

For example, business intensity in these cultures is generally lower than that which we see in America, Russia, and other nations with private citizen focuses. Worker organizations are generally well-accepted and some even have positions in corporate governance bodies. Employees get reasonable amounts of leave time and vacations. There is sufficient government and private sector support of child care and educational programs, etc.

There is a social contract of sorts among all classes in these nations which shows up in: 1) an elite mostly steering the ship, 2) mostly effective popular democratic governance, 3) a solid middle class, 4) a strong safety net for all citizens (rights to health, education, child care, and the like), and 5) less disparity among the classes in wealth, income, and political influence. Furthermore, these nations have started building a collective brain in governance where they are: 1) improving the professionalism of governance, 2) increasingly rationalizing public administration across a large federation of separate nations; and 3) deliberately using bridging strategies to decrease nationalist, ethnic, religious, and tribal differences to promote peace and a collective mind set (the European Union, multi-national trade and cultural agreements, etc.)

This (Nobel Peace prize-winning) rationalization and regionalization is: 1) reducing conflicts and wars; 2) making economies and civil administrations more efficient; 3) eliminating redundancies, frictions, and complexities of multiple legal jurisdictions; and 4) reducing trivial social differences—citizenships, tribes, sovereignties, languages, ethnicities—in favor of a more socially advanced collective-citizen concept, that of "EU citizen" (an evolving concept even now.) As proponents see it, 21st-Century

realities require the elimination of obsolete tribal type mindsets. Having a EU citizen, or better, a *world* citizen, as a standard of identity is making more and more sense.

In some people's views, the developments in the European Union in the past few generations show the highest levels (so far) of rationality and advanced governance and social relations. But the *practical* balances nearly everywhere are skewing more towards the interests of the elite as the capabilities and intensity of (primarily) American and multinational capitalists increase globally. Economic globalization and the compelling logical dynamics of individualism/capitalism are challenging these cultures to maintain their historic private-public balances as well as their advanced governance schemes. More aggressive and focused private interests internationally are pressuring them to have to adapt to the dynamics of capitalism in order to survive in an increasingly competitive and brutal world. Public budgets are being cut, national industries privatized, and worker organizations and benefit schemes diminished.

This is a sort of social version of the 16th-Century financier, Thomas Gresham's economic law--that bad money drives out good money. The logic of capitalism's economic efficiency can compel much of economics, politics, and social relations to go down to the *lowest level* of individualism and competition. Social compacts be damned! Public and human interests be damned! The consequences for the EU nations is a steady regression to primordial jungle attitudes and outcomes despite the otherwise obvious values of their evolution towards advanced 21st-Century status.

There appears to be major significant cross-trends occurring here. There is the increasing influence of global individualism/capitalism. The individualist/capitalist imperative is sponsored mostly by the American elite and by multinational corporations. There is continual but unsteady rationalization advances by the European Community in both governance and social relations. Coming from the bottom rungs of society is the reimagining of class hierarchies by frustrated populations in many of the developed nations of the world including those in the E.U. as well as in a number of second level economic nations--Brazil, Russia, Turkey, and China--with primarily young, globally-aware, and discontented populations.

The rationalization developments in the European community seem to be mostly top-down from a combination of the economic elite, political leaders, academics, and public administrators (where the lower classes already have established some measure of leverage.) Opposition to elite dominance elsewhere--Brazil, Turkey, etc.--where the lower classes have minimal influence is almost exclusively bottom up (with a sprinkling of the educated classes' support.) However, neither of these (anti-individualist/capitalist) developments is certain to have long-term success as they lack an alternative theoretical vision and enough practical leverage to overcome their oppositions--global capitalism and existing elites--especially in the long-term.

If any groups should be intrigued by this program and fit most easily into it, it would be the (adaptive) socialists and the Social Democrats. The program contemplated here goes well *beyond* what the Western European social democracies have done and what the popular uprisings are accomplishing by, among other things, having a broad modern vision and comprehensive plan to create new, *permanent* leverage for the lower classes with public citizens becoming a new and active element in governance, including as enforcers of public values and norms.

D. Economic Conservatives: These people have a limited focus on governmental fiscal policies, generally, but also tend towards individualism. They favor limited government, low taxes, and minimal regulation. They don't want to hear terms like "lower-class pushback, social conditioning, a collective brain, etc." They may shudder at the idea of yet *another* layer of governance, even if it is only informal and unofficial. For those economic conservatives having high regard for a hierarchy and class privilege (similar to the Classical Conservatives) the program may be seen as an affront. The last thing they want is for a large, organized group of (ill-qualified and undeserving, as they see it) lower-class members *more* involved in governance, pushing back on *them*, and shadowing much of their governance and business activities.

Unlike the Classical Conservatives, however, their position on fiscal matters is less principled. Arguably, the economic conservatives' interest in limited government, low taxation, and minimal regulation is due to substantial *mistrust* of government, not for any inherent virtues of those principles. Of course, their mistrust is reasonable given the extensive history of waste, bloat, and ineptness on the part of government. As articulated in Chapter 1 and in later chapters, however, what most people see as government waste, etc., has little to do with any inherent flaws of government itself but is the result of the openness of our governments to special interest influences and the inadequacies of the 18th-Century principles (including the individualist/capitalist ethos) it operates under.

Under different conditions, however, characterized by the *smart* government concepts promoted here—a collective ethos, sand-boxed governmental officials, reformed ethical standards, shadow government monitoring, etc.—these people may have an entirely different view of government and a lessened focus on mere fiscal affairs. The crucial issue of that of *trust*. If there is sufficient level of trust in government then these abstract principle issues may just become academic. There could be significant harmony between what economic conservatives want and what the program proposes to deliver providing we can increase the trust levels in government (and in other institutions throughout society.) Here are some things that the program stands for which may appeal to economic conservatives:

1. An emphasis on rebuilding levels of trust in government, Big Business, and almost every component of society,
2. Better governance characterized by smartness, credibility, efficiency, and accountability,
3. Diminution of special interest influence upon government,
4. Sand boxing of our governmental officials from external influences and conflicts of interest,
5. Ordinary people in the form of a shadow government monitoring governance and Big Business for compliance with law and public value,.
6. An emphasis on quality personal character in government and in society in general,
7. The incentivizing of positive social behaviors (i.e., social rewards.)

All of these things may add up to more than a little harmony between the economic conservatives and the program. The essential element may be an interest in smart and trustworthy government. Fair-minded economic conservatives could see a lot of things in the program that it can support.

In any case, the economic conservative preference for limited government, etc. is too vague to be used as anyone's guidance in deciding fundamental government philosophies. No one can intelligently assert that smaller government is better per se than larger without *knowing the value provided* by expanded government. No one can intelligently assert that lower taxes are better than higher ones without *knowing what value one is getting* for the money. And, again, one's personal preference for less regulation may be *another person's lack of protection* from exploitation, abuse, or overreaching.

How, for example, can so many "limited government" economic conservatives support the greatly enhanced post 9/11 anti-terrorism programs of the government which have imposed an immense web of supervision and regulation greater in breath and depth than nearly any regulatory scheme ever? And, the costs exceed \$50 billion per year. How can economic conservatives support the enormous and ever-increasing defense budget, extensive trade regulations covering vast elements of the economy, and subsidies to Big Business like the Export-Import Bank that grants loans and insurance at below-market rates to facilitate large trade deals costing even more billions? Where's the consistency? The point is that

the country should have the size of government which makes sense, whatever that may be. The country should have the tax level it needs irrespective of any absolute level. The country should have the regulatory schemes which make good sense regardless of how many there are.

The size and scope of government and the tax level are not philosophical issues but *practical* ones based upon the specifics of each situation. Ritualistically supporting abstract philosophical positions is just wrong-headed. Imagine a family which is seriously committed to a limited expense budget, whether because of its financial limitations or not. A daughter then incurs a dangerous health ailment. Let's say treatment for her costs an additional 10% of the family's allotted budget amount. What would we think of that family refusing to pay (or borrow to pay) that additional cost as a matter of fiscal principle? Many might consider them mindless kooks, as well as heartless and foolish.

Replace that family scenario now with one of the government faced with a major natural disaster or a military threat. Should we expect it to come up with additional money for these events? Or, what about spending money now for peacemaking efforts which may potentially eliminate very expensive wars later? Don't we need to ignore abstract principles and focus on specific facts and circumstances? Readers can decide for themselves.

E. The Tea Party and Social Conservatives: One has to see the Tea Party as having, it seems, three main components: 1) Populists who have an economically-focused rage against what they see (mostly correctly) as abuses by government and/or high-powered special interests, especially with the bailouts of the big financial institutions in the 2008 financial crisis and the persistent pilfering of the federal treasury. Those abuses have harmed them economically and raped them morally. 2) Evangelical religious proponents (Teavangelicals?) who want to impose their tribal-like beliefs and morals into the public sphere regardless of the values of the rest of society. 3) Private citizens (or proxies for them) *pretending* to be outraged populists but whose purpose is to promote *elite* interests. Much of the funding for Tea Party activities come from this latter group sponsored (often covertly) by Big Business and elite Alpha Dogs. (They know who they are!)

There doesn't seem to be much philosophical or intellectual coherence among these components. Indeed, this is a strange collaboration. The populists are basically committed to keeping more of their own money and rage against those taking it from them unfairly. The Teavangelicals are promoting issues completely unrelated to economics, like school prayer, abortion prohibitions, and religious symbols in public places. The fake populists are using the Party to help maintain an ideology allowing the elite to get *everyone else's* money even if that includes deceiving its own collaborators and the rest of the public.

The first two groups seem to have tribal-like identities and are striking back at outside elements which they feel are abusing and/or disrespecting them. For the populists, the abusers are the federal government and an amorphous, mostly corporate elite. The Teavangelicals are an insular group which feels that it is being disrespected and marginalized by the secular society, primarily, but also by nearly every other group (religious or not) not sharing its beliefs. The fake populists are no tribe but an association of special interest proxies cynically sponsoring rage against straw men--the government, intellectuals, liberals, etc.--for invidious elite class purposes.

To the extent that they are reacting to frauds, overreaching, gouging, freeloading, and special-interest exploitation of government, the populist Tea Party members are justified in their rage. No one, except the miscreants themselves, supports any of that. However, while they know *for sure* that their public monies and their dignity as citizens are being exploited and abused by (*some?*) elements in society they, somewhat myopically, are attacking the very *idea* of government, rather than those specific parties exploiting the openness of government and conspiring with governmental officials to obtain public monies for themselves.

What looks to them like bad, or defective, government (or a fundamentally flawed concept to begin with) is really the exploitation of good government by private citizens/special interests logically acting pursuant to the rules of our individualist/capitalist ethos. Think of the difference between a house and a crack house. If the people inside a fine structure are selling drugs it makes sense to get rid of *them* rather than to blow up the fine house.

While the populists' rage against financial shenanigans in the governmental sphere makes sense they are attacking the wrong targets. If the real culprits are private citizens/special interests (and they are), then their shotgun-like public policy approach to cutting budgets, reducing tax revenues, deliberately paralyzing policymaking, weakening government, and *deregulating* Wall Street and Big Business plays right into the hands of the elite. There may be legitimate arguments, of course, over specific public programs and issues, but attacking the very *idea* of government is to spite themselves. They are actively involved in reducing in size, neutering the powers, and undercutting the credibility of the institution most capable of protecting *them* from *complete* domination by the elite. (See Chapter 8 for more explanation of why the government is the best, and maybe only, friend of the little people.)

It is odd for this mainly less-educated, less-skilled, and least-resourced group to think that they have much of anything in common with the wealthy and well-positioned elite class. They have crawled into a political bed, so to speak, with a group of people which would never tolerate them inside their country clubs or gated communities. That's true even if that elite class seems to support many of the principles and values that they do, like limited government, lower taxes, and even the religious-based themes of the evangelicals. It is especially odd, too, considering that the elite want to cut back on the benefits and value these little people get from government (as well as private sector benefits like pensions, health insurance coverages, etc.) In addition, any elite support for the religiously-based issues is likely to be mostly insincere and half-hearted as the elite is either unaffected by any of them (see below) or quite willing to trade off support for what they *really* want—being unrestrained in the economic and political spheres.

If the populists achieve what they *think* they want, the value of their efforts will go to the elite, not to them. (We can except those who think *they* will rise to become one of the self-interested elite, too. Some might, the vast majority will not). These populists are unwittingly supporting the wrong tribe! Like the Occupy Wall Street movement, the populists of the Party lack a sound theoretical basis for their economic and political positions. The correct targets are not government as such and not "free-spending" liberals and the like. The target should be the *private citizen attitude* and 18th-Century principles of governance.

The Teavangelicals are primarily religiously-focused and don't seem to fit into the classical conservative/liberal political categories. One way to look at it is that they probably want "God" to "steer the ship," so to speak. They seem to be associating with the other Tea Party components partly out of regional and major party affiliations and partly because all of them target the government as flawed, although for different reasons. For the Teavangelicals, the government is objectionable mainly due to its religious *neutrality* and accommodation to atheists and "other" believers. "Their" government is open, in a way, to others unlike them and that sort of inclusivity violates their sense of tribal identification.

Many of them see (correctly) that the rest of society is becoming less like them in a lot of ways, not only in regard to religious beliefs, but in diminished parochialism, increasing tolerances for differences, more generic value systems, and new tribal-like affiliations like world citizenship identity. They are feeling disrespected and, maybe even scarier, marginalized. They are circling the wagons and shooting out, so to speak. They seem to have a sense of tribal "competition" in the public sphere, where they feel that they have to act like a special interest amidst a pluralism of atheists, competing religions, and new tribal affiliations which mimics the self-interested, aggressive attitude of individualism/capitalism itself.

This approach may be a natural fear-based reaction but that doesn't justify it. They have other, better options (see below.) In a way, this approach is rude and insensitive. Imagine an evangelical family whose daughter is engaged to an observant Jewish man who is allergic to smoking. The daughter invites him home to meet the folks. Will the parents serve pork and smoke in front of him because this is what they do? Because that is their tradition/habit? Because that is their “right”? Now, transpose this scenario into the public sphere where there are:

- a. Citizens of multiple religions—place Christian ideals and symbols in public places including legislative chambers and judicial arenas, regardless of offense to those others?
- b. Rational, responsible family planners—prohibition of educational programs and contraceptive products, to those wanting to make informed decisions for themselves?
- c. Desperately ill patients and their families—deliberately denying funding for stem cell research which may cure their diseases?

This insular, self-interested attitude is not compatible with the program's values. The program wants to *break* barriers among people and tribes and not *highlight* them as the Teavangelicals want to do. It wants to progress from old and irrationally-based beliefs/traditions/reactions to *smart* policies. Certainly, religion is an essential element of existence for most people but it absolutely does not *need* to function as a divider, nor have any significant *public* presence, nor retain rituals/beliefs which don't make objective sense in a modern world. (See Chapter 7 for a more expansive discussion of religion and how it fits into modern society.)

The program wants to enhance the benefits of belief for individuals while “sand boxing” religion out of the public sphere. It contemplates a reframing of the relationship of religion and society into a “win-win” situation instead of continuing, as in a lot of instances, as a major “lose-lose” situation. Think of the divisiveness and the intensity of the abortion regulation conflicts, the undercutting of science in school curriculums, and the public policy consequences of making a moral issue out of birth control instead of sociological and scientific ones. Who is benefiting in any objective sense from these positions?

Irreversible historical developments run counter to religion being a major element in public policy anyhow, especially now when a whole lot of people of different faiths are living and working together nearly everywhere. (Why aren't they *praying* together? We have to fix that!) Whether they want to believe it or not, the Teavangelicals don't need to shoot out at anybody or to circle the wagons. They need to find ways to adapt to the rest of the world. If they “loosened up,” they could find comfortable roles in a program which emphasizes some of the things they may favor like good character and comprehensive public values. (See Chapter 9 for a set of proposals on modernizing religion.)

The private citizen component of the Tea Party can be considered a front operation for the private citizen elite itself. It is cleverly manipulating the other elements of the Party for support of their own elite class purposes. The elite (via the proxies) are very happy to have this cozy relationship with the other Tea Party components as: 1) They like the *populist color* of the attack on the *idea* of the liberal government as it makes the attacks seem as if it's the little people against big government when it is really the elite against *any* government which constrains them. 2) None of the religious and social conservative positions--abortion, contraception, public school prayer, scientific stem cell use, etc.--even if successfully legislated--would have *any* impact on *them*. Their kids will still get and use contraceptive products, get quiet abortions, go to private schools, and have access to all the medical care they need. They are merely using support for these positions to “bond” in their way with the others in a cynical form of exploitation. 3) It will benefit from the outsized political weight of this group (because of its intensity) and get the economic goodies it really wants for itself. The Tea Party has proved that they can fundraise, generate attention, and help sway elections, especially at the state and local levels. It's nice to have it on your side.

The success of the Tea Party, in *most* ways, presents a win-win situation for the elite. It gets the support they need for their goals while giving up almost nothing of value itself. At best, this is a win-loss for the little people populists. They are trading jobs, pensions, health insurance, consumer protections, scientific progress, etc. in exchange for insincere support for abstract economic principles which may provide them only relatively shallow and short-term emotional and psychological value. In the final analysis, they have a huge net loss in their material lives and gain only a small psychological boost.

The Teavangelical's are seemingly happy to promote those same elite goals in exchange for the support of only *potential* and only psychological accomplishments—*unenforceable* legal constraints on abortion and contraception, *symbolic* public school prayer privileges, “slice-off-your-own-nose” constraints on scientific progress, etc. How do these outcomes work for these two groups? Some could see this ungodly mix of populists, a religious tribe, and the elite private citizen front as an anomalous pact with the devil!

The private interest component of the Tea Party, obviously, will oppose nearly everything about the program. Interestingly, the populists in the Party and the program share the same rage against (almost) the same people. Each of them wants to stop the financial shenanigans and regain some respect for the little people. There aren't even any conservative—liberal, Red—Blue State nuances about it. Like with the Libertarians, though, many of the populists will likely be initially repelled by the program due to its emphasis on the collective and the common good. Nevertheless, as the populist Tea Party members are really opposing *bad* government and *unfair* private citizen and special interest activities, they could find a niche within the program. Their fervor would be a great asset, especially for the monitoring functions of the Local Council.

The Teavangelicals might respect somewhat the public value element of the program. The primary values of the program—Balance, Meaning, and Respect—could be creatively interpreted as Tea Party ones, too, for the populist component and even for the religious component. However, for both the populist and the religious components, positions may be so strongly fixed by emotion and psychological frames that it will take a lot of good reframing to get any of them to change up and consider supporting the program. If the program can demonstrate some successes in constraining the elite and in bringing groups together it may develop enough credibility to get these Party folks to look at the program more favorably. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion on reframing strategies.)

F. Geeks, Digital Mavens, and Internet Gurus: While this group is not homogeneous, it contains those many non-commercial, technically-minded folks who designed and built out the Internet, created open-source software and development processes, built and maintain crowd-sourced databases and social networking sites, and are spearheading paradigm breaking problem-solving endeavors combining the digital and social worlds. Think of universal communication standards and protocols, broad-based media distribution and knowledge sharing, updated intellectual property rights schemes, “disruptive” approaches to old industries of all sorts, and more.

A great many of these people are progressively and collectively-minded. They don't mind sharing their knowledge and abilities with everyone else. They are, essentially, “digital socialists.” They share many of the public citizen values of the program—a belief in a common good (or, at least, a common *user base*?); an appreciation of the power of knowledge and information sharing, group collaboration projects, the power of templates (software, public policy, and behavioral standards) for mutual benefit; a deep respect for reason, science, data, and technology; and a high regard for innovation, new ideas, continuous improvement, and efficiency designs.

The program will draw upon some of these digital world models to develop itself. It will rely heavily on this set of people for its infrastructure, developmental models, applications (especially the user Dashboard), and more. The deeper social and philosophical elements and traits of the digital world infuse some of the major principles of the program:

- a. The Internet= breadth and depth of information, inclusiveness, efficiency, and freedom
- b. Open Source= power of community collaboration; sharing for the public good; template and modular construction techniques; combinations of simultaneous bottom-up and top-down developmental approaches (e.g., communal governing bodies guiding, but not controlling, individual developers)
- c. Wiki's and Wikipedia (and similar)= crowd-developed knowledge and collective wisdom (often edited and/or moderated by informal--yet widely accepted--governing bodies having special competencies)
- d. Social networks and recommendation sites= a flattening of the traditional top-down knowledge hierarchy where nearly everyone with something to share can provide input
- e. New organizational tactics and influence methods to assert group and collective interests via the Internet against Big Business and special interest overreaching. (The coordinated protests against the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) in 2012 and others like it are examples of what public citizenship, the community/collective, and non-capitalist enterprise can do. See Chapter 8 for a detailed examination of these tactics.)

While the program's brains will be represented in new models of professional governance institutions, and the heart will be represented by the multi-millions of people working for positive social change, the program's "bones and connective tissue" will be made of computers, Internet bandwidth, and mobile devices, all connected to the Marys and Johns by new software tools and a great user interface. Who would have thought, even a short while ago, that technological principles, values, and methods connecting computers, networks, and users of technology could also connect a shadow government, activists, and the little people empowering major program of social change? Hopefully, many of these geeks, mavens, and gurus will be inspired by the commonalities in structure, process, and values between the program and their own cultural environment and want to contribute.

At a minimum, the program needs may present a "Geek" challenge for them. Can they design a new broad-based network and an accessible user interface to organize the little people and empower even the average Marys and Johns. That challenge may be hard for many to resist simply as a technological, "Can we do it?", thing.

Chapter 3: The Setting

What in the heck is going on in America?

Here are some news items from 2011, three years after the start of the Great Recession: A large handful of rich guys (including Warren Buffett) plea to Congress to have their taxes *raised*. Over 100 prominent rich guys led by Starbucks' CEO, Howard Schultz, organize a boycott to stop campaign contributions to even their own congressmen whom they consider too consumed by partisanship and too friendly to special interests. A prominent Goldman Sachs alumnus acknowledges that the U.S. government essentially *gave away* huge amounts of taxpayer monies to the financial elite (guys like himself) in reaction to the 2008 financial crisis. What's next? School kids lobbying teachers for more homework? Policemen pleading for more violence in the streets?

You know your country is messed up when even top members of the financial elite who have benefited more than anyone from the individualist/capitalist system publicly acknowledge some of its excesses and support policy changes to even things out somewhat between them and the rest of us. This candor highlights the fact that our current political-economic system has obvious major imbalances between the influence and outcomes of the elite and those of the lower classes. But more than merely imbalanced, the system has fundamental *structural* elements which not only will maintain a permanent class hierarchy but inhibit the system from being suitable for governance in the 21st-Century. That is, it:

- 1) lacks a collective perspective,
- 2) is not Smart,
- 3) lacks medium to long-term time perspectives,
- 4) is socially inefficient,
- 5) lacks character, and
- 6) is unfair.

That's quite a list of flaws but they define, in most part, the setting in which we've lived since the 18th-Century. That setting, as we all know, produces a fair number of "Little guy/gal makes good," and similar fairy tale stories but the vast majority of personal and group narratives are of the "Grind it out and make the best of it" kind. That's okay if that's how it *has* to be, but forward-looking, inspired people know that it *doesn't* have to be that way! There are a lot of better stories for the little people to write if they learn how and have some help. But, they first have to have a clear understanding of what is holding them back and who is now, essentially, writing stories *for* them. That would be the cultural ethos in which they live and work and the elite class which dominates them.

In brief, the little people are exploited by a rigged political economic system, treated as objects to be used, and are disrespected. Those facts are recognized by at least some of the elite themselves, as noted above. For the American nation itself, the cultural ethos and the class hierarchy are old and obsolete elements holding the nation back from reaching its 21st-Century potentials. America could be smarter, more efficient, more human-oriented, and populated by happier citizens if it moved on from the way we do things now.

Now that would be a better setting! This chapter will detail the structural elements maintaining our current environment. Later chapters will describe an alternative setting, one more and better balanced and

smarter, where the little people can write their own stories and the nation can write a really Grand Story about advancing to 21st-Century capabilities and achievements.

What is Wrong in America?

The Structural Problems

1. It lacks a collective perspective in economics and politics
2. It is not Smart and lacks a brain
3. It lacks medium to long-term time perspectives
4. It is socially inefficient
5. It lacks social charter
6. It has unfairness elements throughout

The Structural Problems

1. A collective perspective is absent in both economics and governance.

You might suspect, at least, that the individualist/capitalist ethos is defective if it cannot even *conceive* of a collective interest. At its most theoretical level it's main unit of analysis is the independent individual competing vigorously against fellow citizens for status, influence, and financial gain in business and interpersonal transactions. The natural incentives built into the system greatly favor the individual and are counter to collective interests. The most aggressive parties, particularly special interests, deliberately exploit governmental policymaking and the appropriation processes for their own benefit. On the other hand, there is *no* unit of analysis at all regarding any common good or collective interest.

Of course, most people *do* in practical life exercise considerations for the collective and are not always competitive with others. Those considerations include forming family units and teams, doing charity and volunteer work, risking lives fighting foreign enemies, and the like. However, those things run *counter* to the individualism/competitive ethos and are mainly examples of the often incoherent, multiple perspectives which animate most people (mostly unconsciously.) In other words, for the capitalist ethos, things like charity, balancing of private and public interests, etc., which are important for most people are *foreign* considerations. They "Do not compute!," as some might say.

In a practical way, of course, everyone has to survive and if that means putting oneself first, then so be it. Everyone has to have a bit, at least, of a private citizen attitude and there's nothing wrong with that. However, when our one and only system has *no* consideration of anything else and provides incentives *only* for private citizen behaviors there is a fundamental structural imbalance which results in all kinds of antisocial behavior including economic and political exploitation and more. The scope, depth, and persistence of this exploitative win-loss private citizen activity against the the collective, the taxpayers, and even customers and clients (e.g., public pension funds misled by their own investment advisors) helps explain why:

- 1) The United States government is over \$17 trillion in debt.
- 2) State and local governments have nearly \$3 trillion of their own debt and the financial credibility of most governments in America has been seriously diminished.
- 3) We have chronic and serious dysfunctional national governmental operations (from a collective point of view, e.g., a Congress paralyzed most of the time by extreme partisanship.)
- 4) The policymaking we do have is routinely irrational (from a collective's point of view, e.g., anti-consumer sugar import quotas, etc.)
- 5) We suffer excessive and extreme political partisanship in nearly all areas of social life (mostly competing elite groups fighting among *themselves* for control of the public purse (i.e., money) and ego-gratifying status positions, but also the little people fighting among themselves over relative trivialities like school curriculums (public symbols) and similar issues.
- 6) Government officials and institutions, politicians and parties, Big Business, the slew of special interests, and even their peers are viewed by most citizens with mistrust, cynicism, and disgust.

You know things are bad when haters and noisemakers dominate public discourse and citizens rate the institution of Congress, for one, as less appealing than cockroaches and colonoscopies (2013 survey). From a collective's perspective, the incentivizing of only private citizen behavior while having none for

public citizen behavior is harmful, wasteful, irrational, and even immoral. If anyone needs more evidence of the extent and persistence of this anti-collective behavior they could just skim the national and financial news headlines any day for those most newsworthy examples exposed by the news media. Unfortunately, those examples represent just the tip of the iceberg as most of this behavior happens outside of the news media view or is just too prevalent to be reportable.

A lot of people already know or have a bad feeling of what is going on, in any case. Many people are beginning to recognize that the United States is weakening and declining, in large part because of the excesses of the individualist/capitalistic ethos. It may not be long before even fervent believers of American exceptionalism start to wonder and worry about the solvency and moral credibility of the World's Greatest Nation. Ultimately, as the individualist mentality increases and capitalist dynamics get broader and meaner there may be no common interest at all as nearly everyone comes to realize that trying to balance private and public attitudes results in big losses for everyone but the self-interested. They will give up.

In spite of the awareness of the negative consequences of our individualism/competitive ethos there is no explicit and coherent alternative which can compete with or balance it. In the absence of a competing (or complementary) set of public values the individualist/capitalist ethos occupies pretty much the whole social space. Nor are there any institutions in government or the private sector with enough incentive, credibility, and influence to act on behalf of the common good. Not the Presidency, Congress, state/local governments, major political parties, the Chamber of Commerce, or any other institutions, even those with missions to do exactly that (e.g., Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Common Cause, etc.) Those progressive institutions are like the little Dutch boy poking his little fingers into leaks of a very large dike. The reality is that there aren't enough fingers or strong enough ones!

Most people may have an amorphous sense of an "American nation" but nothing of a clear sense of an American *collective* it seems, except maybe temporarily during the Olympics, or after major national disasters or foreign threats or attacks. Where are the common good/collective perspectives on our basic practical issues like economic growth and political policymaking, revenue and spending matters, peacemaking, social happiness, social progress, planning for the future, protection of our natural setting (i.e. the environment), and the like? Where is the *day-to-day* sense of the common good?

If the existing ethos cannot balance private and public citizen attitudes then we must create one which can. If the existing ethos cannot support collective kinds of institutions which have widespread credibility and influence then we must come up with ones which will. (See Chapters 6 and 8 for details of a public citizen ethos and a set of collectively-focused national councils.)

The *Too* Open and Accessible Government

The relatively open structure of our governments—decentralized, lightly coordinated, and having only modest accountability controls—leaves the policymaking processes and the public purse overly vulnerable to private citizens' exploitation. The examples noted in Chapter 2 and elsewhere illustrate the consequences of the relative ease by which focused and intense individuals and special interests establish untoward relationships within the government for their own selfish purposes.

Political scientists and knowledgeable observers of government know the powers of the "Iron Triangle" relationship, for example. It is an incestuous one of special interests, congressional committees and subcommittees (having jurisdiction over a specific industry or area—e.g., telecommunications, housing, energy, etc.) and the bureaucratic departments and agencies which regulate that specific industry or area. It starts with a special interest seducing a targeted congressional committee via campaign contributions, honoraria, junkets, etc. to influence policymaking and appropriations. The committee then asserts *its* supervisory power over the bureaucratic departments and agencies under its jurisdiction compelling them to comply with the wishes of the special interests which then get the goodies they want

(deregulation or favorable regulation, sweetheart contracts, enforcement deference, etc.) The special interests slyly obtain an implied imprimatur from their elected friends to impose their wills upon consumers, taxpayers, and the general public regarding matters relating to their targeted area.

The public is not a party to any of this nor is there much concern by anybody, including the Congressmen, for national interests, much less a collective one. This situation is a virtual back office orgy of back scratching and undue influence with the collective interest and, of course, the lower classes getting the shaft.

The special interests are smart enough to make it very *easy* for Congress to go along with them. They draft the desired legislation themselves and mobilize public relations resources to fool the mainstream media and the public about the “public worth” of their endeavors (boondoggles?) to give political cover to their legislative co-conspirators:

-“Sure, we need (a bridge to nowhere--for example)--it creates *jobs!*”

-In addition to the two regional catfish testing agencies already in place, “We need a special agency to inspect and test just foreign-bred catfish in order to *protect* Mississippi producers, er, *American consumers*, from contaminated imports.”

-“We need to spend multi-billions of dollars for spy products and services from (favored) defense industry companies to gather personal and private information about everyone at all times by every technological means as we are, after all, *fighting Al Qaeda!*”

Use of certain magic terms and phrases almost always work to cover up or justify these takeaways and giveaways--“they create *jobs*; they give Americans *choice*”; they *protect us* from bad guys; and the like.

To finish up their capture of their slice of government the special interests “assist” the bureaucratic agencies even more by drafting implementing regulations favorable to themselves. There will be sneaky exemptions and loopholes from actual regulation for themselves and barriers and traps for foreign competitors, perhaps. Then they will “guide” the enforcement of those rules. We know how that guidance will go! Criminal and/or compliance investigations of misbehavior will be underfunded or dismissed, officials will be co-opted, etc. When a special interest is publicly caught red-handed by law enforcement breaking even the favorable rules, it will, upon the eventual settlement, pay an insignificant fine and then issue a statement saying it was, “Neither admitting nor denying the charges and was only paying the (modest) fine to avoid further litigation expenses.”

The modest fine and modest PR hit, of course, are just other costs of doing business. Then it will *repeat* the same behavior going forward, over and over again, profiting each time. Just check the public records for a list of our blue-chip recidivists—Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, Bank of America, and more. (Little guys in some jurisdictions, on the other hand, caught stealing Wonder Bread for their hungry children more than twice get mandated prison time.) The special interests have learned how to make even lawbreaking good economic sense.

There are a lot of access points in government for the Iron Triangles to form. A special interest can flourish with just one good access point. Anyone with focus and sufficient money can readily capture governmental policy making, regulations, appropriations, contracts, and jobs by forming his own Iron Triangle. It's a piece of cake once you know how.

To stop this kind of “capture” of government we need a collective's comprehensive approach, including asserting a new public citizen ethos, sand boxing of governmental officials, citizen monitoring

governmental activities, and the like. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for more details about these strategies and tactics.)

The Lack of Constraints on Small Group Focus and Intensity

Organizational theory recognizes that entities of nearly any size and complexity can be readily dominated by individuals or small groups having a superior level of focus and intensity. Other individuals or subgroups in the organization whose interests are diffused and less intense are easily overwhelmed. Political party activists or small groups with an intense agenda, for example, are well known to have disproportionate impact in party primary contests and in local elections. Top corporate officials easily get their way with complaisant and/or compliant compensation committees over the diffused influences and lower intensities of shareholders. Businesses and industries (as explained in the section above) assert "ownership" of relevant-to-them legislative policies and appropriations using the Iron Triangle strategy overcoming light resistance from others who have lesser stakes in the outcomes and over the diffused influence of taxpayers.

The inherent advantages of focused, intense self-interested parties to overcome the interests of even much larger groups applies to nearly every public, not-for-profit, or (public) corporate organization where legal fiduciaries--top-level people, for the most part--are in charge of *someone else's* money. It is very hard for the typical taxpayer, for example, to know about extravagant bureaucracy expenditures or quiet giveaways much less be in any effective position to do anything about it. The same vulnerability applies to the average stockholder against CEO's drawing upon corporate monies for outsized salaries and benefits, multiple homes, extravagant hotel accommodations, and golden parachutes even upon being *fired*.

Government and private organizations are subject to periodic audits, oversight mechanisms, etc. but these accountability functions are typically inadequate for a number of reasons. In the corporate world outside accountants, for example, are paid by the companies themselves and want to maintain an ongoing relationship with the customer even if it involves clear conflicts of interests. They take their supplicant peek at the corporate books, pronounce all is well (even when it is not), and *imply* (without even certifying, as the ethical schemes are *so* weak) that blessed status to unwary investors and others. Just review the astonishingly sordid record of the auditing profession in the 2008 financial crisis--top rated investment vehicles were, in truth, highly risky; supposedly guaranteed and/or insured assets had illusory protection; liens on assets were secured by way undervalued collateral; etc. Even fiction writers wouldn't have imaginations cynical and sordid enough to make up what was the reality of the accounting/auditing world up to the Great Recession (which still continues mostly unreformed.)

When some of the Great Recession misfeasance was uncovered there was no supervisory institution anywhere with sufficient jurisdiction to hold the perpetrators sufficiently accountable. There were too few laws clearly prohibiting their (immoral) behavior as the Big Institutions themselves had primary influence over what laws there were. (Some civil trial lawyers, however, did recover some small share of the lost money for already deep-pocketed investors but that recovery was mostly paid by insurers for the auditors.) Mostly, like the financial corporations themselves, the auditors got away with a form of civic manslaughter.

Within government, auditors too often get their reports quashed or marginalized by partisan political machinations and/or by more powerful figures in Congress or the administration who have their own personal agendas. How else do you explain how product suppliers get away with selling \$600 hammers and \$1000 toilet seats to the Defense Department and other similar shenanigans. Are we to believe operational governmental officials are plain stupid? (See the next section, below, for more on governmental officials.) That's what the miscreants want the public to believe. It deflects recognition of their *own* responsibility and the vulnerabilities of the *system* itself which they want to maintain for self-interested purposes. (They are, indeed, clever!)

When in doubt about the wisdom (or lack of it) of governmental actions, just *follow the money* to learn how and why these things happen. When you turn over the rock of nearly every instance of claim of waste and inefficiency you're likely to find a special interest (and maybe some complicit governmental officials) lurking underneath.

Legal controls to stop or minimize this activity are too few and ineffective given the level of openness and decentralization built into our system of governance and the imbalanced power and focus relationships of special interests to taxpayers. In the private and nonprofit sectors that imbalance of power and focus applies also to the relationship of top level organizational managers to their shareholders and stakeholders. Additionally, government departments and agencies and non-profit organizations don't have the same fearsome and vigilant "bosses" watching out for their own money as there may be in private businesses. That's a different kind of accountability function. There is little, if any, ownership in the governmental system (or in many corporate and non-profit environments) which would replicate the private boss protecting his own wallet and possessions. (But, see below for how the public *can* keep a close eye on these things.)

That doesn't mean citizens and taxpayers are without remedy. Asserting a new public values ethos may act as a psychological constraint upon some of the special interest exploitation but structural changes and legal reforms will be necessary, as well as greater and better enforcement of the rules. We can, for example, "deputize" in a sense, ordinary citizens to closely monitor government and the treasury, via the Local Council. (See Chapter 5 for more prescriptions of what we need and how they may work.)

Is it Really "Waste and Inefficiency" or Are the Special Interests Distorting Governmental Behavior?

Individualist/capitalist incentives to exploit, combined with opportunity and ease of access, makes the public purse a favored target for private citizens and special interests. Critics who perceive government "waste and inefficiency" are seeing effects correctly but often assessing responsibility wrongly. While nearly every special interest sees their *own* takeaways and giveaways as legitimate and declare them as good for "the economy, jobs, terrorist prevention, etc.," others, viewing with unbiased eyes, see them as often being examples of true waste and inefficiency. That means that it is not the public which is really benefiting from these decisions and events. If this special interest siphoning behavior upon our open and accessible government is seen as "business as usual" (and it is), it's not apparent how anyone can think that it is the government's fault. If we didn't have the structural openness of the government itself combined with the inevitable private citizen incentives then much of this bad behavior would not occur. In other words it is not the *idea* of government itself or its employees who are responsible for these public treasury leaks but the built-in structural and external economic incentives.

Government officials and staffers, especially at the federal level are, to be fair, almost certainly as ethical as any workers, dedicated to their roles as public servants, and are generally highly competent. Many of these public servants are good and even great people who perform well ethically no matter what. Some are good people in bad environments where their decisions and behaviors are constrained or determined for them (often by the special interest and partisan pressures noted above.) Some, not surprisingly, are truly bad as there are corrupt officials in nearly every government for sure. This broad range of competence and morality in employees is a normal distribution for any decent sized public or private organization.

When we plan to change how things are done, we need to be real about people and be prepared for human foibles. By its very nature, where government represents a wide range of people and interests, it can't be as accountable as, let's say, a private person is to his own assets and affairs or a boss is to his own business. The operations of a liberal government are broad and complex. Responsibilities are spread out

and diffused for both operational reasons and as an important matter of principle—the prevention of abuse of too much power in too few hands. That latter situation, of course, has been proven to be much worse than a loose, somewhat vulnerable government, as anyone subject to an authoritarian regime can relate.

Undeniably, some measure of government is essential for all societies and a somewhat open government is an essential component of democracies. However, while diffusion of power and having a system of checks and balances act to prevent dictatorships and autocracies, they are not necessarily protective of persistent, multiple abuses of government by thousands of motivated individuals and special interests. While a piranha bite will not bring down a large animal, hundreds or thousands of them will. That concept applies to governments and large organizations of all types. Persistent, heavy pressures from special interests result in cronyism, corruption, loss of credibility, and the weakening of institutions, sort of like what we have now in America.

For the most part, what is often cynically thought of as governmental waste and inefficiency is more a result of private citizens (acting consistent with the individualist/competitive ethos) regularly exploiting the vulnerabilities of our liberal democratic institutions. They cloak their activities by diverting attention elsewhere, including contesting the idea of government itself. We have to be clear about what is happening and why or we will criticize the wrong people and/or try to fix the wrong things. (Think about this pretty hard, you Tea Party folks!)

The appropriate reaction to all of this is not to weaken government more but to focus on changing or constraining the individualist/capitalist ethos, sandboxing governmental officials, enforcing laws as they are supposed to be enforced, and strengthening the relationship of government to the little people. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for how this may work.)

The Elite is Dominating the Economy and Governance

Assuming there was a brain in society--a formal rational entity which could observe and draw conclusions for the collective (see below)—there would be obvious lessons about governance and regulation to be drawn from the 2008 financial crisis:

- 1) That more regulation of the financial sector rather than less is necessary (No more “too big to fail” institutions.)
- 2) That not eliminating the moral hazard of public backstopping of private investment risk just creates more risks and nearly guarantees another financial meltdown and associated bailout. And,
- 3) That the financial elite clearly cannot be trusted to regulate themselves nor to act responsibly with other people's money and financial futures. (See below, for more discussion of a brain, as in Smart government.)

Given that there is no brain in American governance, it is not too surprising (but not less outrageous) that the taxpayers and the collective are still fully exposed now to the same set of risks and to the same shameless business practices of the financial elite. That's because the elite *want* it that way and they know how to get what they want. The very legislation that was purportedly enacted in response to the crisis--the 2009 Dodd-Frank reform law and its associated regulations-- has been shaped in large part by the *same* people who are the target of the reforms and is viewed by fair-minded experts as nearly worthless. The basic legislation itself is filled with loopholes, exceptions, and “Get out of Jail Free” cards favoring the same elite. Much of the implementing provisions under the (already weak) legislation have been stonewalled in legislative committees by elite class lobbyists and may never get completed.

The financial elite (happily for them) are still in the same essential environment as they were before the crisis and are acting in pretty much the same ways. But now, they have even less concern for risk and even more confidence in additional bailouts if (and when) they need them because they have thoroughly controlled the political processes to avoid real constraints on their risky behaviors (and profits). Furthermore, they have managed to sufficiently contain the citizen outrage which developed and have rendered it benign.

They have, for example, diverted the Tea Party's attention away from regulation of the financial industry to reduction of governmental debt and lower taxes. (That change in focus will benefit the elite interests even more and at the expense of the lower classes, including some Tea Party members themselves.) The elite have smugly watched the Occupy Wall Street movement peter out by itself from lack of a practical program of change. If there was truly an American *collective* perspective it would recognize the astounding failure to learn a lesson from all of what happened since 2008. But, no matter how bad the Great Recession was, the elite have survived it very well.

While an elite has pretty much dominated most societies everywhere for nearly forever their status now, at least in America, is as high and mighty as it has ever been. That is what we get when the elite regulates itself and gets to dominate the means of public discourse. Top-level investment companies use sophisticated and expensive public relations schemes to cynically convince the public that they do "God's work" and Wall Street traders and operators sincerely see themselves as Masters of the Universe. They consider their domination of the lower classes as both earned and morally correct. These continue to play hardball and expect to win for themselves and make losers out of everyone else.

Most of them do these things perfectly legally (and morally) by the rules of the *individual-competitive* system. If everyone scarfed on the public teats in the same fashion and amount as these private citizens do, there would be at least a (perspective-based) sense of fairness involved. However, public citizens do not scarf at the teats nor want to; the masses don't, even if some may want to. Surely, some of the elite themselves would refrain as a matter of (a different perspective-based) morality, at least, if they saw reasonable options outside of, or in spite of, the economic context they are in.

The bottom line is that the elite has leveraged its incentives into accumulating *way* more of the nation's wealth and income in proportion to its size. Class financial differences are as great now as they've ever been. The same basic situation exists in the political sphere where a tiny minority of people dominate. Majority voting numbers of the lower classes mean nearly nothing. The elite has pretty much occupied the legislative, regulatory, and public relations spaces and smothered effective opposition. Memories of the Great Recession bailouts and financial shenanigans still motivate dismay and outrage among some of the independent media, some mainstream commentators, and the general public, but no one person or any group is in a position to do anything meaningful about it. The continuing dominance by the elite of the capital-labor value ratio and governance in general relegates the lower classes to second-class citizens (or worse) in their own country.

Given all of this, the obvious question of the Everyman is: "Is there any chance of fairness for the little people in this system?" Certainly, not everybody in the system is playing with the same set of rules. An alert, self-respecting Everyman can figure out an answer: "It seems that we need a new and better *system!*" But, so far, neither our smartest and most inspired public citizens or the little people in general have figured out a way to protect themselves or to come up with ideas and implementation plans of a new and better system. If there is a better system it has include a fundamental *pushback* function allowing the lower classes to get a fairer slice of the capital-labor value ratio, more influence in governance, and a measure of respect and self respect. That kind of pushback response is what this Action Manual intends to stimulate.

The Logic of Individualism and Special Interest Protectionism

The logic of individualism/capitalism is more complex than that of mere fairness among the classes or groups. Economists understand how even generally acceptable individual activities if widespread enough can result in overall aggregate losses to the whole. A common example is that of trade protectionism where individual nations raise tariffs and other barriers to trade to protect their home industries. That compels reciprocal competitive action from other nations (in conformity to the individualist logic) where they raise tariffs and barriers, too. Ultimately this all escalates into a butting-of-heads situation of less trade, higher prices overall for all consumers, inefficient industries and economies, and reduced innovation. There is a net loss, overall, for nearly everyone.

Let's say, for example, an ambitious and influential Wisconsin farmer was able to persuade his district Congressman to secure business protection legislation for him to ban the importation of bananas (none of which are now grown in the continental United States) so that he could develop his own banana growing business in the Midwest. His domestic industry with its local jobs, contracts, campaign donations and political connections, etc., would be comfortably protected by law. As the price of bananas would have to be set to at least the cost of production, in (cold) Wisconsin we can expect, perhaps, a \$30-plus American banana, well above the world market price. Consumption of bananas by American fruit lovers would certainly decrease, foreign sellers would be shut out of a large market, and foreign nations would enact their own retaliatory defensive trade rules raising the costs of imports for Americans in general. But, that ambitious farmer would be cosily content with a protected niche market. Score a win for him and losses for nearly everyone else.

This level of individualist “freedom,” while philosophically appealing to many in an abstract sense, can be destructive to or at odds with collective interests (including those of the very same individuals exercising “their” freedoms.) If a lot of people in a lot of industries replicated the banana growing situation (and many do or try to do, in a continuous pattern of win-loss transactions) economies domestically and across the globe would suffer significantly, as would most individuals and consumers. Indeed, this template of abstract self-interested, anti-collective behavior is typical of individualist/capitalist dynamics with the collective as the losing party.

The remedy for this logic is to create a collective mentality in America—an American Team promoting a healthy private/public attitude balance. Just like with other collectives, like the family unit, teams, communities, etc., the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. The inevitable degradations in overall achievement due to the individualists logic can be reversed by a major increase in a collective interest. (See Chapter 5 for discussion of the collective ethos and, below, for how citizen creativity can blossom within it.)

There is *No One* Watching Out for a Collective Interest (Not our Political Parties)

Not the United States President or Congress (see Chapter 1 for an explanation.) Not businesses or even Big Businesses, nor our biggest and most influential special interests as they have to participate in the self-interested frenzy whether they like it or not (because of the imperatives of the system.) If they don't, they will be left behind. Certainly, no individual person no matter how prominent or special could have anywhere near the influence needed to sufficiently promote or supervise an entire nation's common good.

In theory, the major political parties are supposed to act as aggregators (among other things) of individual and special interests with a *broad* focus on the role and scope of government and society while also acting in leadership roles in educating and guiding their members. Provided parties were large enough and homogenous enough they could function as major components of a national or collective

interest. In theory, the aggregation function of major parties together with their natural interactions in democratic governance could be the primary elements in shaping a collective interest, even if in a minority position. As an out of office party they could (*should?*) be a *responsible* opposition to the incumbent party. (See below, for why.) Good public policy for a nation doesn't have to have any partisan components to it. National defense, infrastructures, and environmental protection are obvious examples. Statesmen in every party could create in their followers the sense of the public interest that we are interested in here, but they don't, unfortunately. Responsible opposition means national interest first, partisan ones second.

In America, we have the two major parties. (Note: the U.S. two-party system may be another example of entrenched social/political habit which acts as a hindrance to an advanced 21st-Century governance. We may want to change that, too.) The Republican Party represents, arguably, the private citizen-leaning business class and ostensibly (and oddly) a large chunk of the lower classes (working-class whites, social conservatives, rural residents, etc.) who seemingly have little in common with the business class. This business class, of course, comprises a large part of the dominant elite which itself acts as a large, special interest favoring class hierarchy and elite leadership of governance and control of the economy. The lower class Republicans, less economically-focused, stand politically for a mixed bag of philosophical, social, and religious positions. They include an abstract sense of "liberty," a high level of respect for authority and tradition, protection of traditional family relationships, advocacy of a greater role for religion in social life, etc. The Democratic Party represents, arguably, the more public citizen-leaning business class and a number of relatively unrelated, mostly identity-based groups—labor unions, racial and ethnic minorities, gays, urbanites, etc.

Some people see major differences in the governance perspectives of the parties--e.g., as a contrast of tradition versus progressivism, of tribal-like fear and safety-oriented attitudes versus openness to experience and diversity, of limited governance versus active governance, etc. Others see these party distinctions as simplistic and reductionist, often not very useful, and even insignificant, especially when focused on specific, practical policy matters. (See Chapter 2 for a critique of the usefulness of our traditional social categories like Republican/Democrat, conservative/liberal, etc.) As they see it, the Republicans, in general, advocate limited government, low taxes, and a low level of business regulation. Democrats, in general, advocate limited government, low taxes, and low levels of regulation, just targeted at *different* parts of the government and private sectors. Republicans stand for less regulation of business; more of social and personal life. Democrats stand for lower taxes for the middle and lower classes; more for the elite; etc.

In regard to government expenditures, as another example, the essential difference between the parties' positions may be a shift of about 5% of the federal budget from the elite to the lower classes and vice versa. (That is, the Republicans will lower elite class taxes, provide for more business subsidies, etc.; the Democrats will increase social services for the lower classes, increase taxes for the elite, etc. Policymaking differences, other than the fiscal, tend to the symbolic and psychological (and relatively unimportant in the grander scheme of things.) For example, allowing the Ten Commandments to be displayed in public buildings and schools; restricting, but not prohibiting outright, abortion (Republicans); securing modest accommodations for minority interests in higher education and in the hiring for federally-funded capital projects (Democrats); etc. From a higher perspective, most of these things are not grand differences of principle but of emphasis on a graduated scale. A choice between white bread versus whole-wheat, so to speak, is hardly meaningful for many, or life affecting.

Both parties generally honor the class hierarchy, cater to elite interests, and promote capitalism and individualism. The Republican Party (the private citizen business class) tends to dominate the lower classes unmercifully, in general accordance with dominant ids and egos associated with Social Darwinism, Nietzsche's Superman, and Ayn Rand's, "Atlas Shrugged," hero, John Galt. The Democrats (the public citizen business class) tends to dominate them also, but with *some* degree of mercy. They will sympathize, at least, with the "John Valjean's", you might say, who steal bread for their starving children

and they will provide, magnanimously, the proverbial cake to the unwashed. This distinction in attitude is meaningful depending on what one stands to gain or lose on a personal level, but not a whole lot for the lower classes in general and the collective overall.

Beyond asserting major philosophically-differing perspectives on the role and scope of government in society, the parties in theory are supposed to practice some degree of principled oppositional politics. That means opposition that is not necessarily partisan but exercised as a practical check on the power of the incumbent party to prevent *abuses*. Power of almost any kind, of course, invites abuse. Oppositional politics is a reasonably structured impediment to that occurrence. It's designed to "right the ship," so to speak, so that national instead of more limited partisan or interest group interests are maintained. Oppositional politics, done right, is a form of statesmanship.

Instead of being a practical check on incumbent overreaching, oppositional politics in America today has become mostly highly partisan competition not much different than with the individualist/competitive ethos characteristic of capitalism in the economic sphere. While capitalism has got meaner, the private citizen attitudes of much of the elite class proxies in government (especially the Republican members) have become more extreme and intense than they have been for some decades. There appears to be an almost mortal battle between the merciless (elite Republicans) group and the somewhat merciful (elite Democrats) group for control of the federal government and, thereby, the budget and the business regulatory system. While focused on squishing the other side, neither group has much, if any, focus on national or collective interest. (On the other hand, for the most part, the interests of the little people, are not even on the radar, as they say.)

A good example of this partisan perversion of governance (and responsible opposition) is the August 2011 deficit ceiling standoff between the Republican majority in the House and the President and Democratic-controlled Senate which nearly resulted in the unprecedented financial default of the United States government. The Republicans, prompted by intense pressure from deficit and spending-cut private citizens (zealots?) among their constituents, rejected the customary budgetary understandings and compelled negotiation of a last-minute, makeshift compromise agreement to raise the debt ceiling.

This standoff resulted in worldwide financial anxiety, a reduced credit rating for the country, and a huge loss in the nation's reputation among the financial world and the world's publics. Furthermore, the terms of the eventual compromise were only a delay of serious decision-making combined with near-term budgetary provisions that are irrational from multiple perspectives. Nearly everyone agrees that this outcome is impractical and irresponsible. In these negotiations, we saw: High stakes for the nation, worldwide financial markets, and the American public! High-level, hardheaded brinkmanship! Last-minute avoidance of tragedy only for a realistic resolution to be postponed until another day!

What appears to be the elements of an overwrought, pulp novel is actually a governmental reality in an absurd setting populated by unsavory characters almost none of whom is a hero or even a good guy. Some attentive observers from the outside, having no stake in the situation, might view the leaders of the United States government as being clowns engaged in childish, nasty, partisan warfare. Those Senators and Congressmen who might have acted with principled leadership and true statesmanship were marginalized in the process. We are now seeing an unusual exodus of even veterans of decades of partisan competition who can no longer stomach the moral (immoral?) attitudes of much of the membership and their external influences. A suitable leadership and situation for the World's Greatest Nation? Some think not.

This anti-collective positioning not only shows in the run-up to "national" policymaking but extends way beyond that to include "civil treason," so to speak, where partisan elements in society *deliberately* undermine policies which have already achieved *majority* approval. The out-of-power party sees it as competitively necessary to oppose or to pervert nearly any or all policy initiatives by the in-power party to deny it any political advantages regardless of whether those initiatives are substantively

worthwhile. Nearly every decision/action in governance is politicized whether there is any objective basis for it or not. Take, for example, the intense efforts by many Republicans to scuttle nearly every component (including those benign ones relating to electronic record-keeping and data collection) of the Affordable Care Act (a/k/a Obamacare) and the refusal to confirm qualified presidential appointments to high-level positions just because they want to undercut the incumbent president for political purposes.

The jettisoning of principled opposition extended to its logical extreme would mean, for example, anti-war activists deliberately impeding the war effort even in a legitimately declared and popularly supported war. Under some conditions, that would be *criminal* treason. This extreme partisan attitude seemingly rejects a key component of democratic practice which is that all citizens stand behind a position once it has achieved majority approval. That's what majority rule is supposed to be about. How would you feel if you and two friends agreed to a vote on whether to order out pizza or Chinese food before watching the football game, the vote was 2-1 in your favor for pizza, and the loser ordered Chinese anyway? So much for a collective interest! So much for democracy! So much for fairness and trust! Not respecting any of that means that (as occurs regularly in our political sphere) our society is closer to the primitive social level than it is to advanced governance.

Almost as harmful as bad-faith oppositional politics the major parties, in large part, are not providing the grander functions they could and should be doing in a more rational, advanced society—member leadership, education, and guidance. They are aggregating supporters only for partisan *electoral* reasons instead of fundamental political philosophical positions in the furtherance of good governance. They corral separate and often mismatched interests into an over-arching organization which they call a “party” but which really is just an aggregation of voters and special interests each with independent agendas. They have no one clear vision of governance.

Rather than promoting a true “team perspective” and high-level framing of fundamental national party issues the parties more often reflect the unfiltered expressions of their members—desires, emotions, rages. These are sometimes financial special interest wants, maintenance of “turf” or identity benefits, or assertion of parochial social or religious positions into the public sphere. The philosophical, leadership, and educational functions of the major parties in representing different fundamental approaches to governance have become deprecated in favor of mere electoral obsession and pandering for voters and campaign contributions.

Each of the elite political subdivisions (the Republican and Democrat parties) desperately wants to control government to optimize the self-interests of their class and to gratify the substantial ego needs of their more ambitious members. This elite obsession with control of the federal purse and the regulatory processes shows how the conventional leadership-over-follower hierarchy has become almost inverted. (See more on this below.) The rank-and-file, so to speak, steer the so-called leaders. In practical terms, it seems clear that we can't expect the major parties to guide and lead in any meaningful substantive sense.

One set of responses to the failure of our system to have a real collective of interest would be to develop a widespread collective mentality (an American Team?), utilize public citizen pressures of various sorts to push back on anti-collective activities, and utilize the tax system to “recapture,” in a sense, some of the premium value received from private citizen activity and restore it to the collective purse, at least. (See Chapters 5, 8, and 9 for more details of these strategies.)

Who is Responsible for the Lack of A Real Common Good?

When there are so many Americans who want to believe in a common good who or what is responsible for the idea being almost mythic? The private citizens and special interests which act solely for themselves and have an oversized influence on society? Our loud political leadership which regularly talks of one but really acts to subvert a common good? The voters who put these people in government?

The whole of the American public *itself*, since, as they say, in a democracy the people get the government they deserve?

There may be some limited merit to each of these hypotheses but, even altogether, they do not explain enough. It certainly is wrong to see the situation as: 1) merely another example of the normal political fluctuations of (messy) democracy, or 2) just another typical (albeit nastier) Republican-Democratic Party tussle which has reached a temporary standoff, or 3) another phase of the shifting historical tension between the political-economic elite and the rest of us. Neither logic nor history supports any of those positions.

Whatever, some may *think*, given enough time, that these conflicts will work out by themselves in some equitable way for most of us. The correct answer, almost certainly, is that the fundamental private-public citizen *attitude conflict* is the major responsible element as expressed in this chapter and elsewhere. There is a common thread which connects a whole set of phenomena implying a structural basis for the lack of a common interest. The private citizen attitude has now achieved such extremes in breadth and intensity that there is nearly no room left for a common good regardless of the wishes of the large majority of citizens or of the medium-and long-term consequences to the nation and the planet. If we are to see significant change we have to focus on that element and do something about it.

2. Our Governance is Not Smart and Lacks a Brain

These facts are a by-product of the individualist/capitalist ethos, too. A governance brain implies a broad and deep sense of a collective which is the near opposite of what is fundamental in the individualist/capitalist philosophy. There the aggregation of multimillions of *individual* decisions and behaviors results in what capitalist economists call governance by an “invisible hand.” That is, there is minimal formal governance but, instead, a limited set of implicit transactional rules which regulate society developed among free-acting citizens simply through their interactivity. One might describe it as “natural primitive” interaction, as there may be in the jungle world among the animals. The animals there adapt to each other without any sort of explicit agreements or oversight. Which animal has first claim to a downed antelope and which gets priority in the waterhole just sort of get worked out. As humans, indeed, are animals, they presumably follow (or *should* follow, as the individualists believe) the same interaction rules as those in the jungle. They don't need formal government, or much of one, anyway, as people can work things out themselves. This jungle-like governance and its implied morality maximizes the freedom of (certain) individuals. (We know which ones!) Their freedoms, in large part, are the constraints and exploitations of everyone else.

It happens that people can and do work out some of these interaction conflicts themselves but mostly a small set of the most aggressive human lions and tigers, so to speak, eat most of that antelope and have the most (or all) enjoyment of that waterhole. The most willful establish themselves as kings of their areas of the jungle without any voting or consent of any other animals. The rest of the human animals live tenuously with high levels of anxiety and insecurity. And, while although by far the smartest and most capable animal (and therefore capable, maybe, of more sophisticated interactions), humans are *qualitatively* different.

While some animals in the jungle develop collective entities of sorts—packs and small local communities—they don't and won't evolve much socially like humans have. They don't live closely in large geographical communities, cities, mega-cities, states or nations. Jungle animals don't develop roadways, railways, and airways where they can meet up with all kinds of other animals. They don't learn multiple languages and share communication protocols across tribes, ethnic groups, and national boundaries. They have no grand repository of shared knowledge like libraries, the Internet, Wikipedia, and the like. They don't celebrate (in some fashion) each other's achievements, births, weddings, and deaths; etc.

Dumb Governance

- same old institutions since 1778
- same old processes since 1778
- same political representative scheme including Senate apportionment
- 18th-century geographical divisions
- uncoordinated, unsupervised accounting and budgetary processes
- same political fiefdoms since forever
- no medium-and long-term planning
- no collective brain
- an aversion to planning
- more respect for emotion and habit than for reason and science

Smart Governance

- updated institutions including a shadow government
- new processes including breaking old habits; rationalizing governance
- reconfigured jurisdictional representation; rationalize and eliminate gerrymandering, etc.
- simplify and rationalize governmental jurisdictions
- coordinate policymaking, planning, and implementation based on planning, reason, and a collective perspective
- rationalize governmental services and employment
- establish planning institutions
- establish a collective brain
- make time perspectives a component of all governance
- more respect for reason, data, technology, and science

Human material and social developments have steadily moved way beyond the jungle governance and morality. These developments have led to a new magnitude of collective interests. We have an extensive set of social mores, customs, laws, and moralities which don't much resemble jungle governance. These collective-based concepts (together with capitalist ones, of course) have facilitated great governmental institutions, associations, nations, constitutions, systems of rights, and grand achievements of all sorts. These developments would not have occurred if only jungle-like morality was at play.

The “invisible hand” model of social interaction hasn't fit well with advanced societies for some time and is a severe obstacle to the potentials of a 21st-Century level of governance and social relations. It still, however, has *some* lingering relevance in low population areas where social interactions are not much different than those of the 18th and 19th-Centuries. That may account for *some* of the differences in attitudes towards governance between people there and urbanites and between Red and Blue State folks. But those less “interactive” environments are definitely diminishing. In any case, it's not right for a diminishing small minority of citizens to hold back progress towards Smart governance and social relations for everyone else. The practical, historical, and moral trends are for a more prominent sense of the collective.

While we do have institutions now which could, *in principle*, play a role in promoting collective interests, they don't. We've seen significant shortfalls in the Presidency, Congress, political parties, political statesmanship everywhere, and private business leadership. No institution has yet to take ownership, so to speak, of the collective or to act as a rational decision-maker and planner for a nation. Potential ownership interests in things that matter (or should matter) to everyone, e.g., stewardship of the environment; energy conservation; long-term planning projects; efficiency in governmental expenditures; comprehensive use of science, fact, and technology in policymaking and implementations; etc., don't develop much at all, or not sufficiently, in an individualist/capitalist system because it takes *more* than individual actions (even the aggregated billions of them) for them to form. As in the area of trade protectionism there is a *different* logic for collective governance matters than there is for individual ones. Smart governance in the 21st-Century means:

- 1) a broad and deep sense of the collective,
- 2) a collective perspective on rational policymaking and decision-making,
- 3) a collective sense of fairness, and
- 4) comprehensive planning with multiple time perspectives. (See Chapter 7 for more description of the elements of Smart governance.)

3. It Lacks Perspectives, Both Temporal And Frame-Wise

Time Perspectives

Alternative time perspectives make a big difference both for those involved in decision-making and for those who merely incur the consequences of it. For the extreme private citizen, for example, the short term--his lifespan--is paramount and there is no need to be concerned about the more distant future and future generations as he will be dead and he has no need to care. In the economic sphere, the typical private citizen will exploit situations for profits for himself *now*, as in economic bubble situations, even if the aggregate activities of all others involved typically result in a burst of that bubble with medium to long-term negative consequences for many, including the national and global economies. Like the Wall Street Kahunas who facilitated the financial system collapse in 2008, the entire system-wide damages were not their concern as long as they were able to protect *their* interests.

For those on the bottom rung of the economic ladder, too, medium and long-term considerations often don't matter much. Those things will be irrelevant if one can't be sure of getting past the short-term (i.e., putting food on the table, paying the rent, etc.) and there is a desperate need to survive *now*. Everyone else, mostly, will appreciate the benefits of medium to long-term planning for themselves and for the collective. Time perspectives matter most of the time for most people. Short-term financial profligacy by a citizen, for example, often means too little savings for old age or enough left to pay for college educations. Too little capital invested now by businesses means lower productivity and higher unemployment later. For government, it means too much of a debt load for future generations. Too much of drawing down of environmental capital now means depleted fish and energy resources, a damaged ecosystem, and uncontrollable global warming, etc. Everyone can understand, too, how gamblers and stock market traders on a hot streak (the short term) almost always get brought back to earth in the long-term.

Here are some contemporary social situations illustrating the consequences of limited time perspectives:

1) In the electoral sphere, many office holders have too-short terms of office where they are nearly constantly in electoral mode. Quality governance requires attention, knowledge, analysis, deliberation, and other similar elements. Even the best intended public servants cannot think of and develop quality programs and policies if those achievements are conditioned upon electoral success since campaigning and fundraising is nearly a full-time job. Even regardless of that lack of time issue, how can a U.S. Representative, for example, direct practical consideration to the medium-long term for policymaking when his job tenure stretches for only *two-year* increments?

Should, for example, Congressman John Doe attempt to protect the public purse and long-term national interests from steadily increasing debt *or* support earmarks for favored constituents now (anticipating next election campaign contributions for such support)? Answer: He won't be a congressman for long without the help of his favored constituents who are focused on their immediate individual interests. In other words, favor the short term and get reelected; favor the medium-long-term and get bounced out of the job. The incentives are clearly short-term only. The logic is pretty determinative. The result is that there can't be a focused and influential constituency in Congress (and elsewhere in government having similar time incentives) for the long-term health of the nation or the federal treasury.

2) How much effort and political capital should a governor or big-city mayor put into ensuring that public workers' retirement programs are sufficiently funded when it is easier just to leave it for the next elected guy to deal with later. (That new guy will have the same decision-making situation himself down the line, albeit with an even more challenging funding problem.) If he is *self-interestedly* rational he will recognize that there is no benefit for himself in the long-term health of the municipal treasury and ignore or evade the problem. If he is *statesmanlike* and collectively-minded instead, he may buckle down and tackle those long-term issues, but only by exposing himself to an election loss to a more aggressive, short-term focused opponent promising public goodies *now* to special interests. The result is that there is no incentive for term-constrained officials to act for the long-term benefit of the municipality.

3) Political parties, too, primarily have short-term focuses on prevailing in the next electoral campaign. Not much is worthwhile to them other than control of government positions because without that control they can't secure jobs for themselves and their cronies, have access to the public purse, and have a definitive influence on policymaking. That requires winning elections first and foremost. Quality policies and governance skills are not that important, sort of like how, for many commercial sellers, *marketing* is more important than quality products and services (see below.) Both parties find it irresistible to obtain short-term electoral advantages by promising irresponsible tax cuts and/or more spending, for example, rather than addressing the longer-term perspectives on the accumulating debt or rational policymaking.

Politicians face even more significant dilemmas regarding short-term focus. Should the Democrats of 2000, for instance, have insisted on patience and prudence before offering support for the Iraqi II invasion in order to ensure that the U.S. was not needlessly expending lives and money on a bogus foreign threat? *Or*, should they have immediately signed onto the war campaign (as they did) to protect their short-term electoral chances by catering to American cultural macho and voters' emotional ties to patriotism?

It is absolutely clear now (from a *national* perspective) that they should have held back and awaited more facts and evidence but the short-term electoral focus precluded it. It will preclude it *again* in the next similar situation. The logical dynamics underpinning this situation is an informal *template* for bad decision-making and bad governance in our political "short-term world." It will continue to produce bad outcomes for most people. (Some special-interests, however, *will* benefit.) Medium-and long-term perspectives have almost no chance of being considered as the structural incentives are against it. Impetuous decisions will continue to be made, irrational policymaking will continue to be made, and bad wars will continue to be waged. Opportunities for advancing our governance and national interests will be squandered unless this system logic situation is fixed. (See Chapters 5 and 8 for ideas on how this can be done.)

4) In the private sector, top corporate managers often are motivated to maximize short-term profits at the expense of future corporate (and often national and international) financial health. Many have compensation incentives which reward gains in the short term and they are able to retire or move on before the near certain negative medium-and long-term consequences occur. Similarly, a lot of investors regularly participate in bubble-generating adventures expecting that they will have cashed out before the bubbles burst leaving others to suffer the consequences, musical chair-like. (Consider the Great Recession as a prominent example of this logic.) Some businesses and short-sighted consumers blithely use up environmental capital now and impose long-term environmental degradation and depletion effects upon the rest of us, the government, and upon later generations to clean up and pay for.

5) Scanning over the current political landscape in America: Where in government, or in the private sector for that matter, is the *focused* constituency for dealing with the long-term expenditures for health care, Social Security, deficit spending, etc.? Who in an authority position is looking out for the accumulating governmental debt (now over \$17 trillion and requiring \$300+ billion a year for debt service alone?) Who, in a position to effect a comprehensive response, is paying adequate attention to the myriad stresses caused (or to be caused) by global warming? Who has responsibility for consumer transactional effects on the environment--excessive packaging effects on waste disposal, obesity, and other harmful health effects of convenience food upon consumers? Who is assuming responsibility for preventing or cushioning the next economic bubble (financial, energy, technology, commodities) which will burst leaving the unlucky, the losers, and almost certainly the taxpayers, especially, holding the bag? Who is in a position to effectively and honestly address the early childhood factors which create ills in the public education system which lead to future social problems like unemployment, substance addictions, and crime.

Perhaps most importantly, who is willing to give serious attention *early enough* to prevent a social catastrophe due to the fact that the American economy does not appear capable of keeping up with ongoing employment needs due to population growth and other factors. With the increasing utilization of robotics, digital tools and other technological advances, and the loss of manufacturing and service jobs to foreign nations it looks near certain in coming decades that (without significant governmental and private sector adjustments) multi-millions of Americans will have no honest way to support themselves and their families. We are growing a *permanent underclass* without hope of employment, and seemingly, with diminishing expectations of governmental and external support. Woe is them! (And most of the rest of us, too.) (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of this issue.)

There *are* advocates now dealing with some of these issues, of course—activist groups, academics, think tanks, etc. Most of them are doing their own thing with relatively small budgets and modest human resources. (See Chapter 8 for a discussion of how these organizations can become way more effective by becoming *collectively organized and highly focused*.) But, there is no institution or set of institutions with enough heft, capability, and persistence to successfully address these big problems, especially since they are interrelated in complex and multiple ways. We lack sufficient planning institutions now to operate within the longer time perspectives partly because: 1) the philosophical support is not there, 2) political planners are fighting against much stronger short-term perspective dynamics including private citizen and special interests, and 3) the nation has a social *habit* of ignoring planning.

In the private sector, probably a majority of businesses and organizations *do* have planning functions for medium and long-term perspectives, for their own interests anyway. They have long-term capital budgets, business plans, product upgrade cycles, and the like. In the personal realm, many individuals and families—primarily those with means—have plans and longer-term perspectives for accumulating college funds for children, retirement funds for adults, proactive planning for potential nursing home expenses, etc. For the governments of the World's Greatest Nation to have *inferior* time perspectives and planning capabilities to those of many small businesses and even soccer moms is absurd and primitive governance!

The lack of a social brain to address these long-term issues has negative consequences for some Marys and Johns *now* (e.g., the foreclosures and job losses and other consequences of the irrational, short-sighted, exuberant run-up to the 2008 financial crisis.) There will be some consequences in the *near* future (e.g., municipal defaults and bankruptcies from underfunded public employee retirement funds and budgets, etc.) There will be some more when today's youth reach home-buying age (e.g., exploding federal governmental interest payments tightening the credit markets.) And, of course, future generations will be effected by the consequences of global warming, energy resource depletion, and joblessness. In our society, here are the likely losers of the failures to plan: the lower classes, public citizens, the children and grandchildren of mostly everyone (except for the elite); the collective; future generations; and the physical planet Earth.

While short-term only decision-making can work well sometimes for some individuals, it is foolish for nations and institutions of long-term duration to limit themselves. Smart governance requires the full range of temporal perspectives. Even assuming, however, that we can develop a sort of collective will to address this structural problem, neither reason, experience, nor intellectual critique may be sufficient (although still necessary) to alter this type of behavior. Some might see this as one big, stubborn, bad social habit. Sort of like a nation's version of an elderly, obese, alcoholic smoker with a mean streak. What can we do to shape him up before he incurs an ugly demise? It is another kind of frame, not a temporal or even a cognitive one, but a fixed *dispositional* one. To break it will require more than addressing logic and reason, including long-term conditioning tactics. (See Chapter 9 for an examination of tactics for dealing with social habits.)

Effecting solutions to these issues, from the collective's point of view, requires intelligent and comprehensive planning considering *all* time frames. We need new ways of thinking and acting in our governance and economic systems which will consider the medium-long term interests of workers, consumers, stockholders, taxpayers, the collective, future generations, and the planet. Real solutions to some of these problems need to start now, progress may take years and even decades, and complete solutions (if any) may take generations. (See Chapter 8 for descriptions of how the national Policy and Problem-Solving and Planning Councils may work.)

Frame Perspectives

Frame perspectives generally are the hardest to grasp as not everyone has the mental agility to juggle multiple “realities” simultaneously. Another factor is the conventional belief that there is a (single) reality “out there” that we all experience individually but in roughly the same ways. That's not true and here's a good example. Imagine a human fetus. It can be understood as a “biomass,” akin to a bean sprout (natural science.) It can be understood as a mere cell growth, akin to a pimple or fatty tumor (practical.) Or, vastly differently, it can be considered a human being with a soul (some religious folks.)

Wow! That's an incredible range of “realities.” Which is right and which is wrong? If none are right/wrong, which is better? Can they all be right? For whom, under what circumstances, and why? (See Appendix B for an extended practical discussion of the fetus in the context of the abortion issue.) This way of seeing multiple realities gets pretty complex and confusing pretty quickly. (See Appendix A, below, for a more advanced, philosophical discussion of frame perspectives for more ambitious readers.) Nevertheless, if we are smart, fair-minded, and responsible we will take the time to recognize the multiple ways of seeing and thinking and learn to deal with them in practical situations, mostly problem-solving ones.

Failure to know the framing positions of the “other” person makes us think sometimes that those who don't see things the same way as we do are somehow disingenuous or “f*cked up.” Sometimes people really are f*cked up but, for the most part, the multitude of different frames (cognitive and otherwise) that can be brought to bear when humans interact helps explain why it is so hard for people to see eye to eye and, consequently, to get along. (See sidebar for some simple examples.) But multiple perspectives are present nearly all the time whether most people recognize them or not. Open-minded, alert folks will be attuned to them most often. Wise men will be the most adept at dealing with them in practical situations. A good definition of wisdom is the ability to resolve conflicts by seeing problems from multiple perspectives. For those who feel that getting more and more people to get along is an important step to an advanced society it'll take a lot of persistence and effort to overcome the *unshared perspective* problem. That means bringing a lot of wisdom to bear and also imparting wisdom to everyone willing to be receptive to it. (See Chapter 5 for examples of bridging strategies to get people to recognize alternative perspectives and how to make new ones.)

For a really illuminating example of cognitive frames in the economic sphere, let's look at the capitalist system's claim to have superior economic efficiencies to any alternatives. What is economically efficient in actuality depends on perspective. For example, it is “right” (i.e., rational, efficient, and moral) in the capitalist system (under certain conditions) to:

1) Dump milk and destroy unsold products in order to maintain pricing levels (even though lots of hungry and poor people could use that that milk and those destroyed products.)

2) Have a large number of unemployed people at any one time as that surplus tends to force labor costs down saving expense for employers. (Never mind about the deprivations of the unemployed schmoes!)

3) Produce and convince people to buy products no one *really* needs or wants--e.g., truly worthless health and diet supplements, vanity products, etc.--as doing so creates jobs and makes profits for business owners and investors.

4) Prioritize great *marketing* rather than great *products* as clever marketers can convince people to spend (waste?) their money on nearly anything regardless of any real value. Marketing costs often exceed production costs for many products and services. (Check out Hollywood budgets for many of its blockbuster movies. Maybe the high-priced marketing is needed to get people in theater seats in opening

Examples of Multiple Frames

1. Think of a black and white dog



2. The gestalt: can see only one image at the time; the other is completely hidden, yet both actively are present



Two faces staring at each other OR a vase?

3. Thief! — — “Jean ValJean” — — OR..... Responsible father?



4. Fetus small mass of cells OR a Person/citizen?



week and maybe the week thereafter before word spreads on how bad the flick is (?), and

5) "Brand" products and services which are not essentially different from cheaper, less promoted options by manipulating emotions regarding quality and authenticity, etc.

From a different, more human rationality, all of that behavior is clearly irrational. Prioritizing pricing levels and abstract markets over real people is cruel, some would say. Selling worthless products just because you can is immoral. Artificially creating demand is wasteful and inefficient. Branding is an *anti*-consumer strategy. In the capitalist system, furthermore, there is no important differentiation in the *content* of production, i.e., it doesn't matter what is produced just as long as it sells. Both absolute product choice and utility value are irrelevant—bombs and weapons are just as good as children's car seats, cigarettes just as good as milk, snake oil remedies just as good as aspirin, 8 TVs per household better than 1, 38 TVs per household better than 8, etc.

The social return on investment, so to speak, of money spent on unneeded big-ticket military hardware, especially, is relatively small even though the dollar amounts are huge. In other words, to a Smart society, these activities represent very little positive for society and, more likely, add up to a big negative effect. Nevertheless, these expenditures support big corporate profits for stockholders and high-level management and prop up the nation's gross national product (GNP.) And, of course, they do provide jobs! (See Chapter 9 for an examination of alternative measures of social and economic values.)

Waste equals profits and jobs!? This all sounds pretty screwy! Sort of like listening to the logic-bending acquaintances of Alice down in the rabbit hole. In an alternative Smart society with a *different* set of perspectives, that same money could go elsewhere towards clearly *preferred* needs (from a realist's and collective's perspective.) We can direct a lot of that money and effort to addressing infrastructure, education, peacemaking, rebuilding the social fabric, social conditioning needs, etc. while *still* providing jobs and supporting communities (and still generating profits for investors.)

Instead of having nearly everyone making sometimes desperate economic decisions in order to just fend for themselves in the uncoordinated and ill-formed free market, a social brain could help rationalize many of those decisions. Most people would not *want* to buy 8 or even 4 TVs if they had easier ways to rationally allocate values to more preferred things instead of those powerfully promoted by a dominating marketing culture. Given a *clear* choice (that is, based on facts and good judgment and unencumbered by externally imposed psychologies and emotions), would most citizens prefer to spend their money on useful roads, bridges, and parks or on worthless health and vanity products for themselves?

We can imagine all kinds of similar examples of both consumer and governmental choices. A big problem is that our society, as such, doesn't have a perspective where rational choices are easy and practical. We have an uncoordinated, ill-formed set of markets which present the interests of individuals and special interests competing as best they can for themselves. If there *was* a Smart society perspective, that is, make spending decisions with a rational approach and a collective's perspective as an integral component of the economy (as proposed by the National Character Program) we would likely produce way better social returns on our investments. (See Chapters 7 and 9 for more discussion of this collective decision-making.)

Even more significantly (and shocking to a lot of people who haven't before paid close attention to the frame logic of the capitalist system) *it can't ever accept the concept of the satisfaction of all needs and wants*. In both theory and practice it requires *permanent* increased production and consumption of goods and services and at an increasingly quicker pace. Even after everyone has one or more houses, more than two vehicles per person, more than four mobile devices per person, and more other stuff than they could ever possibly use, the system requires them to buy even more and to *never* stop. If they stopped buying, production would decline or stop, jobs would be lost, businesses would become worthless, and investments would tank. Holy sh*t! This is mind-boggling stuff!

With that logic, if citizens were diners at a buffet, for example, they would be compelled to eat everything on the buffet table even while the table is being refilled. They would have to eat again and on into perpetuity (for the good of the *economic system* of which we are all a part.) That's not even considering the absurdity of the task, the health and financial costs, and the lost opportunity time of doing other things besides eating. If that ultimate *terrible* event ever occurred--the *satisfaction* of all American needs and wants--recessions and depressions would result and truly cause the economic and political collapse of society. Just think about that for a moment: the *satisfaction* of all real social needs and wants when people stop buying and relax in their non-consumer lives means the total collapse of society!?

Some people may want to reread and reconsider that concept again until its truth really sinks in. The idea sounds like nonsense, and it *is*, but only from a *real human being's* perspective. But it is a fundamental part of the logic of the capitalist system. (Ask virtually any fair-minded economist to explain the extended logic of the system.) Obviously, the capitalist principles described above cannot be justified by any sort of common sense and real human perspectives. It is beyond obvious that *another perspective* needs to be in play here, for public citizens and the collectively-minded, at least. That perspective envisions the needs, wants, and souls of real living human beings apart from the abstractions of the capitalist model.

In the public citizen perspective, production of product "X" should stop when the real (not manipulated) need or want is satisfied. Work should ease when the job is done and done right. And there should never be the desperate and compulsive manipulation of consumers to buy, buy, and buy more just because the health of the capitalist *system itself* requires it. It is literally absurd for real people to do things they don't really want to to satisfy some abstract *system*. Real people usually stop eating, buying, etc. when they have had enough. Real people want to enjoy what they have, to rest when they've accomplished what they truly wanted to, and to give due consideration to non-production/consumer matters--family, community, art, reflection, fishing, and just taking it easy once in a while. They want and need to get off the economic treadmill every so often, too.

Like a real person who works so he can live rather than lives to work, and buys to live well rather than lives to buy, a society should have a similar mindset. If that means that our economic system has to evolve into something more sophisticated than what we have now then we should *start thinking* about it now. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of the philosophical evolution of the economy and the politics which will have to evolve with it.)

It is a curious and ironic aspect of capitalism that, despite what some people see as its emphasis on *individual* freedom, it has no human perspective and no soul. Sure, individuals may have freedom in relation to *other individuals* but they are slaves to the *system*! Capitalism runs as an impersonal system requiring continual growth, constant velocity of economic transactions (of which content is irrelevant), and has *no ultimate goal*. There is no ultimate resting place, no stopping point when the "Good life" has been achieved. There is never a time when there are enough goods and services, never a point for relaxation or for anyone to stop and take in the accomplishments. What are considered by most real people to be essential human needs and characteristics--community, emotion, subjectivity, spiritualism, love, etc., are irrelevant and economically of no direct value.

Real human meanings are obstructions to the efficiency concept of production. Worker needs, especially, (e.g., leave time and schedule flexibility, family obligations, job satisfaction, meaning, etc.) are irrelevant to the system. (Slavery and child labor worked well for this impersonal system, let's not forget.) Workplace culture is a major producer of stress, sleep deprivation, anxiety, and burnout. Attempts by real people to bring human meanings into the workplace are typically characterized as "socialist" and "communist" by outraged capitalist ideologues. The concepts of unionization, collective bargaining, due process, fairness in the workplace, workplace/life balances, etc. are anathema to many contemporary employers. This is so partly as a class hierarchy matter but also partly as a challenge to the capitalist

ideology of workers as mere human capital. (See Chapter 6 for more discussion of the conflict of individualist/capitalist and complementary public citizen virtues.)

In the system's view, *abstract* people, all of whom are subordinate to it, are born and then die, generation after generation, but the system just goes on and on—producing and selling—forever. If we real people do not consume or stop consuming we are worthless to the system. If we don't produce, we are worse than worthless—we are a drag, like the Defenseless Class noted in Chapter 2. Only a relatively few people manage to escape this rat race—hippie types, perhaps, who drop out of the system and live marginal lives, or free-spirited isolationists who live alone and stay alone in the mountains of Montana or Idaho, maybe. But, most of us are like rats on the treadmill.

Certainly, most people who think clearly about these things (and most people whose attention is *directed* to these things) would recognize that the utter domination over us of a system which conceives of real people as irrelevant and intrinsically defective is the ultimate of social *irrationality and absurdity*. How does all this sound to you readers?:

-The system doesn't care for you in the slightest as a real human being (alienation?)

-You are nothing to the system except as a producer or a consumer (objectification?)

-You become worthless if you stop producing or consuming even if you and everyone you know have all you need and want (fear, anxiety, and depression?)

-Your human traits—love, spiritualism, sociality, etc.--are not recognized by (nor are important to) the system (angst and more alienation?)

Keep in mind, we are not criticizing the jobs, products, services, profits, etc. that capitalism creates but the lack of philosophic purpose and human values. Real people struggle to define human meaning in the here and now for themselves, their families, and their communities against capitalist dynamics which demand constant and diligent attention from businessmen, workers, and consumers. Those dynamics reward only contributions to the abstract economy and to abstract business productivity and efficiency. Regrettably, people sometimes engage in desperate quests for human meanings of some sort in the system which tries to ignore them. Many people make some constrained or quietly desperate choice of:

1) obsessive consumerism

2) escapism

3) abandonment of *contemporary* meanings in hope of a happier afterlife

4) material object collecting (just for the sake of actually completing *some* personal ambition, however trivial

5) grasping onto personal meaning *substitutes* like celebrity worship and sports team and player idealization; or

6) just muddling through haplessly in an absurdly endless chain of futility hoping that their children, at least, will go on to live more meaningful lives somehow. (*Those* children will hope for the very same thing with *their* children, ad infinitum.)

Because society has accepted and tolerated a simplistic (albeit practical) economic system highlighting:

Perspectives of the Capitalist/Humanist Systems

	Capitalism	Humanism
Feature		
Humanity	-capital item	- subjective, spiritual being with meanings
The Market	-a permanent system of continuous transactions	- a means to an end
Consumption	-a permanent need	- a means to an end
Work	-an activity which must be done in perpetuity	- activity to complete a project and then stops
Love, spirituality, sociality	-motivations to be exploited for sales	- the essence of life

1) competition and individualism

2) an abstract, unmanaged process of transactional interactivity; which

3) has an infinite (i.e., non-human) time perspective; and which

4) is valued for the *abstract process itself* (and not at all for the consequences of the real people who are subsumed within it), we have surrendered personal control over the meaning of our lives to a soulless economic philosophy. We can, however, find ways to balance the system and human needs. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for a detailed plan.)

This Is Not Right! This Is Crazy! This Is Not What We Deserve!

After centuries of being dominated by the system there needs to be a time—perhaps *now*— when alert, thoughtful people consider what we are as a society and what we want to be especially when the material needs and wants of the world can essentially be satisfied (or be close to being satisfied) by the production powers we have now. Once we have filled our stomachs at the buffet table, so to speak, what is next? Will we be able to savor, for once, a sense of achievement, relaxation, and contentment? Can we find satisfactions and meanings apart from mere consumption? Can we find something to do (or even a different state of being) when we no longer need to work as hard and as long as we do now?

These are obviously existential questions which individuals will want to answer for themselves, of course, but also as a society. What nearly all of us are likely to agree on is that we *will* have choices, at least in theory. If we are Smart about our lives we will not allow “The System” to keep these choices from us. Individuals acting on their own cannot do much. Their options are limited mostly to those six options noted above. For real people to live the good life requires a *collective* brain to perceive, think, and act regarding those things which are fundamental to our social lives, including our economic and governance systems and other social relations elements. (See Chapter 7 for examples of alternative economic approaches especially regarding transitions of capital and workers to a Smarter, more rational approach.)

3. It Is Socially Inefficient

Incentives and Rewards for Public Citizens

The individualist/capitalist ethos over-encourages incentives for private interests and under-encourages incentives for public interest. It rewards primarily the competitive, aggressive, and ambitious and deprecates the balancing of attitudes by public citizens and the integrity of those with “supportive” personalities. Those people make up most of the best parts of what social fabric we have. Its emphasis on competition and winners and losers relegates almost every one of us (including many who have remarkable but not entrepreneurial or world-class skills, ideas, and creativity) to the loser class.

The latent potentialities of the multi-millions of loser people remains suppressed primarily because they can't be expected to become the “best” or to be winners (as defined by the existing ethos.) An egotistical, aggressive (perhaps cheating) great athlete can expect to get trophies, cash prizes, and perquisites of all kinds. An ordinary person doing the best she can with her abilities in being a *great* parent, neighbor, or citizen living just the small life gets no financial rewards or other goodies and gets disrespected nearly every day. “Good guys finish last,” they say—but does it have to be that way?! This is a mistake! We want to encourage small life greatness, too. (See Chapter 5 for examples of rewards and conditioning programs for public citizen behaviors.)

Of course, pursuit of rewards for self-interested reasons is a powerful motivator and can result, at least incidentally, in great benefits to society, too. Inventors, innovators, and entrepreneurs who are motivated just to make money for themselves also create important industries, products and services, and employment. The world needs great egos, creators, builders, and the like in business, politics, and the social spheres even as they perform for personal private motivations. Other self-interested people with large egos drive different kinds of achievements—in competitive sports and athletics, scholarly research, etc.

These things are of value, too, as they are positive for both the individual himself and often (indirectly) for the collective. A lot of people, for example, are inspired or at least entertained by extraordinary achievements, even of the trivial kind. (In the larger scheme of things, a new world record in the shot put, for example, is inspiring but still trivial.) We do not want to discourage these private citizen behaviors but want to put them into perspective. We don't want to divert too much attention from equally (or more) impressive small life accomplishments. We want those things to be valued and honored, too.

Rewarding personal ambition and initiative can be rational and functional for the collective but self-interest is not the only motivator and not necessarily the highest form of motivation, as individualists like Ayn Rand's John Galt and Wall Street Masters of the Universe would have it. Many, if not most, people are motivated more by pride, duty, altruism, and community spirit than self-interest. They operate with a different sort of competitive standard: to be the best that they can be regardless of their *absolute* level of capability. That means being the best dad and mom that they can be, going the extra step for the community or volunteer organization, taking pride in their work, acting dutifully not to exploit or harm others, etc. For many public citizens a personal, internal guide of quality is all that is necessary. Doing the right things the right ways to the best of one's ability is part of the essence of being a public citizen—it feels natural and good and morally right.

These people defend our country; are emergency first responders; raise quality families; organize and run not-for-profit organizations; teach our children; condition civil and moral values into our citizens; and serve in under appreciated, underpaying jobs aiding the injured, afflicted, handicapped, and elderly. Profit motive did not inspire the early Internet developers, or the open source people, or the thousands of people who built Wikipedia and Google maps. These people have filled websites with useful information, designed extraordinarily useful digital applications and services, and offered free template files and guides just because they are helpful and sharing types. Volunteers who run block clubs and neighborhood groups act out of pride in themselves and their communities. There are a lot of people who raise the performance levels of their jobs or volunteer positions above and beyond an expected standard because of a personal sense of responsibility, pride, or sense of civic duty.

From the program's point of view, these people ought to be considered winners, champions, and heroes, too, but in different and, perhaps, even more important ways than mere Forbes Top 400 membership or Olympic Games champions, for example. Those kinds of everyday behaviors, like good parenting, when done well on a large scale basis, form the backbone and the character of the nation. They provide, by far, the greatest texture and density of the social fabric. Having fifty million good parents is, arguably, way more valuable to society than having a half dozen Nobel laureates. Having multimillions of good workers is way more valuable than any number of Olympic medalists. Having multimillions of Americans conscientiously caring for the environment is way more valuable than dozens of movie stars and celebrities.

Since the ordinary people (including public citizens) make up about 99% of all Americans we should not take them for granted. Their contributions (and potential contributions--see below) to society are enormously undervalued and under utilized. It makes good sense to focus on them and have programs to *make it easy* for them to "Be Great" and "Do Good," in a social sense. This is a matter of intelligent social conditioning, quality social efficiency, and fairness, too. While none of these people seek more

money or goodies for their efforts from their bosses, supervisors, or anyone else they may well deserve it--from the collective's point of view--as compared to mere sports stars or celebrities. There should be a different set of criteria with a different reward system for achievements in non-competitive, public citizen-oriented activities.

There are ample amounts of research findings in philosophy, the social sciences, and even the biological sciences which show that these mostly unrewarded, taken-for-granted public citizen behaviors are crucial for healthy human life. They are a practical necessity for a working society of almost any decent quality. Think of patriotism; volunteerism of all sorts; engagement in a positive, balanced life of family, work, and community; demonstrations of compassion and charity in local communities; the leading of ethical lives; and functioning as good parents, good neighbors, and good citizens. The people who socially contribute in these ways include some of the elite and multimillions of the little people, including a whole lot of quiet Marys and Johns. How long can we expect these people to perform as they do when they continually “finish last?”

Arguably, the increasing extremism of the private citizen attitude is *breaking down* the tolerance level of those who *do* carve out room for public interest activity, realize human meanings, and maintain the social fabric. They are being pushed too hard--losing jobs, homes, pensions, and much of the safety net established in the mid--20th-Century. The financial gap between them and the elite has widened greatly. They are suffering from near breakdown levels of stress, anxiety, insecurity, and frustration. For good reasons some are even losing faith in our American ideals. They likely will either emotionally break down sometime, or just give up being “good” people.

Without these public-oriented people doing their good deeds there would be considerably less patriotism, fewer public and community services; fewer social groups of all kinds--churches, community and affinity organizations, bowling teams, cooperative regional, national, and international institutions; less social connectedness; less charity; and the like. There almost certainly will be more frictions of all kinds among individuals and groups scrambling about for less and less in greater competition to survive. In essence, the social fabric which makes up, in large part, our distinct American culture will be destroyed. A “Road Warrior”-like scenario of persistent hostility, fear, and anxiety may eventually characterize our sorry society with a tiny group of social-war victors (almost certainly the elite), and billions of hapless victims. (Guess who?)

To a lot of people, society has its priorities nearly upside down. The private enterprise system rewards its winners with profits and governments provide many kinds of incentives to promote business development for those who know how to get them--tax subsidies, grants, support programs, etc.--but there is no system-wide philosophy to promote the building and improving of the equally important (or more so) social fabric. A Smart society will have dedicated programs rewarding and conditioning public citizen behaviors and great small life activities as complementary to the private citizen reward system. (See Chapter 7 for ideas on these kinds of programs.)

In some sense, it is morally justified to reward the types of behavior we favor simply as a kind of giveback to those who deserve it. But such rewards, more importantly, will also act as behavioral motivation for the public citizen development we want to effect. Although there are some rewards now (both public and private sponsored) for public citizen activity--public recognition for charity and public service awards, honors for scientific and academic contributions to society, etc.,--there are no rewards (or too few) for simple public citizen activities like being a good parent, a good worker, a good boss or manager, a good citizen, etc. While we do have some awards for local “Parent of the Year” and “Teacher of the Year,” for example, the better approach, arguably, rewards *every* great parent, every great teacher, every great worker, etc. everywhere. Where is the love for the little people? Where is the honor for the good small life?

Capitalism versus Humanism

Its Virtues

- Gross National Product
- Production for the sake of production, not value/need, i.e., useless and unneeded military hardware
- "Makework"
- Never stop producing/ buying

Its Virtues

- Satisfies real *human* needs
- Stops production when needs/wants satisfied
- Do the right thing the first time
- Smart production

Tapping into the Creativity and Energies of the Little People

Because the capitalist system incentivizes primarily moneymaking activities, it is limited in at least three ways: 1) It ignores, as discussed above, the need to preserve and enhance a quality social fabric; 2) it maintains an unfair reward scheme where the individualistic and egotistic get rewarded and the quality small life behaviors of ordinary people get nothing, and 3) it doesn't recognize or utilize the untapped potential for social good of the mostly ordinary people whose ambitions and skills are not completely focused on wealth creation or production and consumption. Provided with the right environment, that is, easy-to-use (mostly digital) tools of various sorts, easy accessibility to large communities (via the Internet), and reward systems of various kinds, ordinary people may demonstrate surprising energies and creativity. In other words, give public citizen-types some attention, some free tools, and some encouragement and great things can happen.

Consider the (relatively) easy-to-design and develop for hardware and software environments from Google and Apple, especially in regard to smartphones and tablets. They have inspired and empowered thousands of people willing to share their knowledge, skills, and creativity with others. Some of these developments are in essential harmony with the goals and values of the National Character Program. Creative people have developed “apps,” for example, providing information, services, and programs of all kinds for computers and mobile devices never even conceived of only a handful of years ago. Many of these apps are free. Web 2.0 tools--primarily databases and application programming interfaces (API's)--tap into all kinds of online information sources stored on the globally-accessible Internet, and bring all kinds of information and knowledge into the hands (and mobile devices) of nearly everyone on the globe. Online reference projects like Google Maps, Wikipedia, and other websites are maintained and improved every day by volunteers. Consider, also, the new businesses, media file sharing sites, travel and consumer recommendation websites and how-to videos, crowd-sourced wiki's and databases, and the like which have proliferated largely because of easily accessible, free (or low-cost) digital tools.

Relatively new social networking sites have brought block club and other neighbors together, facilitated new community organizations, informed cross-group/tribe interactions, and more. Social entrepreneurial projects are now easily funded by interested parties around the globe through promotional websites like Kickstarter, StartSomeGood, etc. Nearly every American has benefited from these *public citizen*-type activities. Much of the value in the virtual world has been created by little guys. But, not too long ago, the public service-minded people who created much of this had little or no opportunity or encouragement to do good.

Many of the people in this new creative class found their public service niches on their own facilitated by fortuitous technological developments. Many, if not most, of these participants would not have the profiles and the results they have if not for the easy-to-use new technology (itself developed in large part by socially-minded people) and the growing development of a *social ethos* of community, public service, sharing, pride, and non-competitiveness, first seen in the early days of the Internet. That kind of social ethos is a model, the sorts, for what can be done on a societal level in the fields of governance and social relations. Are there creative types who can come up with ideas and technology to promote social harmony, for example? What about apps and services to educate and condition public citizen values like tolerance, inclusivity, proportionality, and the like? It should be relatively easy to develop apps for ordinary folks to monitor operations of government as part of a pushback program.

With a combination of the new tools; program (and even governmentally-sponsored) guidance; a social ethos of public values; and their own work ethics, creativity, and energies small-life Marys and Johns could reach new levels of achievement. We could exponentially expand the type of public-service creativity which started the Internet in the beginning. The outcomes could be fantastic. This type of development could be a precursor element of a Smart society which could flourish like no other society

anywhere at any time. (See Chapter 9 for a number of suggestions and examples of this kind of creative activity.)

Rewarding public spirited people in a programmatic way and making it easier for the millions who may need some guidance and support could facilitate even more creativity. It would also likely increase socially positive behaviors, instill public citizen values in more people, and make public citizen activities a social *habit*. It would also add some measure of fairness to society. (See Chapters 6 and 8 for more discussion of rewards and social conditioning.)

We already have some examples in contemporary society of public citizen activities which *are* rewarded:

- 1) tax breaks to buyers of alternative fuel vehicles, energy-saving appliances, etc.
- 2) tax breaks to charitable donors
- 3) honoring of Good Samaritans
- 4) awards of various sorts for not-for-profit volunteers and sponsors, etc.

These efforts are commendable. However, they are not sufficient in number or quality. We need system-wide awards and rewards administered in a large-scale, programmatic way for every good parent, every good citizen, and everyone to blossom as the best person they can be.

4. It Lacks Good Social Character

There is Too Much Emphasis on Moneymaking and Financial Status

As a natural consequence of the predominance of the individualist/capitalist ethos, our society greatly overvalues people of high incomes and great wealth in terms of deference, admiration, and aspiration. The divide in status between them and hard-working regular schmoe like the rest of us isn't even close. This is so regardless of *how* that high financial status is achieved.

Innovators, inventors, and entrepreneurs honestly earning great wealth with great achievements are rightly due admiration and status by nearly everyone's standard, of course. However, the capitalist system unwisely encourages business behaviors which push the boundaries of legality (and which too often cross over those often ill-defined boundaries into deception, manipulation, and other criminal-like behaviors.) Some people think that it's *beyond* weird to have system logic where aggressive making-money behavior going to the very *edge* of legality and resulting in even bigger incomes and wealth for some people characterizes them as successful blue-chip citizens, while going (a metaphorical) *one inch beyond* that point makes them real criminals!

Think, for example, of these private citizen activities:

1) banks and mortgage companies which made high profits selling unsuitable mortgage products by deceptive means providing legally-required but (deliberately?) *ineffective* disclosures in real life situations to unwitting consumers unable to understand them or to resist high-pressure sales tactics

2) multi-level marketers whose business models are *barely* short of illegal Ponzi schemes

3) lobbyists who shamelessly siphon public treasuries for special interest clients knowing how easy it is to legally *get away with* it, and

4) multinational corporations headquartered in America which benefit from public infrastructure; publicly-subsidized transportation; draw employees from publicly-funded schools and universities; are protected by taxpayer-paid police, fire, and emergency medical services; etc. but which, nevertheless, evasively “assign” American earnings to economically bogus “Headquarters (?)” institutions *overseas* to avoid (evade?) taxes. (It's been reported that one small office building in the Grand Caymans is the official headquarters of 19,000 (give or take) corporations. Now, that is a high level of realty efficiency!) Some of these entities shamelessly pay *no* taxes at all even after benefiting from all those services provided by ordinary tax paying Americans.

These private citizens are encouraged by system dynamics to garner big profits and status by acting immorally (by a number of standards) and only one *small* step from fraud and criminality. Life is (perversely) Sweet! A list of reprehensible (but legal) bad acts which make morally deficient businessmen into wealthy blue-chip citizens is a very long one. In a fairer, more moral world, this absurdity and perversity would not exist and these activities would qualify not for a “Best Business” award but for a Hall of Shame designation. (See Chapter 7 for discussion of how might we restrain some of this behavior by the Smarter use of the tax system and other means.)

Lack of Proportionality

The glorification (and financial rewarding) of relatively modest-achievers in professional sports, the popular arts, and even many mere *sales* positions over doctors, scientists, educators, first responders, and other public servants tends toward the perverse, too. That's not to say that these modest achievers (in one perspective, at least) don't deserve acclaim and ample financial awards for what they do. But it violates social *proportionality*, in some people's view, for example, for a teenaged, lightly-educated, singularly-experienced National Basketball Association benchwarmer making league-*minimum* wage to earn 4 plus times the salary of an experienced doctor. It is perverse, too, for a similarly-credentialed NBA superstar to make over 30 times the salary of the President of the United States. Some find it objectionable that the market value of a modestly-skilled but successful pop singer may be 100 times or more the earnings of a quality teacher.

We know, of course, that that's how the free market works. It's the capitalist logic which is responsible and it is clearly irrational and highly inefficient (from collective's perspective.) Firstly, most of these well-paid people would probably be more than happy to do what they do (and still be amply compensated) by making a mere 1-2 times what the President makes. Secondly, the tangible benefits to society of the President and of those everyday workers vastly outweighs that of the sports and arts performers by a number of standards (other than that of capitalism.) For example, most reasonable people would agree that 100 good teachers are worth more to society than one good singer. (See Chapter 7 for more discussions of *complementary* standards of value.)

While the free enterprise market has its virtues it shows its flaws when its *abstract dynamics* dominate as a standard of value in society. There could be common sense and negotiated social value standards which could address this lack of proportionality in reasonable ways. How much objection could basketballer, Michael Jordan, reasonably have, for example, if his \$30 million plus per year income was 50% less knowing that some of that surplus was fairly and judiciously directed towards teachers and lower-level public servants? Surely, he will not starve, his kids will still go to the best and most expensive schools, and he will enjoy a great material life nonetheless. Corporate Big Kahunas making a mere 4000% more per pay period than their least paid employees 30 to 40 years ago still lived pretty sweet lives. Is there any good reason why they are now making 30,000% more than their lowest paid schmoes?

While these discrepancies are justified by capitalist standards they are not by more meaningful public citizen standards of fairness and proportionality. There are fairly non-disruptive ways for a Smart

society to adjust these things using pushback capabilities and Smart strategies. (See Chapter 8 for how much of capitalist dynamics, including this lack of proportionality, can remain virtually untouched in practice yet be meaningfully conditioned by the smart use of the *tax system alone*. For example, progressive rates, targeted clawbacks, etc.)

Capitalism's supporters may consider common sense and negotiated value kinds of adjustments to market allocations as inefficient, socialist, and even illegal redistributions. However, from a public citizen point of view, they are merely corrections to the *already distorted* capitalist allocation schemes. (We've already discussed some of that above and more will follow in later chapters.) Fixing a flawed system, many would say, is not inefficient or illegal but just intelligent and fair. In truth, these kinds of adjustments may very well be considered socialist in the sense that they take into consideration the real-life sensibilities of most citizens in setting values. These people are willing to fix the seriously perverse aspects of the current system. Common sense and social proportionality have to mean *something*.

Social Status

Beyond the mere perversity and quirkiness of free market logic in what it values and how, the psychology of *human nature* itself has its own complex role to play in matters of social character. While the very basic need to survive and live well economically makes income and wealth pursuits at least understandable, it's not necessarily the *absolute* quantity of income and wealth which matters to many people but the *relative* level compared to everyone else. In other words, there is a psychology of status and ego in the economic sphere which often matters a great deal (although it *shouldn't* in a more rational world.).

This concept drives irrational quests for more and more income, wealth, and celebrity status regardless of any objective utility value. How else to explain why a typical top-level professional athlete will insist in his latest contract for more money than his peers regardless of the absolute level of compensation? In other words, if another athlete is getting \$25 million dollars per year, then he wants \$26 million (or more) *just because*. He feels in his heart that he must be the top dog even though the extra money has little or no true utility value to him. Top-level executives, too, engage in an ongoing escalation of salary levels in an ego-driven quest to be the highest-paid. The psychology is powerful even in the absence of considerations of objective need or merit.

We know from science and experience that ego and status seeking are natural human traits and that fact will not be changing soon. Status and ego competitions are not necessarily negative. They make sense in athletic competitions and gaming, for example, where no one usually really gets hurt, as in the sense of loss of jobs, home, etc. However, when they become tied to real-world economics where losers incur significant consequences, as we see in the class hierarchy situation, they are often severely negative. It is hard, for example, for some to accept a blue-chipper spending \$1 million plus for a piece of *jewelry* while many of the working poor struggle to pay the monthly heating bills. Someone who drives a \$500,000 car once a year lacks even a minimum sense of social responsibility, it seems, when that money could be used to provide better education for school kids. The difference in utility value between education support and those luxury expenses, for one example, seems grossly disproportionate in an objective values sense. And, in a social sense, those luxury expenses are enormously *inefficient*.

The individualist/competitive system is undeniably perverse regarding social status. It:

- 1) over encourages the acquisition of financial assets regardless of utility value -
- 2) values moneymaking skills over personal character and social values
- 3) over promotes competition over cooperation

4) has a perverse and distorted measure of value (e.g., an oil painting is worth *more* than a school building?), and

5) admires *relative* status over absolute circumstances.

These traits add little to the social good and even relatively little, really, to a personal good. How can someone feel good about themselves owning a \$28 million armchair when millions of youths cannot afford even modest participation fees in sports programs? Are there really that many Marie Antoinette's and Imelda Marcos types around? (Maybe we shouldn't ask!) The quest for status tends to make the vast majority of people feel insecure, frustrated, and inferior. To what real end for society? To merely satisfy some selfish guy's *ego*? In essence, this aspect of individualism/capitalism adds up to *poor social character*.

The program wants an alternative ethos promoted where:

- 1) "enough is enough," regarding material goods
- 2) people have social and psychological security in *being themselves*
- 3) competition is kept in proper perspective
- 4) subjective things (like personal character) are valued as much or more than tangible ones, and
- 5) good social character is honored.

Systemwide implementation of these norms may take a big "edge" off, so to speak, of personal and social anxieties and insecurities. Most people are likely to be happier if they are not constantly held up as inferior financially, emotionally, psychologically, and socially to the tiny group of the (mostly) lucky people who receive outsized wealth and status from relatively trivial and sometimes dubious achievements. Let's have some love and rewards for the the quiet, but good, public citizens.

Winning as Everything is Too Much!

The individualistic/competitive attitude distinguishes to an extreme degree winners versus all others, as if being a non-winner itself ought to be a matter of shame. It exalts the few at the expense of the vast number of others regardless of absolute level of achievement, effort, and character. An Olympic skier, for example, who prevails by mere .01 second or less over competitors gets a medal while the inferior athlete (still vastly skilled and accomplished) is a pitiful loser and expected to be shameful and guilty for letting down his countrymen. The four-time Super Bowl participants, the Minnesota Vikings and the Buffalo Bills, demonstrably superior to all other NFL teams in each of those Super Bowl seasons, and superior to every other football team in the world, are broadly considered big-time losers by many fans and the media.

Athletic and other competitions have their rightful and functional place stimulating extraordinary achievements, satisfying internal competitive needs, and providing entertainment. However, similarly to those considerations relating to status and lack of proportionality, an *excess* of desire for being "Number 1" has important negative social consequences. It is not personally or socially healthy to put excessive pressure on high school athletes and young people, for example, to win for its own sake, as occurs so often. Winning is held out to be the paramount goal versus, say, developing character, learning sportsmanship, maturing physically and emotionally, learning to compete responsibly, and taking pride in doing the best that one can do. Putting winning in perspective implies the proportionality and fairness

issues discussed above but also, like in most areas of human life, a good *balance* of often competing traits is preferable to any extreme. We want our individual citizens to be comfortably inner *and* outer directed and to be both personally and socially balanced. Diminishing the excessive competitive attitudes of our society will make it *easier* for people to be comfortable in their own skins.

Worse than the competitive ideal itself (but derivative of it) is cheating. As we are seeing in the business and sporting news, cheating is getting to be common, expected, and even necessary for some competitors. These cheaters are (due to the prevalence of the extreme competition ethos) becoming the most visible and influential role models for our youths and citizens in general. We regularly see our blue-chip business citizens in perp walks and our sports heroes disgraced in drugging and lying scandals, and more. People draw the conclusion: “Everyone is cheating. You have to cheat just to stay even, much less to get ahead.” The over-competitive society diminishes social values of honesty, fair play, proportionality, and integrity. Our citizens, especially youths, are being implicitly *conditioned* to behave badly.

Even more troubling, we tolerate fashion and beauty product makers and their marketers *deliberately* creating serious insecurities and low self-esteem issues in a *whole gender* by making them feel compelled to meet (often bogus and pumped up) beauty standards represented by only a large handful of exceptional specimens (supermodels.) They have created an artificial social aesthetic of beauty or attractiveness which all women are measured against whether they like it or not. Nearly every American woman of over age nine or so knows what this means and how it feels. Even the most accomplished and capable professional women in nearly every area of business and society are tormented by an insidious standard of physical beauty which they will never obtain. Consequently, their psyches will be rendered perpetually frustrated, insecure and inadequate.

Some strong-minded women (a minority), especially those inspired by feminism, are able to adequately *focus out* these pressures and be comfortable in their own skins and bones. Most however, will almost never feel “good enough” even though some actually *do* have the “young, pretty, and healthy-looking” traits favored by the marketers. They will be insecure enough to succumb to the extraordinary pressures of the marketing experts. They will feel compelled to buy more vanity products to try to compensate for their “flaws” but, no matter how much they spend, the vast majority will still *never* measure up to the “ideal” set up by the marketers. They will continue to suffer significant psychological harm without let up.

We have a whole set of industries whose very existence depends on making the lives of multimillions of people miserable! This is an astounding fact when you think clearly about it. Artificially creating an enormous class of insecure people and manipulating their emotions and psychologies just to make huge money for a small group of business people and investors shows *very bad* social character.

Furthermore, another consequence of the excessive competitive attitude is that it is an insidious social “divider.” That means that it provocatively separates nearly everyone into winner/loser groups of various kinds in many situations. Beyond mere sports losers, we have economic and social losers. This competition dichotomy runs counter to program values of inclusivity, flattened status levels, and cooperation. We want to minimize the status gap between the “best” and the winners and everyone else. We want to frame life situations to bring people *together as team* members, in a sense, where everyone is a winner. We want to diminish the *external* competition of people versus people and focus on people in their own *internal* competition to be the best they can be.

What Ever Happened to Truth, Honor, Shame and Trust?

Since the individualist/competitive ethos at its extreme values only financial achievement and social status, virtues like honesty and sincerity, pride in oneself regardless of absolute or relative status, social responsibility, and trust are deprecated. These latter traits don’t “pay off,” as they say. They are of

value primarily to inner-directed public citizens as there are no incentives in the system itself to maintain them. On the other hand, for public citizens those traits, and others, are essential to what make up good social character. (See Chapter 6 for a full discussion of public citizen values.) People can argue whether our current society is more or less tolerant than previous ones of bad personal and social character.

We have always, of course, had disingenuous politicians and spinmeisters, exploiting businessmen, manipulating marketers, and prominent individuals and authority institutions which have betrayed the public trust in so many ways. What seems to be different now is the miscreants' ability to *avoid* any significant consequences, especially regarding deterrence. For example, the Roman Catholic Church's widespread pedophilia scandals have left it pretty much unaffected. Politicians are redeeming themselves from lying, stealing, and other bad acts *multiple* times. Companies and businessmen caught deceiving multiple times continue to live the Sweet Life. Big-mouthed blowhards on talk radio, television, and Internet sites blithely violate standards of responsibility, honesty, and decency yet still have huge audiences. It almost seems as if former President Nixon was the last bad guy to really receive justice.

What has happened to high moral standards? There may be many reasons, some unrelated to the ethos we are critiquing. However, some things seem pretty clear. The major elements of society which used to hold up high standards of personal and social character like journalists, the mainstream media, and even the entertainment arts seem to have given up their traditional roles of maintaining them. Perhaps, that is due to the difficulty of restraining the increasing intensity of (*immoral?*) individualism and competition attitudes in society. Formerly authoritative institutions, like some religious organizations and major nonprofits, have simply squandered their own credibility and are becoming irrelevant. In addition, the generalized "Public Opinion" we had in prior decades before modern communication means stratified opinions into a whole bunch of separate and differing strands is no longer much relevant, either.

There may be a societal wide lowering of standards because those who express even the lowest standards seem to have effective communication platforms and compete vigorously with the rest. Bad character (which doesn't rely on self-consciousness, good habits, and discipline) may be driving out the good. Or, there may be a recognition by many that there is just *too much* bad character occupying too much of the public space, so to speak, leaving fewer checks on the vices and lower impulses of human beings.

Poor social character may be getting to be the new standard as bad guys aren't as penalized as they used to be. More righteous citizens almost might feel nostalgic for the public hangings, pillories, shunning, and shaming of older days. A lot of examples of poor social character noted above and below, arguably, are natural consequences of the broadening and deepening of the individualist/competitive ethos. At its extreme level of individualism it supports the aggressive self-interested egos populating our society who are making *their own* moralities and smirking at the rest of us.

Major developments in a number of areas of society have led to a collapse of good social character:

- 1) Political statesmanship and civil responsibility in public discourse no longer much exist or don't have the influence they once did. The dynamics of the electoral/political system compel participants to compete incessantly. The trend is for people to become more *advocates* for themselves and less *citizens* of a society. For those in the political sphere, the winning of elections and policymaking battles, for example, is way more important than doing the right things for the nation. The major political parties and many of our political leaders regularly mislead, suppress unfavorable facts, spin characterizations, oversimplify issues and manipulate emotions to pander to the lowest level of public discourse. They do this to get votes and other support for themselves. They have learned that they can get away with all of these misbehaviors and benefit from them. Like another variation of Gresham's economic law that bad money drives out good, irresponsible discourse snubs civic duty and national interests because it works so well for the *deceivers*.

2) The regard for truth itself has become greatly diminished. In the world of public discourse, for example, truth has been replaced, in large part, by “litigation language.” Litigation language is what trial lawyers offer a jury—only the facts and characterizations supporting *their* positions. Both sets of attorneys in a case see themselves as having an advocate’s role when it comes to evidence instead of having an approach emphasizing facts, objective evidence, and honest perspectives in a quest for the real truth. They twist and marginalize the opponent’s facts and spin characterizations favorable to them just to defeat the opponent and get their own way. Truth, for everyone involved in trial communications is *irrelevant*.

Like with trials, in our “every man for himself” environment, there is little incentive for anybody to embrace the truth because it doesn’t pay off as well as its opposite. Competition in the economics and political spheres encourages self-interested misrepresentations, unfair characterizations, partial (and deceptive) truths, and the manipulation of psychologies and emotions. Special interest proponents of objectively-awful governmental giveaways, for example, promote them as “job creators” and the like without also disclosing (among other things) that the number and value of jobs created is way less than the money going towards their profits. Think of most federal and state-level political campaigns and special interest-sponsored policy campaigns. The participants smear opponents, sanctify themselves, and show little respect for their audiences. The participants are almost never interested in facts, fair characterizations, or truth.

Consider, for instance, the humanely-intended component of the Affordable Care Act proposing end-of-life counseling by medical professionals. It has been characterized as the promotion of “*death squads*,” of all things, by partisan opponents of the Obama administration. Where are the fair-minded folks providing what the public wants and deserves?— “The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth,” you might say. They are becoming hard to find.

In our highly polarized social world there are similar distortions of truth where some people have sociological and psychological identities which act as *filtering* mechanisms for perceptions and understandings undercutting possibilities (or even interest) in real truth. Nearly everything that happens or exists in the public sphere gets a polarizing conservative versus liberal, Red State versus Blue State, etc. characterization. Things and events that hardly belong in any intellectual way with those dichotomies include the so-called “rape mentality” on college campuses, the race reminisces of TV chef, Paula Deen, and even the intimate personal end-of-life decisions of Terri Schiavo and her family in Florida in 2001 which drew the (partisan) interests of Congress and the President of the United States.

Group antagonisms have become so extreme that it becomes nearly impossible for proponents to accept that opposing positions have any claim to truth at all (or that there may be a lot of “truths.”) These identity-type distortions almost automatically reject facts or nuances as they may impinge on their sense of meaning in their lives. Some environmentalists, for example, have become crusaders, of sorts, dead set against economic development of any kind as a kind of automatic and ideological reaction against what they believe is the unalterable insensitivity of Big Business to the health of the environment. Many Red-Staters are opposed to everything President Obama proposes because he is “not like them.” Reasonable objections to some racial or gender preferences are incorrectly characterized by some as racist or misogynist inspired even when it is clear to fair-minded people that they are not.

The former beacons of truth—the journalism and editorial components of our mainstream media companies—have become overwhelmed and overruled to a large degree by their business (profit-making and public relations) components. Formerly high-level, professional, and socially responsibility news departments are evolving into attention-grabbing entertainment and marketing entities primarily to serve the competitive business agendas of their corporate owners. There is a pandering competition to achieve marketshare and profits regardless of the costs to journalistic integrity and social responsibility. The media shape (or mis-shape) stories focusing on entertainment or titillation considerations rather than information and analysis which is important for citizens to function well in a democracy. The ratio of hard

news to popular floss is getting significantly lower. Even hard news is oversimplified, lacks nuance, and is delivered in smaller and more emotionally-laden segments.

And, while nearly everyone rues the “soundbite” journalism and public relations spin culture which makes a mockery of the ideal of an informed democracy, the media has done much to *create* it. It has determined that that approach is more entertaining and it gathers higher ratings. (There is nothing wrong, in principle, with these business considerations but the public needs to get quality professional journalism from *somewhere*. (See Chapter 5 for public citizen news institutions.) The worst producers are only a bit short of being public relations agents for the elite class or heavyweight owners (i.e., political-economic partisans.) Journalistic truth and ethics, in large part, have been given over to ratings, revenues, and propaganda. You know the nation’s major broadcast media have bottomed out when the new (2013-14) Al Jazeera America company promises to provide the most professional journalism in the country.

3) Our mainstream journalistic media also have seemingly abandoned any professional and socially responsible *filtering* functions for matters important to governance and social relations. In a wrong-headed attempt to appear professionally “neutral” (possibly) they implicitly, at least, assign *equivalency* to political, economic, and social positions which range from the well-considered and articulate to bombastic baloney and bullsh*t. They give equal credence in the sphere of public discourse to both the Big Brains and the Big Mouths. For example, the 2012 presidential campaign (especially on the Republican side) had an unusual number of unqualified candidates (by any reasonable standards.) They were mostly inarticulate and incoherent and/or espoused ludicrous proposals—Herman Cain and his 9/9/9 program and "Icky, Icky, Ickystan!" foreign-policy position; Michelle Bachmann's assertive but grossly ignorant statements about a whole lot of things, etc.

While these things had to be covered as they *were* real news items, they deserved not much more than a few moments of (reluctant) attention. More importantly, they deserved some measure of journalistic *evaluation*. It's nice to “Be Nice,” but those in important and influential positions, as the media people are, have to be honest and fair. When "F student"-types are trying to reach the Presidency of the World's Greatest Nation someone has to be sincere and make it clear that they are dangerous fools. Someone has to take responsibility to maintain the credibility of the democratic processes. If not our mainstream journalists then the public will have to do it themselves. (See the description of the Information Council in Chapter 5.)

Professional filtering, of course, provides a major benefit to voters and citizens. Many voters and citizens, the majority of whom likely take their cues from group leaders and professionals (as well as others), are mostly lost without guidance of some sort. They have to try to make sense of a complex world without adequate time, knowledge, and resources. They need help and journalists and media commentators are in a much better position than they are to do that. These professionals can (if they choose) honestly critique partisan deceptions (i.e., litigation language) and character-depleted candidates and expose them for what they are.

In addition to the abandonment of filtering, the mainstream media has also watered-down the content even of the political and economic material they do cover. The entertainment emphasis of much of contemporary media coverage of politics is geared way more towards personalities and campaign events than to the more significant policies and issues at stake. Vastly more attention is given to someone's overactive libido than to an overactive elite stomping on the lives of billions of little people. Coverage of the more important things in economic matters (like the class hierarchy, capitalism and its alternatives, etc.) is about nil. No wonder so many people buy into the contrived narratives of the elite class proxies (i.e., the media) diverting attention from the class hierarchy and its responsibilities for what ails the lower classes.

4) There has been a general dumbing down of intellectual and artistic standards in the political and cultural worlds. (See more on the cultural aspect below.) Respect for intelligence, education, job

competence, and even manners is dropping significantly among millions of people, in both low and high level positions. Some electoral candidates, for example, shape their political personalities by pridefully boasting of their own *ignorance* of governance and worldly affairs! They show disdain for education, science, and reason. Too many political officeholders (including some serving on governmental bodies supervising science and technology matters and the educational system) are evolution and global warming deniers either for parochial religious reasons or to pander to partisan religious constituents. Some have blocked even just basic research and data collection on public policy issues, like gun-related matters and implementation studies of governmental programs. It's a sad thing for the nation and for the collective interest when political leaders, especially candidates seeking to lead the World's Greatest Nation as its President, deliberately act ignorantly and promote ignorance as a virtue.

On a lower level, parochial religious groups and some social groups have their own (perverse, many might say) reasons to spite rationality and science. It may be that the breaking down of their traditional tribal beliefs and identities by modern communications and globalization have made them so fearful of change that they make up defenses whether they are sensible or not. (Rejecting reason and science makes no sense for anybody, however.) They may be setting themselves to be either radically transformed or marginalized by nearly everyone else in the modern world.

5) In a lot of ways, our concept of leadership has been turned upside down, especially in the political sphere. It seems as if the bottom (ordinary voters and citizens) is influencing the top (elected officials and professionals) to a more significant extent than we have been accustomed to, instead of the opposite, as it is supposed to be. After all, the normal hierarchy is leaders *over* followers. Instead of educating and cueing constituents about elements of good governance, management of the economy, and other important matters, for example, a lot of those we see as “leaders” are taking policy cues from the ignorant and irrational and elevating them into public policy proposals. These fake leaders are deliberately spiting facts, reason, and science and denying the truth of evolution, global warming, and the like simply because that approach “bonds” with a lot of people who are mistrustful and cynical about government or change in general. That is not leadership but irresponsible pandering.

Voters and citizens should have the right to support whomever they want to represent them, of course. It is almost too much to blame them for giving attention to someone “just like them” or who “understands” them, even if none of that makes the representative an effective or responsible officeholder. In the perceived absence of any objective remedy for their anxious and fearful objective situations, they gravitate to the entertainment appeal of the Big Mouths (who satisfy their own egos and financial needs at the supporters' expense.) Except for some pretty insignificant psychological boost for some, these dynamics do little to really help those voters or the lower classes in general. The Big Mouth “truth deniers” will not, certainly, ever accomplish what they promise and are more likely to be destructive rather than constructive. Furthermore, they help divide the little people among themselves and weaken the potential they may have as a group to pushback upon elite dominance. To the elite class, the Big Mouths indirectly provide a useful safety valve allowing the little people to vent benignly. This all adds up to a big loss strategy for the little people whether they realize it or not.

6) The cultural arts institutions, especially the film and television industries, have made billions of dollars promoting the general dumbing down of culture making heroes of slackers, the crude and rude, dolled-up do-nothings, misogynists, the intolerant, and worse. Obviously, there is a willing market for this kind of entertainment. Producers, of course, will give the customers what they want and there is a clear mutual benefit. For the customers, this kind of “downbeat” entertainment may harmonize with many (youths especially) who are losing in economic competition, moving downward in social status, and losing hope in their country's ideals. They have reason, it seems, to give up on the more traditional, positive values which may have not served them very well and may even represent a betrayal of ideals.

Nevertheless, the deliberate promoting by producers of the negative character traits noted above is to the detriment of good social character, regardless of market demand. It has made the slackers, dollies,

etc. the reigning role models for many of our youths, especially our daughters. Clearly, these role models aren't achieving their celebrity from tangible accomplishments or even for *any* accomplishments at all. They are beneficiaries of deliberate marketing and media pandering to the lowest levels of human psychology and biology.

It is hard to see how this can be good for fans of this material (other than for short-term diversion) or the nation. The dynamics of the capitalist ethos creates a lack of proportionality between the earnings and statuses of the exhibitionist do-nothings to that of hard-working, socially productive ordinary people and makes a mockery of small life accomplishments. It implies a fairness issue, obviously, but also conflicts with the values of good social character. A culture which overwhelms, in a way, positive personal character traits and tangible social achievements is absurd to many people. Perhaps citizens are learning to tolerate this negative behavior as they feel impotent to prevent social behavioral standards from declining. After all, what can they do when much of the enormously powerful mass media has surrendered its traditional responsibility as a conditioning agent for good social character.

Some observers may look at each of the individual elements of social decline noted above and conclude that they are fairly insignificant in the larger scheme of things. For instance, people can, they believe, sort through the noise and messiness of public discourse and determine truth for themselves. There are already news sources for those unhappy with the mainstream media. Anti-reason/science proponents among our political leadership are a minority. And, even mass audiences getting chuckles from crude and rude movies represent little more than harmless fun.

That may be so, but on the whole, all of those elements with their overwhelming presences add up to a sort of mini-cultural ethos which is at odds with what we want to see in a modern America. In the absence of a competing or complementary cultural or emotional narrative, we are seeing the deprecating of the values of education, academic achievements, innovation, work ethic, depth of experience, professionalism, civic character, tolerance, and other positive social character elements.

The consequences of all this is that it is getting more and more difficult for citizens to get effectively informed and educated about important political and economic matters to make good decisions about their civic and social lives. There is almost a cultural relativity where the expression of nearly anyone's id and ego are treated on an equal level with the best of our population. There is a conditioning effect going beyond mere entertainment and diversion functions which is bringing down the level of cultural expression. There is a lack of respect for traditional morality and social leadership and authority. In other words, the inmates are in charge of the asylum, as some might say.

We are not going to have much of a quality democracy (where people rationally size up candidates, platforms, and policies) when it is built upon ignorance, manipulation, and professional irresponsibility. We are not going to have much of a social fabric when the primary relationship of people to one another is mistrust and cynicism. We are not going to bring people *up* in attitude and achievement by conditioning them to laugh derisively at positive social behavior. There is a need for a complementary value system promoting the positive social values of truth, honor, shame, and trust at least to counter the decline we are experiencing. We need to take steps to rebuild the quality of leadership, professionalism, statesmanship, honor, and social responsibility in our political representatives and authority figures. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of building new leadership.)

Let's have some inspirational and celebrity-type love for hard-working, dedicated, and professional people providing public-oriented services; for functional, nurturing, and responsible parents and citizens; for striving and inspired students and intellectuals; and similar others. Some clever folks in the cultural arts may come up with 21st-Century versions of the Cleaver and Huxtable families, Marcus Welby, and others which promote positive values. (See Chapter 8 for ideas on how positive role models and behaviors can help to *build people up* rather than allowing the negative models to facilitate their slide downward.)

The entertainment industry in earlier times deliberately acted to inculcate positive values and establish positive role models. Think of the movie and television industries in the 1930's-50's which wove positive social and personal character themes among its actors and narratives. They can do modernized versions of that with encouragement from our social movement. (See Chapter 7 for more discussion of these kinds of strategies.) The program itself, through the Information or Support Councils can create its own social character narratives. We know millions of people, not necessarily in the public eye, doing the right things. They should be our positive role models and guides and we can make our own new set of role models and social heroes.

There may not be any effective way to get the major media companies back to being high-level, professional, socially responsible news producers. They have been swallowed up by the dynamics of capitalism and there's no obvious way to alter that. However, we can create our *own* sources of quality news and journalism. We will imbue them with *truth DNA*, so to speak. That means being collectively-minded, free of conflicts of interest, dedicated to quality information distribution, and intended to truly and respectfully engage citizens in quality political-economic discourse. (See Chapter 5 for a discussion of why we need institutions like the Information Council and the Support Council and what effects they may have.)

Where is the trust?

Perhaps the most important element in the decline of social values is the matter of trust. The increasing breadth and depth of the individualism/capitalism ethos has made competition among people more intense. Exploitation has increased. A rational and practical person in an excessively individualist-competitive system must *assume* everyone else to be self-interested and intended to exploit them *just to protect themselves*. People are becoming more distrustful of their fellow citizens as a general rule. That distrust applies to government, businesses, other authority institutions, and to nearly everyone they deal with.

In past decades, citizens learned to be alert in *consumer* transactions in order to protect themselves from commercial sharpies and exploiters (caveat emptor.) Eventually, a whole body of consumer protection regulation developed to address this problem. Now, nearly everyone who has even minimal experience in the social world is justifiably worried about being ripped off in nearly *all* of their dealings with other people. Mistrust is the first thing that comes to mind when many people think of the government, politicians, Big Business, Wall Street, K Street (lobbyists), Madison Avenue, telecommunications companies, online social media companies, auto mechanics, lawyers, insurance salesmen, financial advisors, Catholic priests, union officials, car salesmen, and marketers and telemarketers of all kinds. (Did we leave any business, occupation, institution, or group out?) That's not even taking into consideration their suspicious attitudes towards immigrants and foreigners and others not exactly like themselves.

As individualism and competition increases people are creating their *own* moralities and the level of social trust is seriously declining. No wonder so many people are perpetually cautious, anxious, suspicious, depressed, and even fatalistically numb to social affairs. Why not? We are producing a large set of cynical, bitter critics of mostly everything, chronic moaners and groaners, and, at worst, haters.

Every functional and worthwhile society requires a moderate to high level of trust of others (including its institutions) if only to maintain the social transactions necessary for life. When that trust level falls below a certain level the whole society deteriorates. Some people see America as a declining society in large part because of the deterioration of trustworthiness. We are becoming "Road Warrior"-like denizens. Those (private citizens) who selfishly breach that trust may harvest rewards for themselves (at least in the short term) but public citizens and the Marys and Johns will experience lives of stress, anxiety, frustration, and unhappiness. Rebuilding that level of trust to a point where a public citizen attitude can

thrive will require development of a new National Character and new institutions based upon public citizen values together with extensive social conditioning programs. (See Chapter 6 for more discussion of trust and public values and Chapter 8 for discussion of new collectively-minded institutions and conditioning strategies.)

5. It Lacks Fairness

To have an elite-lower classes hierarchy *in itself* is not necessarily unjust or unfair. There has always been an elite in liberal democracies and most people, including the little people, do not necessarily object. What they *do* resent as unfair and unjust is when the elite *crank up* the competitive intensity as they have in America to the point where there is no longer just a stratified society but one where the have-nots have no chance to succeed in a rigged system and cannot even hope to enjoy a moderately secure, decent standard of living. And, on top of that, many of them experience not just daily disrespect from the elite but its outright contempt ("the 47%-ers," etc.). People hate few things as much as being treated unfairly and disrespected.

Some, for example, view the recent mostly middle-class uprisings in the Middle East, Turkey, Russia, Hong Kong, and Turkey as fueled just as much, if not more, by issues of fairness and respect as by tangible deprivations. The same might be said for recent protests (2013-14) in many American communities over police treatment of minority cultures. (See Chapter 6 for an extensive discussion of the various types of fairness standards including the special kind favored by the National Character Program—"Rawlsian" fairness.)

A key indicator of a seriously askew class hierarchy is the lack of a large, vibrant middle class, or a shrinking one. Another one is the existence of a large underclass (many of whom are working-class folks) which has little or no hope of improvement and a very real fear of decline. What we think now as the American middle class primarily comes from developments during the 1930's when manufacturing, transportation, and extraction industries (among others) were booming. Not only were there jobs for multi-millions of workers, but well-paying ones with benefits. That was partly due to the formal organization of workers into potent unions and partly due to the *acceptance among all of the classes* that the lower and working-classes, because of their productivity and contributions to the economy, deserved to have a certain set of social expectations:

- 1) more than a substandard of living
- 2) ownership of a decent home and a car
- 3) higher educations for their children, at least
- 4) a pathway to stable middle-class status
- 5) some free time to enjoy domestic life, and
- 6) some financial security after work life was over.

There was a widespread agreement that the increasing economic value created by the productivity of labor would be fairly shared by the capitalists and the workers. The mid-1930's through the 70's saw the working classes, bolstered by the big unions, improve their economic, political, and social conditions. There were abundant good jobs, a solid safety net, a relatively progressive political attitude throughout society, and the absence of serious class conflicts. A large group of manual and white-collar workers, professionals, and many in business for themselves made up a vibrant and growing middle class. Millions of workers experienced improved lives and Americans and America thrived. So did the elite class.

The societal agreement underlying all of that collapsed in the 1980's, not because of any major economic recession or disastrous tangible event, but because the elite class decided to abrogate the fair share standard. Steadily increasing worker productivity which led to greater business revenues was not shared fairly. Wages overall stagnated while costs-of-living escalated. (Looking at just the minimum wage level of 1968, a corresponding minimum wage based on the increased productivity through 2012 would be nearly \$22 an hour--versus \$7.25—federal—now.) Defined benefit pensions were eliminated or replaced (for some) by 401(k) plans placing investment risk on the workers instead of the employer. Medical care and insurance costs shifted to the workers (if the workers had any coverage at all.) Education costs went way up pricing the lower classes out of college opportunities. And many of the jobs themselves were eliminated or moved overseas as employers took avail of even lower cost labor pools there. The main nemesis of the elite, labor unions, were demonized, beaten up, and broken. All this occurred even as the productivity of labor increased substantially.

Some of the elite never cared for the established capitalist/labor sharing ratio to begin with. They were Social Darwinists (with capital) and arrogantly believed that their economic dominance was natural and earned, even if by exploiting others. (The elite has always had a generous number of “Robber Barons.”) For others in the elite, the private citizen attitude just grew and became more compelling especially when they realized they could get away with it fairly easily. They developed an incremental strategy of muscling workers out of productivity gains, workplace privileges, union and collective bargaining rights, and more. They used economic force and bought up media institutions to greatly facilitate their control of the social "narratives" about the fundamental issues of the society including the virtues of capitalism and the evils of socialism and unionism. That type of control has effectively closed off serious critique of the prevailing system in much of the public sphere. In other words, the little people haven't learned who or what is responsible, in large part, for their grind it out existences.

The elite has come to own (metaphorically speaking) the White House, Congress, and the major political parties. They have made elections into money-based processes in which they enjoy overwhelming advantages. A single wealthy individual can now *almost by himself* influence elections and determine outcomes, at least on some levels of government. (The well-known Koch brothers of recent times have themselves spent more money on political influence campaigns than nearly any other *organization*. Big money has flowed into the process from both right and left sides of the political spectrum, but mostly from the elite and for elite interests.)

In America, the capitalist *business model* has spread nearly everywhere:

- 1) more and more governmental functions are privatized
- 2) nonprofit organizations are run like businesses (and their executive directors have learned to acquire outsized escalating salaries just like their Big Business brethren)
- 3) schools, especially higher education institutions, are increasingly influenced by businesses (and to a certain extent are *run* by businesses) and curriculums are increasingly job/business-oriented. (Their chief officers, too, have learned to acquire gigantic salaries)
- 4) news departments of big media companies have merged with or are unprofessionally close with their business departments and much of news journalism now has morphed into marketing, public relations, and propaganda
- 5) what used to be thought of as traditional liberal research science is now primarily business sponsored, controlled, and owned; and

6) in warfare, the U.S. military partners with private businesses which sometimes even make *battlefield* decisions. (“Let’s see now, we can place an order for another 1000 smart missiles here at \$1.5 million each....”)

Circumstances have improved greatly for the elite and its share of wealth and income has increased enormously, as has its political influence. Real democracy is becoming closer to illusionary. It's not hard for the attentive, intelligent, and fair-minded person to see that the political-economic game is very much rigged. If these examples of plutocratic control don't reflect a lack of fairness and justice and a snatching of dignity from the lower classes then what does? There is no shortage of data and facts from even mainstream media sources (mostly) demonstrating the ugly realities of class domination. Not only domination but the elite have an almost “In Your Face!” attitude of entitlement. The rest of us know that that attitude is both wrong and obnoxious. Exposure of these facts and attitude by alternative media sources hardly matters to the elite as they know that the lower classes are tamed. It is convinced they are helpless to resist its domination or react meaningfully to its smugness.

In past decades, one was able to strongly contrast moderately progressive Western European societies with hard-charging American capitalism. For example, Western European social components of Big Business, government, capital and labor, and the various classes all engaged in a shared mentality of overall balance of private and public attitudes. Western Europeans understood that the demands of work and business, the operations of government, and the social and community needs of people all had an important place in a good life. Even though all of the Western European countries have fundamentally capitalist economies, capitalist business dynamics did not thoroughly dominate the other elements (even if its internal logic implied that it do so.) The dynamics of capitalist logic was constrained by the region's historical and balanced social compact.

No more. Globalization, driven primarily by intense American capitalism, has made it very hard for the Western Europeans to maintain balance in their society. The Euro social contract is being shredded—employment rights and privileges diminished, pensions and social services reduced, harmony between classes reduced, politics becoming more aggressively partisan, and American-style hard-edged capitalism intruding upon existing economic and political relationships.

Every economic system and type of government, of course, will have flaws and limitations. What is significant now in America (and in the rest of the world) is that the dynamics of capitalism are becoming more intense and overwhelming and have had, at least, two major effects: 1) The increasing disparity in the wealth, influence, and outcomes of the elite versus everyone else is tearing up the nation's social fabric. The middle-class is significantly declining and the working class is nearly hopeless. 2) Those other aspects of human life--meanings, balance, healthy communities, etc.-- which are necessary for people to have meaningful lives are increasingly being crowded out of our society to the point that *souls* are being crushed.

In other words, we have a society seriously out of balance and which doesn't work well for most Americans. Seriously out-of-balance nations, like the one America is becoming, typically suffer from:

- 1) corruption, unjustness, and messily inefficient governance
- 2) intense, aggressive, partisan politics reflecting the underlying economic dynamics
- 3) persistent tension and corrosive competition among interest groups
- 4) a wholesale depletion of trust by citizens for authorities and for each other, and

5) periodic (but usually) temporary eruptions of citizen rage, including violence of various sorts and social disruptions.

There are other drawbacks, too. The power of the capitalist overdetermination creates a whole host of intangible social and personal ills long recognized by philosophers and social scientists:

- 1) perpetual insecurity
- 2) objectification
- 3) alienation
- 4) persistent stress from managing competition and insecurities, and
- 5) other similar pathologies. (See Chapter 7 for more discussion of these things.)

The elite-lower class hierarchy is a primary historical fact across nations and cultures and there are no good reasons to think that it will change appreciably in any foreseeable time. In fact, a number of great social philosophers have concluded that our present forms of liberal capitalism and republican governance, in their essences, are the *apex* of human social development. They have declared the “End of History” meaning that all the great philosophical and social arguments about the nature and character of society, about governments and economic systems, about class relations, have been resolved. Liberal market capitalism combined with republican (meaning elite-dominated) democracy is the historical winner, they argue. Although there may be structural and procedural tweaks made here and there, from this point of view, the society and governance we have now is, “As good as it gets.”

This is agreeable stuff for the Ayn Rand–type egos and other private citizen types having the set of personal traits and resources which harmonize well with individualism and economic and social competition. Everyone else is f*cked! This is as good as it gets?!

If a modern liberal democracy does not nurture a large, vibrant middle-class and provide a secure, fairly broad safety net for the lowest classes then that means that the elite class is too intense in its private citizen attitude, too greedy, too insensitive, too heartless, and too arrogant. That describes America now, as many see it. Unless and until individualism/capitalism is constrained in favor of societal balance and some space is obtained for human meanings, the system will suffocate nearly everything and everyone. Except, perhaps, for a tiny elite class which will fashion its own comfortable, sheltered niches apart from the rest of us.

And, as for the rest of us? “F*ck 'em,” as they say. (See Chapter 5–9 for descriptions of what the little people need and a plan of how they can get it.)

Chapter 4 The Back Story: What Can Be Done?

1000 to zero!

That's roughly the ratio of recent (post-Great Recession) calls from all kinds of prominent people for significant change of our economic-political system to new, practical programs to make those changes happen. That's too bad, but when we have an increasingly dysfunctional society for most of us and a very long history of disappointments, it's understandable that new ideas are rare. Some people are still proposing tweaks to the system like simplifying voter registration rules, increasing the minimum wage, repealing the Supreme Court's "Citizens United" decision which cut down most limits on campaign contributions, and other rather wimpy and ultimately futile ideas. You can't, one might say, give vitamins to a cancer patient and expect a recovery. The agenda of the hyper-active Tea Party, essentially, is to stonewall policymaking and to tear down the government to spite parties unlike themselves who may or may not be really responsible for their frustrations. They seem not to have thought out clearly the consequences to other citizens, to the United States's financial credibility, and even to *themselves* of this willfully destructive approach, as weakening the government further will leave the elite class to *completely* dominate.

Most people wanting significant change don't know if *anything* can be done. Positioned as they are in an unbalanced, inhumane, and disrespectful environment where they see themselves as mostly helpless they look at our present state of affairs as:

- “Could be worse.”
- “It's God's way.”
- “I'll be rewarded in heaven.”
- “I don't even want to think about it!”
- “Maybe our children will come up with something better.”
- “Well, what *can* you do?”

Historical Perspectives

Up to recent times, there may not have been anything anyone *could* do about it. Elite-lower class hierarchies have existed for centuries. The elite class's aggressiveness, competitiveness, and willfulness (together with superior capital resources) have easily dominated the lower classes economically and politically. Prior generations of ordinary Americans, especially those in the 18th and 19th Centuries, probably had little choice but to accept what they got, due to objective circumstances:

- 1) The productive capabilities of the country were sufficient only to maintain a relatively minimum physical existence for most.
- 2) Economic and geographical circumstances constrained what the lower classes could do or understand as, for the most part, they lacked resources and essential political and economic knowledge.
- 3) Social organization and interaction, including political activity, was primarily local and limited by only modestly developed communication and transportation systems.
- 4) With some notable exceptions—i.e., the mid-20th-Century labor movement and the civil rights era—class consciousness and collective activities were minimal.

5) They lacked leverage in the form of capital, solidarity, and sophisticated ideas for major social change. And,

6) America, for much of its early existence, was full of opportunities and promise of improvement for those with ambition and work ethic which made desires for major political-economic changes less compelling and necessary for many.

However, from a historical point of view of just the past three centuries, America has experienced enormous development and progress in the economic, technological, and scientific spheres. At a *minimum*, life expectancy has been extended a good deal, a key measure of progress. But these advances deal mostly with “things,”—i.e., nature, machines, structures and infrastructures, electronics, and human bodies (but *not* souls or psyches.) They are *object-oriented*. Advances in the *social* world, i.e., who and what we are, how we relate to each other as people, and the *quality* of human life—have been considerably less impressive, although not totally absent. For most ordinary Americans, the period from the 1930’s to the early 1980’s stands out as the most significant for the quality of life matters most important to them. It represented the development of a large, vibrant middle class which allowed multi-millions to own homes and cars, to college educate their kids, and to have a bit of leisure time on the weekends. It was a time when *real* progress in economic, political, and social relations areas was happening for ordinary people. Even the lowest of wage earners had *hope* as there were pathways upward for them into the middle class and even possibilities of greater mobility for the most talented, ambitious (and lucky.)

Looking back at the last century, at least, some would point to these handful of American and global events as significant *social* achievements in the areas of smarter governance and better social relations:

1) The formation of the United Nations, bringing together the governments of the world's nations to interact, share ideas and resources, peacefully resolve disputes, and plan for the future of the planet.

2) Developments towards more centralized and *rationalized* government in the United States in separate periods in the 1930's and 1960's.

3) The growth of the European Union from the 1980's to the present (centralizing elements of governance including a common legislature and executive; a common currency; reduction of travel, trade and immigration barriers; coordination of regulatory schemes creating synergies across multiple sovereignties; and rationalizing common administrative processes.)

4) The nearly worldwide system of financial and monetary coordination.

5) The development in the 1930's-80's of lower class pushback elements like large labor unions, worker rights regulation, and social safety net programs.

6) Widespread reduction in most developed countries of *legally*-based racial and gender discrimination.

7) Greater accommodations of the disabled in many areas of the world. And,

8) (To a certain measure) a reduction in geographic, religious, ethnic, and cultural tribalism and its associated conflicts due to the positive effects of globalization.

Given the *theoretical* possibilities for social advances, however, all this together is fairly meager stuff. Nearly all of the great human relations problems of past centuries still exist—war; economic conflicts; poverty and unfair distribution of resources; hate-driven tribalist conflicts involving ethnicity, religion, and national and regional geographies; *de facto* discriminations of all kinds; high and low-brow

crime; business frauds and consumer exploitation; inept and inefficient government; and (depending on your perspective) increasingly dysfunctional political processes, political irrationalities, and embarrassing partisanship dramaturgy (at least in the World's Greatest Nation.) While world societies have achieved incredible progress in the areas of communication, technology, transportation, management, agriculture, medical sciences, and many other fields, the status of human relations is not much different from that of past centuries.

Where is the corresponding progress in good governance and social relations? Where are the great human and social achievements? Where is the increase in security and happiness levels? Where is the satisfaction of human psychic and spiritual needs? There is an enormous difference, obviously, in object versus subject achievements. There are millions of people who think that we have seriously *underachieved* as social beings.

Even as we can point to *some* advances in social world development, there are some significant declines as well. The benefits of geopolitical interactions and globalization are being offset, in some respects, by major negative consequences, especially for ordinary Americans. We can point to two major changes in the 1980's when things started to change for the worse for the lower classes. First, the American financial elite learned that they no longer needed to rely as much on American workers as they could draw upon cheaper labor elsewhere. Worker rights, as well as health and safety regulations, were considerably fewer and weaker elsewhere, too, lowering labor costs. International capital flows and trade increased and the elite found new financing sources among foreign capitalists. The elite also found new markets overseas so that they did not have to depend so much on Americans as consumers of even American-made products and services. While jobs *were* being created they were the lowest paying jobs of their type on the planet and ordinary citizens and the environment incurred their own costs (i. e., from business externalities--environmental degradation, energy depletion, etc.) All of these business-related events represented economic efficiencies, deriving naturally from capitalist logic. In sum, the capitalists didn't need ordinary Americans nearly as much anymore.

Secondly (in association with this new economic leverage), the elite quickly figured out, too, that they didn't need to honor the implicit social compact and economic allocation understanding that they had made with American workers and the American public decades earlier. They saw an opportunity to take a bigger share of economic value and productivity and they took advantage of it. They are squeezing more and more of that value out of the capital-labor relationship even now. The effects on ordinary Americans has been significant--jobs lost, their share of the allocation of economic value and productivity diminished greatly, upward mobility opportunities have dropped off, and their influence in the workplace, government, and politics mostly crushed.

The world has changed, indeed, for Americans, some for the better, but most for the worse. Most Americans have seen little or no economic progress for the last 30 years. The middle-class has shrunk and is considerably less vibrant now. Its political influence has declined significantly. If the middle class was a person it would be an unhealthy, unsteady senior citizen at the end of her working life anxious and fearful of what comes next. On the other hand, the elite class (now mostly globalized itself) is at an apex of affluence and influence. It is enjoying a 21st-Century Gilded Age. (Just check the economic numbers.) If it were a person it would be a broad-shouldered, smiling, middle-aged man with a stiffy! The extreme individualist/competitive ethos it favors is tearing up the tissue and psyches, so to speak, of ordinary people more brutally than in some time.

There are plenty of good reasons for the little people to feel frustrated, defeated, hopeless, and even rageful. The individualist/capitalist system is not going away. It is not going to change *very much* regardless of what the little people want or do (if they do *anything*.) It *is* our American system. The liberal democratic capitalist model of social relations has vanquished all serious alternatives. That means that if the little people are going to obtain significant political-economic change and if humans (of all classes) are to have some balance and meaning in their lives they need to come up with a new vision of society

and a practical plan (maybe on the order of the one proposed here) to implement it. They will have to *pushback* the capitalist system to provide room for balance, meaning, and respect. For the little people (and everyone, really) to improve their social lives they will have to work *outside* of the individualist/capitalist system and make a Smarter and more modern system. As explained already, that has to be a *dual*-attitude system balancing private and public citizen attitudes.

Although personal opportunities and promises of improvement no longer seem real for most Americans, the possibilities of society-wide change in some respects actually seem better than they once did. Here's why:

1) Our society now has vastly improved capabilities to sustain and advance physical life for nearly everyone. In other words, we can decently feed, clothe, and shelter nearly everyone in an economically efficient manner. That means most people (in principle, at least) will no longer have to spend their entire days struggling just to survive. They will have less incentive to aggressively compete against others. Social frictions may be reduced.

2) For the most part, ordinary people, especially middle class ones, are now more educated, wiser, and more technologically capable.

3) There are powerful new (mostly digital) tools to work with. The Internet and new social networking services have made many opportunities for people to form new (political?) connections that were inconceivable just a couple of decades ago.

4) Many workers and citizens now can carve out *some* "opportunity" time to give attention to defending and promoting their interests which opens society up to potentially effective collective influence by ordinary people.

5) We have access to databases and information sources which have made it easier to identify who has what, how much, and how (in some ways) they got it, among other things.

6) The lower classes can mobilize and assert pressures of various sorts faster and way more efficiently than ever before.

7) Many people have learned about the possibilities of significant social change from decades of economic and political experience. While the 1960's-70's countercultural programs of global peace, love, and cooperation never got very far, racial and gender rights did. Gay rights efforts are headed for success right now. These successful *subjective* social reframings provide good models for a program of *objective* change.

Given all of the elements noted above, lower class capabilities, consciousness, organization, and focus are in a position now to facilitate "disruptive" forms of pushback leverage including a shadow government, consumer boycotts and protests, shaming techniques, and more, never before possible. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of these tactics.)

The Power of Reframing

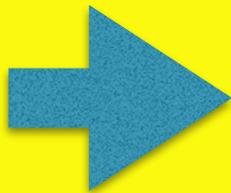
The fairly recent social reframing examples of the civil rights movement and others noted above are, in essence, *paradigm shifts* where people perceive and think about certain things dramatically differently even though the underlying "object reality" did not change at all. Skin color, gender, and sexual orientations did not change—only the way the traits were perceived and cognitively framed by people for governmental and social purposes.

The civil rights movement of the 1950's to 1970's, for example, resulted in the elimination of race as a subject of *legal* discrimination. Where such discrimination—slavery, civil rights, and public segregation—was accepted and well entrenched in society only over a half-century ago, skin color no longer is *an attribute relevant* to government (and much of the private sector.) It has become “invisible” from the law's perspective. Similarly, the women's movement of the 1960's to 1980's refocused government and society's perceptual “lens,” so to speak, to eliminate gender as *a relevant category* for purposes of governmental rights, privileges, and opportunities.

Where previously, many people's vision of a “black person” could not include a coworker, neighbor, quarterback, or U.S. president, now that view is (mostly) gone. Where previously, many people's view of a “woman” could not include a coworker, soldier, corporate CEO, or U.S. president, now that view is (mostly) gone, too. A similar transformation of frame-based perception and thinking is occurring now in the area of sexual orientation and, perhaps, the legal status of marijuana, too. These changes in the experience of “reality” are caused by a triumph of subject (i.e., a vision of what *can/should?* be) over object (what *is* now). Those shifts in seeing and thinking make all the difference. (See Appendix “A,” below, for more advanced discussion of framing and paradigm shifts.)

What Possibilities Present Themselves?

1. Productivity can satisfy everyone
2. Leisure time for many workers
3. Smart, wiser, or technologically capable citizens
4. New digital tools
5. More information
6. Easier to organize and act
7. Examples of positive social change – civil rights, feminism, LGBT



Opportunities NOW for Major Social Change!

The Possibility of Significant Political-Economic Change

Can our current systems of governance and social relations be similarly reframed by a new *paradigm* where people lose their individualist/capitalist view in favor of one having a balance between private versus public citizenship? Can people learn to see and expect their place in the world to be “consumer-*humans*” instead of merely *consumers*? Can enough people become conscious of their status as *human beings* as being just as relevant as their status as producers and consumers (for the benefit of an abstract economic system)? Can they balance having one foot in the individualist/capitalist world and one foot in the social world of community and human meanings at the *same* time, *all* of the time?

All of these are questions which remain to be answered. But, if we are to advance to become a 21st-Century nation, *these* are the questions which need to be asked! They need to become part of a national conversation. Tentative and partial answers to these questions need to be tested. While natural scientists happily find exploring the material world for new knowledge part of their personal DNA, so to speak, there hasn't been a similar attitude among those who most influence the social world—our political and economic leadership, our public servants, public intellectuals, serious artists, social scientists, and the citizen participants of our democracy. Applying “subject consciousness” strategically at a high level to American governance and society relations now seems feasible and timely. In other words, we can be Smarter about our lives, governance, and social relations.

Pessimism about major social change based on centuries of experience and upon the Conservative view of human nature is understandable but will likely be self-fulfilling. We will not know what can be accomplished until we *try*. Trying something new as big as pushing back capitalism without a theoretically-sound vision and a good plan, of course, is foolish. But, optimism based on new material conditions, new knowledge, new tools of interaction, more compelling interest by more people in significant change, and the right vision and plan may be positively fulfilling. Like progress in the sciences and technology, innovation in social affairs can come from a new theoretical perspective, new hypotheses, the right tools, experimentation, and the persistent and focused efforts of millions of motivated people.

“You can never know what you can do until you try your hardest and have the will to succeed.” That idea is a philosophical truth. That idea is what parents try to impress upon their children, teachers upon their students, coaches upon their players, and leaders upon their followers. That concept applies to nearly every inventor and innovator. The key characteristic of human subject is that its capabilities and limitations cannot be determined *in advance*; subject must *try* to succeed in *order to* succeed.

We can now be morally and practically certain, much like those who overthrew the feudal system in the 14th and 15th centuries and those who rebelled against monarchies and oligarchs in the 19th century, that yet another new era of major change in the social order and in social relationships is feasible. A reframing of governance and social elements on the order of those monumental historical examples could be the basis of an advanced 21st-Century society which is Smarter, fairer, happier, and better for a *far greater* proportion of the public (at least.)

We have the capability of moving to the next stage of a progressively more sophisticated democracy. The basic political-economic system—capitalism and the liberal republican political system—will remain in place but it will be enhanced and improved by new ideas, institutions, values, and a new type of citizen organized into a national team, the American Team, so to speak. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for more discussion of what specifically can be accomplished and how.)

What Will *Not* Work

The lower classes or, at least, a large part of them, have been unhappy with their inferior status and outcomes nearly forever. There has been no shortage of attempts over the generations to reform American governance or to replace it. They have all either failed or produced only relatively insignificant changes. Here are the major types of change efforts which experience and (correct) knowledge tells us *won't* work:

1. **Idea:** *Elect the right people.* This is the most popular approach. The right people are the "reformers, the outsiders, the people's candidates, the Mr. Smiths, the new guy with new ideas," etc. What all of these candidates have in common is a *promise* of real "Change." Real change is described as a fairer economic sphere, fairer political processes, honest government, and better outcomes for the lower classes. These people are typically of lower class background themselves and/or espouse empathy with the lower classes. Voters are especially attracted to candidates who emotionally connect with them and who are sincere (or at least appear to be.) Although these candidates rarely have a significant substantive program and rely mostly on their personalities and enthusiasm, that lack is typically overcome by their emotional appeal to the desperation of eternally hopeful voters.

Experience: While the voters have regularly turned out disappointing incumbents, little or nothing significant has changed in the essence of governance or in the character of society. Candidates have either been insincere or incapable of effecting what they have promised. If anything, aggressive, private citizens (the elite) are taking increasing control of government and officeholders (whomever they may be) and the little people are even *less* influential now. Pro-elite candidates win most elections and they don't try to change the status quo. *Non-elite* candidates with attractive personality traits can and do win some elections, however, they don't change much either. Those newly-elected people were either lying about effecting reform, incapable of confronting successfully a powerful political structure designed to kill or co-opt individual efforts at reform, or were deluded by the challenges they faced trying to change already established structures both institutionally and habitually resistant to change and firmly controlled by the elite.

Imagine a typical fresh-scrubbed, eager, Washington-outsider—a *true* Mr. Smith—who decides to run for office to "shake up" the system. If he doesn't already have his own considerable money to risk in his campaign he must raise a lot of money just to participate meaningfully in the very expensive electoral process. If he fundraises from outside sources he almost certainly has to make promises to those (primarily) wealthy donors that he will support *their* (special) interests while he's in office. Why *else* would they contribute? The candidate is compelled to compromise his principles right from the beginning. The private interest environment works him to play by *its* rules .

If he has his own money (or assuming he secures enough funding from the small donations of millions of little people) he will, nevertheless, be pressured by special interests upon assuming office to cater to *their* interests. His immediate environment includes numerous access points into government by private citizens, the Iron Triangles, the diffusion of power across hundreds of elected officials each severely tempted by private interests (their own and of others), the pay for play ethos, etc. Even if he *wanted* to be good and loyal to his public service role, at best, he is like the little Dutch boy trying to plug holes in the dike. He soon runs out of fingers and toes. If he (as a matter of principle) declines to accept the rules of the game, private citizens and special interests (the elite) will turn on him, use their outsized influence to smother his resistance, and eventually join forces to support a more compliant candidate to oppose him in the next election. He will be a one term officeholder. (Somebody with a giant hard drive may be keeping a list of the many "Promise to Do Good" men and women who have been crushed like bugs in the halls of government.)

Despite some voters' disappointment and frustration with this situation they are willing to give the next fresh-scrubbed guy *his* chance in the next election. That guy, too, will be crushed (or tamed) and

The Back Story -What Won't Work

1. Elections
2. Changing Party Administrations
3. Third Parties
4. Legal Reforms even Major Ones
5. Revolution

“Been there, tried that”—no help and no change.

evicted in due time. This situation is repeated time and time again with the same results—there will be no significant change in favor of the collective or the little people.

The entrenched political *system* where the government is “owned” by the elite is way more powerful than the personalities which populate elected office regardless of their personal skill sets and intentions. Voters put Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama, for example, into the Presidency mostly because of their character and ideals. Although both seemingly were as sincere and skillful as anyone, there never was *any* chance of either of them significantly reforming nearly anything. Carter was an earnest, collectively-minded optimist with an unusually strong sense of public morality. In addition, he campaigned and won *without* much support from the traditional party establishment. If significant change *was* going to happen, he was as well-positioned as anyone to be a leader of it. However, in the big picture of American governance, he was an independent “gnat,” so to speak, overwhelmed by a Leviathan-sized elite opposition (including Republican and Democratic Party elements.) He had little or no support from established interests inside *or* outside of government. His presidency fizzled out unceremoniously. (Notably, however, his enormous personal skills and collectively-minded and fair approach to governance made him an important person *outside* of formal government later. See Chapter 5 for more discussions of *non-formal* governance functions and institutions.)

Obama, too, was sincere with a large measure of idealism and popular ideas of inclusivity and bridging (similar to program ideals.) But he had to raise a half billion dollars (much from the elite class) just to win his first election. These contributors were not in favor of significant change. They wanted to *maintain* their status and special interest privileges. How much could be realistically expected from President Obama given the nature of those donors? Not much. Despite his political promises, personal skills, and the historic overwhelming support of the underclasses he was never going to realistically drive significant changes in the status quo.

If *anyone* doesn't fit into the system as it is, she gets neutered, marginalized, and ultimately evicted from office. The system itself does not change on account of one person or even a team of idealistic individuals. Change efforts from the *inside* by even the most talented, popular, earnest people are easily readily deflected, co-opted, or smothered by the nature of the system. One merely has to look at the *long* history of electoral politics (say, *every* presidential election) with intellectual honesty to know that electing new people *has* not worked and will *never* work. We can put different faces into office but it doesn't matter because the same basic elite-controlled economic structures, processes, and social ethos are still in place.

2. Idea: *Elect the right party.* In America, that means either the Republican or Democratic parties. (See why we have only *two* party choices, below.) The thinking goes: If individuals cannot effect significant change on their own, a large philosophically unified *group* of people, especially voters, sharing common principles of government ought to be able to do so.

Experience: An honest look at the history of party change in governmental leadership reveals no significant change in the basic structures and outcomes of the political process. We still have the same economic and social hierarchy, the same sets of private citizens controlling (and exploiting) government and society, and the same persistent national problems—large economic inequalities, poverty, major educational and social advantages for the children of the wealthy, crime, dysfunctional government, economic anxieties for the middle and lower class, etc. (Note that all of these problems primarily affect the lower classes *alone*.)

While *some* people see significant differences in the values and platforms of the two major American political parties, that perspective is very limited and misleading. As noted in the discussion of aggregate interests in Chapter 3, there is really little to distinguish these parties. What some may see as great differences in philosophy, values, etc., are mostly trivial from a higher perspective--i.e., one which views through a class conscious lens. From that perspective, both parties really represent the elite class.

Historically Republican leadership of government typically results in little more than a shift of a modest percentage (<5%?) of the federal budget to the rich and away from the others. The Democrats will shift budgets the other way and the lower classes will get a bit more. Other than that (and discounting the rhetoric and bluster) they are essentially the same (*except* in foreign affairs, arguably, where the neoconservative faction in the Republican Party is exceptionally and intensively aggressive in asserting elite class interests including fierce applications of military power when any nation or group resists their ego-driven agendas.)

Non-economic issues like parochial religion's presence in the public sphere, public education curriculums, states' rights, and the like, are treated as mostly symbolic or have mere *utility* value for the parties where they can rile up partisans during electoral campaigns.) The so-called "culture wars," for example, waged by Republican and Democratic party rank-and-file primarily are, arguably, mostly a contrivance directed by party Big Kahunas to divert the middle and lower classes from recognizing the *way more* significant big money and class hierarchy issues which *do* seriously occupy the elite. Both parties benefit by provoking the little people to beat themselves up over non-economic "trivialities" (leaving the *real* goodies to the elite to divide up quietly and below the radar, as some might say.)

The apparent conflicts between the major parties are more of *intra-class* competitions (most often between the merciless and the somewhat merciful components of the elite class) than anything else. Both parties are funded primarily by the elite class itself and most of the top operatives are from the elite class or tightly associated with it. Both parties are incestuously entwined with the business and financial elite in job opportunities, club affiliations, etc. The changes in party control of government reflects, at best, a revolving set of the elite subgroups. Like with the situation of the individual reform-minded candidates, the parties operate within an economic environment which conditions the nature of the political processes and its outcomes. (Remember, the dynamics of capitalism frame politics and *not* the other way around.)

3. **Idea:** *Elect a third-party.* If the two major parties are virtually indistinguishable and integral components of the existing political-economic system, we can vote in a new third-party regime made up of populist leaders and/or *independent* true reformers. This party will be funded mostly by small contributions but from multi-millions of the little people. Given the overwhelming motivation of the lower classes for change almost any enthusiastic candidate can lead the effort. Even a maverick alpha dog (Ross Perot?) from the elite class may suffice as long he is he is willing to shake things up.

Experience: That approach hasn't worked either. The relative rarity of meaningful third-parties reflects not only the difficulty of establishing another major party from *scratch* but also the major structural, procedural, and electoral logic impediments to third parties baked into the system. Some of these include the Electoral College structure, ballot access and campaign financing rules, Congressional privileges like committee assignments and the like, and the winner-take-all concept. Let's not forget the hundreds of *separate* state and local schemes which add to the complexities and expenses of starting and running a third-party. It takes an enormous effort to conform to all of those laws and rules across all of these jurisdictions requiring a great deal of technical information, money, and time. And, that is just for the procedural and legal matters. There is still the *substantive* content of the party program itself which has to be developed, promoted, and sold to the multi-millions of Americans not already associated with one of the existing major parties.

Wow! That's an enormous project. And, there's the important electoral logic issues to deal with, too.

Voters are reluctant to commit to supporting a third-party knowing that if the party doesn't outright win, the party and the voter will have achieved nothing, not even some proportional number of seats in the legislature or a formal platform to leverage serious influence on policymaking. A vote for a losing third-party also waives the influence a voter could have had in the choice between the two (*somewhat*

different) major parties. Having a seriously different third-party voting option based on low probabilities of success creates a voter's dilemma. He could be principled and hopeful or totally irrelevant, perhaps, while incurring some unfavorable policy choices or other consequences,

Even *if* all of those voter psychology and inherent structural obstacles could be overcome by major constitutional and legislative reforms and enthusiastic persuasion, success in the electoral area alone does nothing to change the inhospitable environment a third party would have to exist in. No third party in modern times has ever been successful in achieving control of the government, i.e., the Presidency *and* Congress and, even if it did, it would be mostly hapless in trying to impose major changes to governance and social relations (including in the economic sphere) while *inside of* and constrained by the underlying political-economic system. As explained above and in earlier chapters, the economic system frames the political and *not* the other way around. In sum, a winning third-party effort is highly unlikely in America and even if we had an instance, *it wouldn't matter much*, especially in the mid-long term. In other words, a third-party supporter faces a low chance of backing a winner; a winner has numerous legal and procedural obstacles to overcome; and a winner has a low chance of effecting change in any circumstances. How many people can like those odds?

4. Idea: *Reform the major existing institutions by legal regulation.* There have been regular and persistent efforts for many generations to bring about moderate-scale governmental reforms that would diminish the influence of special interests, elevate ethical performances, increase the democratic nature of elections, streamline government, etc. The idea is to enact changes that will make politicians perform as we (the lower classes) would like them to--professionally, honestly, fairly, with integrity, and in the best interests of the whole public. We can, for example, change the laws to prevent the special interests from having such easy access to government. We can amend the Constitution to overturn the "Citizens United" decision and reinstate limits and controls on campaign contribution by big corporations, unions, and others. We can prohibit earmark add-ons in congressional bill making processes, etc. If we enact *enough* reforms and install *enough* enforcement tools (with adequate resources) we may be able to fix our dysfunctional governance systems.

Experience: Without trying to count them, probably hundreds of piecemeal reform ideas are enacted every year among American governments. Has anyone noticed any significant difference in the quality of governance? Although these reforms may have had some very modest affect on the electoral processes and governmental operations, the overall impact has not added up to much. These efforts have been regular and persistent failures. The essence of our class hierarchy and rigged political-economic environment has remained unchanged. These efforts are like squeezing a water balloon--what gets pinched at one end just gets enlarged at the other. There are a lot of reasons for these failures: They:

- 1) have been made piecemeal
- 2) have no overall focus or consistency
- 3) have often been symbolic rather than truly meaningful
- 4) lack enforcement in any case
- 5) are (deliberately?) riddled with loopholes, exceptions, etc.

6) rely largely upon design, enactment, and enforcement by the very *targets* of the reforms. The politicians, Big Businesses, lobbyists, and special interests are regulating themselves?! Why does *anyone* expect this to work?

This kind of "reform" approach falsely satisfies reformers' requests and expectations and cynically mollifies the unwitting public. It offers symbolism when it has to placate public outrage. Just review

the long, long list of campaign finance laws and conflict of interest rules *alone* paraded past the American public for so many years. Has no one really figured out *how* to close loopholes, eliminate exceptions and have effective enforcement? Come on?! The reality is that the modest “reforms” which have taken place over the generations for the most part are mostly bogus ones, never sincerely designed or implemented, and intended to fool the public. And, the public *knows* it, at least implicitly, without knowing what to do about it. That’s one reason that many are enraged. The elite, on the other hand, knows how to get what it wants, even if it has to participate in a rather messy process in a sense.

5. **Idea:** *Have a revolution.* Those who recognize reform of our existing system as hopeless dream of tearing down the whole system and replacing it with something else. That makes *some* sense, anyway. While they are correct on the hopelessness of significant reform from the inside, the revolutionaries so far have come up short on the *how* and *why* of the tear down and *way, way* short on a suitable replacement system.

Tear downs of governance systems or regimes, while not easy, are considerably easier than replacements. Tear downs, however, do not necessarily ensure social progress as the current situations in a number of Middle East countries like Egypt, Libya, and others have shown very clearly. Dumping an individual leader or leadership group typically leaves a power void giving opportunity for autocrats or egotists to grab power, without credibility or legitimacy. All of the other aspects of governance like the cultural and moral environment, management of authority institutions, and the like, are not necessarily positively altered

Reasonably replacing any type of major political economic system is a huge theoretical and practical project, rarely done in modern history. The 1917 Russian Revolution and its decades of experimentation was an obviously flawed attempt at fundamental change and ultimately got distorted by autocracy into a massive failure. Arguably, there was way too little good *theory* and way too much authoritarian *ego*. Similar events in other, smaller nations (Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela) in the mid-20th century have been either failures or only partial social successes (depending on perspective.) Most political analysts characterize these events, at best, as incomplete social revolutions usually combined with the usurpation of power by strongmen or authoritarian parties taking advantage of a power void.

A suitable replacement of a governance system must be *theoretically sound* economically, politically, and socially, at a minimum. It has to have support of a significantly large majority of the citizens. It has to incorporate new values with a great deal of the older cultural, moral, and social habit elements and institutions already in place. It has to be harmonious with economic principles appropriate to the level of development. Ideally, it should do all of this peacefully and be sufficiently democratic so that the lower classes have real influence over policies and decision-making.

There is *no* historical example at this point of a complete replacement of an existing governance system which has proven to be both practical *and* liberally democratic. While praised by some theorists for some of its national-level planning and management virtues, the post-World War II People’s Republic of China’s model of governance is an experiment in progress and is built upon a unique Chinese cultural situation of authoritarian history, Confucianism, and early stages of economic development which may be unique to that nation. And, of course, it lacks the level of democracy that Americans need and want. While the replacement systems in Russia, Nicaragua, Cuba, etc., noted above, were meant to be radically different theoretically, there never was a sufficient core of *sound* political, economic, and social concepts (especially of democratic principles) to model a radically new society.

There *are*, of course, a large handful of pie-in-the-sky ideas for new societies which have been floating around for generations. Some proposals imagine a variation on a libertarian, minimal government option or a people-run (?) decentralized system of loosely-affiliated local communities. Some people just espouse tear down actions *hoping* for anything different and better to develop magically, perhaps. The “greatly diminished” government concepts have never been well thought out or supported and arguably

are the opposite of what can effectively govern whole nation states and increasingly complex and interrelated societies. Some still favor the old monarchical system headed by benevolent royalty. And, democracy of some sort is too cherished by most people nowadays to accept even a kind monarchy.

Experience: Revolting against an existing system or regime and succeeding doesn't necessarily guarantee anything better. Toppling an existing governmental system (as in the Arab Awakening successes of recent years--2010-12) is not necessarily positive for most people and may result in economic and social chaos, anarchy, and tribalist conflicts of many kinds. There is unlikely to be any sort of authority structure to maintain order much less operate a better governance system. Most often there will be a military or other strong-man replacement regime which is no better than what was before and rarely more democratic.

Even *if* a relatively smooth tear down occurred, there still is a need for a stable replacement system of governance (theoretically sound and practically implemented) relatively quickly. That replacement system has to be supported by at least a majority of citizens, if not a super majority, (and preferably by all classes of the public) for legitimacy sake, at a minimum. All of these have to come together in a disturbed environment characterized by fear, anxiety, distrust, and confusion. Will there be sufficient time for inclusive, deliberate, and careful reorganization of government? Are we to replace all existing institutions or just some of them? What new ones are needed and how long will it take for them to become effective? How likely, really, is this to work out well for most people?

The reality is that *nothing* up to now has been articulated by anyone which is comprehensively sound and remotely practical and suitable as a replacement for our American capitalist liberal democracy. Even now, there are no such new governance concepts which sufficiently resolve the class hierarchy issues, maintain democracy, ensure adequate economic development and efficiencies, and support human meanings. The bottom line is that there will be no revolution. There will be no *replacement* of free-market capitalism--indeed it has won at least a practical if not an ideological battle. Out of all the flawed major theoretical alternatives which have been articulated so far, it has the better mix of traits--a respect for freedoms, largely *self*-managing, economically productive, and historically well established (as well as having become a well-entrenched habit in American life.)

So, let's sum up:

- 1) Putting even the very best people into political office just gets them crushed and evicted.
- 2) Changing to another one of the existing political parties is just supporting more of the same.
- 3) Enabling a third party would almost certainly be a wasted effort because of the dominant dynamics of the capitalist system upon the political system; it would be compelled to play the *same* game in the *same* system.
- 4) Reforming the existing system from the inside is theoretically *unsound* and has proven to be worthless.
- 5) Revolting against the current political-economic system will not happen, and even if it did, no one has articulated a satisfactory practical and democratic alternative.

If there is to be any significant change in what we have, it will have to take the form of a program which can *co-exist*, at least, with capitalism and liberal democracy.

Chapter 5 Building the Narrative, Part 1: The Functions and Characteristics of the National Character Program

Although multi-millions of Americans are in favor of big changes in governance and society we can rule out: 1) electing new officeholders, 2) changing party control again, 3) a third-party regime, 4) legal reforms, and 5) a revolution. What else is left?

A New Social Paradigm

The individualist/capitalist ethos and the essential traits of liberal democracy are here to stay. That means that change must be focused on pushing back that system to provide breathing room for public values and human meanings, rewarding public citizen activity, and obtaining some measure of respect for people not determined by standards of the economic market. Specifically, these are the basic functions of a pushback program:

- 1) establishing a new public citizen ethos.
- 2) creating a shadow government
- 3) implementing a brain in governance
- 4) creating a citizens' pushback network
- 5) developing public citizen conditioning programs
- 6) creating a set of reward programs for public citizens' activities
- 7) promoting membership of nearly everyone into a Team America. And,
- 8) developing a set of new leaders, managers, and bridgers.

These functions derive from a new way of seeing and thinking about social matters based on an understanding of the relationship of private and public citizen attitudes. This way of seeing and thinking is a new paradigm of governance and social relations. The paradigm contains the two major frames corresponding to the ways people relate philosophically to a social world. The first frame (Frame 1) is attention to and for oneself, i.e., the private citizen attitude. The second (Frame 2) is attention to oneself as a social being, i.e., the public citizen attitude.

The frames *together* provide a healthy balance between the private and public attitudes. People who "get it" will have dual perspectives of their experience, inconsistent in one sense (the private attitude is selfish, the public is collectively-oriented), but also complementary since both will be active simultaneously. "Getting it" is like straddling parallel universes where there is an unavoidable *permanent tension* of sorts in the balance.

A permanent tension between parallel universes sounds uncomfortable and it *is*. No one wants more tension in their lives, especially regarding something new like *consciously* balancing private and public needs. Permanent tension in this regard really is not so foreign, however. Millions of public citizens have been doing it pretty much all the time. *Everybody* already deals with the tension (but perhaps mostly *unconsciously*) between the demands of the (personal) id and ego to do whatever they want against (social) laws and mores which regulate them. For example, the typical adult inhibits the psychological desire to possess all the material goods that he wants against legal and moral prohibitions against theft,

robbery, etc. He regulates sexual urges. Parents, teachers, and coaches train and expect children to play nice with companions even when the children really don't want to. People regularly tussle with harmonizing the “inner beast” inside, so to speak, to the rules, laws, and mores of the outside world.

Imagine an owner of a retail store. He can either employ someone at the lowest wage allowable by law and established by the market regardless of his profitability *or* he can pay a higher (fairer?) wage based on a fair assessment of the employee's relative value to the business. A consumer can buy a heavy, gas-guzzling, environmentally unfriendly pickup truck which satisfies his status and psychological needs *or* something else which may be a bit less satisfying to the ego but less damaging to the roadways and to the environment. An elected government official can act in harmony with his public service conscience *or* cater to special interests who can determine whether he keeps his job or not. Most people may not realize this tension as they experience it or think about it in the rigorous way we are treating it here but these tensions are part of everyday American life. (Note: *experiencing* the tension between private and public and *balancing* it are not the same. Private citizens do not balance; they adhere to the private attitude alone.)

The program wants to condition people to be persistently alert to this tension and to eventually *habitually* negotiate a healthy balance of the two attitudes valuing both personal and social interests. They will also learn to demand that balance from everyone with a presence in the public sphere—the elite, Big Business, “old school” employers, and private citizens in general. They will not accept the “Business is Business” excuse for selfish acts by parties in the economic sphere, for example, nor allow themselves to be pushed around anymore by competitive, self interested parties in the political and social spheres. A lot of people may actually embrace living with another sort of permanent tension and feel a bit empowered by it especially if, as a trade off, they get Balance, Meaning, and Respect (BMR) for themselves, along with membership in an advanced 21st-Century society.

For most people, just a little bit of extra attention to what is happening in their daily lives is all that is necessary for them to act upon their needs for BMR. Just think about it—a whole lot of people having a habit of being a bit more alert about their social lives and standing up a bit more assertively for themselves may mean a giant improvement in their personal and social lives! (How to do that standing up is contained in Chapters 8 and 9.) That relatively modest measure of extra attention to social matters is not much different then the special attention maintained by civil rights pioneers regarding racial matters and by the feminist pioneers to gender matters. What this means in practice for public citizens is that they will maintain a similar alertness to *private citizen activities* which affect them in the public sphere and object to and resist (in some fashion) excessive private citizen activities. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for details of specific strategies and tactics.)

What this is likely to mean in practice for private citizens is that they will be pressured or influenced by the ethos (and by the public citizens enforcing it) to being less aggressive and self-interested in the public sphere and to be more considerate of collective interests overall (even if only reluctantly.) Big Businesses may have to tolerate more organized and assertive employees. Elected officials will be constrained to focus strictly on true public service, forego personal agendas, and avoid conflicts of interest. The elite will have to share a bit more economic and productivity value with the lower classes and accept the lower classes having a truly effective presence in politics and government, etc.. As racists and sexists have been marginalized by attentive civil and gender rights activists, so too, may purely private citizens be marginalized by the public citizen activists.

We can imagine a lot of private citizens, and the elite especially, viewing this pushback situation as “outrageous, radical, communist, terrorist, ungodly” and worse. From another view, asserting a program which results in: 1) *everyone* having some breathing space for human meanings, 2) the lower classes obtaining a modest, proportional increase in economic goodies, and 3) ordinary Marys and Johns getting a small measure of respect instead of *no* respect, is really quite *modest*.

For those private citizens and the elite who will object to the program this situation does not represent the end of the world. At worst, some of them may have to give up one of their (multiple) luxury villas or see a tax bill which reduces their annual income from \$200 million to a mere \$160 million. Some might have to adjust business models to be more responsible and less exploitive. Some might have cozy relationships with governmental officials eliminated. And unhappily for a lot of them, they will no longer enjoy a master-servant relationship with their workers or with the little people in general. This is radical stuff *only* for those used to having their ids and egos satisfied *all* of the time!

To implement this conscious attention to BMR requires a comprehensive movement of sorts. That movement will encompass permanent alertness to the tension between the two attitudes, an ethos of the balancing of private and public attitude, and a new set of values and formal characteristics all of which add up to the “National Character Project.” This chapter will describe the specific *functions* and characteristics of the program. The specific *values* will be described in Chapter 6.

The Functions and Characteristics of the National Character Program Are:

1. A New Social Ethos: We start out by articulating a new way of looking and thinking about ourselves as human beings in a capitalist environment. That will include:

- a) A new set of public values, including a new standard of collective fairness
- b) Enhanced consciousness of the private-public citizen attitudes and their meanings and effects
- c) Insistence on Smarter, more democratic, and more competent systems of governance and social relationships
- d) Respect for those living the small life well. And,
- e) An emphasis on inclusivity and the bridging of trivial differences among people.

The set of **public values** includes:

- a) A healthy balance between the private and public citizen attitude
- b) A fairness standard based on an inclusive set of viewpoints of *all* classes and groups in society
- c) Trustworthiness in governance, business, and organizations which serve the public
- d) Pride in oneself regardless of economic or social position
- e) Economic efficiency and meaning conceived from a *common good* perspective
- f) Enhanced respect for reason and science
- g) Consideration of *multiple* perspectives applicable to all knowledge and experience
- h) Humility based on an understanding of the limitations of reason, knowledge, and social engineering. And,
- i) Tolerance for objectively trivial differences among citizens. (See Chapter 6, below, for an elaboration of these values.)

A List of National Character Functions

1. Counterbalancing private interest
2. Implementing a brain in governance
3. Organizing and empowering the middle and lower classes
4. Developing models of citizenship and public interest attitude
5. Rewarding citizens for public citizen activity
6. Providing opportunities for all to participate in the national character program
7. Developing public citizen leaders and managers

For most people, we might just explain that the new social ethos is about Balance, Meaning and Respect (BMR), together with Smart governance. That makes it relatively easy for them to understand and accept. A lot of people will figure out for themselves how to apply these principles to their work and social situations. However, the program will have leaders, managers, and bridgers, together with guidance from *templates* and conditioning programs, to assist in getting these principles worked out in most areas of social life. (See below and in Chapters 8 and 9 for more details of these things.)

In past centuries, when private citizen traits of self-interest, competition, and aggression were necessary just for survival, there could be little consideration given to any other perspective (Frame 1). Since our society has developed well beyond the mere survival stage, we have the ability and the opportunity now to progress to another, more sophisticated perspective (Frame 2) which can enrich and enhance the quality of our lives, promote human meanings, and provide a measure of respect for everyone. The new ethos will be *people-oriented* versus *system-oriented*.

In one sense, focusing on people rather than a system implies a sort of *female* orientation in the social world. Using a very rough metaphor, individualism/capitalism represents the *male* of the primordial family unit. He used his aggressiveness (testosterone-driven, perhaps) and a physical skill set for hunting and gathering to feed himself and his immediate family. The female, in the meantime, bore and tended to the children and maintained a social unit in a residence where shared experiences, emotions, and social and psychological relationships made up the complex environment we call a *home*. Multiple homes made up a village, etc., and larger, more sophisticated social communities eventually developed. Without the social (family) unit in the home (and the larger communities) the male is just a lonely, miserable survivor--hunting, eating, sleeping, and eventually dying, likely unhappily and unfulfilled.

At the same time, without the male providing the necessary physical sustenance and protection, the female and children are apt to be unhealthy and die fairly young. Together, however, the two gender-based roles complement and there is a remarkable synergy--*social* humanity--composed of sustained sharing, caring, and loving relationships. This philosophical and psychological distance (and critical value differences) from mere (male) *existence* to higher-level (female) *societies* is well-recognized by social scientists and philosophers. While the male provider-defender role is essential, the female nurturing role makes the *quality* of existence enjoyable, meaningful, and even spiritually rewarding. (We have to *live*, of course, but we ought to live *well* and with *meaning*!)

In many (but not all) respects, we have progressed way beyond the primordial state where men fight and kill and women nurture. Nevertheless, our present society, arguably, is too male and not enough female in the metaphorical sense noted above. Unlike nearly all other aspects of society (e.g., science, technology, etc.) which have developed and matured a great deal, our governance and relations systems are still too close to the primitive. (We still have 18th-Century governance institutions, remember!) While we have developed enormous economic production capabilities we have a societal shortage of contentment, enjoyment, meaning, and spirituality. Capitalism's dominant thrust to produce more and more goods and services more efficiently does little to satisfy human needs for the higher-level experiences and virtues. It does, in fact, make it harder for people to enjoy those things as pressures to work harder and longer and to consume more make those experiences and virtues less likely to be obtained.

Since the elite is fairly content with things as they are now as many (most?) of them enjoy at least some of those experiences and virtues noted above, the American lower classes are left with trying to obtain *quality* of life on their own against enormous philosophical and practical obstacles. The philosophical ones include the capitalist conception of people as mere producers and consumers and the primacy of the abstract system over real human beings. The practical ones include the class hierarchy; elite manipulation; a rigged political-economic system; and the lack of capital, solidarity, and class consciousness among the lower classes. Many, if not most, ordinary people feel helpless and defeated.

The failure of our society to devote more attention to satisfying the higher-level virtues when there is a crying demand for them by most citizens is pretty astounding from a 21st-Century *collective's* point of view. It highlights a major blind spot, so to speak, of the capitalist worldview. But, it also may be the lack of a quality vision of what *can* be and how to achieve it that has been the crucial holdback. Two hundred-plus years of living in an all-encompassing ethos can dull imagination and act as a strong social habit which resists change and especially social improvement.

However, getting beyond the obsolete philosophy and entrenched habits of Frame 1 could mean a quantum leap in human achievement. This is not such a giant leap *conceptually* as many thoughtful people have realized the flaws and problems of individualism/capitalism for a long time. And a lot of people have come up with ideas about how to change that ethos although, unfortunately, nothing sufficiently comprehensive, coherent, and practical enough to have the big, sustained effects we need.

The vision and plan articulated here means to provide that theoretical and practical organization and coherence. It asks people to see and think about their social lives in a new way as the pioneers of the civil rights and feminist reframing events noted above did. The reframing of political-economic reality as proposed here may make the same kind of differences as those historical reframings did. It *could* be a Big Deal!

Not recognizing and embracing quality of life virtues of an advanced social ethos (Frame 2) in the early part of the 21st-Century may be akin to not embracing the scientific frame of reference (in the 17th-Century), the concept of democracy and individual rights and freedoms (in the 18th-Century), the theoretical and practical insights of quantum mechanics and relativity theory in physics and other sciences (in the 19th-Century), and the concepts of racial and gender equality (in the 20th-Century.)

We may now be on a leading edge of a historical era when fundamental new ideas combine with new values and technology to present a unique opportunity for social change and an advanced society for everyone more suitable for the times. Certainly, it will be a huge project to implement this vision (or any similarly comprehensive program) given the difficulty of getting people to see and think in new ways and in changing very deeply-rooted habits. And, of course, some of the elite and private citizens will oppose this or any new view which threatens to upset *their* comfortable world (and maybe intensely.) However, it is certainly *within the means* of public citizens to make the conceptual leap and to implement a comprehensive program despite the obstacles. Let's hope that enough people will be exposed to these new ideas and say "I get it!" and "Let's get to work!"

2. A Shadow Government: Most political scientists would acknowledge that in liberal democracies it is typical for an elite to control government and the political processes. The little people do get to have a *small* say and to vent from time to time but, really, most are fooled by elite-sponsored ideology into believing that they matter when they really don't. The little people, because of their voting numbers, *do* have a sort of veto power against the *gross* excesses of the elite class when the Marys and Johns get really pissed off and develop a temporary class consciousness. Arguably, populist outrage fueled the trust-busting era and opposition of youthful generations, mostly, led to the ending of the Vietnam War. But, the elite generally finds workarounds to get past those kinds of temporary outbursts. While many of the little people, for example, became irate over the 2008 Wall Street bailouts and some developed a bit of half-formed class consciousness--the 99% versus the 1% concept--there still was no big outburst and no veto of anything. The elite patiently watched as the opposition gradually fizzled out. They have since resumed business as usual.

Knowing what we know about the excessive openness of government, the special interest influences, the Iron Triangles, etc., we can't trust the government we have now to be collectively-minded, collectively fair, nonpartisan, and deliberate without some strong incentives not present now. The bottom line is that we can't rely on our government, as it is, doing much to support lower class needs. (However, government in general *done right* may be the best friend, so to speak, of the lower classes.—See below

and Chapters 8 and 9 for explanation of why we need both reformed formal and new “informal” governments.)

That's one of the reasons we need a separate *shadow* government run by public citizens themselves to keep the formal one in check. It is separate because it has to act outside the existing political processes to be effective. It is a shadow government because it will oversee formal government but will have no formal legal status or authority. The shadow government will be comprised of a new set of informal (i.e., non-constitutional/legal) institutions to: 1) *counterbalance* the elite's domination of government and the political processes, and 2) *complement* existing government by providing functions that existing government cannot.

In regard to counterbalancing, the Local Council, for example, will provide auditing and monitoring functions over every component of formal government to keep our public servants honest and responsible. We won't tolerate having them supervising themselves as they (mostly) do now. (See Chapter 8 for details of how the monitoring function will work.) The shadow government will also add “brain-like” functions to government where none really exist now. It will bring governance into the 21st-Century by adding important planning and problem-solving functions not feasible now.

The Planning Council and the Policy-Making and Problem-Solving Councils, for example, will provide medium-long-term planning for the nation based on a collective perspective and will address major national problems like unemployment, educational deficiencies, and the like using a new Smart approach to problem-solving. (See Chapter 8 for more detailed description of these functions.) Their Smart, collectively-focused approaches will utilize quality data and evidence, clear and comprehensive thinking, and professional deliberation by distinguished panels of nonpartisan experts.

Shadow government presence and pressures will provide incentives for formal government to be Smarter and more responsive to collective interests. It will ensure that formal governmental operations are compliant with a number of 21st-Century standards of governance: 1) competence, 2) professionalism, 3) honesty, 4) collective focus, and others. There will be strategies to hold the institutions and public servants properly accountable and responsible for their decisions and actions. The shadow government will closely monitor governmental activities to restrain abuses and undue influence by private citizens. It will help enforce sandboxing of public servants to maintain their integrity and competence. It will diligently obtain information and data about governmental activities and expenditures, analyze them, and report results to the public. It will monitor legislation and regulatory activity and object to overreaching and abuse of trust. Our public servants, in other words, will have us looking over their shoulders at all times.

The Local Council will be the primary agent for these types of pushback means. Pushback will take any number of forms including: 1) public disclosures (exposure and shaming tactics) of governmental “bad acts;” 2) mobilizing reactions from public citizens, sympathetic media, and other supporters which may have their own leverages to enforce compliance with program values; and 3) reporting its findings in effective ways to the public with recommendations and *Action Plans*. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for an explanation of Action Plans.) Ideally, we will significantly reduce private citizen/special interest corruptions like undue influences, irrational policy and regulations, and pay for play. At the same time, we will increase professionalism and competence as public servants will know that if they don't do their jobs well there will be consequences for them beyond just electoral ones. That should be no problem for honest, sincere, and professional public servants.

Given all that, the program will not ignore the traditional elements of governance. It intends to reform government structures and processes at least somewhat by revising electoral schemes to diminish the role of money, sandboxing elected officials to diminish conflicts of interest and minimize special interest influences, and similar reforms. (See Chapter 8 for more details on governmental reforms.) Public citizens will still participate in traditional governmental processes like voting, running for office,

lobbying, etc. They will be proactive in influencing economic, political, and social policies by asserting their *own* agenda.

A unit of the Support Council will function as a sort of public citizen-oriented special (general?) interest to promote collective interests. It will lobby elected officials and participate in elections, etc., similar to what private citizens and special interests do now but having a collective view and asserting a collective interest. Other Councils will promote legislative and executive policies and programs having collective and long-term perspectives.

While the shadow government and public citizen pushback will be directed primarily at present governments it will also assert jurisdiction over the activities of Big Business and other major actors in the private sector which act counter to public citizen values. We will not have the significant change we want in society without influencing both the government and business sectors since Big Business and government are almost on a par when it comes to being major influences over society. The program's institutions, especially the Local Council, will assert its jurisdiction in areas like: 1) consumer exploitation; 2) business operations which cause harm to the environment and create other similar externalities; 3) abusive labor practices; 4) manipulative marketing and other disrespect of consumers; and the like. The Local Council, particularly, will have a set of strategies to pushback Big Business by drawing upon its *consumer leverage* using organized and focused means. (See below and Chapter 9 for some details and examples.)

3. A Brain for Society: Two of the major Councils, at least,—Planning and the Policy Making and Problem-Solving Councils—will implement a brain in governance to take a rational perspective on social matters for the nation and the collective. The brain will stand *above* individualism (and special interests) and see and think for the national interest and with multiple time perspectives. It will do planning for the nation--short, medium, and long term--and design policies and programs regarding major social issues and problems. It will provide guidance for implementations of plans and problem solutions. The program's brain will fill a role that *no other person or institution in America does now*.

The thinking process of these Councils will emphasize a broad-based, inclusive, multi-perspective involvement of *all* relevant social parties. It will be filtered by panels of nonpartisan experts applying fact and scientifically-based approaches to a host of national issues and problems. Inclusive democracy and collective fairness, in other words, will blend with professional and technical expertise. The institutions will be staffed with high-quality experts in academics, politics, management, administration, and other fields. These people will be charged with being alert and Smart about matters important to the collective. They will do research, analysis, design policies and programs, and provide honest information, options, and reasoned positions to the public. They will propose plans and solutions to matters including:

- 1) financial sector regulation
- 2) fairer allocations of the productivity of capital and labor
- 3) fairer and more rational tax policies
- 4) intelligent immigration, environmental, and energy policies
- 5) peacemaking
- 6) plans to deal with the looming long-term structural unemployment problem
- 7) rationalizing of local and regional governments

8) transitioning from the “war on drugs” to a saner approach to substance abuse issues

9) transitioning from tinkering with public-school systems’ details to honestly, and sincerely addressing the *underlying causes* of our public education problems; and more.

While not a deliberate part of its function, the brain concept could be a template of advanced governance for governments everywhere making America an inspirational world leader in something other than hard-core business and war making. The brain institutions will get their credibility and legitimacy from their representative makeups, sense of fairness, collective perspective, professionalism, intellectual heft, and support from a charismatic National Council. That Council will be comprised of a representative sampling of prominent and respected public citizens who will represent the “soul,” so to speak, of the movement and act as the major cue-giver for the public in general. (See Chapter 8 for a full description of these Councils.)

Compare this brain concept to that which guides us now--the so-called invisible hand (in the economic sphere) and freewheeling individualism (in the political sphere.) These are no real guides at all. There is no collective thinking at all; no overall perspectives; no plans, coordination, coherence, or ultimate goals; and no sense at all of human meanings. There are no broad-based *human* standards of accomplishment. We need to get beyond measures of mere Gross National Product and productivity levels to include Gross Happiness, Quality-of-Life, and similar indexes.

Presently, we have no significant person or institution acting for the collective or for the common good and no one accountable for the medium and long-term perspectives, or for long-term planning in general. There is no one accountable for the social welfare or for the emotional and psychological health of our communities. Nearly every sub-entity in society--individuals, families, businesses, and organizations--have a set of *some* elements of thought, reason, and planning to guide their ongoing activities except our *governments*. For the most part, our governments are like the Straw Man of the Wizard of Oz--brainless.

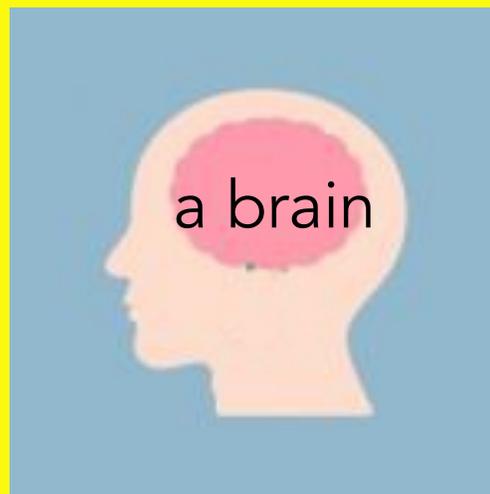
For example, even trying to improve the efficiency of the lowly incandescent light bulb (circa 2012), a project certain to be economically efficient for *everyone* in the medium/long-term and which would promote global environmental goals, spur innovation, etc., is stymied by worse than ridiculous partisanship in Congress. When this type of partisanship (a form of collective stupidity) regularly inflates itself over much more serious matters like national security, for example, we end up with enormously consequential wars and military actions, our privacy and civil rights trampled, and trillions of dollars spent with little value (and much pain) for the Marys and Johns. (Special interests, on the other hand, seem to make out great in these events!)

Without having the restraint of a collective brain, the two major political parties after the 9/11 attacks insisted on demonstrating to the American public which of them was tougher and had more testosterone. In exchange for political advantage, the parties jumped into the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and were willing to sacrifice American lives, Middle Eastern and other lives, trillions of tax dollars, the loss of the U.S.’s credibility, the loss of respect of many of the world's nations, and the enduring enmity of the Muslim world. (Getting to maintain permanent military bases in the Middle East and getting a leg up on lucrative oil development contracts in exchange for the costs pleases only a *tiny* number of Americans.)

Wow! Those are enormous costs and consequences of a horrible decision. That horrible decision was produced by an archaic *process* derived from a flawed *system*. A Smart nation having a collective perspective, quality facts and analyses, and deliberate in its decision-making would not have gotten itself into those Middle Eastern wars and incurred those kinds of consequences. (Note: from the current economic system’s perspective, war and militarization are generally good business *opportunities* to be taken advantage of. A Smart nation would never consider war and militarization as positive opportunities

Issues to be Addressed by the Brain

1. A collective perspective and rationality
2. Short-medium-long-term perspectives
3. Inclusivity
4. Multiple perspectives
5. Enhanced respect for facts, data, reason, and science



for anything.) The decision-making examples noted above, among others, show the essential flaws of our present governing processes.

As a nation we are not a Smart decision-maker primarily because the way we do things is based on 18th-Century concepts and institutions. (If only we had a brain!) From the program's perspective, it is easy to see our dysfunctional Congress and archaic governance processes as not only inept governance but a large embarrassment to a nation which prides itself as being "exceptional." It is also a true insult to the American public especially to the lower classes as they suffer most of the negative consequences.

Most of the major problems in society--war mongering, gross inequalities of income/wealth, high unemployment, an inadequate health care system, government deficits, etc.--have persisted in our country for generations. And, that's after hundreds and thousands of governmental and private sector laws and programs have been proposed, enacted, and implemented. Since these purported solutions have done little to satisfactorily address them one can get the distinct impression that the elite class (which *really* manages these things) doesn't see them as *real* problems in need of fixing (for *them*). None of these problems really affect the elite, except maybe only in modest and incidental ways.

Generations of elite efforts at remedies seem to constitute symbolic activity mostly, not dedicated to sincere problem-solving, but to actually conning and pacifying the rest of us, as well as satisfying their special interest friends who seem to end up with most of the value. (Some studies of the Great Society programs of the 1960-70's show that if the public money devoted to the multitude of programs designed to serve the poor and disadvantaged was just given *outright* to those people almost none of them would have been considered under the poverty level, by income data alone.)

How often do we see authentic governance or even private sector activity deliberately taken in the "best interests of America?" Most of what we get now is aggressively-selfish special interest activity, symbolism, and persistent rhetorical bullsh*t combined with ugly partisan politics. It is difficult to conceive of *any* large and significant governmental program sincerely designed for the public good and *not* highly polluted by special interest activity. (The special interests selfishly see opportunities nearly everywhere government functions.) Sincere activity happens on occasion, but usually in small-scale applications. The government's sponsorship of basic scientific research and development and support for the space program are examples, perhaps. The Subway Company's promotion of spokesperson "Jared" and its healthy menu options is one of the more prominent private sector examples. (Arguably, the Great Society *concept* and the programs which came out of it *were* collectively-minded examples as was the Interstate Highway program, but those were sponsored 50 years or so ago!)

Most Americans (as surveys, commentary, electoral behaviors, and public protests show) want something else. They want sincere, professional efforts by our leaders and elected officials to address and solve our real problems. We *have* on recent occasion come up with a limited number of ad hoc "collective brain"-like attempts to provide the perspectives needed to address national problems. In Congress, we've had the military base closing commissions which did rationalize some military operations and saved some taxpayer money, even if only to a modest degree. We've had the Simpson-Bowles "Super committee" (circa 2011) charged with fixing budget deficits and reducing the overall debt of government. It was intended as a "special bipartisan" effort to avoid the partisan and special interest-polluted inadequacies of the *normal* congressional legislative process. It was the right sort of *idea*, perhaps, but the effort from the start was corrupted with partisan and electoral politics, special interest lobbying, and personal ego agendas. It failed due to a lack of credibility and an inability to truly *rise above* private citizen behaviors. It was *part* of the existing private citizen attitude situation, versus being above it, as it needed to be. We really can't expect Congress to fix itself. We really can't work within the existing system.

We need a Smart approach to governance. Here is what we can do:

- 1) create a new set of institutions like the set of national councils detailed in Chapter 8 to provide the brain, monitoring, and enforcement functions
- 2) enlist professionals and experts with public citizen attitudes to operate the councils
- 3) enlist members of the public to participate in monitoring and reporting activities regarding government and the business world
- 4) rely much more on scientifically-minded approaches to planning and problem-solving
- 5) be guided by 21st-Century standards of public values and ethics.

This approach to governance may earn the essential credibility and legitimacy to engage the lower classes to support it and the elite class to respect it, at least. (See Chapter 8, below, for more discussion of the National Councils.)

4) A Citizen Pushback Network: What the lower classes have that the elite doesn't is *numbers*—numbers of voters and the extraordinary weight of consumer and workplace power. (The lower classes make up nearly two thirds of purchasing power in America and nearly all of the workers.) If *organized and focused*, these number advantages could be very influential under the right circumstances. Voting influence alone will be limited, of course, as the political system is mostly defined by openness to special interests with big money, the separation and diffusion of powers, and subservience to the imperatives of the underlying economic system. In other words, the political system is mostly rigged for the benefit of the elite. Nevertheless, an organized electorate focused on public citizen interests may be able to secure and enforce a set of reforms which may make the political system *somewhat* more democratic and responsible. Voting numbers could be an important element of a social change program.

More significantly, an organized public citizen network as proposed here could be a major force in enforcing pushback strategies in the economy and workplaces. A network--the Local Council proposed here--made up of activist individuals and organizations and multimillions of little people aided by easy-to-use, accessible software could enforce public values by a number of means including:

- 1) collective declarations of opposition to governmental and Big Business "bad acts" (saying "No," "Stop," "Fix it," etc. via social media and other tools),
- 2) mobilizing "shaming" strategies, together with sympathetic media organizations. (Think how a prominent person's belittling now of the female gender, for example, brings out a broad storm of disapproval. Can we expect that same kind of response to *private citizen* overreaching?)
- 3) consumer, labor, and public citizen protests
- 4) boycotts of various sorts
- 5) noncooperation and other civil resistance methods
- 6) labor strikes and workplace pressures, and
- 7) more traditional means like engaging in voting behaviors, mass lobbying, etc.

Organizing a sufficient number of little people into an effective, permanent entity has always been difficult and rarely successful. The little people have lacked knowledge, time, and means to participate in these kinds of things. However, with the methods of communication and organization now available together with a widespread, focused attention to Balance, Meaning, and Respect issues prompted by

program activists we can expect to have more success now. The program will develop strategies to draw attention to the BMR concepts, make alertness to them a habit among the public, and then *make it easy* for people to enforce them. (See Chapter 9 for examples of how this can work.) The key to an effective public citizen network is:

- 1) a technologically-adept combination of hardware, software, anywhere/anytime access (home and mobile devices
- 2) a sophisticated yet easy-to-use interface linking databases, information sources, and social networking tools,
- 3) core groups of public citizens and activists to gather, process, and distribute information
- 4) a centralized command center for planning, mobilizing of public citizens, and managing action plans, and
- 5) conditioning programs which will create among potential network participants a practical, *always-on habit of attention*.

The Local Council network will activate pushback at instances of private citizen/special interest bad acts. For example, when the special interest lobbyists are discovered again trying to obtain legislative benefits for themselves at the expense of the collective, the public citizen network will know about it and implement an action plan to oppose them. When Congressmen try to embed earmarks and "pork" into general interest legislation, the network will spot them and implement an action plan to stop them. When businesses market worthless or deceptively overpriced products and services to the public, the network will respond and convince them to stop.

A model for how this may work is the ad hoc, informal network which formed to defeat Big Business's attempts to secure regulations of the Internet to support their corporate interests at the expense of personal freedoms and civil rights (the Stop Online Piracy Act events of early 2012.) However, the program's Local Council network will not be ad hoc and temporary. It will be a permanent watchdog and enforcement mechanism. A designated component of the Council will decide which bad acts to target based on criterion which ensures the credibility and responsibility of the program. In other words, no one will be subject to an action plan unless they *really* deserve it and have rejected requests to voluntarily do the right thing.

It should be relatively easy with this kind of network to organize consumer and public citizen responses to a lot of government and private sector bad acts. Instead of the types of well-intended but mostly ineffective responses we see most often—occasional individual and/or small group expressions of rage ("I'm mad as hell and I won't take it anymore"), the voting out of incumbents, relatively gentle protests in the park, the loud Tea Party rants against the federal government, etc., the broad, integrated network of informed public citizens will have more effective options with real power to oppose and pushback. (Note: the Tea Party *has been* somewhat effective in what it wants to do, although either destructively or in misconceived ways which do *not* help the lower classes. Those Tea Party members who truly oppose the same elite domination as the program does can find better, Smarter means like those proposed here.)

This public citizen network is meant to function not merely as *another special interest* group of consumers, workers, and ordinary citizens on the same order as what we know as traditional special interests. It will be as a broader-based, new component of Smart governance. It will have these functions:

- 1) acting as a counterweight to elite and special interest influences on government

2) acting as an opposition to governmental and Big Business bad acts

3) providing collective influence for the little people in the democratic processes

4) representing inclusivity, as its membership will bridge most traditional dividers like geography, race, ethnicity, gender, etc., and

5) being the primary enforcer throughout society of the BMR set of values.

Of course, there are a lot of people and organizations doing some of these pushback activities now. A simple Google search for “good government,” or “progressive organizations” or “citizen activism,” will bring up *thousands* of separate organizations. Although not all are aligned perfectly with public citizen values, there are government monitoring entities, political and policy-oriented groups, environmental and consumer groups, labor organizations, citizen activists of many kinds, and others.

However, even the most fervent supporters of Smart governance or progressive and social activism in general would have a hard time sorting them out, making effective contacts, attempting to aid, etc., as there are *so many* organizations doing too many different things in different places with different methods, etc. There's little coordination among them and there is no focus on a shared interest. Many people trying to help out would be confused and discouraged just by the options presented (not even considering the time and effort to evaluate and choose among those options.) From the Mary and John’s perspective, access to the existing progressive movement is *way too confusing and difficult!*

Even if accessibility and evaluation were *not* issues, these organizations are working alone, or mostly alone. They each focus on separate (sometimes overlapping) aspects of the system with their (mostly) small staffs and budgets. They use different strategies and tactics. They have separate and different priorities. Although they may have similar ultimate goals they are all doing their own things. In trying to push back the capitalist Goliath the separate entities acting mostly alone are mere toothpick pricks on its shins, so to speak. Hundreds and even thousands of separate little pinpricks have little impact on the monster. It shrugs them off like gnats.

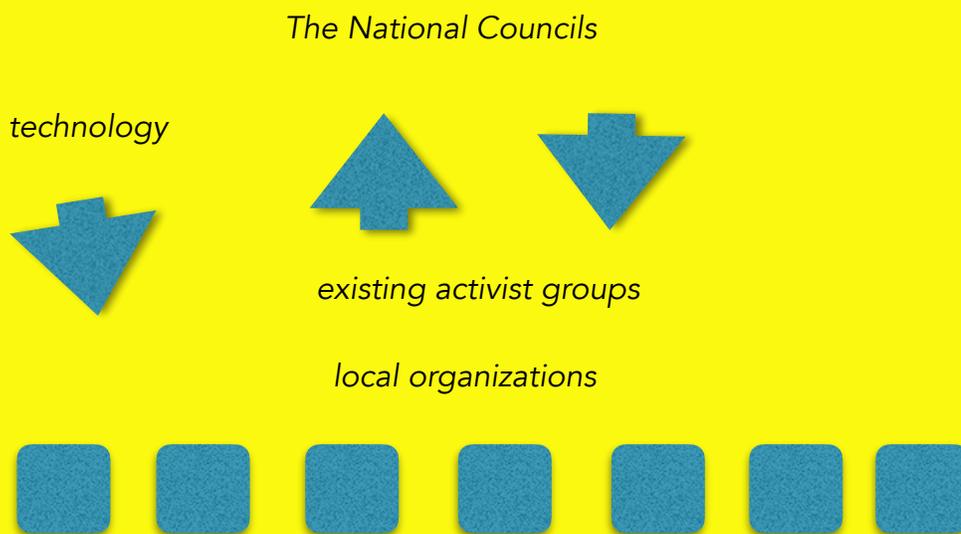
The reality of any effective lower class movement is that only when all of those discrete pinpricks are gathered, coordinated, and focused into a *Big Stick*, so to speak, can those shins be smashed fiercely enough for the Goliath to step back (at least.) That's why an overarching organization like the Local Council is necessary to provide collective organization, focus, and accessibility. We have to have the Big Stick and we have to make it *easy* for people to participate in the adventure. Consistent and credible threats to smash those shins with that Big Stick will conceivably make the monster think twice about throwing its weight around anymore. Getting that monster to stay back some distance is accomplishing pushback.

Where is that Big Stick?! We *can* do pushback! (See Chapter 9 for how to organize these separate groups into the Local Council.)

How the Local Council May Work

1. Build local organizations at the grassroots levels
2. Link existing organizations especially activist groups together
3. Coordinate activities by a common citizen pushback ethos
4. Establish communication channels upwards and downwards
5. Connect everyone via a common network with an accessible, easy-to-use user interface

The Pushback Mechanism



5) Public Citizenship Conditioning: How people think and act, in large part, is a function of their environment. People living in an individualist, competitive environment, as in capitalism, mostly act as individual capitalists. (Those who don't, for whatever reasons, are easily and regularly exploited--like public citizens?) Those living in environments where community-oriented behavior is expected and rewarded act mostly in that way. Comparative sociology describes various national or cultural "characters." The Japanese and Korean cultures, for example, are generally considered community-oriented and conformist. Scandinavians are thought of as community-oriented and having relatively low intensity (in the business area.) Americans are known as individualistic, aggressive, and competitive. People have argued a great deal over which type of cultural personality is better, more successful, etc. However, there really is no consensus on the standard of measurement.

Based on its analysis and evaluation of the extreme individualist attitude which characterizes American culture, the program favors an environment less individualistic and more community-oriented. That change would go far towards fixing much of what bothers most Americans--income/wealth disparities, dysfunctional policymaking, etc. We could have a true collective sense. We could have an American Team with the advantages that provides. Our society would be a bit more female and less male, so to speak, (as articulated above.) In another sense it may simply mean that our culture would be more like that of the Canadians or Western Europeans. That hardly could be a very bad thing. These differences would favor the lower classes, mostly, and allow for an advance in governance and social relations. Those would be very good things, indeed.

But there is much more to the program's ideas of National Character conditioning. The program will develop a large set of models of public citizenship behavior for people to become both better people (as they see fit) and better citizens. We may want, for example, to create templates of what it means to be a good parent, worker, businessman, neighbor, citizen, steward of the environment, etc. We can offer templates of a whole lot of things to make it *easy* for people to do the right things. For example, we can promote much greater uniformity in law and business practices; model consumer warranties and services; model ethical standards and even pattern compensation schemes for public servants and nonprofit officials, and more. (See Chapter 9 for more explanation and examples of this point.)

Social conditioning at the higher ethos level and at the lower practical business/consumer/family levels is meant to make it *easy* for people to do the right things. Little different than other national, cultural, religious, ethnic, or civic types of education and conditioning, the National Character movement needs to install a set of values and principles deep into the culture. The public citizen attitude has to become a sort of an invisible component of social life were people don't have to think much about doing the right thing. They'll just do it out of *good habits*.

Our society already takes steps to mold people to social and civic norms (some geared towards public citizen values and some not.) On the public citizen side we condition schoolchildren to be patriotic, obedient, disciplined, civic and community-minded, and appreciative of reading and learning, among other things. Parents, especially, are expected to be dutiful in conditioning their children to be healthy, law-abiding, etc. There are some public and private sector training and apprenticeship programs which condition youths (and some adults) to learn useful skills, to have good work ethics, and to have a sense of responsibility. Government, to some extent, conditions the public to decrease its energy usage and also (often in the service of elite interests) conditions the general public be fearful, anxious, and docile as against perpetual external threats, real and imagined so they are good citizens (in *its* view.)

On the private citizen side, marketers intensely and persistently condition people (adults and children) to be good consumers (as *they* define it.) Big Business employers condition workers to be fearful, anxious, and docile (so they are good employees, from their point of view). The major political parties and the mainstream media promote individualist /capitalist narratives which condition citizens to conceive of political-economic realities in "acceptable" (i.e., benign) ways while marginalizing and

demonizing *more accurate*, but more unsettling perspectives (to them), e.g., class consciousness, elitism, socialism, labor rights, consumer activism, etc.

Conditioning of all kinds is ubiquitous in all societies and it should not be surprising that the National Character movement wants to do its own conditioning. Partly, this is a matter of educating people about the new program's values and about opportunities to break old habits and form new ones. Acting upon templates, however, of what it means to be a good parent, worker, businessman, neighbor, citizen, steward of the environment, etc. *is* something new and important. We shouldn't assume that any of these roles and ideas come *naturally* to everyone. Indeed, the private citizen attitude often acts as a hindrance to new social ideas. If there is much difference in the concept of conditioning between the program's ideas and traditional conditioning efforts (other than *content*, of course), it may be in the duration of conditioning which, for the program, is *forever*.

We shouldn't continue to think, as many do, that the idea of personal responsibility and all of its expectations attaches as a characteristic to everyone merely reaching age 18 (or so) and, therefore, public and civic conditioning is no longer needed, or enforceable (or desirable?) At that age people are legally emancipated, can marry, vote, work, drive, and nearly everything else. Regardless of what they may *really* know or are capable of, in our society's view, people (somewhat magically) become fully responsible for their decisions and actions to themselves and to society. An under age 18 parent, for example, is understood as an unfortunate case, while at age 18, he is fully on his own and held to a world of responsibilities. If he fails at that point, he is held accountable in a big way, regardless of whether his knowledge, experiences, social competencies, and other traits have improved at all by his 18th birthday.

Consider, too, the not very rare situation of a young child (whom *everyone* accepts as less than responsible) shuffled during his youth from caretaker to caretaker, diverted by rough circumstances from focus at school, whose maturation is stymied by outside circumstances in nearly every aspect of his life and at all stages, and then having children of his own by age eighteen. (That early parenthood just *happened*, as so much of life just happens for most people most of the time.) Upon reaching adulthood that person is expected and *required* to be a fully legally responsible person regardless of his impaired personal, social, and civic development. Although, realistically, in little way prepared for adult, work, and social lives he is no longer an "innocent" in some people's eyes and expected to compete with the rest of the world and make his own way well.

Disadvantaged adult high school dropouts are presented with the same opportunities and decisions regarding voting, political and economic policy preferences, employment, child rearing, etc. as are economists, political scientists, Ivy League graduates, and those comfortably situated in the middle class. Not only that but they are expected to compete with all those others and *succeed!* If one of these new fully responsible (?) adults doesn't compete well and succeed it is her *own* damn fault (some think) and she deserves being crushed in the market, ignored in the political sphere, unemployed, destitute, divorced, estranged from her children, and worse.

These expectations of our youths (and most other people, in fact) seem more formal and righteous than real and practical. Experience and social science research show that these expectations are unfair for many people. We seem to have an unjustified expectation that attainment of legal age is sufficient to hold everyone fully responsible as a parent, voter, worker, neighbor, national citizen, global citizen, environmental steward, and the like, regardless of skill and maturity levels. Some people (but not all) receive quality guidance in their home environments. Some (but not all) are positively conditioned by teachers, coaches, and local traditions and mores. However, for many, the complexities, demands, superior competition, and often bad fortune of modern life make it difficult for them just to get by. They muddle through and have to be reasonably content to survive much less live right or well. It's fanciful to expect all of them to be successful much less become the "be the best they can be" when they incur obstacle upon obstacle. On top of all that the lowest capable, like everyone else, are in a competitive environment of dog-eat-dog with the most capable. Certainly wherever there are winners there have to be

losers, *no matter what* the absolute levels of ability of the participants. Even "A" quality people will be losers if they have to compete regularly with "A+" quality people.

Our flawed set of beliefs about responsibility reflects an inadequate understanding of civic conditioning. The short duration conditioning given to the disadvantaged youth described above is the extent of what we consider public duty with too little consideration of whether the conditioning given was *effective* or *sufficient*. There is too little consideration of whether longer and/or more sophisticated conditioning is needed or would be worthwhile to both him and to society. Those who have little more than mere survival skills are likely to be a drag in some sense on society itself in many ways—drawing on government and private aid and subsidies, being unproductive as a worker, being part of broken families, having children with diminished potentials, and representing lost value as a potential high quality citizen.

Those qualities mean nearly unavoidable negative financial consequences for taxpayers, a weakened lower class politically, and a fraying of the social fabric. Multiply this situation over multimillions of Americans and we have a major element of a declining and failing nation (according to comparative world statistics.) As a collective we're wasting potential energies, creativity, and social value. Even the elite see some of this as a problem of waste *if only* for the increased governmental expenditures (which it wants to eliminate or drastically cut.)

Many (most?) people need help to be the best that they can be. We need to think less of winners and losers and more of helping *everyone* be successful. People (and not necessarily formal government alone) helping people achieve success can be a win-win situation. A better understanding of the relationship of society to the individual is for *continuous* conditioning through all phases of human development for all aspects of people's experience. That's why we need conditioning programs which last forever and assume that most people need help most of the time. We want to make doing the right thing *easy* for everyone by providing the support and guidance for those needing it, for whatever reasons. At a minimum, the promotion of anxiety, fear, and docility by private citizens (and government) among workers and citizens for private agendas must be counterbalanced by appropriate education, conditioning, and *security enhancing* programs (i.e., a broad and healthy social safety net) for the little people.

Some people will cringe at more of what they call a "nanny state." They see the governmental role as mostly providing order so that "free" men (i.e., the elite, many of whom already start out with capital, training, and/or good luck) can exercise their ids and egos to the maximum. They are adverse to providing support to their potential competition. Consistent with the individualist philosophy, they believe that the little people losers are getting what they deserve. If they don't get by that's their own problem and their own fault.

The program's approach is to consider the interests of everyone, the elite as well as those of the little people, as a collective (for all of the good reasons that one supports a collective interest in the first place.) If one has that attitude then it makes great sense to make it *easy* for people to be good people and good citizens. Many people who get help may overcome the effects of a rigged system and will learn to help themselves be the best that they can be. Even better, having a better system for all will facilitate everyone being the best that they can be.

Civic conditioning of the sort contemplated here will be a big, long-term project. Even if we were to convince people on an intellectual level of the value of the movement we will still have to deal with the powerful force of habit, something which is often underrated as a factor of personal lives. Conditioning, of course, is just a form of habit creation. Americans, unfortunately, have been conditioned for generations by capitalist dynamics to be workers first and consumers second. Everything else is unimportant to the system. We work and then buy, then repeat that nearly every day for most of our lives. If we do anything directed towards personal and human needs, it comes from extraordinary personal motivation. A lot of people (a minority) *do* have this motivation but their lives are unnecessarily complex and stressful. A reworked society of the type proposed here can't rely just on extraordinary personal

motivations. The system's role habits are too powerfully (but not permanently) fixed. The program has to condition people with a broad, persistent approach to developing public citizens habits.

Getting a sufficient number of people to break their habits will not be easy and if we can't do it the program will be very much weakened. It is likely that many people (especially those of older generations), even those otherwise supportive of the program, will have well-established habits and attitudes which will restrain change. These people may not be nimble enough to recondition, so to speak. Even worse, some people's lives may be so psychologically and emotionally fixed with established beliefs and attitudes that they may be immune to new ideas and resist cognitive efforts and even more sophisticated conditioning influences. We may need to wait for these people to die off while we will work to condition their children. Of course, there will be some people *consciously* committed to the private citizen attitude and will not want to change, no matter what.

Where promoters of capitalist ideology and marketers use all kinds of means to inculcate in everyone capitalist (consumer) values nearly everywhere we live, learn, work, and play, the National Character movement will promote an alternative set of values, principles, and social identities implemented in its own ways. Guides modifying decision-making, behaviors, and identity can take a lot of forms including:

- 1) direct articulation of program ideas and principles
- 2) celebrity or public figure examples (i.e., role models)
- 3) media representations of positive behaviors (using popular music, movies, and TV and Internet productions, etc.)
- 4) Educational and training curriculums in schools, businesses, and workplaces and similar locations
- 5) emotional and psychological appeals oriented to people's value structures. (After all, the most attractive aspect of the program is a set of new values which ought to be appealing to nearly everyone.)
- 6) common standards (templates) of good parenting, etc.
- 7) nudging strategies (see below), and
- 8) cue-giving by charismatic and respected public figures. (See Chapter 8 regarding the role of the National Council.)

A major part of this conditioning will be in the form of “nudging” based on recent research into human choice behavior. It involves government (or society) framing *default* options for people where they may have a choice of a better option or a lesser one and most don't consciously act upon either. In that situation, the default option “selects,” in a sense, the good option for them. For example, automatically enrolling employees in a 401(k) plan (where they can *opt out* if they choose) has increased participation rates greatly—a good deal for nearly everybody. Ideally, there will be creative people who can invent other new approaches to promoting the public citizen attitude. (Maybe apps for the computer and mobile devices which prompt attention and reactions like some health-related ones do.)

The program's conditioning efforts may borrow some traditional marketing and public relations methods, too. There is no shortage of creative people in existing marketing and public relations firms who could be useful, if they support program ideas. (Unlike some traditional methods, however, the program will avoid any which are exploitative or deceptive. The program has to represent Credibility.) Professionals in these areas already know how to push the right buttons to get people to unconsciously

accept a consumer culture where continuously buying marginally satisfying new products and services has become their *meaning* in life. Our marketing and PR techniques may need to create the new social ethos by "overwriting," so to speak, such private citizen values and identities with public citizen ones.

The program's conditioning efforts will apply to both getting the public to buy into the public citizen attitude and counterbalancing the deeply-entrenched private attitude to make it less imposing upon the rest of us. There may be some models we can draw upon. Think, for example, what anti-smoking efforts have achieved and how they have achieved it. Smoking, in a sense, is a private citizen activity. Many people like it even if it causes harm to the smokers themselves, causes harm to non-smokers, and adds costs to the health system. They decide to smoke partly by choice, partly by habit, and partly by marketing manipulation by manufacturers and sellers. Non-smokers, of course, know that smoking creates externalities—e.g., harm to them from secondary smoke. The pushback-type response of non-smokers over the past couple of decades or so has been to:

- 1) accept people voluntarily doing whatever they want to *themselves by themselves*
- 2) condition habitual smokers to quit by educational, emotional, and similar means
- 3) regulate marketing,
- 4) regulate secondhand smoke affects (e. g., public building smoking bans, etc.), and
- 5) deliberately increase costs, via taxes.

This effort has been fairly successful even as it has been opposed by special interests. Here are some other areas where we may want to use similar conditioning efforts for the good of individuals and the collective:

- a) getting people to focus on improving their health and that of their families (for their own good but also to cut health care costs for society and to improve the quality of life overall.)
- b) improving educational and skill levels (to increase value and flexibility in the job markets and in volunteer organizations, at a minimum, and to increase the quality of citizenship activities, like voting, public-service, etc.)
- c) training for quality business-related relationships like cooperative management-labor relations, positive business-consumer interactions, responsible business-government interactions, responsible business-the planet interactions, etc.
- d) training for good citizenship including ecological and environmental consciousness; effective and intelligent political participation and voting; consumer and financial management skills; and quality parenting, homeownership, marriages, and pet ownership.
- e) beautifying homes and neighborhoods to increase pride in community and property values.

A lot of people may be grateful for such comprehensive and practical conditioning efforts. Some may feel that they don't really need any conditioning but will support it for those who do. Some may just need a hospitable environment for their *latent* public citizen attitudes to activate. A large set of others—in the multi-millions, probably—may not be responsive at all to social conditioning. The masses, for example, likely will be indifferent—neither affected nor in opposition. On the other hand, a lot *will* resent the efforts, not because they are not well-intended or of good quality, but just because they don't want *anyone* to suggest to them ways to improve their lives or their society. It's a psychological disposition and a well-known component of America's individualist culture. (Think of the leader of a major motorcycle

enthusiast group acknowledging being "100% in favor of wearing helmets but 100% against" a statute which requires it.) That's foolish, of course, but okay. Program conditioning is not meant to be any sort of mandate. And, the nudging-type of conditioning which may comprise much of the effort is pretty much unobtrusive and invisible.

When it comes to the social ethos we don't need to reach everyone. (All the conditioning in other areas like as noted above will be valuable no matter how many or how few want to participate in it-- assuming a positive cost-value ratio applies.) For the social ethos conditioning, we only need a "tipping point" number of people which may be as low as 15% of Americans. For the most part that conditioning may take little more than creating a habit of conscious alertness to private attitudes and acting upon BMR.

Millions of Americans are *already* balanced in their private/public attitude and have no need to be (re)conditioned. The masses, we know, will be indifferent. For all of the rest of the public, if the marketers now can mold people to be good workers and good consumers, our specialists can likely influence them to be good citizens. If that 15% of Americans is enough, a paradigm shift may occur where the public citizen attitude becomes the "default" one.

6) A Reward System: The capitalist system incentivizes only private citizen activity and it rewards with profits. It works, of course, for a lot of people (but not all, or even most.) It encourages will, ambition, innovation, and effort in economic transactions with (at least) some spillover benefits for the collective. However, it does nothing to encourage public citizen behavior and even discourages it. We need a complementary reward system for public citizen activities because private citizens get rewards (profits) and public citizens get a kick in the ass! This is not good policy. We need to reward people for public benefit actions like the system rewards private citizens with profits for capitalist activities.

A reward system is a form of conditioning but does a bit more. Of course, it acts as an incentive guiding people towards the public citizen behaviors we want. But it addresses fairness issues, too, as it gives something back to those performing public citizen activities where the capitalist system ignores or disadvantages them (a morality issue.) It also supports a sense of personal and social pride where people doing the best that they can do can become conscious of themselves as winners. Rewarding them shows that society appreciates their efforts (a framing issue.)

It's also not fair to have private citizens reap benefits for activities which may compromise or oppose the common good while public citizen activities result in exploitation or disadvantage. Although there are some rewards now (both public and privately-sponsored) for public citizen activity--charity and public service awards, honors for scientific and academic contributions to society, etc., there are too few rewards for simple public citizen activities like being a good citizen, a good parent, a good worker, a good boss, etc. We need to establish some kind of economic and non-economic rewards which offset, to some degree, the disadvantages which sometimes attend to public citizen activities. Think of the subsidies offered by government to purchasers of energy-efficient cars and appliances, for example. We can do more and include rewards for even small life activities like good parenting and the like.

Here are some examples of how we might reward public citizen behavior:

-Tax breaks for those who minimize their healthcare expense demands on the (taxpayer-supported, at least) medical system by completing a lifelong checklist of requirements and behaviors for themselves and their families which keep them both healthier and are less costly to the system (in the mid-long terms).

-Tax breaks for those conforming to best practices templates developed for good parenthood, intelligent homeownership (including energy and environmentally-friendly behaviors), quality customer service, consumer-friendly business practices, fair management-labor relations, responsible pet ownership, etc.

- Reductions in service bills for enhanced recycling and waste management efforts.
- Prizes for reducing energy consumption and the like.

We can administer much of the reward system by providing credits, deductions, and exclusions through the tax system alone. However, creative types may come up with a host of other strategies and ideas using game-like activities and consumer-type incentives like contests, coupons, rebates, and the like. Done right, these reward systems will act as win-win propositions for society and individuals. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of this kind of conditioning.)

Not only does the capitalist incentive system discourage public citizen behavior but it implicitly is *disrespectful* to those people who choose not to, or cannot, compete in the marketplace. For instance, a shady businessman pushing the limits of legality can make big money and get public renown while a highly competent businesswoman trying to balance work and family obligations is demoted or penalized. Doctors who own testing facilities and push expensive and unnecessary tests on patients may make double profits while more responsible and professional doctors lag way behind in earnings. (See Chapter 7 for more discussion of the consequences of private and public activities.) Doing the right things should not result in disadvantages! Good guys should finish first! People ought to feel good about doing the best they can do whatever roles they have!

Having a formal rewards system is likely to make people feel good about being good citizens, parents, workers, bosses, managers, community members, etc. Since public citizens and those who do good (or want to) make up the large majority of all Americans we should not take them for granted. It makes good sense to focus on them by rewarding great small life activities and making it *easy* for them to "Be Great" and "Do Good," in a social sense. These people who take pride in themselves and their social activities deserve to know that the rest of us are proud of them.

7. Bringing Everyone into the Movement: Since we are envisioning a collective consciousness and a Team America that means including (nearly) everyone in America. (Some people--intense private citizens, alpha dogs, etc?--may want to exclude themselves, for various personal reasons.) We may not have any new social ethos without having most active Americans and representatives of nearly every class and division, including the elite, buying into the concepts. In order to succeed the movement must "move the culture," so to speak, with at least tipping point numbers. (Note: this does not necessarily include the masses as they may not be activated by anything and will go with the flow.) The program will lack credibility and probably will not have enough leverage to work without a pretty wide *consensus* about the program's value. (See Chapter 8 for a description of the *Grand Reconciliation Project*, which acts as a fundamental consensus-development project.) Members of the collective will want to feel a connectedness and a kinship. They will want to know that their friends, coworkers, neighbors, bosses, leaders, etc. have bought into the movement themselves. Workers and others will want to know that other people like themselves are pushing for the same goals.

We want to be as inclusive as possible for a number of reasons:

- 1) The more people who participate the more likely we are to develop the *quantity* of leverage we need for effective pushback.
- 2) Having as many people as possible share the values of the program, especially across classes and groups, makes the social fabric bigger and better.
- 3) Facilitating a partnership of sorts between the elite and the lower classes to develop a cross-class consensus so that the movement doesn't function as mere *class* conflict (a probable lose-lose proposition, or a win-lose one in favor of the elite.)

4) It is important psychically for everyone to have the *opportunity* to participate even those whose statuses and capabilities may be impaired, (e.g., the underclasses, as described in Chapter 2.) Everyone wants to be respected and have a chance to be heard. The sense of ownership of the program by everyone will help build credibility and legitimacy.

5) We want to release the latent creativity and energy of the many people who may need the special encouragement and support of the movement to open up. And,

6) Having a broad and welcoming Team likely will reduce frictions as we focus on our commonalities rather than the differences--the major commonality being a commitment to pushing back upon an *attitude/ideology*, and not necessarily upon the identities of other people or a class of them.

The movement has to be framed at a meta-level in order not to be viewed as just another (large) special interest or as a mere opposition group to the elite. It can't be viewed as an "East Coast/West Coast (?) intellectual group, or a mere "liberal," "progressive," "youth" or other similarly designated social category. We have to demonstrate that the program is a national *general* interest group meant to function above the zero-sum fray which characterizes our society now. It has to be framed as an offering of a new set of ideas for everyone to find value in. It has to be viewed as for the benefit of (nearly) everyone and welcoming of all classes and groups of people including those private citizens willing to try to balance their own lives. Getting people to recognize themselves as participants in a common project having an emphasis on *fairness to all* may reorient for the better their perceptions and beliefs about others.

If there *is* to be any conflict at all we want it to be reorganized into that of private versus public citizen attitude and private citizen elite versus the lower classes. Those dividers are *not* trivial and typically involve "two dogs-one bone" issues. That type of conflict makes objective sense as there is likely to be some degree of friction, at least, among the small group of those who have always had their way and the multimillions who have never had their way.

Nevertheless, although the elite has waged implicit class warfare against the lower classes for nearly forever, the National Character Program is not intended to coalesce the lower classes against the elite in a competitive posture. It is important for private citizens/the elite to understand that the movement's achievements of BMR will not come solely or primarily at their expense. There will need to be some shifting of wealth and influence from the elite to the rest of us, of course, but the elite needs to recognize that it will get value out of the movement as well, as detailed in Chapter 2.

Creating an American Team may be one of the more difficult goals to achieve. A sense of collective is not much part of our historical American culture. Bridging class differences to the extent proposed here has rarely occurred anywhere at any time. Deeply-set antagonisms exist among political partisans, regions, conservative/liberal ideologues, and other social categories. Many of these social categories are tribal-like, with various "we-versus-them" elements. Some dichotomies like the conservative versus liberal, and Red versus Blue State ones are only "soft" constructions, so to speak, as explained in Chapter 2 and maybe more amenable to dissolution. Adherents may be drawn to new and different tribal-like constructions (like an American Team) by a reorientation of the we-them dichotomy. They may evolve out of the stale social categories we have now which are making less and less sense.

What does make excellent sense is a set of only two dichotomies--elite versus lower-class and a private versus public citizen ones. If we can make this kind of reorientation, the other social categorizations will weaken. However, for Americans, the existing *class* dichotomy will not weaken much but it will become at least *visible and salient* where it is not now (primarily due to elite ideological manipulation. In most other nations, the class hierarchy is openly acknowledged and recognized.) The classes will continue to exist in a constructive tension while the private--public citizen category will be the primary subject of the balancing concept.

The section below and Chapters 8 and 9 will expand upon the strategies we can use to bring everyone into the movement. However, it is likely that some in the lower classes will need extra help in participating. We may have to have a more sufficient social security system (safety net) in place so that the lower classes don't have to spend all their time just trying to get by in their personal lives. Given hospitable circumstances they may contribute to the collective good, if only from reduced stress, anxiety, and insecurities. What effects can we expect just from that? There may be:

- 1) A reduction of domestic violence and drug, alcohol, and gambling abuses caused, in large part, by unemployment and financial stresses.
- 2) A reduction in street crime due to enhanced employment and business opportunities in the economy.
- 3) Improved economic productivity from a more capable labor force.
- 4) Fewer demands on the public benefits programs resulting in lower taxes; etc. A lot of people will have better personal lives while society, at a minimum, will benefit in governmental cost savings outcomes. And,
- 5) A potentially more alert, active group which may significantly contribute to the pushback efforts and public citizen activities, in general.

8) Developing Leadership and Bridgers: The movement needs two major sets of leaders—organizational leaders and bridgers. The organizational set will include: 1) executive producer types who understand how to take a conception--like the vision of the National Character Project—and make it a practical reality. That will include setting up the Councils, the technological communications methods, and the like. (Chapter 9 has a detailed list of objectives and a timeline.) 2) traditional managers and administrators who will operate the various institutions and programs, regarding physical space needs, infrastructures, personnel matters, fundraising, etc. And, 3) influencers who know how to communicate ideas well and to persuade. The other set has bridgers who, like influencers, can communicate and persuade well but, more significantly, *recognize dividers* and how to *reframe* them. Those dividers may include the various ways people see and think in overly simple (limited) or misleading ways and the organizational characteristics of those many activists and progressive groups which are doing their own things.

Bridgers need to: 1) influence people to think clearer and smarter about how they categorize people and their social lives (i. e., reframing), 2) expose the invidious politics of *intentional* mis-framing and weaken it, and 3) bring the various existing activists and progressive groups together into a coordinated network having a single focus. That network will be the Local Council and part of what the bridgers will do is “node-building.” Node-building means constructing parent-like overseer/coordinating entities over existing local and regional groups. (See Chapter 8 for more on this Council and Chapter 9 on node-building.) For example, the block clubs of a neighborhood would have a parent organization providing coordination and support services. It would have templates for organizing new clubs, streamlining interaction, and providing a focus for them on what they want to accomplish. That parent organization will be a subunit of a larger regional entity which provides the same or similar services to the first level parent, and so on. Ultimately, there will be a single, well-coordinated network. The node relationships can be set up on a geographical basis or specific content areas, or both.

The key point is that the *whole network comes under the brand of the project*. Even though each entity may have its own specific focus and jurisdiction it will be in harmony with program principles of BMR and Smartness. Not only that, but what it does is under the auspices of the program and entities will subsume their local identities to that of the program in most circumstances. In other words, their focus is aligned with program focus and everyone coordinates with the program's National Councils. What has to

be accomplished with this networking is the creation of **leverage** from the size and coordination of the network, a clear **focus** on obtaining BMR and Smartness, and being **accessible** to the public.

The framing aspect of bridging dividers deals with the inevitable human subjectivity which influences what people consider knowledge and understanding. It's useful to think of the social world as filled with all kinds of cognitive and unconscious level frames which create beliefs and attitudes. There is so much variety and differences in intensity that social discourse and interaction is hobbled right from the start. No wonder it is so hard for anybody to get along with anybody else! Nearly everyone imagines *their* way of seeing and thinking as true. Other people who don't share their views are either disingenuous or just screwed up. Good bridgers will recognize the specific frames, get people to understand other people's frames, and find a way to harmonize them. That may mean convincing one party to adopt another's frame or constructing a meta-frame incorporating elements of each frame and getting everyone to accept that accommodation. (See below for more of this.)

Another function of bridging deals with personality politics and self-interest. Some people frame the way they do to *intentionally* encourage "mis-framings" in others for personal agendas. Think of the populist politicians who invidiously frame the "haves versus the have-nots," establishment types categorizing everybody as conservative versus liberal, lobbyists for the military-industrial complex who categorize us "American good guys" versus a slew of foreign bad guys, religious leaders demonizing followers of other religions or atheists, etc.

These people benefit in self-interested ways from creating us versus them categories fomenting fear, hatred, and discrimination even when the articulated differences are actually objectively trivial or invalid. It's so common for purported leaders to create and maintain us versus them categories just to justify their existence that we can presume that it is the primary motivation for most social dividers. (Habit may play a big role, as well.). The status of these leaders relies upon maintaining that us versus them relationship and some may even oppose harmony with other groups for their own selfish purposes.

Organizational leaders

The first set of program leadership—executive producers, managers, communicators, etc.—will build out the program from the skeletal outline presented in this Action Manual. They will design, fund, and operate the formal structures and processes of the movement. They will deal with conventional and new organizational issues like:

- 1) building the communications network to distribute the program's ideas
- 2) establishing the various Councils
- 3) constructing the digital infrastructure and communication means
- 4) building the Local Council neighborhood by neighborhood, group by group, subject matter by subject matter, and establishing its pushback functions
- 5) setting up the selection processes for the Council leadership and membership roles
- 6) organizing and directing the Grand Reconciliation project
- 7) establishing the National University
- 8) obtaining funding and enlisting volunteers; and more. (See Chapter 8 for more details.)

Some of these people have to be visionaries and social cue-givers. Others have to be problem solvers, organizational architects, and engineers with traditional organizational skills who also understand the crucial virtues of team play, collective coordination, focus, and accessibility. They need to grasp the what and why of the National Character Project, imagine what can be accomplished, and make it all a reality.

No mere program, set of ideas, or even detailed plans are any good without the right people to bring them to life. The right people for the National Character Program are probably already out there in American life. They are dedicated and competent producers, activists, geeks and techies, managers and administrators, visionaries, and millions of ordinary citizens who want significant social change and have some public service sensibilities. A vision, like that of the Action Manual, may inspire them to participate in Something Great.

Some people are already actively promoting, in their own ways, *some* of the concepts articulated here. However, they are writing phrase, sentence, and paragraph clippings, so to speak. No one is articulating a *complete Story* of significant social change. Even after adding up the separate contributions of all of these people over a lot of years, there is still no complete, coherent, plausible Story. (See Chapter 1 for a fuller explanation of why there *has* to be a Story.) There has to be an overarching, accessible narrative arc (so to speak), a larger and more developed set of characters than we have now, judicious editing (i.e., intellectual and professional shaping), and a plausible satisfying resolution which flows naturally and practically from the narrative. The story really has to make sense, be true to life, and be mostly original. There is no fantasy element to significant social change.

That there *has* to be a unified, coherent, accessible movement is what the Action Manual is about. Refer again to Apple's innovative model in the consumer computer space of what can be done with the right vision, design creativity, people/consumer perspectives, and attention to detail. That model was essentially an inspired synthesis, in a sense, of existing resources. Arguably, a similar opportunity for significant advancement in governance and social relations may be waiting to happen now. The demand is definitely there. The materials seem to be there. Under the right circumstances, the *will* of millions of Americans to work for it may be there. Adding a good story outline (vision and plan) to the mix may result in the synthesis we want.

For the Story to play out the way we want it to happen there will have to be people who are *team* players who can flesh out the narratives and coordinate them. Cue-givers and charismatic types will start out by articulating the basic ideas to the public. Others will come up with tentative templates of BMR and Smartness principles. Think of templates for "Good Corporate Citizen, Respectful Campaigning, Good Employer, Steward of the Environment," and the like. Most people will understand what those things are once they are articulated in an accessible manner.

Big ego types with the right intentions and character who now run major corporations, organizations, and governments may populate our executive producer group. Other, lower-profile people from all over may be inspired to lend their managerial and other skills to lead and organize. There may be technological experts who will address the infrastructure and digital needs, especially in creating basic systems and protocols as a start. A growing social entrepreneurial class now becoming prominent in global-wide problem-solving projects may bring new ideas and resources to this movement's organizing and problem-solving needs. (See more on the building of the program in Chapter 9.)

And, there are a lot of potential influencers, some with prominent statuses in the political, entertainment, academic, and cultural spheres, who may act as advisors, cue givers, educators, and role models. Think of the United Nations, former President Jimmy Carter, Ralph Nader, the new Catholic Pope Francis, entertainer/activist Bono, economist Jeffrey Sachs, and similar others who seem to have the right intentions and attitudes. A lot of the people already active in organizations promoting public citizen values may just need to be oriented to the concept of a coordinated, focused National Character paradigm

to become part of the team of program leaders. The program itself eventually will develop its own home-grown leaders, especially a younger group, from the academic program (the National University) it will set up. They will be National Character Program specialists.

There are good reasons to think that a new social movement can be an opportunity for a 21st-Century set of American *heroes* to emerge, much like those heroes of earlier similar social movements—Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, A. Philip Randolph, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Betty Friedan, Emma Goldman, Simone de Beauvoir, Germaine Greer, Barbara Ehrenreich, Bayard Rustin, Larry Kramer, and the like. (See the section on the National Council in Chapter 8 for a list of potential contemporary candidates for the major cue-giving group.)

Bridgers

Program bridging is meant to: 1) break down some of the existing social dividers which cause friction and inhibit rational governance, 2) form a new social category of an American Team consisting of the classes and private and public citizens, and 3) create a Local Council network by building nodes coordinating activist groups. Some of our present dividers have historical bases no longer relevant. Some are based on tradition or social habits. Most, to some degree, have emotional aspects as in fear of the other, unfamiliarity, and/or mistrust. Many, probably, have some personal or group *power politics* basis. That means that someone or some group is benefiting from the us versus them scenario. That includes the class hierarchy divider, especially, but also political partisan and religion categories. (See below for more on this.)

The country has already spent decades reducing the tribal consequences of the race and gender categories. Sexual orientation as a category is starting to dissolve now. Yet, there are too many others which still divide which are counterproductive to a 21st-Century America. They include major party political partisanship; 18th-Century-based political ideologies like conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, etc.; economic winners versus losers; and the Red versus Blue State regional dichotomy. These kinds of dividers are typically manifested in strong emotions, psychologies, habits, traditions, archaic beliefs, and even *deliberate* invidious politics. (Yes, some self-interested parties promote these dividers to maintain status and leadership positions for themselves as “protectors” of their group in regard to the “wicked” others. See more below.) We are not going to have a real collective, an American Team, or an organized lower-class group with strong enough pushback capability until these dividers are eliminated or significantly minimized.

The frictions and problems caused by some of these (mostly invalid) subjective dividers are self-inflicted social hurts, in a sense. (Private citizens with their own agendas who deliberately maintain divisive politics are an entirely different problem. See below.) The dividers deriving from historically-based motivations of fear of the other, unfamiliarity, and mistrust provide almost no objective benefits to the groups themselves and can be overcome with “improved” subjective views, you might say.

Bridgers may be able to deal with these kinds of dividers with strategies involving education, interactions, and breaking of social habits. (See below, and especially Chapter 9, for more details on these strategies.) Social dividers are especially counterproductive in that they take away focus and resources from *real* problems which bedevil the lower classes (especially)--income/wealth disparities, unfair allocations of capital/productivity, insufficient political influence, lack of human meanings and respect, etc. The worst consequence of these dividers is that they destroy the organization and focus that the little people *absolutely* need to push back capitalism and they critically weaken the lower classes as a group.

Fomenting trivial dividers (e.g., national party affiliations, religions, regionalisms, etc.) as sources of conflict among the lower classes is a long-established control strategy of the elite class. Usually, it creates (or promotes) the dividers in ideological or tribal terms—"us against the Commies; us against the godless; us against the terrorists; us against the conservatives (or) liberals; us against the labor unions and

consumer rights advocates;" etc. In nearly every case, the elite tactics exaggerate and demonize group differences or turn complex, nuanced, multi-perspective realities into simplistic, black/white scenarios laden with emotional components (especially fear) to divide the little people amongst themselves.

The benefits to the elite are: 1) distracting the lower classes into thinking that their important problems are caused by other groups of *their same class*, 2) diffusing potential consolidation of lower class political and governmental influence by getting members to turn against each other, and 3) obtaining identity-based loyalties of sorts of the Marys and Johns to the major political parties (controlled by the elite) for purposes of manipulation and control in electoral and policymaking activities. In other words, these faux dividers are *red herrings*. They are used as ideological tools of manipulation to distract the lower classes from consideration of the most significant divider *by far*--the private citizen versus the public citizen attitude.

We need to recognize this kind of class politics for what it is and apply strategies to disrupt and weaken it. The lower class needs to see social reality more accurately, to realize their commonalities, to develop a class consciousness, and coordinate their resources into a unit with real leverage. The bridgers will utilize strategies to reframe these current social categories into more valid ones. They will consolidate the lower classes into an American Team and diminish the ideological and emotional weapons used by the elite and special interests to manipulate them. They will organize the public citizen network to exercise pushback functions.

Bridgers will start out by articulating the paradigm's categories, primarily the private-public citizen distinction, the class hierarchy, the pushback concept as a political strategy, and Smartness in governance and social relations. Bridgers will take a critical look at how people currently see and think about social realities and identities and explore optional views and, in some instances, create new ways of looking and seeing these things. The intent is to get people to understand that a new way of looking at social reality *is* a realistic means for them to obtain significant change. They will begin a conversation about the American Team and start drawing people out of their existing tribal affiliations. For some people, hopefully many, a new vision of things may be empowering.

Bridgers (although not termed that then) were crucial in the civil rights and feminist movements. People who were sensitive to the social and moral invalidity and harmfulness of the racial and gender dividers worked to overcome both the subjective component of the mis-framings and the politics of them. The politics was easy enough to understand (although not to breakdown and overcome.) Illuminating the subjective component was way more complex and controversial. (Entire academic fields of study have developed in the post-1970's around these issues--*critical* black, gender, and queer studies, for example.)

Individualism/capitalism is about self-interest and exploitation and subordinating entire classes of people like racial minorities and women was a natural and very efficient "business" thing to do. Using simple and broad categorizations like race and gender efficiently promoted elite and male interests much like lawsuit class actions efficiently promote consumer or large group interests in the legal area. They are high leverage strategies. Getting millions of Americans to work for nothing (slavery), for example, was fairly easy and very lucrative. Subordinating an entire gender of Americans to male domination was fairly easy, too, and provided great psychological satisfaction (for the males.) Even the lowest level male could be "King" of his household castle.

While the discriminations were expressed as cognitive framing matters--that is, based on social reality "facts"--the underlying motivation, primarily, was power politics. These frames satisfied the economic and ego needs of dominant groups--the financial elite, of course, and the entire male gender (but especially the elite ones.) They asserted simple and broad cognitive frames like race and gender hierarchies which were easy to understand and implement. They declared, "Whites are naturally superior to blacks; Males are naturally superior to females; and that's all to it!" The black/female "subordinates" had to comply. (It was only "natural.")

These subjective *mis*-framings by dominant groups authoritatively supported factual beliefs about race and gender (both valid and invalid) which were maintained in bogus science forms, traditions, habits, and pure ignorance. For example, for generations (or centuries, even) society (elite and male dominated) held certain factual beliefs about gender traits which generated corresponding social *rules*. Certain male traits--physical and emotional strength, aggressiveness, rationality and deliberation capabilities, etc. led to male only roles, privileges, etc. *as males*. Males were the politicians, military, and business persons. The defined set of female traits--physical and emotional frailty, docility, lack of intellectual and deliberation capabilities, etc. meant females had their own roles and privileges, *only* as females--homemakers, mothers, and church auxiliary members.

For many generations, it was a social belief that men were qualitatively different from females. They worked outside in the business world, owned property, handled the more dangerous and complex chores, and were more rational. When it came to the concept of voting and government participation, for example, which implied certain civic traits like interests at stake in political affairs and government, knowledge of candidates and issues, rational decision-making, strong personal presence, and similar others, males were determined (by guess who!?) to have the requisite traits and females did not. One of the legal rules which flowed, consequently, from all of this was that males could vote and females couldn't. And females, furthermore, were not qualified to participate in government for similar reasons. Similar rules and discriminations followed from this single, invalid gender frame: 1) men could own property; women could not; 2) men could legally beat and rape their wives; women didn't really *want* to reciprocate; and many more.

Even if all of those beliefs about gender trait differences *were* valid in general (and in actuality they were not) it was still illogical to *assume* (as the law did) that *no female at all* had traits suitable for politics and government or to own property. Not *one*! Even if a specific female demonstrated conclusively that she *had* the requisite traits to participate suitably in politics and government and could responsibly own property, etc. it made *no difference* as the rule "sliced," so to speak, into male/female categories only and *not* more rational politically aware/unaware categories, etc.

From one perspective, this is a strange slice. Although the expressed criteria for voting and political participation, for example, included interest, knowledge, and reason, the belief that males were merely *better* equipped with those traits did not logically mean that females *totally* failed that criteria and that *no female at all* could (or be allowed to even prove that she could) meet that criteria. Conditioning voting and political participation on awareness makes *objective* sense; making it conditioned solely on gender does not. (Might there have been one or more males who lacked interest, knowledge, etc. of politics yet still was allowed to vote?) Nevertheless, the gender-based rule was simple to understand and enforce for governmental purposes even as it illogically and unfairly disenfranchised nearly one half of the population.

Having a (dubious) general belief about gender traits and making a blanket rule based on them towards a set of civic criteria is a classic logical fallacy (The Sweeping Generalization fallacy.) Other examples of bad logic: Just because women are (or may be) better homemakers than men doesn't mean that *they* have to be homemakers and men don't. If there are some females who *can* drive big trucks and want to, their gender should not mean that they should be prohibited from it because the gender is generally smaller and weaker than males. (Can *one or more of them* drive well or not? If so, why *shouldn't* she drive?)

Similar framing and logic characterized the situation leading to the civil rights movement. Regardless of what (valid or invalid) beliefs people had about women and blacks *in general* they didn't logically compel the conclusion that merely *being* black and/or female (in the 19th-20th-Century) barred one from the judiciary or professional sports. Performing in a court of law or in a sports arena had nothing objective to do with race or gender. Recognizing the invalid framing, bad logic, and the power politics

and getting people to understand it was much of what the feminist and civil rights movements were all about.

Thinking which doesn't make philosophical or practical sense because of invalid framing and/or bad logic can sometimes be attributed to human error but, more often (as in race, gender and the individualist-collective conflict), it represents efficient self-serving political power intentions. The rights protagonists eventually educated most people to understand that this mis-framing was invalid, immoral, harmful, and had to be changed. They made society "Wake Up!" Once the experiences of skin color and gender were no longer a legitimate social frame of experience, we then had black/white marriages; black/white coworkers, the elimination of segregated public facilities; black and women CEO's, black and women sports stars, and a black US president. The irrational frames which couldn't conceive of those things previously dissolved (in large part) as did the power relationships.

In each of the two major examples noted above of subjective reframing (race and gender) the existing subjective dividers dissolved, essentially by mind "reprogramming." That reprogramming may take the form of intellectual argument (e.g., "deconstruction" of the cognitive frames by demonstrating their limitations and biases, insistence on quality facts, valid logic), drawing attention to the harms (e.g., protests, rallies), and proposals for substantive change (e.g., lobbying for regulations and similar means) What strategies to use may be issue specific. For example, females never had to object to separate washrooms while blacks did. Blacks had to object to racial partitioning of public transportation but females didn't; etc. Arguably, a recipe for successful social reframing is to expose and break bad frames, frame new and better ones, and adapt to the new power relationships.

Program bridgers will focus on breaking and/or modifying other more contemporary invalid or inadequate frames. (See Chapter 9 for more detailed discussions of the bridger roles.) The major one by far, of course, is the idea of the naturalness and sufficiency of the individualist/capitalist ethos. The movement *itself* (in large part) is a subjective reframing of reality (like race and gender have been reframed over past decades) oriented to the economic and political spheres. Some of those targets may be:

1) The social category of rich *versus* the poor. (The private versus public citizen frame is more accurate and useful.)

2) The 1% versus 99%. (Same as above.)

3) Conservative versus liberal. (While the Classic conservative/liberal positions *are* valid and useful, the commonplace understandings are exceptionally vague, excessively freighted with emotional and habitual elements, and more harmful to quality discourse than not. It is a commonplace, for example, that conservatives are anti-regulation and that liberals are pro. Yet, analyses of the entire range of regulations would likely find both conservative and liberal supporters. Some purported anti-regulatory businesses are actually big proponents of regulation--as long as it advances *their* interests. This conservative/liberal divider is certainly invalid in this area, and in many others, too.)

4) Red State versus Blue State and Republicans versus Democrats. (These concepts, too, like those above, are vague, etc. and hardly useful for serious discourse.)

5) *My* religion versus *your* religion. (This category slices poorly. What is the real significance of separately held historical or spiritual beliefs when the real essence of religion for everybody is in the *shared functions* of comfort from the experience of mortality and tragedy and the benefits of a social community. How important should it be to *anybody* (except maybe leader types who possibly benefit from an us/them conflict) the minute doctrinal differences among the major religions? See below for more on this point.)

Each of the frame dichotomies, and other dividers like abortion and same-sex marriage positions, have one or more of these traits—they are simplistic and limited, crude and misleading, fake and/or ambiguous, and/or philosophically invalid. Most function as significant social dividers which we have characterized as harmful to program goals, as explained above. They perpetrate elements of irrationality which inhibits a Smarter society. Bridging these dividers may provide (among other benefits) a pathway out of the extreme partisanship, divisiveness, hatefulness, and dysfunctional governance which characterizes our present society.

In principle, bridging subjective framing is pretty simple conceptually—it's getting people to see and think *clearly* about matters that they may have been seeing incorrectly or in muddled fashion before. It's getting them to see the essential limitations of any *one* way of looking at things and to rely on multiple perspectives, particularly when dealing with major social issues and problems. In practice, however, accomplishing these subjective revisions may be very difficult especially on a broad and permanent basis. People, for good reasons, like things simple and easy. Black/white factual and moral scenarios are much preferred to nuanced ones with factual complexity. Some might say that we can view our governance processes in a simple but wrong way *or* a more complex but more useful way. Choosing one approach or the other has consequences. There may be millions of Americans who will select the former choice. That is one of the problems the program is trying to address. Somehow, somehow, we have to Smarten up as a society or we will decline in both quality and quantity of life.

Keep in mind that the bridgers don't have to reach everybody. Even among that large segment which we *do* have to reach, we don't have to address everyone individually. Most people rely upon leaders, authoritative figures, and other cue-givers for guidance. We can focus on those influencers, for the most part. Some people are good at seeing frames and reworking them, like the pioneers in race and gender relations did. Reorienting *thinking* may not be as difficult as, say, altering economic situations or other similar tangible matters. Bridgers will have nimble minds, empathy, comfortability with multiple perspectives, boldness, braveness, and persuasiveness. They will be creative in coming up with with the multiple strategies to address the right audiences. Those strategies will include intellectual argument, teaching, conditioning, and more creative techniques.

For dealing with the power politics aspect of this framing issue bridgers will have to have different strategies. Beyond direct appeals to organization members, bridgers may have to focus on influencing cue-givers like traditional tribal-like leaders who control the divider-type organizations we've been critiquing. This includes leaders in the churches, labor unions, business groups, national and local political parties. It might be hard to *reform* these self-interested private citizens, as that would mean for many of them, that they would have to relinquish the approaches which got them their prominent positions in the first place. If they can't or won't "reinterpret" their organizations' roles in a collective, advanced society they need to be challenged. That will include strategies to expose and undercut recalcitrant leaders and find replacements as necessary.

Another strategy may be to reframe the *narratives* about the "us versus them" situations they have maintained and assert new ones, more collectively-oriented. This may require communication techniques to go past the leaders *directly* to their members and explain credibly that their leaders are misleading them. That might include undermining the theoretical bases of the "old schoolers" and delegitimizing their personal fiefdoms, so to speak. Perhaps it will take the development of a new generation of 21st-Century leaders oriented towards collective interests to replace the archaic leadership who are satisfying their own private agendas.

Sandboxing of Religion

Let's take a brief look at how these concepts may specifically apply to not atypical tribal-like organized religions. Religious differences have fueled some of the worst social frictions for no *good*

reasons. (Demonizing and/or killing other human beings because they believe in three beings in God instead of one, or that only one set of disciples of a supreme ruler is legitimate instead of a larger group are *not* supported by good reasons.) Taking a meta-level perspective, many philosophers and social scientists accept that religions exist for the *same essential* purposes for all humans: 1) they help members ease the burden of contemplation of mortality and personal existential responsibility for their own lives, and 2) they establish a social community to provide psychological and emotional support for members especially at life altering moments—birth, marriage, crisis, and death. All of the other aspects of religions—historical narratives and beliefs, symbolism, rituals, etc. are essentially incidental and irrelevant to these two fundamental functions.

Even though many of the incidental and nonessential religious beliefs and practices (evolution denial, cross-sect marriages, etc.) are subject to justified criticism and ridicule by nonbelievers, the value of what religion means to most people as existential human beings is hard to deny. Life (and death) is hard, uncertain, sad at times, and often scary and overwhelming. If there is something (e.g., religion) which makes these things easier to handle (at least emotionally and psychologically) then they should be *exalted* by everyone. In other words, religion provides crucial support for a lot of people who need what its essence provides and society should support anything which makes life easier for people to handle. In other words, religions and religious communities help most people get by regarding common existential concerns even while their incidental beliefs and manifestations vary greatly (and unimportantly.)

It is the differences among these incidental beliefs, however, which tend to cause tribal frictions. Those incidentals also impose into areas which ought certainly to be out of their jurisdictions. Reasonable people, for example, would think that killing a neighbor just because he believes in a different authority figure than someone else is absurd. There is no reason for religions to be much concerned about science and governance. Religions have moral dimensions which help maintain their social communities but there is not much need for that to impose into the public sphere, at least for morality which is parochial to that group.

Allowing these incidentals to trump matters of science and practical facts, policymaking, and sociological matters is just *asking for* opposition and ridicule from both other religions and the larger public group as a whole. Stopping stem cell research and preventing children from learning evolution because of parochial beliefs is foolish. Holding a religious belief about what “life is” based on some arbitrary time periods when many other groups hold alternative beliefs and have differing experiences is arrogant and obnoxious. Insisting upon commercial “blue” laws in a pluralist society is rude and disrespectful to many who have no reason to support those policies.

Religions can perform exactly what they need to do *confined to their essence*--that is, comforting those in existential moments of their lives and providing for a social community. They don't *need* to impose a parochial morality on the rest of society to maintain their identities or communities. Neither do they need to risk being considered foolish in areas outside of their jurisdictions. Like all other institutions in America, religions need to get Smarter. In principle, getting Smarter is just another subjective reframing and should, in theory, be relatively easy. Convincing religions to stay within their jurisdictions is a type of sandboxing. This can be a big plus for facilitating collective-mindedness and the American Team. It also avoids the policymaking and sociological problems caused by evolution deniers, extreme pro-lifers, etc.

Bridgers with the right understanding of the essence of religion will try to get people to think clearly about what they really need from it and what function it should have in the 21st-Century. (Perhaps Pope Francis is that type of leader.) Existing religious frames can, in theory, be changed relatively easily especially when the inherent value is preserved, the unnecessary but potential provocative incidentals kept *internal*, and bridges built to other religions and groups (tribes) who are basically the same kind of people with the same needs. Bridgers can approach religious leaders and elders, interpreters, scholars, and the like to persuade them to better reflect the intellectual *essence* of what they need to be. These people can

reorient their missions to promote a healthy partnership of their organizations and the rest of pluralist society. They can celebrate the commonalities rather than the (incidental) differences.

We can't be overly optimistic about easily reframing these religious issues, however, given the strength and durability that they have. There are powerful organizational, political, and traditional tribalist factors at play. There are a lot of people for whom those outward manifestations of religion are (sincerely) psychologically and emotionally dear and reinterpretations will be difficult. Here are some objective reasons why it may be difficult for religious organizations to become Smarter:

1) Old-fashioned tribalism gets people to define an "us/them" relationship with others for mostly imagined fear and insecurity reasons.

2) Personal agendas of leaders who use "others" as threats, etc. to maintain control of the group.

3) Political parties and other special interests which cynically manipulate groups (religious communities) for their own self interested purposes, like forming electoral blocs, etc.

However, those obstacles were also true with race and gender mindsets decades ago and we know what has happened with them.

Chapter 6 Building the Narrative, Part 2: The Values of the National Character Program

If we had to describe the National Character movement in three words or less they would be: Balance, Meaning, and Respect. Once people get a good feel for what we are talking about we can do even better, we can shorten it to “BMR.”

Balance, Meaning, and Respect are the primary elements of a new societal ethos which will guide the development of the public citizen attitude, the formal structures of the movement, Local Council pushback network, and the rest of the movement’s components. Those concepts create a new framing of society where the attitudes and activities of individuals, businesses, organizations, and government: 1) are evaluated by the standard of private versus public interest, 2) the requirements of the abstract capitalist system are complemented by human requirements, and 3) social character, including living a quality small life, is given high respect, on a par with high financial status, individual competitive achievement, and celebrity.

-Balance: When the elite push again for new taxpayer bailouts for themselves and try to reduce public benefits for the elderly, the disabled, soldiers and veterans, and the working poor while cutting their own taxes, public citizens and program supporters will recognize these private interest exploitations of the public and say “No!” They will enforce what they say with an Action Plan. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of enforcement of Action Plans.)

-Meaning: When marketers persist in making whole segments of the consuming public feel inadequate and insecure by exploitative conditioning schemes and when employers ignore the family and personal needs of their workers, public citizens, and other supporters will recognize the assaults on their humanness and say “No!” They will enforce what they say with Action Plans.

-Respect: When politicians make vague, implausible, and dishonest promises of “Change, Reform, Eliminating governmental 'waste'," etc., public citizens and other supporters will recognize the disrespectful bullsh*t and say “No!” They will enforce what they say with an Action Plan.

Right now most Americans have way too little balance, meaning, and respect in their social lives. They live in an unbalanced economic and social environment of every man for himself, whether they like it or not. The political sphere, including governance, reflects the same self-interested private citizen attitude which largely ignores or marginalizes a public interest (or a common good.) Real people struggle to define human meaning in the here and now for themselves, their families, and their communities against a capitalist *system* which is valued way more than the *people* who live within it.

By exalting a simplistic (although practical in many ways) economic system highlighting: 1) competition and individualism under an unmanaged process (the invisible hand), 2) which has an *infinite* time perspective ignoring the real lifespans of actual living people, and 3) which is valued for the abstract *process itself* and not at all for the consequences of the *real people* who are subsumed within it, we have surrendered personal control over the meaning of our lives.

While the system has respect for power, wealth, hierarchical status, competitive achievement and the like, there is too little for personal and social character and the subjective and social elements of life because those things are useless from its perspective. How many people have been rewarded or have made money by being a “good guy,” a “good citizen,” or a “good parent”? Obtaining some modest degree of personal respect from family, friends, coworkers, and community members because of quality small life character traits and accomplishments is about as much respect as most people can obtain. People who are good moms, teachers, community gardeners, etc. are pretty much self-rewarders. In any case,

however, they have to tolerate—reluctantly and tamely—disrespect and exploitation on a daily basis from many other parties in society (businesses, marketers, “old school” employers, government, politicians, etc.) .

This is one sorry-assed situation for a vast majority of Americans living in an “exceptional” nation in the 21st-Century. There is a deficit of the Big Three (BMR) values which the lower classes (at a minimum) *have to have* for an (objectively-based) decent, worthwhile life. Regrettably, desperate quests to compensate for this lack lead too many people to some inferior and unsatisfying *replacement* choices of: 1) mindless consumerism; 2) escapism; 3) abandonment of contemporary meaning in hope of a happier afterlife; 4) diversions, like the materialist collecting of trivial objects; 5) reliance on personal meaning substitutes like celebrity worship, sports team and player idealization; and/or 6) muddling along haplessly in an absurdly endless chain of futility hoping that their children, at least, will go on to live more meaningful lives *somehow* (and those children doing the very same thing with their children, ad infinitum.)

Those people who tamely or even angrily suffer disadvantages by being public citizens (*vis-à-vis* private ones) will have to *insist* on whatever BMR they need or they likely will not get much, if any, at all from the system. To get that BMR there will have to be a major program (on the order of the one proposed here) based on a new *values* perspective. We to have to reach people at their deepest, most important level—the values level—which is way more motivating and potent than any new ideas, institutions, processes, or projects. That’s not to say that we don’t need new theories, formal institutions, etc. They are crucial if we are to organize the little people and to have an effective pushback strategy. But what we need *foremost* is a core set of values, especially BMR (see below), which will reflect the near desperate needs and wants of most Americans disappointed, at least, framed, and mostly crushed by contemporary life.

Given the breadth of the movement's vision and goals and the limitations of social knowledge and engineering, it is unlikely that any overly formal and *preconceived* set of structures or processes would succeed in any case. They will lack the *emotional* connections to the people we want to reach if untethered from an institutional core set of values. We need to build out a social ethos first from which these formal elements will grow. Once that set of values is infused into the public mindset it will logically guide the development of a coherent, coordinated, and comprehensive program—the National Character Program—having a real chance to effect major social change. Because the set of values will likely appeal to *most* Americans, the institutions and processes which derive from them will have a leg up on broad-based credibility and legitimacy. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of how the program may be constructed.)

Although values are paramount, the program will need preliminary structures immediately to establish the practical organizational framework to make the distribution of even the values ideas possible. It’s necessary to develop the theory sufficiently to convince high-level thinkers that it is sound and to engage cue-givers to influence the public. Our executive producers, managers etc. will handle much of the formal development but the millions of average Marys and Johns merely need to be engaged emotionally and psychologically to the core values and to understand, primarily, just BMR.

Ordinary people who want significant change will not need to engage with all of the concepts, structures, and processes of the National Character movement to be good supporters. The BMR concept will be a sort of shorthand by which people will assess aspects of their daily lives and react to them with a new attitude of self-esteem and empowerment. Once they become aware of what these values can mean to them they may be *renewed* citizens having a more positive attitude about themselves and their society’s future. That aggregate accomplishment will function to facilitate structures and processes to implement the feelings and intentions. More savvy types knowledgeable about organizational and political processes will develop a more formal leverage mechanism to tie theory and values to action.

A Core Set of Values

The National Character movement will have a broad set of values beyond that of just BMR that will likely appeal to most people. The *full* set will include:

- Balance, Meaning, and Respect
- a fairness standard based on a neutral, collective perspective
- trustworthiness in governance, businesses, and organizations which serve the public
- pride in oneself regardless of economic or social position
- economic efficiency and meaning conceived from the common good perspective
- respect for science and reason
- consideration of multiple perspectives applicable to all knowledge and experience
- humility due to the limitations of reason and knowledge and social engineering
- insistence on quality of character
- toleration for objectively trivial differences among citizens

Values of the National Character Program

1. Balance of private-public interest
2. Consideration for human meanings
3. Respect for living the small life well
4. A fairness standard based on all social viewpoints
5. Trustworthiness in governance and public service organizations
6. Pride in oneself regardless of economic or social position
7. Economic and governmental efficiency from a common good viewpoint
8. Humility in social conditioning and policy-making
9. Respect for reason and science
10. Insistence on quality of character
11. Toleration for trivial differences among people
12. Inclusivity



BMR and Smart governance and social relations

1-3. Balance, Meaning, and Respect (BMR)

A balance of private–public interests; space for human meaning in society; and respect for social character. Of course, these are the foundation values and have been explained above and in previous chapters.

4. A Fairness standard based on a neutral, collective perspective

For most people the fairness value might be the most sensitive and significant. Some see it as a primary motivator of many of the Tea Party members, the seminal "Black Lives Matter" development of 2015, of the Arab Spring revolutions in the Middle East, and the growing set of populist advocacy movements in many countries across the globe. People *hate* to be treated unfairly whether it is just Blue Chip businesses getting public bailouts or someone aggressively pulling into the parking space that they've been waiting for. At more extreme levels, these frustrated people become suicide bombers, terrorists, mass killers of various kinds, or disruptive moaners and groaners, including haters.

Fairness implies respect for one's own ego as related to others and bears upon dignity and self-esteem. Fairness doesn't equate to equality; it relates to fair dealings among independent egos and it includes consideration of merit and proportion. There is no one simple standard of fairness. Fairness is relevant to specific circumstances and sometimes more than one standard may be applicable. Also, different people at different times may bring differing perspectives as to what is fair.

There will be people, for example, with powerful ids and egos who believe that fairness means that they get everything they want because they can take it and get away with it (i.e., the extreme private citizen.) There is the nominal equality of "one man, one vote" as in an electoral democracy and fairness comes from honoring majority preferences. There is the standard of equal *opportunity* only for all to succeed, knowing some will squander opportunities, lose out, and deserve the proper (fair) consequences (emphasizing personal responsibility.)

Another sense of fairness, which seems the most harmonious with the principles of the National Character movement, comes from the philosopher, John Rawls and is expressed most comprehensively in his 1971 book, "The Theory of Justice." His idea of fairness is a neutral, independent, collectively-minded standard which he uses mostly as an approach to social rulemaking. In the book, Rawls tries to imagine what the start of a *new society* would be like and how social rules are made. Starting from scratch allows *any* set of rules to be established, in theory. The problem is that the selection of a specific set of rules (and especially who selects them) matters as it can (unintentionally or not) provide systemic advantages to members of society having certain traits which harmonize better with the rule's contents.

Let's say, for example, we have a primordial society of just two people, pro basketball star, LeBron James, and leading physicist, Steven Hawking, where there are no existing rules. They dispute ownership or possession of something valuable and need a way to resolve the dispute. The most primitive way is resort to physical confrontation where the biggest, strongest, and gamiest prevails. LeBron quickly crushes Hawking and takes the goodies. This is essentially how early stage capitalism works. However, we are assuming for purposes of this hypothetical (and in conformity with present American sensibilities about violence in social relationships) that we have (mostly) moved beyond mere physicality as a social determinant.

Lebron and Hawking agree to a "fair" competition of some sort. Lebron proposes a game of "HORSE" where the parties take turns attempting basketball shots where the second person must match the made shot of the first or lose points, until a winner emerges. (This rule favors Lebron because it *implicitly* biases towards a high-end physical skill set.) Hawking (who is wheelchair bound and

somewhat wimpy) favors a math challenge where the first to compute a handful of complex math problems becomes the winner. (This rule favors Hawking because it implicitly biases towards a mathematical skill set and he is a leading expert.) While the dispute-resolving method selected treats each participant fairly *within the context* of the competition, the *specific set* of rules chosen obviously makes a huge difference to the expected outcome.

In the James/Hawking example, each has a disposition towards a rule based toward their *own material basis*—physicality (Lebron) versus abstract logic skills (Hawking.) A *neutral, independent* third party, however, might determine that a truly fair resolution between them would be by a coin flip, an option which *ignores* their relative objective skill sets (although, each of them sees *that* rule choice as inferior to what he would prefer.)

If any primordial rulemakers knew in advance that they were to be big and strong, for example, they may favor a rule of unrestricted physical competition at the expense of the less physically powerful—smaller men, women, children, the handicapped, etc., as in the primitive physicality rule described above. If they were wealthy and powerful they may favor rules which rewarded those traits and disadvantaged the powerless and those without capital. They would, for example, favor low taxes and few regulations, financial and practical obstacles to effective lower class political participation, prohibitions on lower-class collective activities, as in labor unions, etc. (Sort of how we are now in America.)

However, if the rulemakers knew they were to be *without* wealth and power in the new society, they likely would favor an *opposite* set of rules-- i.e., reducing the role of money in the democratic processes and throughout governance, regulating the consumer-unfriendly activities of Big Business in economic affairs, having laws *encouraging* labor unions as a counterweight to capital, etc.

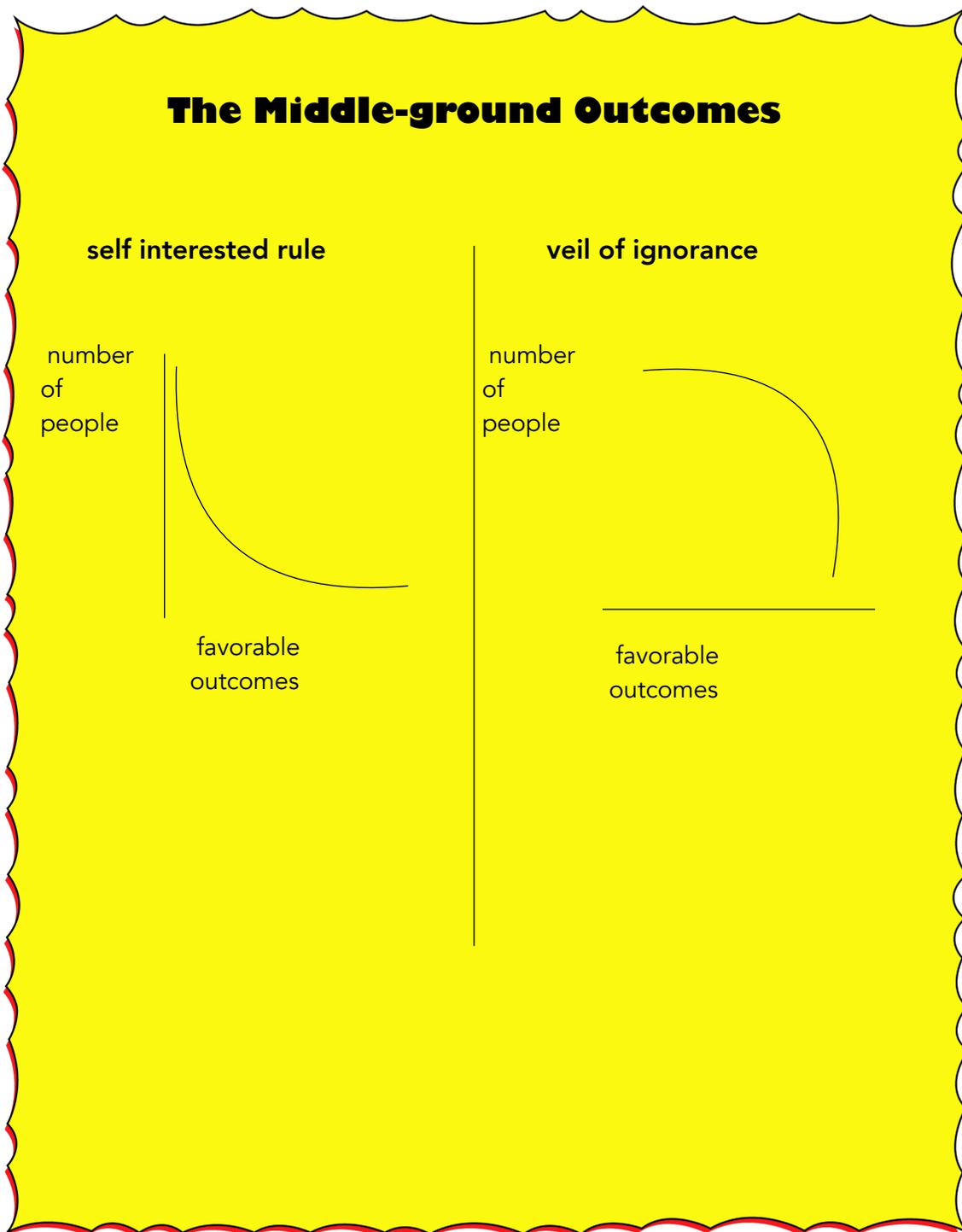
The essential point is that rules are *not* neutral even when they *apply equally* to everyone. Someone once famously noted that a rule prohibiting everyone from sleeping on a park bench applies to both the rich *and* the poor (but with obvious differential effects and meaning. Some poor have nowhere to sleep; while the rich have multiple residences and beds to choose from.) Rules typically are made by people who know in advance how the rules will advantage or disadvantage themselves and bias them (deliberately or unconsciously) accordingly.

In contemporary America self interested private citizens having competitive and aggressiveness traits favor rules which imply *maximum freedom* as a virtue. That allows them to intensely and aggressively acquire superior capital and influence over the less intense and aggressive and impose an environment (with few rules) which exactly favors the traits that they have and the capital advantages that they obtained. (They don't understand, or care, that in nearly every situation, one person's freedom is another's *disadvantage*. ("Small government and few regulations allows *me* to eat *your* lunch. Too bad for you!") Furthermore, they ideologically mislead the public into thinking that this state of affairs is something natural. This biasing of the rule-environment to favor their traits and material bases is a pure rigging of the system. (Sort of what we have now in America.)

Rawl's fairness concept focuses upon the way (and by whom) the initial selection of the rules is made. The fairer rules are those made by someone who is *neutral* and *independent* from the material bases which are impacted by the rule. A coin flip, for example, is random, neutral, and independent of any participant's *material* situation. If the rulemaker cannot be neutral and independent then, at least, he should be *ignorant*, in a way, of how the proposed rule would affect him specifically, so that there is no bias favoring him. (That is, presumably no one has ESP or whatever, to know which side of a coin flip will land upward.)

Imagine people of a hypothetical new (or renewing) society starting out to make a primordial set of rules for the system governing everyone but where the rulemakers *don't know in advance* what their own material circumstances would be in the new society—size, intelligence, skills, possession of capital,

ambition, intensity, etc.— and how they would perform under that set of rules in that system. They would be under a “veil of ignorance,” so to speak (Rawl’s term.) They would not know, for example, whether they were to be upper or lower class in the new system, smart or not; strong or weak; black, white, or other race; male or female; gay or not; etc.



If the rules were made behind a veil of ignorance the rulemakers then would have an incentive to establish rules that would favor the *broadest range* of life possibilities, not giving a large advantage to any specific class, group, or personal traits. The rule would tend towards a “middle ground” where there would not likely be a great difference in outcomes among people having varying traits. If there was a hierarchy of some sort, it would be *flatter* rather than *taller*, and fewer people disadvantaged from the get go. Taking the material bias out of rulemaking (via the veil of ignorance) leads to a type of social fairness that is especially appropriate for pluralist societies where there *are* a wide range of personalities and circumstances.

Refer to the “slicing of the pie” example involving Mary and Leonard in Chapter 1, above. Now, let’s imagine two young boys (of equal physical and psychic makeups) representing typical citizens. They discover a slice of pie which each would like to have but fighting for it may not result in a winner as they are of equal competitiveness. So they agree to split it. Assume neither trusts the other to slice fairly. They make a Rawls-inspired set of rules: the first will slice and the *other* will get first choice of slices. It is likely that the slicer will make *two equal* parts not knowing which one he’ll end up with (veil of ignorance) but expecting the second boy will select the larger piece if the first sliced in any other way than equally (recognizing self-interest.) This decision-making process leads to a “middle” outcome, a fair result, one where neither is disadvantaged.

This type of blind, neutral approach to fairness is not merely an abstract philosophical concept. It’s implicit in any conflict or competition resolved by a method where one’s material characteristics are made irrelevant to how the outcome is determined. Think, for example, of a coin flip at a football game, a selection of short straws, a roll of the dice, etc. Arguably, this type of fairness concept underlied the congressionally-sponsored Military Base Closing Commissions (and the Simpson-Bowles Commission) even if not implemented so neatly.

In the base closing commission situation, the members were deliberately chosen to be neutral, independent, and apolitical and expected to focus on making a rational set of decisions based on objective *collective* interests. They would assess the objective economic and other relevant facts and figures of each existing base and use a cost-benefit or other rational decision-making process to determine which bases to close. There would be positive consequences for the nation—lower expenses and a more rational military—but significant, negative consequences for a *small set* of citizens resulting in lost jobs; lost revenues for local businesses; lost tax revenues for local governments, etc.

Nevertheless, overall, the *nation* and *public* would practically benefit instead of allowing the small set of citizens alone most invested in special interests continue to benefit at the expense of everyone else. (Even if the nation as a whole benefited let’s not ignore the poor schmoe in the affected military communities who took the losses. See Chapter 9 for how the movement’s problem-solving methods will involve compensation of various sorts, i.e., “soft landings,” and the like for Big Win-Little Lose situations like these.)

The decision-making process in the base closing situation was designed to rise above, so to speak, the traditional special interest and politics-dominated environment which made it difficult, or impossible, for individual congressmen to approve decisions which would negatively impact their own districts. They clearly know in advance their *own* material bases and were never to be neutral and independent. Under the *typical* legislative processes we use now, the elements of decision-making (as in the base closing examples) include: 1) the influence of Congressional, state, and local representatives where the targeted bases are located, 2) lobbyists for the particular businesses supplying or servicing the base area, 3) protests from labor unions trying to protect their jobs, 4) local vendors and suppliers who would lose captive business, and 5) electoral and partisan politics at both local and national levels posturing and maneuvering for advantages, and more. The decision-making process readily becomes thoroughly polluted and the purported goal of making rational and efficient decisions for the national government

quickly abandoned. Too few, or no, bases are closed, little or no taxpayer dollars are saved, and the credibility of government is itself diminished.

The results are clearly unfair to the collective and arguably unfair to some losers in the competitive fray. Multiply this scenario many times over as in real life politics and the nation's governance becomes highly irrational and inefficient, the nation prone to increasing debt with no corresponding increase in national value, and the cynicism, distrust, and frustrations of the public reinforced. Furthermore, even though the specific individuals/groups on the bases and in the communities which got or retained goodies in the sordid process may be a bit contented they are *no less* cynical and distrustful of the process itself, while losing themselves long-term benefits as taxpayers and citizens.

In the collective-rational approach of the Military Base Closing Commissions the theoretical process moved to a meta-level where the decision-makers (rulemakers) were shielded in some way (veil of ignorance) from having personal relationships to the situation. They were removed enough so that they weren't affected by considerations of whether the bases to be cut were in *their* legislative districts; or what effects the closings would have upon their own families, friends, and business connections; or what effects there may be upon their electoral circumstances; etc.

The meta-level, neutral, and independent approach actually had some success and could be a model for other projects even on a much bigger scale. It shows the validity and utility of the Rawlsian fairness concept which may work especially well as a *general* approach for designing and implementing public citizen reform of American governance. If the country had decision-makers—congressmen, major political parties, etc.—like those involved in these commissions who see themselves *solely* as members of the collective (versus having a private or special interest) we would achieve a certain level of fairness for everyone involved, not to speak of regularly making *rational* and *efficient* decisions for the national government. Not only does the approach result in fair and rational outcomes but it earns governmental credibility and secures public legitimacy. In other words, the Rawlsian approach to fairness is multiply *effective* where other approaches are mostly not effective at all (for the collective.)

As one example, in a democracy as we have in America, a fair electoral process would *not* have rules and conditions which overwhelmingly favor the wealthy at the expense of the great majority of the population. The need for incredibly large sums of money for mere campaigning, the nearly unlimited financial ability of a tiny minority of people (the elite) to influence elections, and the other dynamics making great wealth way more important in the electoral and governmental process than the substantive vision, ideas, skills, and quality of character of parties or candidates themselves, crushes any sense of fairness or collective rationality. There are so many obstacles relating to money and finance to our fundamental “one-man-one-vote” democracy concept (which theoretically underlines our society) that the numerical superiority of the middle and lower classes is *almost irrelevant*. Some mere thousands of wealthy elite members dominates the political processes at the expense of the interests of hundreds of millions of us schmoes.

How can *that* be considered fair? Or collectively rational?

Historically, elites have *never* liked democracy but it has sort of been imposed upon them in the post-French Revolution world. Before that, we had brutal dictatorships and monarchies and masters lording over serfs and slaves. While we have nominal (relatively mature) democracies now, the rules are still being made by the elite for the elite's interests. As they see it, if they are to be outnumbered, they *have* to rig the system in some way to make electoral numbers irrelevant. In some nations, single (elite) parties dominate and make (and often break) rules which makes it difficult or impossible for competitors to acquire power and influence.

Think of Russia, for example, and a large handful of former Soviet republics. In America and some other nations a small minority of people (the elite) are able to influence elections, policymaking, and

governance to an extraordinary degree because of rules *biases* where the financial costs and other complexities of participation are set very high, high enough to obviate serious lower-class opposition. The political democracy as many people imagine and as taught in our schools is mostly fanciful.

The bottom line is that many outcomes are irrational from the *collective's* point of view and most Americans are being treated unfairly most of the time in economics, governance, and politics. Some might say that we (the lower classes) have let this happen to ourselves and that we deserve the type of society that we have. That idea has some superficial validity as the numerical advantage of the lower classes has a (theoretical) chance to be considerably more influential than it is. Clearly, the lower-classes have, by far, the most votes. But that idea ignores the overall *context* of the one man, one vote system of democracy—that is, the predominant framing of capitalist economic structures over governance; the effects of organized and semi-organized elite wealth and influence on electoral, policymaking, and regulatory matters; ideological manipulation; the omni-presence of private citizen aggression and intensities throughout society; etc.

All of these elements bear on this real world situation which make advantageous voting *numbers* mostly irrelevant. The context of the rules makes all of the difference. Yes, Stephen Hawking *has* a chance to beat LeBron James at a fair game of HORSE, too, but being short, tiny, impaired, and athletically inexperienced compared to LeBron's enormous size, athletic skills, and professional experience makes it very unlikely. Sort of like your chances of out-influencing David and Charles Koch and George Soros and the organized major party elites in the next presidential election.

One man, one vote? Multiple billions of dollars for some? Multiple millions of votes? The truth is that real democracy is close to a fantasy.

We need to pay more attention to the rules of *our* game (individualism/capitalism) and who makes them (the elite) and establish a new sense (or senses) of what is fair for everyone. That is what the program is about and why its new institutions are necessary. The National Councils will take a Rawlsian perspective to enforce a better sense of fairness for most people while benefiting the general public with a more rational and efficient approach to fundamental governance issues and problem solving. (Chapters 8 and 9 describe how the formal Councils will undertake planning, policymaking, and communication functions for the nation using this type of approach.)

A set of neutral, independent rulemakers at a meta-level, ignorant of their own material traits in the society would devise a fairer set of electoral rules (among others) minimizing wealth as a campaign requirement, decreasing wealth and power as influences on both campaigns and politics, and insulating officeholders from the influence of wealth and special interests so that they can do their jobs professionally without having to appease campaign contributors, and from having to deal with enticements from special interests to compromise their roles as *public* servants.

Like most “big” philosophical concepts, fairness is not a single idea where one person's conception is right and the other is wrong. What is fair in the movement's view is an empathetic meta-level idea constructed from the viewpoints of all relevant social parties. It also includes the *multiple* views that can be constructed even by any one nimble-minded and creative individual. Political scientists, for example, generally can view the *same* basic political subject matter but conceptually organize it into *different realities* using multiple lenses, so to speak. For example, a varied set of views of American politics may result in a varied set of realities--American society equals: 1) an aggregation of separate individuals all doing their own self-interested thing (pluralism), *or* 2) a set of interconnected influential people conspiring in one way or another to secure governmental and political advantages for a distinct political class (elitism), *or* 3) a distinct class hierarchy with the owners of *capital* dominating the middle class bourgeoisie and the working class proletariat (Marxism), and others.

Each of those lenses highlight certain perceptions and hide others. They each have partial and limited validity. This is the *inescapable* philosophical characteristic of *all* perspectives or lenses. Only by recognizing and contemplating *all* of them together and sorting out their separate strengths and weaknesses can one have a complete and fair understanding of the subject matter. Some have termed this meta-perspective as a “Hegelian Observer,” or as a “God-View.” Open-minded, worldly, experienced, and politically knowledgeable people may obtain this sort of perspective under the right circumstances. Life is too complicated to be sliced into just “my one view and your one view.” There are lots of valid ways to look at any significant issue, including fairness issues, and all of them potentially relevant, if not necessarily equally valid or useful. As they say, wisdom is the ability to juggle all of these realities and develop a balanced viewpoint.

There are a lot of possible fairness standards and there may need to be a different set for different matters and situations. Because of this multiple perspective situation, if we are to achieve any credibility and legitimacy as a collective regarding fairness it will be necessary to include all relevant viewpoints of all parties in society. Those multiple viewpoints will be incorporated into “fairness agreements” which will be negotiated among the participants (all classes and groups.) The type of negotiation contemplated here does *not* simply mean trading off of interests and benefits (horse trading) according to individual conflicting interests or views as in “I take my share and you take your share”; and “You get your way on this and I get my way on that,” etc.” We need to imagine a higher-level concept of what is overall collective fairness taking into consideration all views and circumstances with a Rawlsian-sense of decision-making.

This type of decision-making requires mental agility, empathy, judgment, wisdom, and comfortability with dealing with multiple ways of seeing nuances and complexity. This inclusive fairness will not only result in a better understanding of “reality” but provide essential credibility and legitimacy to the negotiation processes. People generally will be happy to be part of the process even if they don’t necessarily get the results they want. It will go a long way towards rebuilding the credibility of government, the people as a collective society, and the rationality processes of the nation itself.

It is asking a lot of individuals, large groups, and especially of a whole society to do this type of inclusive, deliberate, collectively-minded thinking. But, if we want to break centuries of obsolete habits and advance as a 21st-Century nation we *have to be real* and to accept the real difficulties. We can continue to function as we do now as near primitives (regarding governance and social relations) or we can *work* to do better. The self-interested, lightly-regulated, “invisible hand”-type of social management we rely on now is simple and easy and requires little of people. But that approach keeps us where we are now as a society—dysfunctional, inefficient, riddled with unfairnesses, and hurtling stupidly towards a likely unpleasant planetary future (at least, environmentally.)

The truth is that it is difficult for *any* group of people anywhere and anytime to get along *no matter what*. In a pluralistic society as we have in America, getting a wide variety of individuals and groups to empathize and to think clearly in the same way is especially difficult. We can’t expect to easily overcome long-standing habits, hardened perceptions and conceptions, and the difficulty of reconciling multiple perspectives. There likely will be no clear right and wrong way or simplistic black or white way to do things in any case. There will be plenty of nuances, plenty of uncertainty, and plenty of complexity to process. (See Section 8, below, for more discussion of this point.)

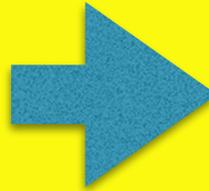
There are good reasons why the movement will value *humility* and caution in its approaches to decision-making and action. We can’t be overly confident of our policy choices, especially for some of the big projects or fairness constructions contemplated here, given the complexity of these situations. At least the collective will rely on its *brain process* to take the lead in seeing, thinking, and acting upon these public issues. That’s better than having *no* brain and a muddled set of incoherent processes as we have now. Having a credible and legitimate *process* will go a long way towards getting this coherence to happen.

Despite the difficulties with multiple and differing perspectives, we can reach reasonable consensus on a lot of issues. Credibility requires that the decision-making process itself is: 1) inclusive, 2) based on sufficient knowledge and consideration of multiple perspectives, 3) made in good faith, and 4) reliant on evidence and rationality in conformity with the fundamental values of the movement. If so, we can be reasonably confident in our choices and content that we have actually done things better. At a minimum, that process *in itself* implies credibility and legitimacy. People will support and respect a credible process.

Ideally, fairness constructions and other similar decisions will result in a *consensus* (as merely “majority wins—with a few winners and millions of losers” is an *old-school* approach in today’s world.) Achieving consensus as to what is fair in all matters and at all times is unlikely, of course, but also unnecessary. Most people can be content with a wide range of negotiation circumstances and outcomes as long as they see them as basically fair, meaning (in part) that everyone’s view has been considered and that everyone maintains a basic dignity in the process. Accommodation of *all* good faith positions in negotiations may become a national virtue.

Credible Policy and Decision-making

1. Inclusive
2. Sufficient knowledge
3. Multiple perspectives
4. Good faith
5. Conformity with public values



Credibility!

A consensus upon what is a fair democratic *process* is the minimum of what we can expect and go a long way to working out the *substantive* problems and differences among us. For these substantive issues we still will rely on our traditional democratic decision making processes (although as modified by legal reform proposals of the program.) Nevertheless, in any case, if we provide the right environmental support for our leaders, our decision-makers, our cue-givers, and our citizens, we can expect a higher quality level of performance in governance and social relations.

We live in a contemporary world roiled with all kinds of *economically* disruptive technologies which are providing all kinds of efficiencies and benefits. We are presented now, also, with an opportunity for disruptive *social change* based on Smartness and collective fairness and rationality. That is why the movement proposed here is timely. Realistically, however, we cannot rely on (mostly) individuals themselves to have to do the type of involved, deliberate thinking necessary for our Smart society. As with most complicated things, people typically draw upon cue givers—those trusted folks who can take complexity and ambiguity and simplify it for them and provide guidance in decision-making. In other words, they rely on credible and legitimate leaders to guide them to do what they need to do.

Based on the new vision and plan we articulated here we have a solid basis for new leadership to come forward, or to develop, to get the program to work. The movement will rely primarily upon quality people who will populate the set of formal Councils, especially the National Council and the Planning and Policy and Problem-Solving Councils, to act as cue givers and to work these fairness negotiations out, some now at the beginning of the movement, and some later, as we go along. (There will be more discussion of timing issues in Chapters 8 and 9, below.)

5. Trustworthiness in governance, businesses, and organizations which serve the public

There has to be a large measure of trust among citizens for there to be *any* functional society. At a minimum, there will be trust in one's tribe at least as a defensive position to outside threats. More advanced societies develop trustworthiness through extensive commerce systems and formal institutions, as in a legal system and independent judiciary, representative legislatures, etc. As those things develop sufficient trustworthiness they become authority structures and major pillars of a social fabric. Societies probably can be usefully measured by their levels of trust with the better ones having more of it.

When existing authorities break down or are upended as in contemporary Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., trust levels significantly decline. At the least, the negative aspects of tribalism with its associated frictions and conflicts become more relevant and distrust, anxiety, and cynicism increase among the citizens. At worst, the consequences are economic collapse, moral uncertainty, and endemic violence and chaos.

Many would say that the level of trust in American society is diminishing to a worrisome degree. Hyper-aggressive capitalism, hyper-individualism, and the diminution of nearly all of our major authority institutions have created a vacuum of trust. Who in their right mind has high regard for the (overall) credibility, competence, and character of the federal and (many) local governments, or the Supreme Court, Wall Street and Big Business, many of the major religious institutions, etc? We are besieged nearly day in and day out with crushing stories of authority and character collapses: 1) sports hero cheaters (McGuire, Bonds, Armstrong, etc.), 2) big-time sports world cheaters and hypocrites (major college administrators, boosters etc); 3) major public institutions engaged in bad act coverups (Penn State University, the Boy Scouts, the Roman Catholic Church, etc.); 4) rampant white-collar criminality by the elite (Wall Street blue chippers, etc.); 5) rampant frauds by the world's largest (and most respected?) financial institutions (too many examples!); 6) Ponzi schemes run by VIP's everywhere across the nation; ad infinitum.

Did we leave anyone out? Who *can* we trust?

The spiraling decline of trust seems associated, at least in part, with the “Every man for himself” philosophy and the associated morality we have been critiquing—(“It ain’t wrong if you can do it and get away with it.”) This situation is so disappointing for so many that they have given up on our traditional authority institutions. Worse, they see nothing worthwhile which could replace them. They are becoming diehard cynics. No wonder that there is such a broad and high measure of rage and hate among the populace. It may very well *require* a large-scale movement with a fundamentally new social ethos and new institutions (as we have been proposing here) to turn this mess around. We have to reestablish for ourselves a more satisfactory level of trust in Americans and its institutions (both old and new.) That means enforcing new standards of trust for our public servants, private sector leaders, and our existing institutions, as well as establishing new trustworthy institutions.

The movement will aim to do two things in regard to trust: 1) earn trustworthiness for itself, and 2) provide opportunities for official government and Big Business and the private sector to repair their reputations for trust. Because of the ambitious goals and plans of the National Character movement--the assertion of a new social ethos, the creation of a unique shadow government, organizing tens of millions of citizens/consumers to pushback upon capitalism (and the elite), etc.--the movement itself will require huge resources of trust. It will need to demonstrate basic trustworthiness right from the start and steadily build its level of trust. If done right, the movement could set a new standard for public trustworthiness.

Public citizen governance among the National Character institutions has to be done strictly in conformity with the values of the program, i.e.,: 1) oriented to collective fairness and rationality; 2) without conflicts of interest; 3) without vulnerability to special interests; 4) without disruption from excessive or selfish egos; 5) without bias; 6) reliance in decision making and policymaking on facts and data, reason, and good judgment; 7) exceptional transparency with clear and complete operational disclosures and practices; 8) rigorous monitoring for compliance with public values and professionalism standards, and 9) be guided at the top level with the good judgment of the National Council membership. (The details of how this may be done will be addressed in Chapter 8.) Fair-minded people can reasonably come to a (near) consensus on a set of public operating standards including openness, competence, public-service orientation, ethical standards, and the like. If the program shows this kind of credibility (i.e., competence, public values, and good faith) it will *earn* its trustworthiness and authority.

The institutions of the program, once they set up and start to operate, may earn *some* measure of trust from the public simply out of their good intentions, inclusiveness, and Smartness. But people may start trusting the basic *concepts* (i.e., BMR) all by themselves as they make intrinsic sense and they can become part of their own personas and life experiences. The social ethos concepts have to be explained to the public in ways which will provoke attention and intrigue, at least. The emphasis will be on be the readily acceptable shorthand BMR themes together with the new fairness concept. The ideas of BMR and fairness need to be disseminated by whatever communications we know will work with the various subgroups of the public. (See the discussion of the Support and Communication Councils in Chapter 8.) People eventually may start to believe that there *are* new ideas and institutions which they can believe in especially when they know that they can observe and be *participants* at a level they choose. Trustworthiness will become a sort of brand trait of the movement and the program may be a (large) part of any renewal of authority in America.

Of course, the National Character Program's institutions will be designed by and operated by people--human beings with flaws and biases. We can't expect the program operatives to have inhuman capabilities and have unobtainable moral superiority. We can, however, insist upon a higher standard of behavior and more ambitious expectations than we typically accept now of our governmental and business leaders because our people will have, or will be conditioned to have, character traits reflecting the values of the movement. High-level National Councils personnel will be established professionals, having strong character histories, having a personal set of traits which includes a collective perspective, good faith, empathy for multiple perspectives, and a team player mentality. They will be financially

established volunteers who will either not need to milk their positions for money and perquisites or will receive compensation (not necessarily *market*-based) sufficient to satisfy their personal needs.

Contrast this set of criteria for public service against what we use now to pick our governmental leaders. Anyone over a certain age—18 (for *any* position), 30 (for the U.S. Senate), and 35 (for the US Presidency-plus national birth status)-- who can *get elected* becomes one of our leaders. Nearly any live body no matter how narcissistic, self interested, aggressive, and cunning with money or backed by money can get elected. There is no requirement of expertise, competence, experience, good character, or leadership skills. Wholly unqualified but *electable* nobodies often assume leadership positions. (We know who they are!) Businessmen foolishly think that their market skills translate well to governance. Single issue candidates get to run broad-based departments and bureaus. Merely *knowing* important and wealthy benefactors and promising fealty to them is always a good in to a high-level office. For a rational society interested in substantive merit instead of procedural merit, this is ludicrous stuff. Why in the 21st-Century do we legally require more of our electricians, hairdressers, and Boy Scout leaders than we do of our President? What is up with *that*!?

We need to insist on a credibility standard emphasizing substance (i.e., competency, character, etc.) There will have to be fundamental *institutional practices* specifically designed to maintain leadership Credibility. While drawing primarily on their *goodwill* to serve the public, we intend public leaders, both the formal and informal, to be recognized and rewarded for acting well as public citizens even while being rigorously held accountable by appropriate compliance mechanisms. The benefits of acting well, hopefully, will discourage anyone from being drawn back into the alternate ethical environment of capitalism and individualism and our current governance where personal and professional standards are perverse, lax, or made deliberately vague; ethical and illegal lapses often have insufficient consequences; and an “Everyone does it, why shouldn't I” mentality is often present. They will get a qualitatively different type of respect from the public than that received by those mainly good at making money or promoting themselves.

While the movement will have to earn credibility and trustworthiness for itself, it'll only remain *part* of what we need to do to restore confidence in our governance. It will not replace existing government, or diminish the role of business, or other social institutions. What it can do is help repair the loss of trust and credibility in those other institutions by bringing those entities “up” in conformity with the public values standards we will *insist* upon. The repair of our existing institutions will come from establishing high character expectations for public officials and those private and quasi-public institutions and organizations which serve the public.

Those latter institutions would include entities which set standards and provide guidance on public health matters, those which make accounting and financial standards for public corporations and businesses, the research sciences, and similar others. The program will create examples and templates of good behaviors (essentially best practices standards) to be applied upon official government, the quasi-public professional standards setting bodies, and the more public parts of the private sector, especially Big Business. We will create a sort of marketplace of ethics and values where citizens and businesses which cannot “compete” will suffer negative consequences.

A set of best practices proposals will include: 1) *bulletproof* laws and regulations to constrain and to prohibit the unfair, deceptive, and unethical business practices which too often now go on with impunity; 2) law-enforcement resources which can match or exceed those of the potential miscreants to ensure legal compliance; 3) a rock solid set of universal ethical standards applying to anyone responsible for someone else's money; 4) stronger penalty schemes where white-collar and business crimes get comparable punishments to street crimes; 5) increased promotion of private enforcement mechanisms like class actions; and the like.

In addition, we will create an ethos that cheating, dishonesty, and breach of trust require shunning and approbation of miscreants instead of providing plentiful opportunities for them to be “reborn” after getting away with felonies and frauds. While we don’t want to discourage legitimate rehabilitation efforts, we do want to squash the easy rehabs involving insincere public apologies, book deals, and televised sessions with Oprah and Dr. Phil. In other words, bad actors will *actually* be treated as bad actors with appropriate consequences.

Of course, none of the proposed legal reforms can be drafted and enforced by the elite and Big Business themselves, as they are now. They intentionally build in loopholes, exceptions, ambiguities, and enforcement deficiencies to get away with bad acts while hiding behind legalities which falsely promise public responsibility. Our program professionals will handle these reform efforts correctly. There will be no deliberate drafting ambiguities or built-in loopholes. Our enforcement resources will not be dwarfed or outgunned by the high-powered legal resources of the Big Corporations. Wall Street crooks who steal billions will room in cells alongside of petty convenience store robbers and dope pushers. Banks and financial institutions will not get away with ripping off consumers with fine print and cleverly deceptive marketing practices.

We will have strict liability laws penalizing high-level executives who are now practiced at cynical claims of “plausible deniability.” We will claw back every cent of the illegal profits and subject the corporate Big Kahunas to severe criminal penalties, including prison time. We’ll arm trial lawyers (OK—not the most lovable bunch!) with stronger class action and similar tools to bark and bite even more at bad corporate actors as they have done quite successfully with a large set of cigarette companies, mortgage lenders, and pharmaceutical miscreants. We’ll make sure that their (mostly) self-interested financial motivations are balanced by appropriate taxes on (excessive) earnings which will make their recoveries fair to them, fair to the public, and really painful to the bad actors.

We need to create an *ethos* for our institutions—public and private—of competence, professionalism, and public values and hold people to it. We will do this in several ways: 1) We will impose an informal set of norms (best practices templates) to guide behaviors and public citizen attitudes. This is a form of social conditioning and may, ideally, firm up into social *habits*. 2) The consumer/citizen network of the Local Council will utilize its consumer power to compel companies to do the right things at the expense of market penalties (i.e., it will supervise the marketplace of *values*.) 3) We will set up within the Council structures (see Chapter 8) a network of monitors to detect and disclose deviance from appropriate standards and to enforce Action Plans; 4) We will reform business fiduciary rules and corporate charters to broaden what are acceptable practices making *societal stakeholders* a focus of performance instead of only corporate *shareholders*; 4) We will establish our own communication means to provide accurate information and evaluation of matters and events important to the public using professional “good-sense” standards. (See the discussion of the Support and Communication Councils in Chapter 8.)

We will, for example, clearly expose the lies, deceptions, half-truths, foolishness, and stupidity of politicians, marketers, businessmen, etc. We will not tolerate this type of citizen disrespect any longer. Our own media institutions will not imply equivalency to political statements or positions by major political parties or elected officers for the sake of bogus journalistic neutrality or nonpartisanship concerns. A fool and a foolish position have to be exposed for what they are. We are trying to establish a *Smart* society after all. An enforced insistence of truth and nothing but the truth will weed out a class of unscrupulous political officials and candidates and an ethos of citizen deception. (We may even inspire 21st-Century George Washingtons, FDRs, Lincolns, and Mr. Smiths.)

All of these changes mean that gone astray politicians and public servants will be detected, disgraced, replaced, and disqualified from public service. Dishonorable and disrespectful businesses and organizations will be exposed, shamed, shunned, and boycotted. Global warming and evolution deniers will be identified as the fools they are. We won’t tolerate from our highest political and business leaders

the moral laxity, excessive egotism, disrespect, and disregard for the public as we have for decades. We will refuse to accept anti-consumer, anti-citizen “Business is Business” attitudes any longer.

These efforts towards emphasizing trustworthiness, fairness, respect, and public values will likely appeal to what most citizens at a fundamental level really need and want. The program will have gone a long way towards earning the trust of the public by being both Credible and Smart right from the start. When people have trust in their leaders, institutions, and processes they will aspire to do more *themselves* and they will have pride in what we/they are trying to promote for our 21st-Century nation.

6. Pride in oneself regardless of economic or social position

The competitive approach has its benefits, its faults, and limits like nearly everything else. In the individualist-capitalist system typically only the the “best” is worthwhile or worthy of pride—the richest, the highest paid, the most beautiful, the All-Stars, competition winners of every sort—and everyone else, *regardless* of absolute level of achievement is a “loser.” It rewards the most ambitious, competitive, and aggressive including those willing to go to the boundaries of legality and ethics (or beyond.)

In our society, that ethos motivates people to great innovations and achievements benefiting themselves and often society (even if only incidentally.) On the other hand, that ethos tends to encourage people to think that they need or ought to be better than the next guy, to be higher on the social scale, and value *relative* success more importantly than absolute success, even when *absolute success may be very good*. There seems to be an insidious social incentive for everyone to want to bring everyone else down so that they can rank higher, consequentially in some social, economic, or psychic way. One scientific study shows that some people would favor a situation where they get to own a \$160,000 house (for example) and others own less expensive houses over a situation where *all* own a \$200,000 house.

Not only is this attitude perverse in a personal and a social relations sense but it creates a persistent atmosphere of anxiety, tension, and insecurity. It divides people into a handful of winners and hundreds of millions of losers (or nobody’s.) This is a “tiny win-massive lose” situation. Some people feel that it is perverse for a society to have nearly everyone feel that they are a loser in their economic, social, or personal lives.

Clearly, the societal obsession of relative success and status is a major impediment to establishing the sense of personal and social pride we want to have. We want to turn this reward construct upside down emphasizing the attitude of *absolute* personal accomplishment: “Be the best you can be!” That is what public citizens mean by success. The National Character movement will emphasize a non-competitive standard of accomplishment. Any competition, so to speak, is inherent to the individual, not *individual versus individual*.

There are *some* people with an internal motivation to be the best that they can be regardless of the circumstances, rewards, or social attitudes which may or may not be supportive. A lot more people, however, need help, guidance, and encouragement to be the best that they can be. It’s hard, for example, to have pride in your job as custodian cleaning up vomit in the school cafeteria when spectators look down on you while you do the dirty work, your employer pays you the absolute minimum he can get away with, the marketers persistently poke you in the eyes with products and services which “Everyone has (or should have)” but which you will never be able to enjoy, and you get reminded daily that you are mere human capital, at best.

Nevertheless, that custodian is doing a necessary job and presumably well. But her circumstances make it very hard to have pride in that situation given her low status and her skimpy tangible benefits, so low that she can’t support herself or family without help. From one perspective, it is understandable for this person to lack pride, to want to perform with as little effort as possible, and to drop her performance

level just because it makes some sort of sense. After all, why bust a tail when you are just getting dumped on?

Way too many Americans are trapped in these types of situations. Because capitalism rewards only the winners and deprecates the multimillions of the rest of us we have incentivized for the losers the *lowest* levels of performance instead of the *best*. We need to change that. We should be bringing people up! We can't ask people to achieve more than they are capable of yet, nevertheless, we can encourage and reward them to be as good as they can be regardless of job or position. Not everyone, of course, is going to be a mobile app designer, for example. And, even highly skilled people are beaten up in the competitive environment. We can still make everyone feel worthwhile and take pride in their work whatever it may be. Furthermore, we can compensate those people at the lowest status levels in some fashion to bring them up.

There probably will be a lot of strategies to instill a sense of pride in everyone and reward them to perform at their highest levels. Workers, for example, may *will* it to happen perhaps because of the deliberate encouragement of a boss, customers, or society. People will likely work harder and better, be happier, maybe friendlier, be better family members, provide better customer service, have greater pride in their neighborhoods and communities, etc. They can take pride in their own achievements regardless where they stand on any relative scale. We could make hundreds of millions of winners and greatly enhance their self-esteem, self-respect, and societal respect and performance.

This ought to be an important goal of *any* worthwhile social movement. Just think about it— should we be content with a society where we all just compete, compete, compete, identify a few winners, and then die? *Or*, would we like better for everyone to just do the best they can do, be proud of it, live OK at least, (and *then* die.)

Many teachers, parents, coaches, and personnel directors know from experience that promoting a standard of being the best that one can be produces quality students, children, teams, workers, and citizens. There are exemplary organizations and businesses in America which already know how to appeal to pride and to motivate their people to be their best for the benefit of the individuals themselves *and* for organizations. And for their communities, too. Some examples include “Best Places to Work At” employers like Google, Wegmans Foods, SAS, the United States Marines, the San Antonio Spurs franchise, etc.

This type of attitude creates win-win-win-win situations—employer, employee, customer, and society. The program intends to extend this attitude to the American citizenry in general. We can design incentives to encourage everyone (serving the public, at least) to take a high-level of pride in their jobs and positions, whether business CEO, janitor, soccer mom, student, etc. We can establish cultural values which will permeate the system so that people will *want* to perform at their best simply out of a sense of pride.

Being the best that they can be is the real achievement and everyone (some with help and guidance) can do it. Many people will need conditioning and tangible incentives. Here are some ideas: 1) create an ethos where everyone who contributes to society in whatever positive ways they can is made to feel important regardless of level of ability; 2) subsidize those at the lower levels of activity with adequate compensations as a leveling concept. For example, a garbageman doing dirty work may get special goodies like extra vacation time, store coupons, or something similar in compensation; 3) *everyone* gets living compensation including health insurance and other necessary human need benefits; 4) every worker gets reasonable vacation and leave time (like nearly all Europeans get now); and the like.

These benefits are not meant to be giveaways. That would seriously violate fairness considerations. Everyone will have to *earn* benefits by giving back something, whatever makes sense in each situation.

What we want and expect from citizens is their best performances in their job or role. No one can reasonably argue against having to do their best in exchange for these kinds of social goodies.

That will be a worthwhile outcome all by itself. It will be exceptionally valuable when pridefully dedicated and competent service becomes the norm in this country. Wouldn't we be more thrilled overall as consumers and citizens with consistent, exceptional service from our mailman, plumber, office custodian, landlord, Congressman, etc. on a daily basis as we are about a self-interested celebrity gold medal-winning Olympian, a Super Bowl winning team, or an American Nobel Prize winner in physics or medicine? Where the social ethos becomes "Be the best you can be" then the latent potentiality of millions of Americans could blossom.

When you add up all the value to society of all those people raising their level of performance because it was made worthwhile to them it is likely to be enormous. From the perspective of the collective, all can be heroes of a sort. Social value will increase in the form of economic efficiency, social pride, and an enhanced social fabric. Let's be even more optimistic and suggest that many people will be just *happier*.

This may sound like a Pollyanna-ish fantasy: Expecting millions of people to step up their performances not just for themselves but for a common cause? To work harder and better and to go out of their way not because of financial motivations but because it feels good and enhances self-esteem and creates bonds with fellow Americans? The idea, however, is more than plausible. Consider the way in which Americans pulled together in reaction to the 9/11 terrorist events, the Katrina hurricane in the South in 2007, and the Great War Effort in World War II, for example. People stepped up their work and civic performances, volunteered and sacrificed in many ways, showed unprecedented appreciation for our national defense forces and first responders, and more. Years after 9/11 and Katrina, citizens (in general) are still showing uncommon appreciation for first responders and military personnel.

There also is no shortage of human interest and sports world stories of people doing great things when motivated by collective pride. It does not have to take hostile violent acts or natural disasters to motivate people to get them to come together to address common causes. We can make it so that more mundane and quotidian concerns like the general welfare, jobs and the economy, peace, happiness, the environment, and social values can be the subject of collective action and pride as well. Conceived and administered in the right way millions of Americans may really respond to particular problem-solving projects motivated by collective pride.

It's proven that the motivations of individualism/capitalism are *not* sufficient to advance us to a 21st-Century nation. Those motivations emphasize self-interest, competition, aggressiveness, and encourage cheating, lying, deception, exploitation, and cynicism. (As they say, the *nice* guy finishes last.) Take a fair look at our current state of governance and social relations for confirmation of that. This doesn't mean that we abandon competition, ambition, etc. where excellence and grand personal accomplishments can inspire and awe everyone. But, we do need a *complementary* approach which can value absolute positive accomplishments and recognize the achievements of everyone regardless of how they rank on a relative scale.

We can act *proactively* now with good plans to rebuild and reanimate our lives and communities rather than merely reacting to some outside, temporary, unpredictable motivators like wars and disasters. A new ethos may motivate people to take a higher level of pride in themselves and their work and achieve great accomplishments when they realize that there is opportunity, public support, and a chance for success.

7. Economic efficiency and meaning conceived from the common good perspective

What is economically efficient depends on perspective. For example, it is “right” in the capitalist system (under certain conditions) to dump milk and destroy unsold products in order to maintain pricing levels. It is right in the capitalist system to produce and convince people to buy products no one really needs or wants as doing so creates jobs and makes profits for business owners and investors. Smart sellers know that it is vastly preferable to have great *marketing* rather than great *products* as clever and devious marketers can convince people to spend (waste?) their money on nearly anything regardless of its real value. Even war making is generally a very good stimulus for the economy (and production of profits.)

All of that behavior is clearly irrational from the common good perspective--(lots of hungry people could use that milk and those products; “manufacturing” demand is wasteful and immoral from one point of view; war obviously has its drawbacks for *most* people and especially the lower classes who contribute most of the dead and the wounded.) In addition, in the capitalist system there is no necessary interest on *content* of production, i.e., what is really needed and wanted by people and by society or the relative value of one product to another. What is marketed and sold is not necessarily what anyone (objectively) needs but what the marketers think they can convince consumers (including governments) to buy, regardless.

Taxpayers, for example, regularly pay for new military hardware that will never get used, *has* little or no use, and is not even *wanted* by the military services themselves. But, that (worthless?) spending is considered a *positive* thing for the capitalist economy as it provides jobs and incomes and grows GNP. Billions are spent on unproven (worthless?) health and diet products and on the “latest and greatest” of *everything*—technology, fashion, style and fad items, ad infinitum, *no matter what* intrinsic value. (Note: there is *always more* “latest and greatest.”) *Absolute* product choice, too, is irrelevant—bombs and weapons are just as good as children's car seats, crystal meth just as good as milk, eight TVs per household better than one, thirty-eight TVs per household better than eight, etc. That (unnecessary? worthless? irrational?) spending, nevertheless, is a positive thing for the capitalist economy as it provides jobs and incomes and, most importantly, grows GNP.

Of course, some economists argue that the free (consumer) market is the only valid judge of value and, arguably, if people are buying purportedly worthless and/or unnecessary products, it's because they actually *do* want them. Consumers are assumed by the *theory* to be free-thinking, free-choosing actors so we should accept their voluntary acts of spending as validation of market worth and valuations. The *reality* of consumer choice and behavior, however, as understood by the marketers themselves, public relations professionals, behavioral economists, and many social scientists is vastly different. Decision-making is much less cognitive-based and determined more by elements of psychology, emotion, social environment, and the deliberate manipulation by marketing and PR specialists who condition and exploit people to be willing and active consumers.

The molding by marketers of an insidious all-encompassing *consumer culture* has been a huge factor in driving often perverse citizen behaviors (i.e., persistent buying) and attitudes (i.e., living to buy.) And, of course, wasteful high-level governmental expenditures are promoted from the external influences of elite heavyweight lobbyists and special interests for their own economic gains.

Even if people were capable of and did make smart decisions for themselves in the market that doesn't mean that the private market concept is efficient, from a *collective's* perspective. The free market concept itself is an abstraction contained in an abstract economic model that has little to do with real human needs and wants. The market exists for *systemic* purposes—to spur economic transactions to the greatest extent possible and forever. It doesn't conceive of a human dimension to economics.

Astonishingly, in both theory and practice, the capitalist system can't *ever* accept the concept of the satisfaction of all (real and/or conditioned) needs and wants. If after everyone has one or more houses,

more than two vehicles per person, more than four mobile devices per person, and more other stuff than they could ever possibly use, the system *requires* them to buy even more and to *never* stop. If our country was a diner at a buffet she would be required to eat everything on the buffet table, watch as the table is refilled, and continue to eat again into perpetuity. This is perverse behavior all by itself, not even considering the absurdity of the task, the health and financial costs, and the lost opportunity time of doing other things besides eating (consuming).

This scenario sounds like nonsense, and it is, but it is a *fundamental* part of the logic of the capitalist system. If that ultimate terrible event—the satisfaction of all American needs and wants—ever occurred, recessions and depressions would result and truly cause the economic and political collapse of society. Just think about that for a moment: the *satisfaction* of all real societal needs and wants means the *total collapse* of society! From a human point of view, that concept is hard to mesh with one's sense of common sense and practical perspective. Some readers may want to read and consider that idea again until it really sinks in.

It is beyond obvious that another perspective needs to be in play here, one that highlights the needs, wants, and perspectives of real living human beings. Most people, if given a choice, will not knowingly accept the idea that “He who has the most toys wins!” There are other important measures of meaning and value which, unfortunately, are crowded out of experience by the smothering presence of the capitalist logic. People would like to find their *own* meanings—in themselves, their families and friends, their communities, their personal existential activities, their spirituality, and the like—and not have the system chain them into a role of “consumer-worker.”

We need to get beyond being *system* people and find meanings for ourselves as just *plain* people. In the public citizen perspective: 1) production of product “X” should stop when the (real, not manipulated) needs or wants are satisfied, 2) work should ease when the jobs are done and done right, 3) a societal brain should have a big say in what we produce not simply upon what the market comes up with, and 4) there should not be desperate and compulsive manipulations of consumers to buy, buy, buy, and buy more just because the health of the capitalist system itself requires it.

Many experts believe that it is the current *unfair distribution* of wealth and incomes which results in poverty, etc., not the lack of absolute resources. It seems evident that we could support a pretty good standard of living for nearly everyone in America right now. Of course, that's not our reality, as we have experienced over the past two centuries at least how *capitalism* has organized our economic and social structures and outcomes. Not very well when the top 1% of the populace owns 42% of the wealth. Not very well when our society has multimillions of so-called losers. From the point of view of the lower classes, most of whom work very hard and long most of the time, the system rules which produce these outcomes are seriously rigged and/or perverse. They have to wonder when that tide that has been projected for them is ever going to rise, or if they are ever going to get a slice of that larger pie which is promised them? If so when? And how?

There needs to be a time—perhaps now—when alert, thoughtful people consider what we are as a society, what we will be, and what we want to be, especially when the material needs and wants of the world are essentially (or close to being) satisfied by the production powers we have now. We may find satisfactions and meaning apart from mere consumption. We may be able to savor, for once, a sense of achievement, relaxation, and contentment. We may find other worthwhile things to do (or just a different state of being) when we no longer need to work as hard and as long as we do now.

These are existential and practical issues and primarily longer-term ones which we should face at some point and come up with new ideas. For now, we should *start* discussing major shifts in how we view society, moving from one where the system makes our decisions for us to one where we make decisions for ourselves. This is a radical change of view and implies not only a different type of society but also a new economic system. (See Chapter 9 below for more discussion of the contours of a new economic

system.) A new economic system *may* happen but if it does it is distant and it is hard now to see exactly what it will look like. For now, we can consider it a major advance if we can just *start* on balancing capitalism and human needs.

The National Character Program intends to do just that, in part, by coming up with a set of economic and political concepts which *sidestep* the capitalist system. (Remember, capitalism is not going away, at least in the foreseeable future.) As noted previously there are institutions already which sidestep or operate inside a different, parallel frame to capitalism—the family as an organization, teams of various sorts, not-for-profit and volunteer organizations, charitable programs, etc. But we need much more pushback on capitalism in a variety of different ways: 1) we must organize a counterbalance to the influence of the elite in economics and politics; 2) businesses must take responsibility for their externalities—waste, pollutions, work-related injuries and diseases, etc.; 3) the consuming public needs stronger protection against overreaching, manipulative, abusive, and disrespectful business practices; 4) the whip-sawing of municipal jurisdictions for economic goodies by businesses needs to be stopped; 5) a brain (e.g., the Planning and Policy and Problem-Solving Councils) should have a big say in what we produce, in addition to what the market comes up with; etc. (See Chapter 7 for more discussion of what we need.)

Here are some specific (very tentative) ideas:

- 1) Disruptive redirection of some industries like the military-industrial complex to more rational production in line with the objective needs of the nation and the values of the movement. This may be accomplished by voluntary design or political “nudging” of some sort where worthless spending is diverted to worthwhile needs—infrastructure, alternative energies, peacemaking, and the like.
- 2) Rationalizing the health industries comprehensively to provide universal coverage, a focusing on preventative care, and elimination of perverse economic incentives which increase costs without increasing positive medical outcomes, etc.
- 3) Comprehensive tax reforms to strip out the slew of private interest benefits and subsidies; re-organize the tax system for transparency and clarity to distinguish the provisions which exist for strictly revenue purposes and those which exist primarily as incentives (or disincentives) for specified social behaviors. In other words, the tax code needs to make clear to the public what our society is favoring as a matter of policy (or invidious politics) and why.
- 4) Redirecting some consumer product industries, including the beauty and fashion industries which deliberately exploit insecurities and emotional weaknesses making people feel bad about themselves while promoting products and services to “rectify” those feelings. These industries create a fake need and make money satisfying it. This is egregious disrespect and manipulation of consumers. It would be better if they could adapt their philosophies and strategies to making people feel good about themselves in the first place, while still making money. (If they can't do that then they should redirect their resources to some entirely *new* business.)
- 5) Redirecting some marketing ingenuity to promoting national benefit projects like energy efficiency, healthy personal behaviors, conservation, social harmony, and other public interest matters instead of merely buying more and more products and services. There is a huge need to condition people and organizations to be Smarter.
- 6) Establishing job programs for the unemployed and for youths to address current pressing public needs—rebuilding infrastructure, community enhancements, care for the elderly and disabled etc. From a collective viewpoint, it seems weird that we have so many public and social projects to be addressed, so much work to be done, so many people willing to do it, and yet it is not getting done either because of market disincentives or ill-considered politics. Furthermore, money is being spent (wasted?) on unemployment compensation programs when it could be used for public programs to employ people on a

temporary basis. There are plenty of people employed in jobs in unwise military adventures and hardware programs, marketing of unneeded products and services, etc. that could be redirected to better value producing work. We need to be more creative in fashioning solutions to inefficiencies like these. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of these points.)

8. Respect for reason and science

Arguably, our society's greatest areas of achievement are in the fields of medicine, engineering, energy, technology, agriculture, and military weaponry. (The U.S. military power is more capable than that of any other nation's by a *huge* measure.) We may be in the most productive period ever for practical accomplishments in the natural and engineering sciences. The application of reason and science to the natural world has given us us (among other things):

- the Internet and global communications
- a steadily lengthening lifespan
- placing men on the moon thousands of miles from Earth and men seven miles deep in the ocean
- a digital network of sensors, computers, and databases which is compiling a detailed, searchable, permanent history of nearly all natural and human activity. This is Big Data. (It is too early to evaluate what this means but likely there will be both good and bad consequences: Technical management capabilities = off the charts awesome! Privacy = R.I.P.!)
- the ability to identify bad guys in the dark in mountainous terrains halfway across the globe and blowing them up using a video controller located in an office in Washington, D.C.
- etc.

There is much we have learned, too, in the social sciences about people and relationships. There is fantastic new research being done in the intersection of biology and the behavioral sciences where scientists are discovering a complex web of interaction among reason, values, beliefs, psychology, emotions, and the physical brain. That knowledge is likely to revolutionize understanding of how and why people behave as they do. Unfortunately, however, we are not seeing much *practical application* of this social science to good governance and social relations.

The application of reason and science to the *social* world has (mostly) given us:

- a large variety of sophisticated methods to get consumers to shop and buy products and services
- a large variety of sophisticated methods to condition citizens to support political candidates, parties, and political positions of various kinds

Not much else. Mostly just ways of buying and selling (i.e., the essence of capitalism.)

There is, of course, a lot of *potential* valuable research being done. However, much of what is produced by both public and private think tanks and academic institutions on economic, social, and cultural issues is generally ignored by policymakers in the political sphere. For fair-minded experts and professionals, replacing our current healthcare system with a universal, single-payer system like they have in nearly every other developed nation is a no-brainer. Giving up the war on drugs for a medical-social approach and seriously addressing global warming before it is too late are other no-brainers. (But, don't forget, we don't have a brain!)

There is a big disconnect between academic research and analysis which tends towards national and global issues and medium to long term time frames and active policymaking which is focused on narrow, personal or district perspectives and short-term electoral cycles. Policy makers in and around government are not much interested in this science except where it may benefit their personal or district interests in the short term. (We can't get Congress to promote lightbulb efficiency and innovation because a tiny group of —let's be honest—“kooks” have outsize impact upon the political election outcomes?!)

The social sciences, like much of everything in a capitalist environment, are framed by political-economic dynamics which condition what social science research is produced in the first place, if and how it is distributed to relevant audiences, and how it is used. Much of social science research is sponsored, bought, controlled, and used by private citizen/special interests for self-interested purposes. Academic research institutions are increasingly being conflated with Big Businesses which funds research mostly with profit making intentions. The insulated, pure, academic ethos of the ivory tower is withering away being replaced by university-business partnerships, sponsored curriculums, interrelated finances and employments, and business/profit focused science.

In other words, science is either not much valued at all (in the political and social spheres) or valued not for its general knowledge and insights and its potential to improve people and social life but for the making of profits for somebody. Partisan political actors and entities and industries like marketing and public relations use the social knowledge (they like) to cynically manipulate voters, consumers, and citizens for partisan or special interest purposes. Like with the collective interest or national policy, there are few, if any, formal organizations in America with significant influence to promote social science material for use in improving people, governance, and social relations.

The grand potential of the social sciences and reason is constrained by the following factors:

- policymakers don't see much direct value for *them* in social science research and analysis
- profit-making and private citizen interests heavily drive selection and funding of research topics
- pure science (basic search for knowledge for knowledge sake) is being deprecated in favor of that which is directly profitable or can be used by some (the elite) to manipulate the rest of us
- the steadily increasing private-citizen/special interest appropriations of scientific knowledge for selfish purposes has created public distrust and cynicism so that science *itself* is becoming less credible with the public. Credible science is being overwhelmed and suppressed by private-citizen actions in the manufacturing of private interest science or “pseudoscience” for partisan benefits further discrediting traditional or “real” science. Big Businesses now design projects to give them the results they want to have for marketing or profit-making purposes, they control what research results get publicized and used, and they suppress results which don't support positions they want and pay for, etc.

All of these factors lead to a serious loss of a quality public resource. An intelligent, rational society having a collective perspective would: 1) insulate at least some large segment of the scientific endeavor from domination by private citizens/special interests; 2) regulate the use of science by Big Business to prevent abuse and deceptions; 3) direct serious money into research leading to practical *social* applications such as:

- developing flexible employment models where workers can easily move from position to position as work needs may require
- redirecting economic resources and industries in a similarly flexible way

- world peacemaking
- designing a broad range of “nudging” techniques to frame many people into right choices even those they couldn't make themselves
- reducing intolerance and frictions among people due to trivial differences
- helping people learn how to better respect their environment
- seriously addressing the developmental needs of lower class children
- motivating people to perform in their jobs better
- providing social and medical alternatives to abuse of alcohol, drugs, and gambling
- making it easier for people to associate more with their neighbors and to be active in their communities
- making people become truly happier (i.e., not equating happiness with mere ownership of consumer items)
- etc.

We need a complementary relationship of social science to the capitalist system where social science is developed and used to condition our economic and political spheres and not only the other way around. Like what we want with governance in general we want credible research which will be used to help public citizens make good decisions for the collective. (See more discussion of how this can be done in Chapter 8.) Realistically, we may never have sufficient credible social knowledge to remake or model human affairs (subject) in a practical way to the same degree as we can work with materials in the natural world (object.)

The natural world is simpler. Social life, of course, is much more complex having subjective elements while trees, oceans, DNA, etc. do not. Social elements of cognition, habit, emotions, psychology, and especially consciousness and self-consciousness interact in too many multilayered and complicated ways to be understood as they are in the natural sciences. Arguably, however, we are still underachieving in our use of the social knowledge we have.

We have to rely on our social brain to have a focus supporting the development and usage of social science for public citizen purposes, like those projects noted above. We also have to elevate cognition/reason to a more prominent level in governance and social relations. There seems to be a general lack of respect for those elements in governance and the public sphere. Reason, facts, and data are too often deprecated leaving us to rely on less useful and reliable habits (bureaucracy, standard operating procedures), psychology (ids, egos), emotion (fear, hate, anxiety), and private citizen motivations (competition and self interest.) We have allowed the once respected scientific ethos to be punctured by some of our political leadership and have created whole segments of the population who show a disdain for facts, intelligence, reason, and even higher education. Having evolution and global warming deniers serving on Congressional science and technology committees is just one egregious example.

We also have clearly unqualified political candidates campaigning for high offices blithely touting their ignorance and incompetence as leadership *virtues*! How would you like your doctor to say he never heard of blood testing and x-rays and was eager to proceed with your brain surgery because he "believes so strongly in himself?" Would you trust your auto repairs to a guy who seemed “just like” you, “said what he meant, and did what he said” but knew little about mechanics? Some even give credence to clearly irresponsible dumb asses who are eager to be in a position to push the nuclear button!

This is pretty awful stuff for a 21st-Century nation!

Too much of the media and the public tolerate these kinds of antics by our leaders and erstwhile leaders while they would never tolerate such ignorance, incompetence, egotism, and unprofessionalism in any other professionals. Somewhat like the position equivalency in the news and journalists spheres, maintaining any equivalency between science and reason and ignorance and incompetence is irresponsible, perverse, and damaging to the public welfare. In addition, we have a culture fueled partly by the media and entertainment industries where “dumbing down” is now a virtue for many, perhaps because so many people (especially the young) have given up on the traditional positive virtues. This may be part of a general defeatism and cynicism which pervades their lives because of the culture they live in maybe because they feel that there is too little social reward in honoring them.

Not only do we have large segments of our population choosing to exalt ignorance, emotion, and faith-based beliefs over scientific facts and reason but far more disturbingly, fundamentalists of various sorts (primarily religious zealots) are becoming more influential in governance and culture. By nature, fundamentalists are intense, intolerant, irrational, assertive, cannot be reasoned with and are not amenable to negotiation or compromise. Because of their intensity, they exert way more influence in society than their relative numbers should support. They are partly responsible in America for holding back medical, social, and other forms of progress like stem cell research, responsible fiscal policy, honest educations for our children, rational policymaking, and more.

All of this is social regress! Contrast this general attitude to that of citizens in Europe, Asia, and much of the rest of the world where education, reason, and intellectualism are generally cherished and public intellectuals and the educated are considered national (and global) assets. A 21st-Century nation can't tolerate going backward intellectually and educationally. Public citizens must resist and pushback the influences of anti-intellectualism and fundamentalism. We can, at least, marginalize it, instead of explicitly or implicitly granting it a political or moral equivalency to science and fact-based knowledge as we do now. At best, we can create broad-based respect for reason and science as part of our new set of values. There will be no 21st-Century worth level of governance where those who disrespect science and reason assert more influence than those who don't.

9. Consideration of multiple perspectives applicable to all knowledge and experience

Philosophers, scientists, and artists have long shown that perspectives and subjective viewpoints (including the rational, emotional, habitual, psychological, and physical) frame our experiences in multiple and simultaneous ways, often conflicting and logically irresolvable. What we consider “real” or “truth” is in actuality perspective-bound whether we realize it or not. Truth and facts are not just out there in the world to be discovered, they are samplings of *multiple* perspectives. As they say, there are two (or more) sides to every story; more than one way to look at things. Each perspective reveals its own truths while at the same time, hiding others. It takes cognizance of the multiple truths and "omitted" truths to reach valid understandings. As some say, if you're looking at things in just one way you are missing most of what is there. (Readers interested in more advanced discussion on this topic can turn to Appendix A.)

For many people, this conception of multiple perspectives is hard to accept. It highlights the complex over the simple, multiple truths over the so-called real truth, nuances and shades of meaning versus the straightforward, interpretations versus “cold-fact” reality, etc. Surely, most people prefer experience to be simple and straightforward. The consequence, however is that by doing that they are reductive, fail to comprehend nuances, are un-empathetic, and make wrong-headed (or bone-headed) decisions. You might call this approach “low-V-RAM” understanding. That’s like the early computer monitors which had the capability of rendering graphics in saw-edged, low resolution, black and white (or 2 to 4 shades of gray” instead of the high-V-RAM graphics we have now which have sharp, high

resolutions, natural shapes, and millions of colors. LowV-RAM understanding is *so* primitive (like so much of the 18th-Century political concepts and institutions we continued to maintain.)

Open-minded, fair-minded, intelligent people accept that major issues in economics, governance, and social relations, especially, are less black-and-white and more “grayscale,” so to speak (as in computer graphics terminology.) 21st-Century governance and policymaking needs to be more attuned to Grayscale. That means recognizing that there are inevitable multiple perspectives to be brought to bear before one can be confident in an “understanding.” Good decision-making implies openness to alternative viewpoints and a high degree of mental nimbleness, empathy, and good judgment. It means being “wise.” We need new governance institutions and leaders (unlike our existing ones) which *can* address these issues in the right way, especially as to policymaking and fairness negotiations.

10. Humility due to the limitations of reason and knowledge and social engineering

Relying more upon reason and expert social knowledge for policymaking and implementation of practical projects requires caution, partly because of the uncertainties stemming from the perspective issues noted above, and partly because reason is only a *small component* of the richness of human experience. Despite a greatly increasing reliance on computers and robots people are still supposed to be in charge and people are highly-charged with psychologies, emotions, biological aspects, and value filters. We are trying to remake our social experience for our own *human* good, which means that other important elements of personality (subject)–emotion, habit, etc. have to be factored in.

In other words, reason is both perspective-based (therefore limited and potentially biased) and doesn't always reflect adequately the fullness of human affairs. Most people, for example, would find it lacking to make a marriage relationship on the basis of cold facts and logic. In asserting national defense position, especially a dangerous military one, it may be inadequate to rely only on cold facts and logic. Sometimes (psychological) will is necessary. Even being Smart does not necessarily imply being wise and appreciative of the complexity of human nature.

On top of all that, the great richness and complexity of human life dwarfs the capability of even the most sophisticated reform program, even this one. There is too much to manage well. That's another reason why it makes sense for a major reform program (like this one) to try to complement, not replace what we have now. We can be confident to steer social direction, reorient attitudes, and reform components but not remake entire societies by new ideas alone.

History has shown many times over that overconfidence, impulsiveness, and excessive ego (as well as other factors) have resulted in large-scale social failures. Consider the events and decisions that led to American involvement in the Vietnam, Iraqi, and Afghanistan wars; the limited successes (and the unintended consequences) of the War on Poverty of the 1960's and 1970's; the urban redesigns and ill-fated low-income housing projects of the same period; the war on drugs; and the side effects of the impulsive reactions to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. These decisions and actions are commonly considered by many now to have been serious mistakes. Since 9/11 we have spent billions of dollars on less than effective antiterrorist methods; suffered gross diminutions of privacy, civil rights, and travel inconveniences; unnecessary increased discrimination against Muslims and immigrants; and deterred legitimate foreign pleasure and cultural tourism, etc. (In contrast, the hundreds of thousands of hospital patients killed each year in America by mundane medical and bureaucracy errors receive nowhere near that kind of attention. What is up with *that?!*)

However, a greater appreciation of reason and science does not always guarantee better governance and policymaking (although Smarter *always* is better than ignorance and willfulness.) People (and society) can be smart but not necessarily wise. Professional expertise cannot always be relied upon as

valid or sufficient. And, of course, experts themselves may be affected by elements of personal biases and ideologies.

Because of these limitations and complications there has to be a prudence and caution in undertaking the major changes in governance and society which we are contemplating here. It is worthwhile to consider the ideas of Classical Conservatism, especially those of the 18th-Century philosopher, Edmund Burke, who believed that the existence of major elements of social life—structures, behaviors, conflicts, etc.—implied the existence of good and sufficient (objective) reasons for them to be as they are. We have to accept a lot of things as they are (and the social elements which made them what they are) and big ideas to change or overcome these major elements need to be tempered by prudence and judgment.

The National Character Project (see Chapter 8 for details) follows these prudent principles: 1) it is a nondestructive project; 2) it builds incrementally; 3) it has relatively modest budgetary requirements; 4) it works on changing attitudes, not the system's formal institutions and structures themselves; 5) it will effectuate big changes in smaller bits, perhaps modular and scalable approaches; 6) emphasize testing and trial and error methodologies; 7) adapt to circumstances; and 8) revise as we go along, etc. Big Change programs, in other words, especially those requiring major social engineering efforts, need to start modestly and build upon successes.

11. Insistence on quality of character

A major theme of the National Character movement is promoting good social character, one which balances the elements of both the private and public citizen attitudes. Good social character implies pride in being the best one can be, credibility, trustworthiness, good judgment, tolerance, competence, balance, and ability to maintain a *dual focus* towards one's experiences having a healthy balance of private and public citizen attitudes.

Good social character has nothing to do with ability to make money or to achieve celebrity. Being a big business success while disrespecting the consumer, the environment, and the public does not indicate good social character. Having a focus on a personal agenda and/or conflicts of interest while in a role of service to the public does not indicate good social character. Contributing funds to construct a building for charity having one's own name on it from funds derived and tainted by aggressive private citizen activities does not indicate good social character.

12. Toleration for objectively trivial differences among citizens

The program's focus, of course, is on a collective perspective. It intends to create an American Team. It wants to bring people together and minimize the trivial and unnecessary dividers. There will be a need to educate and condition people to overcome those elements of personality and culture reflected in the parochial "us" versus "them" attitude (tribalism) which is pervasive and deeply-rooted. There may be two major motivations for this type of competitive tribalism—1) A scarcity of resources where people have to compete against others to survive and prosper. This entails a sort of zero-sum situation and the discriminations have an economic basis which makes them have *some* sort of objective sense, at least. 2) Ignorance and emotionally-based fear of "the other" because of objectively trivial differences—skin color, gender, religious beliefs, etc.—which makes less sense (although there is evidence that genetic and biological motivations may contribute somewhat to these social discriminations.)

The tribal discrimination motivated by economic scarcity is *not* objectively-trivial. It is a subset of special interest, private-citizen competition no different than any other economic competition. It is not directly addressed by the program and is addressed by more traditional economic policy means. The

objectively-trivial discriminations are different. They can be addressed by education and social conditioning. Of course, there are historical examples showing they can be overcome. (See Chapter 5 for prior discussion of this.) Clearly, race and gender discriminations have diminished in America and elsewhere over the past five decades and some geographical, religious, and ethnic frictions have also diminished. Globalization and new communications technologies have been a big positive factor for much of this and will be even more influential for younger generations more exposed to the “other.”

Many educational and conditioning efforts, however, are undercut by private citizens and politically-motivated actors intentionally exploiting faux differences to divide the public for partisan/electoral loyalty reasons in order to distract them from recognizing the more significant, objective discriminations in their lives—private versus public citizen and elite versus the lower-classes. These are the dividers that *really* matter. There is a class conflict happening “below the radar,” so to speak, where the elite (private citizens) is active in securing power and economic goodies for itself at the expense of the rest of us doing it, in part, by exacerbating trivial differences into political/sociological categories of conflict.

The carving up of the public into blacks versus whites versus Hispanics versus Asians; Red versus Blue States; straights versus gays; conservative versus liberal; the coasts versus middle America; intellectuals versus regular Americans; Americans versus foreigners; true believers versus the godless; etc. obfuscates the reality of the class hierarchy. While the elite may not directly be responsible for creating these faux differences, they at least take advantage of them for their own invidious class purposes. It prevents lower class consciousness, political and economic solidarity, and diverts attention away from the significant elite-lower classes divider.

Looking objectively at objective interests and needs and examining this basic set of values from the perspectives of the social classes and groups discussed in Chapter 2 it seems likely that a substantial majority of Americans may find the set of values listed here as generally acceptable and worthwhile. We can expect, maybe, a large number of the political elite to object to it fearing that their material and social positions will be compromised (approx. 5% of the population); a fair number of people across classes will object to the inclusivity and nondiscrimination provisions for various (for mostly illegitimate) reasons (5 to 10%); and there will be the usual group of naysayers, and moaners and groaners (10 to 15%), all totaling about 20 to 30% of Americans. Another 30 to 40% of the population (the masses) will be indifferent or incapable of taking positions, for various reasons.

That still leaves a lot of people (30 to 50%) who potentially are willing to do Something Great.

Chapter 7—The Narrative—Part 3: What Do We Need

It's clear that the lower classes are being abused and exploited. It is clear enough that it's the individualist/capitalist system, private citizens, and especially the private-citizen elite who are mostly responsible for it. Smart, attentive people know what is going on and many more others *feel* what is going on without being able to articulate it. Given the persistent expressions by the little people of dismay, frustration, and rage with this situation, there are good reasons to think that many if not most Americans are "Mad as hell" and eager for changes.

But what changes exactly? How? When? How long will it take? What will we have when we are done? Will it last?

First, we need to think out *clearly* what we want! "Blowing up the system," like some talk of doing is not a well-considered option even if it was clear what that meant. Throwing monkey wrenches, so to speak, into the political processes like many in the Tea Party are prone to do is ill-conceived, lame, and foolish. Not only is there little positive about it it also is counterproductive as it basically stalls things as they are and *reinforces* the elite's dominance, not ends it. The Occupy Wall Street movement has *no* specific programs to fix what it sees as the causes of American economic and social ills, nor any idea of what kind of system we would have, even if it did.

Elsewhere, while the inspirational Arab Awakening events of recent years have toppled long-standing regimes, those societies don't seem to be much better off now and are maybe even worse. Long suppressed anger and frustration leading to civil reaction is premature and ineffective when there are no clear, coherent, and practical concepts of what is to replace the old systems or regimes and how. None of the above are models of effective social-economic change.

These failures are not surprising as the macro issues especially—involving economics, politics, civic and personal philosophies, (among others)—are complicated, not many people have the time or capabilities of sorting through all the theory and evidence and assessing it intelligently. The task is made even more difficult by the deliberate ideological brainwashing, clever misdirections, and evasive, false hope promises of change made regularly to the public by the elite and their proxies. Even if it *were* made clear to most who/what was responsible for their complaints, and even if it *were* feasible to oust the ruling elite or to destroy the existing system, it is another thing entirely to know what can and should replace it.

When you distill the complaints and the reactions of the lower classes to their situations you realize that what most people want (essentially) is to have some economic and financial security, to be treated fairly, to have some measure of respect and dignity, and to have a reasonable amount of balance and meaning in their lives. These elements can be subsumed into what we have been calling here as BMR-- Balance, Meaning, and Respect.

The National Character movement is an attempt to articulate a vision and a feasible plan to obtain BMR for all Americans. Since the causes of our broad-based dissatisfactions implicate the entire capitalist-individualist system in all of its manifestations it is likely that only a broadly-based economic, political, sociological, and cultural program will have any significant chance of producing permanent quality change. And, that program needs to be based on public citizens values and new public institutions implemented and managed by public citizens themselves.

Here is a tentative grocery list, so to speak, of *specific* things we need to do to remake our governance and society organized into four categories: finance, economics, politics and democracy, and sociological and cultural. We will talk about the "how and when" in the next two chapters.

Financial Needs

1. Robust and thorough regulation of the financial system by independent, outside experts
2. Robust and thorough enforcement of the rules
3. Clear and comprehensive and accessible financial accountings of all parts of government and of publicly-held businesses
4. Creation of independent financial watchdogs of all financial products and services
5. Obtaining global cooperation and coordination of financial regulation

A. Finance

1. Financial safety regulation. Never again should the lower classes suffer massive economic distress as they did in the 2008 financial crisis and similar predecessor events. We need to thoroughly regulate the financial system to prevent the greed, excessive risk-taking, and irresponsibilities of the elite financial class as happened in 2008 and continues even now. Those crises were the result of runaway self-interest and short-term perspectives and were near certainties to happen given the particular combination of a deregulated financial system, globalization and the mobility of capital, the internal logic of the capitalist system, and an increasing greed and arrogance of the elite class. When the structural incentives of the system favor such greed, self-interest, and arrogant behavior, and the little people present no effective opposition, what else can you expect?

Even though the 2008 financial calamity was predictable to many (including even to some of the Big Players themselves) the amounts of money being made were too attractive for most of them to stop even as the probabilities of financial collapse were increasing. "Grab while the grabbing is good," as they say. The Big Players were not much concerned with the risks of the game of investment musical chairs that was being played because they were playing largely with other people's money and were confident (correctly) that they could lay off much of any losses of their own on less savvy investors downstream (municipal governments, retail investors, insurers, etc.) and would ultimately get downside backstopping from the government. (It seems that they hate government "intrusion" when it restricts their ids and egos but welcome it when it bails them out.)

As the Big Players saw it, the upside to the inflated investment bubble was all "meritorious" profit for them (made even more valuable by preferential tax treatments they implemented for themselves) while the downside risks were for others, or could be socialized, as they knew that they could not be allowed to fail without bringing everyone else down with them. Leveraging the recognition that the health of the entire globe was at risk the elite easily persuaded and manipulated governments (i.e., ordinary taxpayers) into bailing them out.

It helped that many of their "own kind" (same backgrounds, education, social circles, etc.) were high-level employees positioned in influential financial roles in the U.S. government and associated financial institutions around the globe. These decision-makers either were of the same ideological mindset or otherwise essentially co-opted or controlled by the financial and political heft of the investment and banking industries.

The elite made sure that the economic concept of moral hazard was not applied to them but only to the little people. House foreclosures and loss of jobs for the little people were acceptable. Dried-up credit for small businesses was acceptable. High pressures for fiscal "austerity" for governmental employees (especially *unionized* workers) was a very nice side effect of it all. The little people were mostly unwitting and unwilling pawns who had little say whatsoever in all of this even though they bore most of the negative consequences—lost jobs, businesses, homes, 401K investments, and faith in our political and economic leaders.

There was not then, nor is there even *now*, any regulatory schemes or formal mechanisms in society sufficient to protect the taxpayers and the lower classes from these kinds of financial booms and busts. In case you haven't been paying attention, the same sorts of financial risk taking and other shenanigans are occurring *again* right now, still shamelessly under-regulated and undeterred, despite the legislative chimera of new controls and restraints over the largest banks and financial institutions.

Those busts wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing if the risks and their consequences were limited to the Big Players themselves but they are morally and practically unacceptable to the rest of society when hundreds of millions of relatively innocent people get hurt. They become outrageous when the Big

Players stiff the little people and the taxpayers with nearly the whole bill and are *astounding* when you realize the extent of the unethical, immoral, and illegal activities which occurred at the highest stages of corporate governance during all of this crisis and which remain unpunished and undeterred even still.

The public must be sufficiently immunized from the irresponsibility, greed, and arrogance of the elite financial class. The only effective way to prevent these disruptive financial occurrences from happening again is by robust regulation of the financial system so that the lethal combination of private interests, short-term perspectives, unchecked levels of risk, missing moral hazards, and unprotected public interests can never occur again.

Formulating a suitable regulatory scheme containing policymaking, monitoring, and auditing functions is not that hard at the theoretical level. Knowledgeable, fair-minded experts already know how to balance system safety with capitalist imperatives. The new rules can be made by independent, intellectually honest experts who have a collective viewpoint and charged with protecting the whole public. Certainly we cannot allow the same people responsible for these crises to continue to make their own rules of behavior (and misbehavior) and to determine their own ridiculously inadequate enforcement schemes.

Enforcement of the rules has to be aggressive and thorough (see below.) Getting the elite to accept them is unlikely as this level of regulation almost certainly will lower their massive incomes somewhat and constrain their over exuberant ids. (That's rough!). The scheme will have to be *imposed* by the little people over the elite's opposition. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of the Policy and Problem-Solving Councils—for regulation—and the Local Council—for enforcement—regarding how this can be done.)

The elite will argue that these kinds of regulations (and even worse, the actual enforcement of them) will "cut profits," "slow economic growth," and perhaps even result in blue-chip citizens going to prison. Some of that may very well be true but there are trade-offs to nearly every position and the positives for the collective greatly outweigh the negatives.

Of course, *something* has to give in this conflict of classes. The rest of us are willing to sacrifice (sometimes bogus) economic growth (based largely on excessive credit and short-term perspectives) and the diminution of profits of the elite (from fantastically enormous to *merely* enormous) as a well-worthwhile trade for the security of the billions of little people. And, as for the criminal prosecution of those blue chip citizens—Oh well! If we are fortunate, new entrepreneurs can make money and create jobs by, among other things, marketing videos of the blue chippers' perp walks and selling commemorative T-shirts and other tchotchke outside of the courthouses during their trials.

2. Law enforcement. There must be adequate funding and support for aggressive and thorough enforcement of new regulatory schemes covering the entire financial system sufficient to counter the resources of the big corporations, particularly their lobbyists and law firms. We cannot allow violations of law to be unpunished, insufficiently punished, or become merely costs of doing business as they are now.

Many of the Big Players in the financial world, including Citigroup, Bank of America, JP Morgan, and Goldman Sachs, are repeat criminal and/or civil offenders who have, when caught, received only figurative slaps on the wrist while entering wimpy enforcement stipulations that required them to pay (modest) fines, to agree not to commit anymore of the criminal and fraudulent acts they were charged with, and which allowed them to trumpet arrogantly to the public that they “conceded no violations of the law.”

Then they proceeded to violate the same laws again! Sweet deal!

Rigorous enforcement is required for regulation to be effective, of course. The elite should no longer be able to get away with an emasculated enforcement system which they set up themselves to

superficially regulate their activities, nor outgun and out resource government enforcement of the laws. There will have to be loophole-free rules with real deterrent and effective penalties and consequences for violators. Such enforcement is also important to reinforce the fairness and trust considerations we want to build into our culture. (See section 4, below, for more discussion of cultural changes.)

We will have to spend a higher level of tax dollars than we do now to deter rule breaking and to punish it appropriately when it occurs. The spending will be well worth it in providing financial safety for the public, enforcing fairness norms, and adding to the level of trust we want to build into the culture. That enforcement money may come from a higher level of taxes or from a reallocation of current revenues from wasteful projects (military hardware boondoggles, for example) to the useful-quality enforcement of the laws.

3. Accountability and credible accounting. (a) We need clear, comprehensive, and accessible accounting of all financial aspects of government so that the public can understand effectively the condition of our finances: What do we own and its value? What do we owe, to whom, and why? What are our summary and detailed revenues and expenses for one year, five years, and longer periods? What are the income/expense/balance sheet projections for the next 5/10/50 years? Are all of our long-term commitments adequately funded? Etc.

There seems to be a deliberate (elite-sponsored?) effort by government to obfuscate the status of governmental finances. Why only in recent years have the decades-long underfunding of governmental pensions at all levels become headlines? What is the deal with hidden or under-disclosed liabilities and expenses like "off balance sheet" items and *separate* accountings for wars and similar matters? These accounting flaws are either deliberate obfuscations meant to fool the general public or manifestations of an obsolete and/or incompetent system of public accounting.

We need to have more disclosure, more accessibility, and more attention drawn to these kinds of financial matters so that the public (*once adequately prepared to assert itself*—see Chapter 8, below detailing how the Support Council, particularly, can educate the public) can make intelligent assessments of the status and consequences of governmental financial activity and policymaking and react appropriately. At a minimum, the public needs to get credible, accessible governmental accounting records akin to the simple budgets and net worth statements that many families use for themselves.

The little people may help control higher-level financial matters by framing expectations that governmental expenditures be funded properly, belt-tightening occur when circumstances warrant, and disposable income be devoted partly to long-term savings.

(b) As with governments there must be clarity, credibility, and accessibility of accounting matters in the private investment and transactional world relating to publicly-held companies, insurers, and similar financial entities. We can't tolerate the accounting shenanigans—bogus asset evaluations, the pricing of exotic assets by inadequately tested and ill-conceived algorithms, "drive-by" audits, incestuous relationships among principals and auditors, etc.—which characterize our current financial system. It seems as if much of the scheme is deliberately designed by the top-tier financial elite to facilitate deceptions upon innocent investors, governments, and the public.

The extended web of credibility failures across the global financial spectrum in the 2008 crisis is a spectacular example of the level of accounting dishonesty and irresponsibility we are tolerating. The big private institutional so-called financial "watchdogs" we have now, like equity and bond ratings firms are typically entwined in systematic conflicts of interest with those entities they are supposed to oversee and evaluate. They are well paid by the very entities they are supposedly independently and honestly evaluating and their continuing lucrative compensation depends on keeping those same folks happy (by abetting misrepresentations and dishonesty.) Hapless public entities and retail investors (i.e., mostly the middle and working classes) are regularly defrauded and exploited. The numerous, almost weekly, horror

stories about fleeced governments and investors are way too frequent to think that they are anomalies. The *system itself* stinks! (But it does work well for the Big Players.)

Scenario:

The auditors (with anticipation of a hefty fee payment) to their customers:

“You don't want us to confirm the asset account balances? Sure, we can skip that. You're <Any One Of The Big Banks!> We can trust *you*.”

"You don't think we need to detail the quality and quantity of that crazy quilt of security interests, reinsurances, and hedge techniques you list in your schedules? Okay, we can just accept the assurances you provided us as sketched up by *your* algorithm experts."

"And, by the way, you can transfer our (very large) fee payment (and bonus?) to the account we maintain at the flagship branch of *your* (offshore?) bank.”

Multi-trillions of dollars of assets and transactions professionally evaluated in a context of obvious and pervasive conflicts of interest! Unethical back-scratching! Irresponsibility to the public!, Modest or absent legal accountability, etc.? These characteristics define our professional public accounting in the 21st Century?! Is this a perverted situation, or what?!

This system naturally works well for the private citizen elite and (contrarily) for a very small set of trial lawyers who uncover bad acts done against some *other Big Players* who have the big money to pay for their services. Those lawyers recover some of the tainted profits from some of the Big Players and distribute it to other (defrauded) Big Players, mostly. Occasionally, a state attorney general or some federal regulatory body suing the Big Players for fraud and the like will recover *something* for government and small investors but generally the legal and political firepower of the miscreants overwhelms most regulators and victims.

The independent governmental watchdogs we have now have their supervisory jurisdictions (intentionally?) carved up to minimize cohesiveness and oversight responsibility. They are (deliberately?) underfunded (e.g., the IRS and SEC enforcement units) when compared to the legal, political, and lobbying resources of those who wish to keep secret a world of fiscal shenanigans.

In both public and private sectors we need independent and more credible accounting entities and stronger consumer protection regulations to ensure credibility and trustworthiness in our financial accountings. The private watchdog entities need to be made more legally accountable, firmly held to collectively-determined professional and ethical standards, and subject to firmer enforcement measures. Otherwise, they should be replaced by credible governmental or independent entities funded, perhaps, by fees upon the financial entities themselves. Governmental oversight bodies need broader, more coherent jurisdictions, more robust regulatory rules, and healthier budgets. They need to be immunized from politics and special interests.

We have to make it so that the financial elite (or any unscrupulous types, for that matter) can no longer mask and hide their nefarious activities and get away with it. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of how this can be done.) Effecting all of this will improve credibility and fairness in the financial world, but just as importantly, it will step up the level of *cultural trustworthiness* in our financial and business sectors. (See Section 4, below, in this Chapter regarding the need for a more trustworthy culture.)

(c) We will need to have a formal institution of some sort to take a collective's point of view of government finances (and even of the private sector's finances to the extent that they impact upon the

collective.) That institution will be characterized as free of bias, special interest influences, and conflicts of interest with the mission of guiding public citizens in dealing with these macro-level fiscal matters.

There are some entities now which provide *some* elements of what we need like the non-partisan (but not *non*-political) Government Accounting Office and some think tanks but they lack sufficient prominence or credibility in themselves to be sufficiently effective. They are perceived, at least, as part of the “system” and therefore, not entirely credible. Even if that were *not* the case, their small voices, so to speak, are drowned out by the multitude of other and larger voices (of the elite themselves, the elite-controlled media, lobbyists, and special interests), mostly partisan, biased, or intentionally deceptive inhibiting the public from having and acting upon credible, accessible information.

The little people need their *own* trustworthy source of information and guidance and influence. (See Chapter 8 for discussion of the Communications Council.) There is, of course, much more to these fiscal and accounting situations than mere information and guidance. There must be a source sufficiently *powerful* to protect the public interest. That power would take the form of influence on policymaking, regulation, spending, revenue raising, and enforcement of the laws. There is no such institution or authority now, not even the Office of the Presidency or the Federal Reserve, which has sufficient weight and power to act effectively for the *collective*.

Just look at American history in this area. Has any institution or authority in America been in a position to do something positive about the growing \$17 trillion United States government deficit and the cost of carrying it? Not our political institutions or leaders, of course, nor our business leaders, both groups which have profited from the excessive credit situation. The self-interested, short-term perspectives which characterize their roles and governance have created that debt and will act to increase it forever (if not restrained.)

Has anybody with sufficient *collective* interest and influence tried to address the fact that much of our overall economic growth and increase in incomes and business activity in the past decades or so was due, in significant part, to excessive (private and public) borrowings from (indefinite and unpredictable) future income and tried to address the mid-long-term consequences to the economy? Not our business leaders, of course nor our political leaders.

Has anyone with sufficient interest and influence taken a collective's eye view and mid-long-term perspectives of the wasteful earmark spending sprees in Congress; the generous corporate welfare (i.e., taxpayer waste?) handed out to Big Business, Big Agriculture, and the Military-Industrial Complex; the last decade's housing bubble; etc.? Again, not our business or political leadership. Special interest influences have dominated high-level finance, governmental spending, and credit availability. The system incentivizes short-term perspectives; we have conditioned a culture of self interest; etc.

Their structural *incentives* support *individual* self-interest and the short term. It's no wonder so many people see our society's economic well-being spiraling out of control. Of course, there are many publicly-minded and practically-minded people and organizations who know and think about these things. They understand the collective irrationalities. Some have raised questions and objected but no one has formal responsibility over these matters or had sufficient resources or jurisdictions to resist the overwhelming set of circumstances which prevented collective intelligence. Warnings from public interest groups, academic researchers, and others about collective consequences are generally ignored, unfairly criticized, and/or marginalized by those in power who don't want us to really know or understand what has been going on.

Even if you were to grant those organizations as having offered quality, collectively-minded attention and analyses, all of these many objectors are acting pretty much independently and without overall coherence. They are like little pesky gnats at best against the entrenched political-economic system. The Tea Party people, perhaps, have demonstrated the most outrage and assertiveness but not in

any effective or positive ways and their efforts have lacked theoretical sophistication. They have not made any positive and permanent differences for American society.

Even after all the negative consequences incurred by the collective from the terrible 2008 crisis, and the lessons to be learned, there is still no person or entity formally responsible for supervising or asserting control over these things now for the collective interest. We need to have a formal institution acting for the collective which can address these things and assert indirect power (moral and practical influence), at least, to handle them. (See Chapter 8 for discussion of how the National and Policy and Problem-Solving Councils can address this structural weakness.)

4. Global capital coordination. All of these financial changes have to be globalized to match the scope of the financial system itself. Capital has few geographic boundaries and worldwide competitive pressures alone require nearly all major financial institutions (and national governments) to be subject to the same basic set of regulations in order to be collectively effective. It is necessary for there to be a leveling of the global competitive and regulatory landscapes to remove some of the pressures by private citizens to exploit the system. That means removing national and regional capabilities to exploit otherwise competent taxation schemes, environmental protection schemes, and labor rights, among other collectively-valuable elements.

Global regulatory schemes need to be developed by collectively-rational experts. Coming up with theoretical and workable schemes is not the major problem. The major obstacle is the forcefulness of the elite class in protecting its unfair advantages over the rest of us and in opposing a reduction of its income levels from the very enormous to the merely enormous. New global regulations will run up against the normal coordination and bureaucracy obstacles, of course. There will be the drag of social habit, too, of course. That fact and the matter of elite class ego in avoiding their self-satisfying superiority being limited by the riffraff (i. e., us) will take time and persistence to get fixed.

The practical mechanism for this regulation may start with a subgroup, perhaps, of the National Character Councils which could act as a model of advanced 21st-Century financial governance. (The EU's meta-national institutions and general philosophies, arguably, are examples of advanced governance.) It is likely that most of the developed nations—like Canada and especially the European Community (provided that their elites are similarly pressured by *their* lower classes) will cooperate in these endeavors as they have cultures showing more respect for collective rationality and a proven history of cross-national cooperation. Globalization logic will likely harmonize regulatory rationality across nations and regions eventually. We just have to ensure that the little people have the protections they need.

5. Responsible financing. We must have a better philosophy about debt in general and better processes in place in government to control public debt. We must accept the *long-term* economic realities that even us Americans must live within our means. That means a smarter approach, especially, to long term obligations like Social Security and Medicare, governmental pensions, etc. We can't tolerate the "short term—no accountability" practices we have accepted for decades. We have to eliminate the conflicts of interest, lack of accountability, and *internal* special interest motivations in our present structures and processes of government which act to generate runaway debt.

It's too easy, for example, for high-level officials and bureaucrats to exploit the public purse for big salaries and perks. It is too easy for public sector unions to exploit low-accountability politicians/management leaders into loosening the purse strings to someone else's (our) money. It is too easy for politicians with personal agendas, or for special interests with influence upon government, to sponsor wasteful half-baked projects.

We need a modern, brain-like social institution to monitor and influence public debt activities so that we never reach fiscal crisis stages again. That institution will be smart about debt activities in general and propose a reasonable debt balance reduction program to bring down current debt levels and

borrowing costs. The collectively-minded entity will monitor governmental finances, propose fiscal strategies, design modernized compensation programs for public employees, and have adequate credibility and prominence to influence *official* government to do the right fiscal things. (Refer to the National Councils functions in Chapter 8 for how this might work.)

Economic Needs and Wants

1. Redirect governmental spending to what we need and want rather than what some special interests want
2. Rationalize the healthcare system
3. Consolidate local and regional governments
4. Revise the tax system and use it to condition social and public interest behavior
5. Rebalance the relationship of capital and labor
6. Improve consumer protection
7. Improve environmental protection

B. Economic

1. The most significant thing we can do regarding governmental expenditures is **to stop spending taxpayer money on things we (the collective) don't need or want** and redirect it to those things we *do* need and want. We can start by rationalizing the government's part of the Military-Industrial Complex which represents the biggest part of the federal budget. We are throwing away money on many enormously expensive and nearly useless hardware programs. We are overspending on the number of military bases we maintain domestically and overseas. (We maintain bases in or have a significant military presence in nearly *every* country in the world.) There is no shortage of credible, independent evaluations of the government's military expenditures condemning them as wasteful and/or unnecessary but those evaluations are customarily ignored or marginalized by Congress in cahoots with its special interests friends. In fact, Congressmen have authorized multi-billions of dollars for military hardware programs (jets, tanks, etc.) which the Defense Department *itself* didn't even need or want. (We already know why and how this happens.)

The special interests, of course, know where the money is. Until we control special interest influence on defense spending and other areas of the budget we are committed to wasting multi-billions or trillions of dollars which can be put into projects which have more societal value and where we will get demonstrable value for our money. Projects like infrastructure repairs, digital bandwidth improvements, senior citizen care, environmentally-friendly energy innovations, and smart employment which will result in capital enhancements/improvements, be future-oriented, and have other similar tangible and intangible values.

Spending choices need to be determined by a collective brain and not separately directed by the hordes of special interests which feed off government. Those hordes have no collective conscience! For example, it is collectively-irrational for government record keeping and operations to become more digitalized thereby saving money, increasing efficiency, and providing new and better capabilities. Yet, for example, the paper industry (a special interest) is successfully undercutting that effort by pressuring Congress to support using *more* paper, of all things, (for their own interests and profits.) This is pretty awful stuff! It is a poke in the eye of the public.

That's just one example of the anti-collective private citizen behavior which characterizes a major part of our present government expenditures. A nation spending \$1 trillion or more annually is not necessarily bad in itself as long as that money is spent for good value. But that's not how things are working in America. We spend on projects promoted by special interests for their own interests, not the collective's. We have to limit access to the sugar tit! (See Chapters 8 and 9 for how the National Councils can remedy this.)

The kind of economic rationalization proposed here will have major disruptive consequences, of course. Certain industries and investors will, in theory, see reductions in value, people will lose jobs, communities will lose economies, etc. These disruptive effects are characteristic of capitalism, too, of course, but under capitalism the disrupted are summarily vanquished and heartlessly left to fend for themselves. *Intelligent* disruption organized by a collective brain can plan positively for these disruptions and provide for phased industry and job conversions, compensation and buyout programs, and similar soft landing components. The social and personal costs of the disruptions can be managed in a humane and practical manner.

But, more importantly, the fundamental *incentives* for people to hold onto what they have need to be diminished. If people know that they will have intelligent and fair "downside" assistance in a disruptive event they won't need or want to so fiercely defend their interests (as they do now) from and at the expense of collective rationality. In the capitalist system people do what they feel they have to hold

onto what they have regardless of how irrational it is for the rest of us because the alternative (i.e., being crushed in the market and left for dead) is so *brutal*.

Done right, our disruptive projects won't have unionized manufacturing workers stubbornly resisting automation and labor-saving production modernization. We won't have trial lawyers undermining rationalization of the medical error/tort compensation areas to protect their fee arrangements. We won't have paper producers hindering modernization of government, etc. Smart governance can manage disruption in humane yet efficient ways.

There will need to be a big emphasis placed upon industries, businesses, and workers to be way more *flexible*. That means adapting quickly to economic and technological changes, workers relocating or reorienting skills more often, and modernization of how pensions, health benefits, retrainings and the like are administered. Disruptive projects, done properly, will advance society materially, humanely, and spiritually. (See Chapter 9 for examples of intelligent disruption management strategies.)

2. We must rationalize our enormously expensive healthcare system once and for all for the good of the collective budget and for the enhancement of medical outcomes of patient-citizens. The healthcare industry is at least as corrupted by special interests as is the Military-Industrial Complex. We are certainly spending too much of our resources on unnecessary, unwise, and inefficient healthcare. The influence of special interests operating within our current individualist-capitalist economic system makes it nearly impossible (under our present decision-making processes) for us to rationalize services and to control costs. The special interests suck limitlessly and endlessly at the money sources—private insurances, private pays, but mostly by far upon governmentally-sponsored health programs. Costs are rising continuously (without a corresponding increase in positive medical outcome values) and, given the logic of capitalism and the inadequacies of our 18th-Century governmental system, will likely *never* stop rising unless we can change the entire ethos of the healthcare system.

It truly is outrageous that the World's Greatest Nation maintains one of the most expensive, least efficient, and most convoluted healthcare systems in the world especially when there are alternative models existing elsewhere which can be easily adopted or adapted.

The theoretical and practical elements of a rationalized system have already been developed. Dozens of other nations have proven systems less expensive, more efficient, and medically better (overall.) From all the fact gathering, analyses, and comparison evaluations developed during the health care policy discussions in our country from the 1980's Clinton era up to the current Obama-championed programs, it has become abundantly clear (from the collective point of view) that nothing less than a single-payer universal care program like those in nearly every other developed country makes sense if we want to control costs, insure the most people, improve the quality of healthcare, prioritize preventative care, reduce bureaucracy and paperwork hassles, and reduce the role of litigation in the medical error/malpractice area.

In addition to addressing the direct costs of providing care, the *process* of paying for healthcare can be modernized fairly easily, too, at the level of design and implementation. We have an ungainly morass of private and public insurance programs, coverages, claims, exclusions, non-covered expenses, co-pays, deductibles, enrollments, indexes, reviews, appeals, payments, etc. Our present system is burdened with 20% administrative costs for private insurers versus a mere 2% for the federal government's Medicare program. This is inefficient not just financially but because of the unnecessary time expended and the psychic costs for both consumers and healthcare providers involuntarily involved in the hassles of the insurance coverage bureaucracies.

How can all of this Rube Goldberg-like complexity not be considered stupid (from a collective's perspective- although quite lucrative from a special-interest point of view)? Much of that stupidity can be eliminated by a single-payer, universal care program. Just look to Medicare again for one useful model.

Can we imagine some healthcare professionals and institutions which might tolerate some modest caps on their billings in exchange for the near elimination of the time and expenses of administering medical practices? You bet!, (according to surveys of the professionals themselves.) Would those people trade off some earnings in exchange for rationalization of the medical error/malpractice area to eliminate litigation, trial lawyers, depositions, subpoenas, and courtroom appearances as well as having their patients fairly compensated for professional errors? Yes, again.

The medical error/malpractice system now is an unnecessary conceptual and administrative mess where most victims of error (as many as 400,000 Americans yearly!) get no compensation at all, a tiny fraction get oversized jury awards and settlements, and medical professionals live in chronic fear of trial lawyers and high-profile litigation exposures. Medical professionals compound cost inefficiencies by (rationally or irrationally depending on viewpoint) acting to protect themselves from patient claims of error with medically unnecessary testing and the like. Even more, health providers tell us that they suffer enormous *psychic* costs for being (or merely threatened to be) involved in the medical malpractice/legal system.

This area is as irrationally *unmanaged* as it can be, but it is really an easy fix. There is already a potentially suitable model in the Workmen's Compensation system which covers workplace injuries. Employees injured at work get prompt compensation nearly automatically (mostly) without lawyers and litigation or determinations of fault. That type of system (overall) could be way fairer and more efficient for victims of medical error than that which we have now.

A rational medical error system would: 1) compensate all victims; 2) compensate them fairly pursuant to a negotiated pre-established award schedule (like with Workmen's Compensation) based on the consequences of the medical error; 3) replace the slow, expensive and anxiety-filled litigation process with a simpler, quicker, administrative one; 4) obviate the excessive defensive strategies of the healthcare providers; and 5) eliminate one major area of professional stress and anxiety for health providers while 6) likely reducing malpractice insurance premiums substantially. It would also 7) facilitate health professionals who commit errors (who doesn't?) making *apologies* to victims in an appropriate setting (not a lawyer's office or courtroom) which is what most of those victims say they *really* want.

This comprehensive approach makes great sense for nearly everyone (from the collective viewpoint) while the current one benefits only the trial lawyer lobby and incidentally-related special interests. Adopting that kind of system would greatly benefit patients, payers, taxpayers, and even many fair-minded health providers, some of whom may lose out economically to some degree (but still obtain offsetting values, like process efficiencies and malpractice reforms.) The major obstacle is the entrenched horde of special interests all of which fiercely protect their own turfs and positions. (See Chapter 8 for a discussion of how this kind of special interest horde might be *re-oriented* positively via The Grand Reconciliation Project.)

If the economic dynamics of our healthcare system were not irrational enough (from the collective's point of view) irresponsible partisan political agendas incidentally work against rationalizing the system. We have been unable, for example, to achieve even obvious efficiencies like guiding people with terminal illnesses to hospice care, even though the patients themselves may want such end-of-life options, because the issue has been invidiously misformed as a *political* issue by partisan interests. The "death panel" concept cynically promoted by some politicians as a (bogus) component of the Affordable Care Act is a typical example, as are the bogus and ignorant threats of rationing, etc. in a more advanced system.

An intelligent society would not tolerate the intrusion of religious fundamentalism or irresponsible politics into a fundamentally professional and technical area. Like with much of the political-economic system, a massive injection of facts, reason, and logic (combined, of course, with a collective perspective) would go far towards modernizing the health care area. We need formal authoritative institutions populated by fair-minded medical professionals to provide objective, intelligent information and guidance

to the public about these issues where special interests and partisan politicians cannot or will not, and where others (fundamentalist and “kooks”) choose irrationality as a matter of principle. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of how the Council structures can deal with these issues.)

Notably, the financial, medical, institutional efficiency, and psychological benefits of a rationalization of our healthcare system are separate issues from the *moral* or philosophical one of whether government itself should even be responsible for providing health care to all Americans or not. Conceivably, we could still obtain most of the benefits of the reforms noted above even while deciding *not* to pay for universal coverage (although there certainly are long-term economic benefits to covering everyone.)

But the decision to provide universal coverage is an issue upon which people can reasonably and legitimately disagree. It's a matter of perception of the nature and scope of American government and is more suitably left to *informed democratic* (see below) debate. (The Smart government approach promoted here doesn't take positions on substantive issues, many of which are subject to differences in governance philosophy. See more on this in Chapter 8.)

It is true, however, that public citizens and probably most Americans would agree with the decisions made by nearly all other developed nations that providing universal coverage is the right thing to do of the nation, especially if they had confidence it was designed by collectively-minded professionals.

Assuming that there *is* a democratic majority in favor of universal health care, we still have big obstacles reaching an informed decision of the public as we are now continuously and vigorously stymied in thinking clearly and comprehensively about the issue by the machinations of special interests and by irresponsible partisan political game playing. The individualist/capitalist system acts to prevent collective thinking and decision-making as the incentives are for individuals to promote their own interests. That usually entails a disrespect for facts and truth in favor of trial-like “litigation evidence” where only self-serving facts are produced for the public and they are designed to mislead and to deceive. We need to get above that partisanship and beyond self-interested misrepresentations by developing credible formal institutions of our own to provide satisfactory information and guidance. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of litigation evidence” and how the Support and Communications Councils can counter this in furtherance of comprehensive facts and truth.)

3. We have way too many governments to pay for and to pay attention to. In one roughly typical county (Erie) in New York State alone citizens fumble with over twenty-seven primary public sector entities with at least twenty-seven executives and departments, twenty-seven legislative bodies, and twenty-seven full bureaucracies) covering a mere 1 million people. Do some math: we have (in rough approximation) twenty-seven governments x sixty counties in New York State =1620 state governmental bodies, x fifty states =81,000 American governments, for 310 million people in America.

That's an awful lot of governments. Parochialism, local political fiefdoms, and social habits aside (all of which are unsuitable motivations for an intelligent society) how do we justify *thousands* of sets of elementary school curriculums, thousands of separate building regulations, fifty separate bodies of state law, and the like. In an age of computers, the Internet and advanced communication networks, and digital management systems of all sorts, there is no good reason to spend vast amounts of time and money for 81,000 executive departments and staffs, 81,000 legislative bodies and staffs, 81,000 annual or regular elections, etc.

We can reorganize regional and local government to eliminate many of them and avoid duplications and rationalize services. It can't take *very* much reorganization to bring it down to a *mere* 40,000 of each (at least) and cut costs and bureaucratic hassles in half. That will certainly reduce costs, provide consistencies and efficiencies, and likely improve performances.

Despite what a lot of muddle-headed folks say, there are no compelling reasons to think that biology and mathematics (and the teaching of them) differs in California versus Mississippi. There are no compelling reasons for alternative probate systems in every state. There are no compelling reasons for many of our 18th-Century institutions and processes to remain in place. While minor local variations may be justified in some matters, the benefits to consolidation, uniformity and consistency are overwhelming. We would facilitate cross-state/regional business and commerce, simplify government-citizens relations, save enormous sums on administration and operations, etc. How many people would *love* having the government-individual/homeowner/taxpayer experience a lot simpler and easier?

Many of these separate entities exist now mostly as little personal political fiefdoms and patronage dispensers for political parties. That has to be changed. Governments need to be more professionalized. Some of the persistence of obsolescence is traditional tribalism, where parochial groups, motivated by irrational fear and paranoia, can't trust others, even those just over the hill or across the river or highway. They need to learn how! No rational 21st-Century society should tolerate thousands of unnecessary feudal-like governments at the state and local levels especially when consolidation is a relatively easy administrative challenge.

There are other factors to be dealt with, of course, in attempting reorganization besides the mere administrative ones. Elements of personality politics, egos, habits, etc., exist so that this challenge may be harder than it should be. But, these obstacles to rationalization can be overcome. Look at the European Community as an example of how this rationalization can be done on an even vastly more complex terrain than that of American state and local governmental systems. The Europeans have (mostly successfully) coordinated and rationalized into one government twenty-eight separate nations--sovereignties, cultures, religions, ethnic groups, tribes, languages,--covering 500 million people. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of how the Council system, especially the Local Council, can help rationalize local and regional governance.)

4. We need to reform the tax system and use it better.

(a) The tax rate provisions need to be more progressive if only as a matter of fairness. There is no just reason why (rich guy) Warren Buffett's secretary should pay a higher effective tax rate than he does. Or why many of the highest earners in America pay taxes on most of their incomes at lower (capital gains) rates than the regular rates most every other wage earner does. There are, of course, tax credits and incentives for socially intelligent policy-promoting purposes which taxpayers of all levels take advantage of. That is appropriate as long as basic fairness is achieved. However, when high earners, including major corporations, have tax rates lower than their blue-collar workers, or pay no taxes at all (like many major corporations), fairness is lacking. We can implement stronger alternative minimum taxes and/or similar means to change this.

(b) We need to rationalize the tax code to eliminate the pure special-interest provisions which have nothing to do with incentives for social purposes. Like with nearly every other aspect of government in a capitalist liberal-democracy, special interests have penetrated into the veins and arteries of the (tax) system like cancer cells. Many provisions of the tax code are just out and out giveaways to those special interests aggressive and influential enough to get them. There are numerous unfair tax avoidance and evasion means which are available only to the already wealthy:

Raise your hand—If the purchase of your yacht entitled you to special tax benefits? You got away pretending that your corporate income derives from a mail drop office in the Caribbean even though all or most of your business operating income is actually derived in the United States? Have passive income (dividend and capital gains, for example) taxed at lower rates than those of an actual working stiff while merely sitting on your ass? Etc.

Nearly everyone, of course, can point out "unnecessary, wasteful, or inappropriate" governmental expenditures and no one wants to see their tax dollars go towards those things (except for their own breaks!). The collective good, on one hand, is being severely undercut and polluted by special interests breaks and preferences while the credibility of the tax system itself is lessened. We need to monitor and stop these takeaways. We need to rationalize the tax system so that it is fairer and more harmonized with the collective needs of an advanced society.

(c) The fairer and more rational tax rules that we end up having (if we are successful) have to be rigorously enforced. That means spending more money for auditors, investigators, and the like instead of *cutting* enforcement funding like the elite has implemented now. That money can be considered well spent if it brings in additional net revenue but also if it enhances public perceptions of system fairness and credibility.

(d) Whether we should have greater tax revenues or not is a separate, mostly policy, issue, but having a federal government debt (alone) of \$17 trillion and growing is a clear indicator that we need to raise taxes to reduce and eliminate deficits. Cutting expenditures alone will probably not be sufficient even if we could arrive at a consensus of what we can reduce spending on. Comparatively, the United States has among the lowest tax burdens in the developed world and the major reason for that is the American elite has just flat-out *insisted* on it despite legitimate governmental and social needs and the negative consequences (for some) of the exploding deficit.

The long-term consequences of that debt may eventually entail serious problems for even the World's Greatest Nation. The arguments against higher and more progressive tax rates—disincentives to work and investment, lower employments, impediments to economic growth—have all generally been proven false and are just more ideological bullsh*t spewed upon us by the greedy elite.

An intelligent society will raise whatever revenues it needs, it will tax everyone fairly, it will not allow inappropriate special-interest distortions of the system, and it will make clear to the general public about what it's doing with tax incentives, including their use as social and economic conditioning tools.

(e) The tax system has historically been used, in part, as an instrument of economic and social conditioning. It can be perhaps the most flexible and potent tool of government to provide the incentives and disincentives to guide society in publicly valuable ways. Deductions and credits to support higher education are good examples. Child care expense deductions and the earned income credit to facilitate working people are others.

We can do more. A special interest-immunized tax system can be used in a large variety of creative ways to incentivize collectively-favored economic and social policies, including acting as part of the reward system for public citizen behaviors. (See Chapters 8 and 9 for more discussion of the Program's reward systems.) It can also act as the primary mechanism to administer the all-important capital-labor allocation ratio described in section 5, below. We can avoid trying to micro-manage much of economic activity and use progressive tax rates instead to get the ultimate collective fairness we want. We can efficiently exercise significant pushback on capitalism just by smartly using the tax system!

(f) Some of the more established social or economically-targeted incentive provisions like the mortgage interest deduction and certain commodity depletion provisions are historically-based and may no longer be as legitimate or useful as policy incentives as they once were. The system needs to have a cleansing of these obsolete incentive provisions. A permanent process should be implemented to have every conditioning provision reevaluated on a regular (5-10 year?) basis by an independent, credible public citizen institution. Adjustments to add or eliminate provisions can be made as appropriate. We can utilize sunset provisions for newer ones which would expire when the social function has been satisfied. (More discussion of how this can work can be found in Chapter 8.)

(g) We need to improve the disclosure of the purposes and characterizations of each of the non-administrative provisions of the tax code, if merely as a matter of enhancing tax policy *credibility*. We need to clarify which ones are pure revenue provisions and which are intended as social conditioning provisions or policy-based incentives. We need to be more forthright about who is paying what taxes and who is obtaining special benefits and why. This will reinforce a sense of fairness about the tax system and build trust in its value to the collective.

5. The single most important economic change we can make is in establishing a more balanced economic relationship between capital and labor. The allocation of value between the contributions of capital and labor has become way out of line (as viewed from both theoretical and modern history perspectives.) Despite record-level (circa 2010) accumulations of national wealth, high stock market prices, high business profits, high labor productivity, and marvelous scientific and technology progress, the lower classes are less well-off economically and way more insecure than they were decades ago. The elite class is absolutely and relatively wealthier now and there is a greater income disparity between the classes than at any time since the early 1930's. The facts show that as more wealth is created the elite retain even more of it. With justification, some might say that the lower classes are getting cheated, big time!

Where the period of the 1940's to the 1960's saw the establishment of a large middle class in America, primarily due to the leverage provided workers by the great industrial unions, the period of the mid-1980's to now reflects its drastic decline. The American middle class is now declining in numbers, wealth, income, security, influence, and happiness. All this regression in the lower classes has occurred despite its workers being more productive than ever (the bulk of the value of that increased productivity having been retained by the elite.)

The great industrial unions which facilitated middle-class lifestyles for (mostly) blue-collar workers and pushed up the compensation and benefit floors for nearly all other lower-class workers are now gone or are mere shells of their storied pasts. They are no longer functioning well in creating pathways to middle-class status for millions of workers and their families. Public sector unions which contributed, too, to the development of the middle class are under heavy pressures to give back some or all their economic and workplace achievements and are being steadily weakened. Budget cutbacks, diminished compensations, and less attractive work conditions have resulted in losses of better quality public servants and fewer governmental workers which has meant fewer and lower quality services for the public, as well.

On top of all the economic injustices, the lower and middle classes are becoming politically impotent, too. The elite have used their aggregate might (domination of capital and management resources, near monolithic control of media and information distribution sources, and domination of the political processes) in a multi-barreled assault on one of the two main strengths of the lower classes—voting numbers. (The other being consumer purchasing power.) While we have always had some measure of “Big Money” politics, we now have “Huge Money” politics where the lower classes are now almost irrelevant except as electoral pawns for the elite.

An America of plutocrats and the rest of us combined with a political system dominated by Huge Money does not equate to a real democracy. If we were talking about a football game instead of elections and political influence, the scoring would be: Elite 92, Lower Classes 3. (Isn't it time that the little people changed the rules of this Game?)

By diminishing their allocation of value from the capital-labor relationship, nearly neutering their influence in politics and governance, and convincing many of the public (through persistent ideological brainwashing) that those results are natural and just, the elite have positioned a large boot, so to speak, on the backbone of the little people. The elite has pretty much “tamed” the lower classes. This state of affairs indicates that divergences in income, wealth, and political influence between the elite class and the lower

classes has spiked way beyond reason and justice. The game is rigged. There is little fairness in status and outcomes. There is little to no respect for the general public.

The elite have even overstepped the boundaries of decency. After screwing the public in the recent financial bailouts they are pushing Congress now for even *more* tax reductions for themselves to be paid for by cuts to the food stamp, Medicaid, and Medicare programs. The same group which took massive taxpayer bailouts for themselves has disrespected even the working poor (many of whom rely on food stamps, medical care subsidies, and heating cost assistance to survive) by calling *them* “Takers.”

Is this the "Audacity of Greed," or what?!

We need to readjust the income and wealth disparities between the elite and the rest of us to levels more reasonable and more consistent with the historical levels of the 1930's through 1960's period. That will help revitalize the middle class, help the working class reach a level at least a bit better than treading water economically, address fairness issues, and allow the lower classes to participate more and better in matters of governance and society, thereby enhancing democracy and overall societal happiness.

There may not be any certain or optimal set of economic and financial adjustments we can make where we can be completely confident in satisfactorily addressing these economic imbalances while still maintaining a healthy economic and democratic society over the long-term. The landscape is too complex. There are many variables, some intertwined in complex ways, and our social engineering capabilities immature (right now, anyway) and limited.

But, on the other hand, the program here is not anticipating *radical* changes in any of our basic economic, political, or social systems. We are seeking merely to pushback capitalism, to enhance democracy, and to instill a complementary social ethos within the governance system. We can proceed with our vision and plan idea by idea, component by component, structural module by module, small group activities by small group, over a long period of time, building and making adjustments as needed. In one view, this is really quite a conservative approach to major change. (See Chapter 9 for a guideline and timeline of how the Program can be built.)

Here are some significant economic things which can be done, keeping in mind that the specific individual items noted here (in no particular order of importance) interact in various and complex ways and that there will need to be coordination among them, some experimenting, and many adjustments made as we go along.

(a) **Increase the minimum wage and enhance employee benefits** to help provide support for the fundamental economic security needs of the lower classes. As the capitalist labor market greatly favors the owners of capital, the bulk of workers have little to no real leverage by themselves, requiring governmental involvement for help. This is a matter of fairness and individual *security*. The more economic (and other types of) security people have the more likely they are to be good citizens, voters, parents, etc.

Those who know of psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchical pyramid of needs and achievement know that people cannot act upon advanced aspects of life—good citizenship, the intellectual and artistic, the pursuit of happiness, self-actualization, etc., until fundamental security needs—food, shelter, family stability, etc.—are addressed first. In order to proceed to an advanced society, we have to free people from basic economic and social insecurities.

Of course, for capitalists, the best (and only?) motivator for many workers is fear of job termination and its financial and personal consequences. That motivation works to an extent, but it is primitive, exploitative, and cruel. It is probably inferior to *extending positive opportunities* for people to advance themselves. We can upgrade, so to speak, our motivators for people to work and participate well in

society—pride, inspiration, good social habits, etc. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of the role of positive motivators and true opportunity.)

Raising the bottom of the economic scale via minimum wage and benefit laws is also a fairness matter and relates to the issue of the fair allocation of capital and labor. (See more in section 5(d), below.) The business class will object to the imposed increased wages as that may, in their minds, require raising product/service costs which may then make American items less competitive with foreign businesses in the global economy (among other objections.) The logical imperative of capitalism, of course, is for a global “race to the bottom” regarding labor costs where the absolute most destitute, despairing workers willing to work for the least compensation set the wage standard for everyone else. That defines *labor efficiency* in capitalist theory.

But we can't let capitalism's economic efficiency logic act as the only perspective on the role of labor. We shouldn't assume that capitalism's imperatives are natural or even necessary. They fit the interests of an elite which wants to convince us that these rules are inevitable. They fit certain primitive societies where people have no social relations and cannot manage themselves in any civilized manner. As noted above, capitalism's logic biases strongly in favor of those already having capital, at the expense of workers. Capitalism is only *one* “game,” among other economic system alternatives.

In the world of athletic competition, for example, the rules of basketball favor the tall and quick but no one believes that we all are sentenced to participate in *that* game. Different games favor different attributes. A competitive Stephen Hawking would select a game of Jeopardy, not basketball, likely, against a LeBron James. We understand that any game covers only a tiny slice of human activity. The same basic idea applies to the capitalism game versus its many variations and alternatives.

From a humanistic perspective, those destitute, despairing workers are real flesh and blood people populating *our* society. There are considerations of social ethics, human decency, and social meaning which we will have to *impose on* capitalism in order for the realization of economic fairness. (We already know that we are not going to replace capitalism.) There are, of course, obvious *alternative* responses to the minimum wage competitiveness concern noted above—businesses can absorb those wage increases by becoming more creative and productive, they can support efforts to raise labor and regulatory standards elsewhere, or they can magnanimously *accept slightly lower profits*.

They certainly will squawk about lower profits! However, economics often is a matter of conflict over resources, and if the lower classes want to achieve social fairness, the elite will have to accept mere “hog” profits instead of “pig” ones. Oh well!

(b) Provide enough **employment opportunities** for everyone who wants to work. That means having low rates of unemployment and underemployment. (Of course, there almost always will be periods of transition for both capital and labor resulting in *some* level of un/underemployment.) What those rates should be is open to disinterested professional determination but as long as there are social needs people will need jobs whether they are in the private (preferred) or public sectors.

While we prefer that the private sector create most of these jobs by itself we can't expect that to happen. The capitalist system is not designed to ensure employment constancy. There is a long, fluctuating historical record of capitalism overcapacity and oversupply, diminishing markets, and oversupply of labor. This doesn't work well for many people for very long.

The government will have to have a big role in job creation as it has in the past and will almost certainly need to do more in the future. The government can, as it does now, offer subsidies to private businesses when circumstances call for it to enhance employment. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that changes in the nature of the economy, productivity increases, and population changes will create

a lessening demand for private sector employment and result in massive, permanent unemployment unless society (i.e., the government) comes up with an intelligent solution.

This probably will mean that we will have to have more governmentally-sponsored jobs programs unless the private economy is greatly stimulated by “something new” and big–new technologies, new industries, etc. While capitalism has a long history of creativity, innovation, adaptability, and finding/creating new markets we can't always rely on factors that indefinite and need to put unemployed people back to work now. We also need new opportunities now for high school and college graduates and others ready to enter the workforce. High employment will not only benefit the lower classes economically but also add to emotional security enhancements, inclusivity, and positive social conditioning issues.

New programs modeled after the WPA and similar programs during the New Deal in the 1930's may work. These jobs should be in areas of demonstrable need—infrastructure repairs, elderly care, etc.—and not “make work” positions. We want subsidized employment for the most part to act like capital expenditures, i.e., that there will be something tangible standing when the work is completed or there will clearly be a social improvement. That means new roads and buildings, playgrounds, repaired roads and bridges, updated utility infrastructures, energy savings, cleaner communities, a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce, more secure working families and communities, and more. We want capable people to have work, of course, for their own benefit, but at the end of the spending we want to be able to see quantifiable results.

Everyone, the elite especially, needs to see that we are getting full value for these job expenditures. That will enhance the Program's credibility and secure broad-spread support. At a minimum that means people getting more training, education, and productivity skills to grow the economy on a long-term basis. Preferably the jobs will stimulate the private economy, as infrastructural repairs and upgrades are likely to do, and increase the capital base, ideally.

We can expect to have a large permanent underclass of workers and their families if we don't act responsibly soon to *fundamentally* reframe our existing concept of the private-public sector relationship regarding jobs. Given the increasing productivity of the existing labor force, replacement of jobs with robotics, and the relocation of work overseas resulting in continuing losses of jobs in the private sector which will only get more pronounced, something different and permanent will have to be done with the millions of Americans who are or will be without work and will have little hope of being employed again in traditional positions.

We may have to even rethink what it means for citizens to “make a living” in a context where there are no traditional jobs for them. At a minimum, there'll need to be more government involvement in creating employment and ensuring a measure of economic and emotional security. Otherwise, what are people to do? Resort to an underground criminal economy? Resort to seriously harmful heroin habits and other escapes? Scrape out an existence in feral-like situations like urban cats? There certainly will be significant negative social costs to all these alternatives, too. We can be smarter and provide opportunities for these people to be good and to do good.

(c) Reduce the competitive disadvantages of the lower classes. This means adding and enhancing opportunities for them to compete successfully in the capitalist environment. The elite have all of the advantages in that area—the better educations, the better family and social support during childhood, the better training and extracurricular activities, and the like. They grab up the better jobs, business opportunities, and capital resources before the lower classes have a chance. The children of the elite start out, metaphorically, on third base before others can even have a chance to play.

The lower classes will need support to advance, including the following (among others): 1) educational support from preschool through graduation school levels, 2) early childhood health, socialization, and domestic stability programs, 3) employment-related trainings, apprenticeships, and internships, and 4) start-up capital. These programs will be designed to even up, just somewhat, the

achievement opportunities between the elite and the rest of us. These programs will not be giveaways. Society can expect benefits from providing this support—better workers, citizens, parents, etc.

Many of the elite, understandably, will not be expected to support lower-class competition *especially* when subsidized. They already have what they want and don't want to help the little people to challenge their status and share of the goodies. Too bad, as that is part of what pushback is all about—a fairer allocation of the value of capital and labor. Many of the elite *may* support these opportunity programs as they: 1) may have pride in seeing their investment subsidies produce quality results; and 2) appreciate the development of a better workforce, communities, and citizens in *their* society.

(d) **Negotiate a sort of capital-labor *distribution of income ratio*** where each group (owners of capital/elite and workers) receives a permanent designated percentage of profits and productivity gains. Like in a partnership, each class will share fairly in both upside and downside performances. We can refer to historical allocations like in the 1940's through 1960's when the middle classes were doing fairly well as a guide to establishing the specific ratio. Once we have established a fair ratio, economic deviations from the standard over time (for legitimate public interest, risk-taking, or fairness reasons) can be adjusted relatively easily through the tax system alone by adjusting tax rates for each group to maintain the ratio.

Think of how some of the major professional sports leagues (particularly the National Football League, the National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League) have established sorts of economic partnerships between owners and players. These leagues have negotiated fixed income allocations between owners and players taking into consideration fair revenue allocations to capital, entrepreneurship, and labor. These negotiated accommodations of separate interests leaves the owners (rightly) in control of capital and the production of revenue, owners receive fair value for capital and entrepreneurship, and the players (labor) get their fair share of revenue, including some allocated to their depreciation costs as human capital (players.)

Applying this model to specific private enterprises, industries, and the private sector as a whole leaves capital free to operate and produce revenue as it always has and able to manage businesses pretty much as it does now. However, labor now receives its fair (negotiated) share of revenues and productivity gains. This model, once fine-tuned, has the benefits of satisfying fairness issues and reducing much of the friction between the classes. It will maintain the ratio status in both upside and downside periods (another aspect of fairness), be fairly easily administered via the tax system, and need little or no renegotiation as time goes along. It becomes a permanent natural compromise.

We may be able to say “Goodbye” to class conflict, at least in the most important area—economics.

The capital/labor partnerships may be implemented at local business, industry, and/or national economic levels. The overall allocation level will be managed by the national government and enforced and adjusted via the tax system. When the overall allocation ratio drops against labor's share, taxes for the elite get raised and/or the earned income credit gets raised, etc.; when the ratio favors labor, taxes for the elite drop, etc. Surpluses from increased taxes on the elite may get distributed in targeted ways to labor: e.g., the earned income tax credit increases, educational and child credits, increases for lower level earners, minimum wage bump ups, etc.

This allocation concept essentially reframes the relationship of capital and labor from a broadly incoherent, uncoordinated jumble of mostly individual, primitive, jungle-like economic relationships (bare-knuckle, every man for himself competitions, head-butting management-union competitions; public treasuries versus opportunistic management and public unions, etc.) to a sort of *professionally negotiated business partnership*. This seems to be a part of Smart Economics.

Some may see this concept as radical as it implies economic management as a professional, reasoned, intelligent, and negotiated enterprise rather than what it has been for hundreds (or thousands) of years—unregulated every man for himself with the consequences for the collective mostly negative and getting worse. On the other hand, aspects of this new approach already exist in parts of our economy—the major sports entities, some examples of management/worker partnerships, and other examples of collegial managerial/labor relationships in the private sector. We are just extrapolating from these already proven situations to a more general and national level.

What is most important is that this approach *does* promise to push back individualism/capitalism. Furthermore, this kind of new economic thinking will contribute in a big way towards making America an advanced society likely improving efficiency and productivity, minimizing class and political party conflicts, and increasing the general security and happiness levels of most people. That's what an advanced society is about.

(e) **Greatly reduce impediments to formation and operation of labor organizations.** Capital and management in most industries now thoroughly dominate not only wage and benefit determinations (relatively lower and fewer for employees over the past few decades) but also other conditions of employment like leave time, shift scheduling, health and safety environments, and even aspects of workers' private lives like health habits, privacy, political activities, and more.

Only in a minority of situations do employees have significant bargaining power, primarily in high-tech energy and computer-related fields where scarcity of highly-skilled employees provides some (temporary) leverage for workers. In nearly all other areas, there are too many people chasing too few jobs leaving all of them at the mercy of the capitalist efficiency logic (i. e., two steps above slavery; one step above serfdom.)

Left unrestrained, capitalist management will continue to reduce labor's share of economic value and wring out of the workplace the humanity of workers in regard to health and safety matters, family-work balances, privacy, dignity, and human meaning. Globalization of the world's economies has resulted in the “race to the bottom” strategy regarding labor compensation and workplace standards, as the lowest paid and most malleable labor force anywhere in the world helps set a ceiling for nearly everyone else. This is wonderful economic efficiency for capitalists while constituting real exploitation of the working classes.

Workers will need a great deal of leverage to negotiate the allocation compromises noted above at each level of the partnerships. Historically, organized labor has proven to be the most effective way (but not *only* way—see below) for employees to obtain bargaining leverage in the labor marketplace. The great unions of the past century or so facilitated the development of the American middle class by acting as a counterweight to capital and management while also being active in the political sphere promoting privileges for *all* workers and citizens (Social Security and Medicare, civil rights, etc.)

But those unions are either gone or beaten up so badly that they are not able to function as well as we need them to in providing employee leverage and advancing society in the ways we have been discussing here. They have diminished, primarily, because of the globalization of capital and advancements in technology and management which has allowed capitalists to exploit foreign labor sources (i.e., the unorganized and desperate.) In addition, intense and incessant ideological and political attacks of the elite have whittled away the unions' influence through methods including reducing worker/union legal rights and remedies, partisan politics, public relations demonization, and economic leveraging, including using the mobility of capital. (For example, factories formerly in Michigan, Ohio, New York, etc. have relocated to southern states where an anti-union environment is controlling.)

The unions have also contributed to their own demise from the effects of organized crime influences, miserable public relations, a (flawed) philosophic attitude by some union leaders that they need to act in a role of *opposition* rather than as a *partner* with capital, and the excessive

bureaucratization and politics in many unions where individual union leaders (egos) exploit their positions at the expense of the welfare of their own rank-and-file.

Most significantly, many unions have taken on a *special interest character* which has made them as unliked and resented by many in society as any other (anti-collective) special-interest group. From creators and defenders of the workers and lower-class interests in general, the unions (i.e., many of them) have evolved into special interests not much different from private businesses, industries, political parties, and the like.

From one perspective, how different are the motivations and effects upon the collective good of the ethanol industry lobbying for governmental subsidies and tax breaks versus municipal unions pressuring for early retirements and double dipping pensions? Regardless of specific details, the perception is that both sets of parties are in it for themselves, the collective be damned. Both have lost their credibility with the public and their basic morality. Losing those two qualities, especially, has been nearly fatal to the labor movement.

The elite class has an almost visceral dislike for unions, of course, the primary reason being that unions get in the way of their ids and interests. Bosses and private citizens like to impose their wills upon workers and others without restraint. Who doesn't? Once past early childhood, most people do get over that attitude and learn to play nice with other egos. Historically, however, bosses and private citizens have never much accepted such restraint and only when forced to—by organized labor, mostly—and on some occasions, governmentally-enforced public policy (see below.)

Nevertheless, organized labor and collective bargaining remain the single most effective way for lower class workers to obtain satisfactory leverage to achieve some measure of fairness in the capital/labor allocation and effectuate humanness elements in the workplace. Formal union structures and collective bargaining have, at least, a strong historical and habitual presence and a measure of achievement and unions (as *Smartly reinvented*--see Chapter 9 for elaboration) can regain their moral and practical relevance.

The elite, if pressured enough, may adapt to partnering with responsible and reinvented unions. Organized labor, acting as a counterweight to capital, doesn't equate to opposition. The capital-labor relationship doesn't have to be a zero-sum one. Negotiating a partnership relationship, even with labor as a junior partner, can be a significant positive for everyone. Partners can learn to get along despite having less than perfectly-aligned interests—husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and pupils, coaches and players, capital and labor.

There is no absolute theoretical conflict between capital and labor except in the minds of the most extreme ideologues, extremely selfish private citizens, and those having rigid, old-fashioned mindsets. Intelligent and creative people in good faith can turn potential zero-sum situations into win-win situations. (See Chapter 9 for more discussions of this idea.)

Unions need to modernize, rationalize, and again take on a role of progressive, inclusive, collectively-focused entities and give up the special interest one. They have to rediscover the essential *values* which made them popular and effective in the early-mid-20th-Century. Reinvented unions and new unions can again represent *all* workers (organized or not) and citizens as a “general interest” group while still raising the baselines for compensation, benefits, and workplace balances for a majority of workers. Unions which reinvent themselves (see Chapter 9 for more discussions of what this means) will be the heavy lifters, so to speak, in pushing back capitalism.

While it is essential that workers obtain leverage to be able to push back capitalism in the workplaces, it is not essential that they organize into traditional 19th-20th-Century style trade or sector unions, or even unions at all. New models of labor organizations for the 21st Century can be developed

which may effectively provide the capital-labor balances we need. These organizations can be varied-- governmentally-sponsored or modeled after the experiences of existing business environments now where the relationship of management and labor is already healthy and balanced, mostly due to progressive and enlightened business and labor leaders. (Examples include some in the “Top Best Places to Work” category where the workplace manifests business, labor fairness, and human elements in balance.)

Some especially vulnerable workers like office and clerical workers, farmworkers, lower-level managers and administrators, temporaries of all types, retail employees, and healthcare workers will need extra help in obtaining pushback leverage. If those groups are too hard to formally organize (for any number of reasons) then pushback can be in the form of statutory and regulatory schemes implemented by government and complemented by effective and rigorous enforcement of the rules. In other words, these most vulnerable workers will get governmental help in the form of public policy methods like protections under an “Employee Bill of Rights,” so to speak, including job security provisions and the like. We may borrow from the more humane work practices in Western European democracies.

In addition, informal work relationship *templates* sponsored by expert and professional entities may incorporate concepts like having representation of labor on corporate boards of directors, employment contracts (or laws) providing for worker protections against arbitrary discipline and model leave policies accommodating personal and family needs, allowing some management discretion over merit compensation schemes even in unionized environments, limitations on seniority rights, greater organizational democracy for workers, protection for workers from exploitation by their own leaders who unfairly benefit from their positions in the organizational hierarchy, and protection of management from crippling disruptions of operations used as a bargaining tool. These are all possible options in the modernization and rationalization of the labor relations area.

Regardless of how it is done, the basic functions of these strategies are the same: to provide labor with enhanced leverage in establishing the capital-labor allocation of economic value, to provide workers with a secure voice in determining workplace conditions, and to restrain capital/ management domination over worker interests as a whole.

(f) **Rationalize the business-employee relationships in the private sector** to focus just on matters in their transactional jurisdictions. Instead of having employers saddled with tangentially-related items like health and disability insurances and similar other benefits we should strip off those things as they relate more to the *general* welfare than specific workplaces. These extraneous elements are merely historically based and inefficient for business and workers alike. They distort business and economic missions and finances, especially compared to some foreign competitors. Business cost structures will align more closely to their economic mission. We can address those benefit matters in the governmental sphere where they better belong. Many other countries have *national governmental* policies regarding citizen health care, disabilities, and related worker benefits leaving businesses able to focus on core business concerns.

Some of these matters can be fixed, in principle, without too much difficulty. United States businesses can off-load health insurance costs to a governmentally-sponsored universal health care program (as noted above), for instance. That will address multiple issues very nicely.

(g) Eliminate a private citizen whipsawing of communities. The public has been increasingly exploited by private businesses pitting states and local communities against one another for investments, jobs, sports team placements, etc. Businesses obtain land and infrastructure subsidies, tax breaks, and other public benefits at the expense of taxpayers, not merely because they need help to survive in a competitive global economy, but simply because *they can get away with it*. Some don't even hide their selfish motivations. To the taxpayers, they say “This (exploitation) is how it is. Accept it or we will get more desperate taxpayers elsewhere to subsidize us.”

This type of situation is clearly the capitalist way—"Exploitation is good!" It is not much removed from felony blackmail. The public is not only paying for some private parties' profits it is being deprived as a community of fair share tax revenues. Even more, it is being outright disrespected by private citizens (*or*, the communities *themselves* are giving away their self-respect out of desperation. Sort of like some think of street-level prostitution.)

There is no simple remedy for this type of exploitation except that any remedy *has* to be a universal one. The logic is much like that of the global labor market. The capitalist imperative drives costs down to the level of its most desperate worker. Here, substitute the most desperate community and we have the same race to the bottom for taxpayers. The policy choice is to protect all citizens and the public purse and still have the economic/sport enterprise *or* have some (most?) taxpayers accept giving away tax money and bending over and taking it in the psyche(?), so to speak. Perhaps, a national prohibition of such taxpayer subsidies may work. All taxpayers will benefit immediately. The private citizen will still have his businesses and still make money, just at a bit lower level.

(h) We need to **step up health and safety protections for workers and the public**. An advanced nation should not tolerate 250,000+ deaths a year (!!!) in hospitals alone for avoidable medical errors. It should not accept the miserable food inspection system it has now resulting in an unacceptable level of consumer disruption, deaths and illnesses. It should not condone the abuses of farmworkers and domestic aides, illegal aliens or not. We cannot continue to let private citizens/businesses blithely harm workers and the public by opposing or ignoring health and safety regulations. This is not just a domestic concern, as American multinationals escape effective regulation here by maintaining operations elsewhere including supplier relationships, where foreign workers are subjected to persistent health and safety dangers.

We can build upon the regulatory and enforcement structures already in place while enhancing monitoring and penalties to deter business and management indifference. We will also have to develop more effective means to inhibit the exportation of work dangers than we have now. Foreigners are humans, too, and deserve better. The World's Most Exceptional Nation should not be deliberately exporting health and safety damages. We may be able to better utilize regional trade agreements to eventually bring *up* standards for labor rights and environmental protections.

(i) We need to **stop the compensation inflation for higher earners** that exists at the top level of corporations, large nonprofits, and universities and colleges. The disparity between these highest earners and the lowest is expanding significantly. The consequences are unnecessary and unjustified economic costs to stockholders (corporations), loss of value of contributions (nonprofits), and increasing tuitions and fees (colleges and universities) helping put college educations out of reach for millions of lower class Americans.

Many of these high earners essentially establish their own compensation levels. Those levels have increased over the past couple of decades at an unjustified rate, way beyond cost-of-living increases and increased job demand considerations. It is easy for that group of executives to inflate their compensations as they use "comparison standards" (among other factors) which include only people in positions like theirs (who *already* have inflated compensations.) Anyone who knows organizational theory knows how easy it is for top-level executives in business and other organizations to exploit someone else's money pot.

Beyond pure monetary considerations, the situation is also a fairness issue as many of these people are making way more money than justified, not because of merit or "market imperatives" as they like to tell us, but because there are inadequate external controls over their ability to gouge. Not only is this a high-profile pay grab of our money, it highlights the gross unfairness between their earnings and ours while also contributing to a culture of greed and exploitation. These "blue-chip" citizens are mere wage exploiters. It really rubs the wrong way.

We need to implement compensation templates based on some set of objective standards *especially* for the non-profits and higher-education positions. (The concept of the use of informal professionally-determined compensation templates for these and other positions, especially in the public sector, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.)

6. We need to greatly enhance consumer protection. For the most part, consumers are fish in the barrel for sharp and unscrupulous businesses. These sharpies include some of the most prominent names in the consumer economy like nearly all the major banks and telecommunications companies. They directly or indirectly are responsible for deceptive and manipulative marketing and shady fee gouging practices. They cunningly impose hidden or ill-disclosed fees on billions of customers' transactions, among other bad acts. Mortgage lenders and brokers in the run-up to the housing crash of 2007 cynically convinced many unwitting borrowers to commit to loans which the providers *knew* were likely to default but they didn't care as they got their commissions and fees up front and sold off the loans to unwitting others downstream.

Mostly unregulated businesses knowingly sell billions of dollars worth of food supplements and nutritional products which are of unproven value or actually proven to be worthless (but still legally marketable.) Too many manufacturers sell products, especially the “latest and greatest” high-tech digital and computer items, which are essentially beta level quality, forcing unwitting consumers to suffer the aggravations of immature and inadequate products. The manufacturers spend billions of dollars to *market* products and services while starving their own customer and warranty services departments downstream, as those are simply “cost centers” for them.

Consumers typically have to navigate through a series of obstacles deliberately designed by sellers to thwart obtaining warranty services. Even just a simple (cynically designed) non-responsive robotic phone system can effectively stonewall a determined customer. Consumers, traditionally, have eaten these losses because they have had few practical remedies. Some state attorney generals have acted on too infrequent occasions to address some of these problems, but they are like the little Dutch boy putting his finger in the holes in the dike. They can't do enough as their will and resources have been insufficient.

At their worst, these practices bring down the entire global financial system as in the housing/mortgage collapse leading up to the Great Recession. But, mostly, consumers are just cheated and disrespected—group by group, one by one. The losses add up to real money.

That can change. The fairly recent (2012) establishment of the federal Bureau of Consumer Protection is a step in the right direction. Stronger legislation and enforcement is needed at all levels of government. More importantly, it is necessary to create a *culture* where respect of the consumer is the norm. (See below in Sociology and Culture, section 1.)

It is unlikely that a governmentally-based schema alone will be sufficient to provide sufficient consumer protection. We also need self-help remedies. A public citizen network (i.e., a Local Council, as detailed in Chapter 8) can provide a counterweight to abusive and disrespectful sellers using “market-remedy” strategies. They will include discontinuing transactions with the bad sellers (refusals and boycotts), broadly publicizing examples of consumer disrespect (feedback and ratings options, social media “revolts”), and *rewarding* consumer-friendly businesses with purchases, social media “likes,” and much, among other options. The established market default position now of “caveat emptor” (buyer beware) can be turned into “seller beware” by the right combination of values standards, formal structures, and action mechanisms to empower consumers to condition (and force) businesses to treat them right.

As part of all this, we can create clear and accessible templates of “Best Practices” in the relationships of sellers to consumers. These practices will promote accessible disclosures, easy-to-read contracts, (high-quality) minimum warranties and acceptable warranty services, quality customer service

practices, and restrictions on mundane marketing annoyances like dinner time phone solicitations, excessive sound levels on TV commercials, and the like. (Where is the respect?) All of these things will add up to a new philosophy of the seller-to-customer relationship based on the values we are trying to promote—"Respect the Customer."

7. More respect for the environment. Like borrowing money way beyond our means and pushing repayment of debt to way in the indefinite future we are over consuming and abusing our environment by under-regulated harmful business and consumer activities creating a set of growing *long-term* problems for future generations. Global warming, energy depletion, and pollutions of all sorts are some examples. Global warming all by itself may doom much of the planet a lot quicker than even many pessimistic observers earlier have predicted.

Too many parties have short-term perspectives, or are just outright selfish, and will not want to consider or to accept any responsibility for the long-term consequences of their actions. Those of us living now may be able to ignore some of the worst consequences for a long time but future generations will not be able to escape them. Private citizens may say: "Fuck future generations! We either don't care or don't want to think about them." They plan on getting the maximum for themselves now.

Public citizens have a greater sense of responsibility for the collective and for future generations. They earnestly accept a stewardship role over the planet. Extreme short-term, private interest attitudes are not compatible with a Smart society. Some responsible people see a need to act *now* to protect the environment that will be inherited by our children and grandchildren.

If this future-oriented perspective is to have any impact we'll have to inculcate more respect for the environment in the general public and among our business and governmental leadership. We need to raise the level of education and information about nature and the environment. Like with most aspects of our political, economic, and social lives, we need to better condition the level of public discourse about environmental issues. We should not have to tolerate the global warming and evolution deniers, for example, especially when they are influencing our legislators and public servants and our schoolchildren. We cannot grant equivalency in public discourse to the irrational and irresponsible.

Mostly, we need to eliminate the economic *incentives* for businesses (and consumers, too) from creating externalities thereby dumping their costs on more responsible parties, including future generations. Our society needs to establish a set of rewards and disincentives to condition citizens on the right level of balance of short, medium, and long-term perspectives. Businesses (and individuals) will have to accept responsibilities for their own externalities: polluters will have to make up for their environmental consequences; product sellers will be responsible for downstream waste management; everyone will pay more for excessive wastes, excessive energy and data usages, etc.

**List of Political and
Democracy Needs**

1. Reformed electoral processes
2. Public financing of elections and private contribution caps
3. Shorter campaigns/longer terms of office
4. Multi-party system?
5. Intelligent/honest communications of policies, platforms, abilities
6. Reform Congressional compensation and benefits to match typical Americans
7. Restrain executive use of military power
8. Minimize conflicts of interest in governance
9. Break the "iron triangles"
10. Reform government appointment processes

C. Politics and Democracy

1. Make our political processes more democratic, smarter, and more efficient. More democracy means, primarily, that we minimize the importance of money in the electoral and political processes to allow the lower classes to have more influence over candidates, platforms, and governmental policies and operations. When there is the gross disparity between the classes in wealth, power, and political and social influence that we see now in America, we can hardly say we have a real, or even a republican, democracy. What we have is more like a plutocracy. Given fair opportunity in the political sphere, and with their numerical strength, the lower classes will be able to effectively influence elections, party platforms, and policymaking.

Being Smarter also means having processes which upgrade both the people and the performances of those who represent us and run the government and their performances. It means having higher entry qualifications and a more professional set of representatives and officials. It also means being more efficient modernizing nearly everything about voting, campaigning, electoral/political communications, and more.

Just look at typical policy outcomes now in Congress: Do the lower classes actually support: Huge financial bailouts for the elite, especially of the “give-away” kind of the past few years? Special tax breaks and loopholes for only the very wealthy? Lower tax rates for the wealthy than exist for the working poor? The human sacrifice of (primarily lower class) young men and women at war essentially in the service of American business interests overseas? How can these things happen in a political process based on *majority* rule?

The answer is that where Huge Money (i.e., the private elite) is king, Congress is bought, the President beholden, the Supreme Court populated with elite-sponsored proxies, and the little people thoroughly manipulated by the mass public relations, marketing, and ideological resources of the elite. The elite-biased policies noted above happen because our political processes are way too open to the influence of money. The elite have the Huge Money and they get the policies, regulation, and enforcements they want, despite their tiny electoral numbers. They have not gotten any significant resistance from the rest of us and they happily see us as incapable of anything but inconsequential noisemaking, at best. Life is Sweet for them.

We can enhance democracy in various ways (see a proposed list, below) without being radical. No knowledgeable person advocates a *pure* (people's) democracy, as the numerical superiority of the lower classes implies no superior philosophical legitimacy or guarantee of quality governance capabilities. Also, it doesn't make sense that the (realistically) unknowledgeable, unprepared, and unexperienced general electorate should have a *compelling* influence over the details of governance; after all, governance is (or should be) mostly a *professional, technical* area. We can still maintain a classically liberal *republican* political system while obtaining more influence for the lower classes.

We will, also, always have to account for individual and group interests. And the elite will likely remain better at promoting their own. Realistically, we have to accept that the republican system gives the elite some proportionately more influence than their mere minority numbers would justify. Those with the most “skin” (i.e., capital) in the game will have to have their (larger) say in how the country is governed. They have a more *intense* interest than most in protecting their status, capital, and fundamental class interests and it would be unreasonable to expect them to ever accept the risk of the lower classes being in any position to *significantly* upset those things. They will never allow it to happen.

They may, however, with the greatest reluctance and not without a strong resistance, grow to accept the *amount* of pushback we will insist upon. (The amount of pushback of the system contemplated here

doesn't aim to overturn the fundamental relationship of the elite and the lower classes but only to even it up somewhat.)

In any case, an invested elite, knowledgeable and experienced in leading, managing, and operating complex organizations is almost essential to any modern society. However, that does not mean that our government should be a puppet of elite interests, (i.e., Big Businessmen and private citizens) as it resembles now and it doesn't mean that the tiny minority of elite members ought to dominate the social system at the expense of the hundreds of millions of the rest of us. It's enough for the elite (from the collective's viewpoint) that they assert substantial influence while leaving some substantial room for the lower classes to have counterbalancing influence, as well, as in classic liberal democracy theory (what we want.)

Consequently, we need to minimize the importance of Huge Money in the electoral process in order to allow the lower classes to place some of their "own" in positions of governmental power, at least, and to be able to influence policymaking and executive decision-making in their own favor, especially fiscal and tax policies, to a much greater degree.

Ultimately we want to make a situation where we have a more balanced relationship between the elite and the lower classes *combined* with Smart governance. We will never obtain Smart governance until the elite class's power and influence over the rest of us is diminished. Effecting Smart governance means implementing a collective perspective and relying more than we do now on professionals and experts as long as they are the right ones having the right attitude. (See Chapter 8 for discussion of who these people ought to be and how they should be selected.)

Here are some suggestions to improve elections and government representation:

(a) **Open up the political system on every level of government to multiple parties** by eliminating the myriad legal and structural impediments to all but the two (elite-controlled) major parties. This will bring more people and policy positions into play and enhance coalition building and compromising. There are a lot of discrete interests in society which are mostly impotent as the existing processes channel mostly all interests into a two-party dichotomy of "Conservative" versus "Liberal" (with *both* parties essentially representing the elite class.) (See Chapter 2 for a discussion of how crude and misleading these labels are.) Dividing Americans quite rigidly by 18-19th-Century legal/political rules into only Republican or Democrat seems little less reductive than dividing them into cat people and dog people.

Arguably, these categories have *some* validity, but much of the richness, nuance, and potential of American political experience is lost. Millions of Americans in the underclasses are systemically deprived of political influence. Not only that, but both of the existing major parties, arguably, are philosophically incoherent, spiritually dead, and nearly obsolete in performing the legitimate aggregation functions they are supposed to do. They are like the computer code which ran pre-Y2K machines with tiny memories and processing capabilities.

The tired old party dichotomy hides the complexity and richness of Americans beliefs and attitudes about an awful lot of separate things—freedom and equality; private versus public attitudes; individual versus community perspectives; religious/nonreligious; gender, race, cultural matters; nature of government; business/consumer/citizen matters; and much, much more. Opening up the system to multiple parties will allow these separate interests and combinations of interests to have breathing space to develop and potentially revitalize society.

Think what new digital music services, cable and satellite options, and the Internet have done for the music industry, television producers, distributors, and viewers versus the traditional single album

options and the the old half-dozen or so stations which comprised analog broadcasting from TV's early days. We could reinvent American politics. Opening them up will have more democracy and a richer one.

(b) **Put a cap on candidate-party spending** and/or establish a full publicly-funded electoral system. There is no good reason why candidate-party positions and characters can't be stated, explained, and argued in a rational manner under reasonably modest budgets. A reasonable budget is one which covers expenses for the development of policy positions, disclosure and explanations to the electorate, and some measure of reasoned arguments in support. In other words, expenditures for: "Here is who I/we are; Here is what we plan to do and how; and Here is why we stand for what we do," are legitimate. Any other expenditures are likely to be in the nature of objectionable emotional and psychological marketing and exploitation for partisan purposes rather than rational promotion of character and platforms.

Marketing science shows that persistent conditioning even of the most nefarious kind to make or alter consumer/citizen attitudes works well (for the marketers.) The problem is that it compels consumer/citizens to make bad (or irrational) choices (for themselves.) These self-interested political communication activities are akin to commercial marketers drumming messages into consumers 24/7/365 and everywhere we are or go via exploitive and deceptive means with exploitive and deceptive motivations.

No one ought to be allowed to use anything like the half billion dollars spent by just a couple of businessmen *alone* recently (2013-14) to *manipulate* the voting public. (Sincerely informing and educating them would likely cost *a lot* less.) A Smart electoral process will consider illegitimate the carpet bombing ad campaigns as well as all of the dirty tricks so favored by partisans. It *will* accept reasonable funding for professional, responsible campaigns and restrain spending for all of the bullsh*t.

We also seem to have the political system upside down in a sense—voters are important for the candidates/parties rather than candidates and parties being important for the voters. The candidates/parties obnoxiously hound us to listen to *them* (while slandering and demonizing their opponents) where they should be listening to *us*. Why should this type of behavior be tolerated *anywhere* much less than in the selection of the people who spend our tax money, may commit our kids to war, and act as our representatives to the world community?

(c) **Rationalize the legislative apportionment process.** Now, the two major political parties themselves control the process. Not surprisingly, they act to bias the outcomes as much as possible to favor partisan interests. There is no consideration of inter-party fairness, collective interests like diversity of all kinds, common (versus divisive) interests, etc. This situation not only institutionalizes unfairness it exacerbates the excessive and divisive partisanship that characterizes our political environment. Criteria favoring diversity and inclusiveness ought to be relevant instead of only partisanship advantages. This is a perfect situation for the application of the Rawlsian fairness concepts where neutral, independent decision-makers apply collective rationality to apportionments.

(d) **Enforce an overall reduction in conflicts of interest** in all areas of government. This is another area where Huge Money now dominates. Smart legislating and executive activity means governmental officials focusing on the professional and technical tasks at hand. We can sandbox our government officials so that they can do the jobs we selected them to do instead of having them persistently catering to campaign contributors, lobbyists, and special interests. We will prohibit them from using their offices to benefit themselves by making them securely immunized from conflicts of interest; shielded from undue lobbying influences, gifts and perquisites from anyone with an ulterior motive; and any other elements which compromise public service integrity.

We can have clear, loophole-free professional immunities and more comprehensive ethical codes enforced by independent bodies. No more unlimited contributions to campaigns (i.e., bribery); no more campaign contributions or even party affiliations in *judicial* elections at all; no more openness to

lobbyists' or constituents' payments and enticements, etc. Goodbye sweetheart earmarks! So long free "educational" travel junkets to exotic locales for congressmen and their families!

(e) **Reorganize the outdated constitutionally-mandated apportionment schemes** which tolerate huge discrepancies in population influences among the states. Tiny Delaware and the sparsely populated Dakotas, for example, have unfair influence (in the United States Senate, at least), over heavily populated California, Texas, and others. Given the fundamental homogenization of American life having fifty states now is *so 18th-Century!* How much difference is there, really, among North Dakota, California, and Texas citizens when it comes to national security policies? The federal budget? Tax policies? Educational policies? And the like? Close to zero. Yet, North Dakota's 700,000 people have legislative influence equal to California's thirty-eight million.

This is obviously undemocratic and unfair especially under the circumstances of 21st-Century America where population ordering has changed greatly since the original constitutional ratification. The practical parochial issues of 230 years or so ago are pretty much meaningless now. We can come up with a modern scheme and deal otherwise with the small handful of legitimate local issues.

(f) **Amend the Constitution to allow democratic improvements.** Putting a cap on electoral contributions, altering the apportionment schemes, and some other similar proposals perhaps, will require amending the Constitution. We can do that provided we can frame the effort to the public as modernization and rationalization in pursuit of fairness and the collective interest, rather than more partisan politics. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of what we may want to do with constitutional amendments and how.)

(g) **Dismantle the legislative-special interest-bureaucracy "Iron Triangles"** by immunizing the bureaucracy from undue influence from legislative committees and subcommittees. We need to ensure the professionalism and expertise of this element of government. This is another application of the sand boxing concept. Very capable bureaucracies at *all* levels of government, but especially at the federal level, are stymied from performing to their abilities by interference and undue influence from legislators and special interests. Spending \$600 per hammer and building bridges to nowhere don't happen because governmental employees are stupid or because the process of government is inherently functionally irrational. These things happen because the special interests and their congressional friends (a/k /a "bribees") insist upon them. Let's say "Bye-bye" to legislative distortions of regulatory schemes and enforcements, and spending which benefit special interests only.

(h) **Improve our public servants.** Firstly, we need to establish an informal (at least) set of criteria for public office containing rational elements important and relevant to operating government and representing our nation. That means, for example, Big Resumes rather than Big Money or Big Mouths. Participating in running the government ought to be considered a job with great responsibilities not an item of personal opportunity. We don't want ignorant, inexperienced, and unqualified people to even feel comfortable about stepping into the political arena. We can have potential candidates match themselves up against a checklist of rational credentials, sort of how most employers evaluate job candidates.

It would be worthwhile, too, to recondition the attitudes of members of Congress (and other officials) so that they understand and care better for the people they are supposed to serve rather than acting as a type of aristocracy or as mere supplicants to wealthy special interests. A lot of them now get enriched while in office, have perquisites and benefits *way* superior to the typical American, enjoy the multiple blandishments of special interests with money, and lose perspective and empathy for the lower classes.

That has to change. They need to have their perspectives and environments aligned more with those of the people whom they are working for. While we want to attract the most capable people to represent us, those sincere enough about true public service will have no problems with merely *comfortable* levels

of compensation and benefits (as opposed to *regal* levels.) Legislators should have similar health insurances to that of the typical worker, similar pensions, no more rights as the typical employee in America and be subject to the same regulatory provisions as the rest of us, i.e., prohibited from insider trading in the financial markets, subject to employment discrimination regulations, etc. Let's help them understand us and feel like we do. It might make them more sensitive to their legal and moral responsibilities to their offices and to *all* citizens.

(i) **Improve the quality of electoral/political communications.** As noted in section 1(b), above, our current political discourse is mostly partisan and manipulative, appealing to the lowest emotions and psychology, and irrational for a process of selecting quality candidates. It is irrational if the (collective's) goal of the process is to ascertain substantive preferences of the electorate based on legitimate interest and values. Voters should get the information they need to make decisions in a form and matter which works for *them*. This is way different than the communication we get from those wanting to *get something from us*. We need to eliminate (or work around--see Chapter 8 detailing the Communications Council) the sound-bite environment, the simplistic rendering of political issues, the overly emotional appeals of candidates to the voters, and the outright lies, deception, and bullsh*t which characterizes our extreme partisan competitions.

We can insist on a higher-level of electoral campaigning, for example, where legitimate issues relating to policy positions, leadership and management abilities, and character are adequately addressed in a form suitable for an electorate to make informed, intelligent votes. We need to give the electorate a chance to make informed, intelligent decisions, even if some or many of them don't care or won't take advantage of the opportunity to be rational in this area.

One way to approach this is to create a *template* of what is acceptable campaigning--intellectually complete, honest, and accessible policy positions, reliance upon independently validated facts and data, adequate disclosures of candidate backgrounds and financial materials, and the like. We can develop greater expectations for competency, professionalism, and credibility in the political processes.

We can raise the level of campaign discourse while still maintaining accessibility to everyone in the electorate. The traditional media has a role (if it wants it) in filtering campaign and position news, information, and presentations to the public holding candidates and parties to a defined standard of professionalism. We can't, for example, be overly polite to those "dumb asses" (you know who they are!) who are laughably unqualified for high elective office, nor to parties which distort issues and positions unfairly. Parties which deliberately criticize, oppose, fail to adhere to a responsible level of public/political communications, or inhibit actions of the majority for purely partisan reasons should be called out for it and be penalized in some (informal) ways. If our Big Media institutions don't want to take on this higher-level journalism function public citizens will have to create their own entities to provide it. We have to insist on quality public discourse while seeing that the public is respected. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of the Support and Communication Councils.)

Furthermore, being an opposition party does not justify opposing just for the sake of partisan interest. We need to create expectations of statesmanship and collective responsibility. In essence, we need to condition good social character in the political sphere.

(j) **Rationalize the electoral processes nationwide.** We should rationalize and standardize voter and candidate eligibility; registration rules; place, time, and manner of voting; etc. This should really be a easy fix. Do we really need to have hundreds or thousands of sets of rules and processes of voting when one good template for the mechanics and operations of elections everywhere will work well for everyone? The wholesale, incoherent, uncoordinated processes we have now are unnecessarily cumbersome and expensive for candidates and taxpayers, act to unfairly disenfranchise some groups of citizens, and allow the establishment of major parties to maintain a near monopoly over the mechanics of elections to the detriment of inclusive democracy. That incoherence is a global embarrassment. (Many foreigners got a lot

of laughs out of tiny Cuba's offer to send volunteer observers to help supervise the 2000 federal elections in the state of Florida.)

(k) Model our elections and terms more after those of other developed nations which have much **shorter campaign periods and less expensive ones**, less personality-based campaigns, and longer terms of office. The point of elections and campaigning is not to provide candidates and parties enough time to thoroughly manipulate the voting public or to provide the media with source material to attract viewers with competitive entertainment and amusement (like football and baseball seasons, for example.) They ought to be designed to rationally select the better people and parties to execute and administer government operations. Improving the quality of political communications, for one, as noted above, will make this more likely. And, once we have picked the right people, why would we want to reenter another electoral campaign almost immediately? Two-year terms, for example, for nearly any office is ridiculously inefficient.

(l) **Rationalize the governmental appointments process.** We need modernization and more professionalism in how we select our officials. Like with a lot of other areas already much discussed, having special interests and partisan politics play an excessive role in what ought to be professional and technical areas of governance is irrational. We ought to de-politicize certain highly technical and professional offices like law enforcement and administrative roles. Examples include attorneys general, county clerks, sheriffs, treasurers, and the like. Is there a Republican versus Democrat variation on accounting for income and expenditures? Is there a Republican versus Democratic variation to prosecuting bad guys? Not really.

We know why this happens—it's partly a social habit and mostly vestigial partisan politics where these positions are patronage offices where partisans get rewarded. We can obtain better quality officials, save money on elections, and enhance credibility of government itself by taking the politics out of these positions. We can evaluate candidates by objective measures for the most part, e.g., objective professional credentials, professional recommendation committees, and the like.

(m) **Set “speed bumps” in front of the Commander in Chief** to slow up and improve decision-making on waging war and engagement in warlike activities. Too many Americans (and others) have died because emotions (especially impulse and fear) and psychology (ego, especially) have animated our leaders and/or the electorate. The Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan conflicts are only the latest examples. We don't want to engage in war for other than the most cogent reasons. That means having a deliberate, professional process to make such decisions. We have nothing like that now. We pretty much authorize a single person (the President) to act, even on impulse.

Most importantly, we need to remove in some way the overpowering *political* element in the war-making process. It is far too easy for the Commander in Chief to be *compelled* to risk other people's lives for political (partisan) reasons. Now, all it takes for a war is some (real or contrived) external stimulus involving a foreign actor of some sort giving an opening for the *out-of-office* party to imply (for partisan purposes) that the President is a “wimp.” For the President, the political reality is to sacrifice the rest of his term and his party's legislative and electoral plans *or* crush some other organization or sovereignty and kill its soldiers and civilians.

We know how that will go. We need an independent, rational, institution to put a damper on impulsiveness, ego and testosterone, and politically-motivated decision-making in the using of military force. (See Chapter 8 for discussion of the role of the National Council.)

List of Sociological and Cultural Needs

1. Business-public partnerships for solving social problems
2. Achievement programs for good citizenship
3. Support local associations of neighbors and consumers
4. Reframe the role of religion in society
5. Create media and entertainment role models and programs for value education
6. Reframe existing "dividers" like sexual orientation, etc.
7. Increase environmental awareness
8. Inculcate a "less is more" social attitude
9. Reduce the role of consumerism and replace it with "meanings"

D. Sociological and Cultural

Many of the specific things the Program hopes to accomplish rely upon a large base of social trust, something that does not exist now. That means that we need to bring the level of trust that people have of organizations and institutions and of each other way up. (Of course, the program will have to earn a broad and substantial amount of trust for itself.) That trust may develop once the public recognizes the good intentions of the program, its emphasis on public values, and more.

Assuming we can increase the social trustworthiness component upward we must keep in mind, too, that it will always be incomplete. We will still have competitive capitalism, many diehard self-interested private citizens, and *everyone* will still have to manage the inherent conflict of dual private-public attitudes. There always will be potential (and actual) interest conflicts even among public citizens, especially under the more extreme existential conditions of survival, if and when they occur.

Nevertheless, the program itself will stand for collective credibility. It will deliberately stand apart from those elements just noted which remain essential components of the capitalist ethos. However, the program's profile is expected to influence the overall society, as well. Raising the level of social trust in significant measure will facilitate most of the other things we want to accomplish. Many of the specific concepts and institutions of the National Program are designed, in part, to build up societal trust:

- enhanced economic security (i.e., social safety net)
- the profiles of the National Council membership, having characteristics of professionalism, credibility, inclusiveness, and collective perspective.
- comprehensive regulation of the financial sector of the economy (supported by strict enforcement.)
- sand boxing of our governmental officials from conflicts of interest and special-interest influences.
- the inclusiveness process itself.
- some successful (hopefully) outcomes of the Grand Reconciliation Project.
- the connected and inclusive Local Council, characterized by a grassroots network of family, friends, neighbors, and regions.
- the Policy and Problem Solving and Planning Councils, characterized by expertise, professionalism, scientific emphasis, and collective perspective, standing above the divisive partisanship and special interest activism which permeates nearly every aspect of our public life now.
- consumer protection regulation making commercial transactions more secure and much less “buyer beware.”
- the persistent monitoring by members of the Local Council of government and Big Business reducing corruption and bias in government, building positive business-consumer relationships, and diminishing public cynicism of authority institutions.

However, there are other things we need to do in the social and cultural areas to implement an effective National Character Program

1. Socially condition citizens to public citizen values. This is the primary way to build a foundation of a good national character. For the most part, these values must be taught and formed into

habits. Good public citizenship must be developed early, starting from pre-childhood (pre-natal nutrition items and the like) and continuing through *every* stage of personal development. It is wrong to assume that this type of good social character happens naturally or becomes conditioned merely by conventional life experience.

On the contrary, it is actively inhibited and even discouraged by our individualist capitalist society. Many assume now that people, once reaching adulthood, find their own ways with these behaviors and relationships. Some do, many don't. For those who don't we want to encourage and guide them to do so. There is not much guidance now, at least at the adult level, for many of these things. For everyone, we want to make it *easy* to do the best that they can.

To guide good parenting, for example, we can promote a checklist of sorts, supplemented by free coursework, reward systems, etc. providing for: 1) the physical and developmental needs of children; 2) emotional and psychological needs of both children and parents; 3) social harmony and civic training; 4) ethics and morals training; 5) good personal and social habits e.g., reading, learning, work ethic, healthy lifestyle, etc.

We can create "behavior templates" which reflect public citizen values to provide guidelines for many parts of social life, like what we mean by good citizenship, good parenting, good marriage partnerships, good customer services, good homeownership, good electoral campaigning and voting, good pet ownership, etc. We can promote this kind of guidance and conditioning for all kinds of personal and social matters. We can make these kinds of templates a part of everyday life for those people who want such guidance and for extended periods of time, even generations. We can have achievement programs with a range of specific goals which, if met, reward with tax benefits or something else which will motivate participation and, accomplishment. Let's *make things as easy as possible* for people to be good public citizens and to be better people for their own benefit and for everyone else's.

Capitalism, of course, has already inculcated *its* values into society—individualism, aggression, competition, materialism, consumerism, short-term perspectives, etc. Those values and private citizen attitudes must be pushbacked and balanced with complementary public citizen values like a collective perspective, fairness, inclusiveness, social harmony, respect for living the small life well, and human meanings.

2. Promote the dual-citizenship concept (i.e., balancing private and public attitudes) throughout society but especially to Big Business. It's Big Business after all which has the biggest organizational presence and highest profile in society. We want to reframe the single-minded, profit-based business perspective of stockholder economic interests to that of a multi-perspectival one, i.e., understanding a business as having multiple societal roles, each with separate responsibilities: to stockholders, of course, but also to other stakeholders including workers, suppliers, local government, the community, society, the environment, and future generations. If we can get them to adjust from pure self-interested parties to "conscious and balanced capitalists" and accommodating to their environmental stakeholders, their examples may frame much of society, also.

Ideally, 21st-Century businesses will *want* to see themselves as being part of an overall ecology and will reframe their operations' philosophies to seek win-win situations with each of its ecological partners. Smart businesses can adapt to these additional responsibilities while still making money for owners and investors. Legal and fiduciary standards relating to the corporate management-investor relationship will need to be modernized. (Some of this is already happening.) Consumers, via the Local Council and otherwise, can help by rewarding public citizen-minded behaviors in their choice of transactions.

Unfortunately, some businesses which *do* adapt may incur competitive (capitalist) disadvantages over those which don't. That is a problem which can be overcome by requiring just compensation for

externalities, as one way. Better-run businesses will figure out how to turn their additional responsibilities into advantages.

Here's some of what we can expect from 21st-Century businesses:

(a) Companies can take (partial) ownership of those elements which most pertain to their operations. The food production and distribution industries can, for example, help remedy (or at least not contribute to) social ills which are caused, in part, by their operations. They can reduce their energy and carbon footprints. They can design packaging to be environmentally-friendly and a lesser burden on public waste management operations. Food suppliers to schools should take an active role, if not the lead, in finding solutions to childhood obesity and other poor health outcomes instead of spending millions on lobbying to *defeat* reasonable public interest concerns.

(b) Employers can establish internships, apprenticeships, and similar programs to develop, not only potential employees with specific work skills for their own companies, but general work ethic and social responsibility concepts and habits for youths and others in the community. Businesses can modify existing “bench marking” standards and mission statements to include public citizen values (as some already do.) Businesses, for example, reducing their carbon/energy footprints, reducing incidental pollution and wastes, or by creating “Best Places To Work For” environments for employees and communities, etc. will be rewarded in various ways either by consumers and/or transactional partners, or by special governmental reward programs. (See Chapter 8 for details of such reward programs.)

(c) The media and entertainment industries can produce content of various formats which encourage positive social behavior using role models, character and narrative templates, and the like. This kind of social conditioning was typical of movies, books, and other cultural material in the 1940's and 50's. They contained lessons and encouraged positive values.

Much of the popular media industries now deliver a steady diet of gratuitous violence and mayhem, social dysfunction, and the glorification of misogyny, crudeness, and stupidity. Surely, millions of people find this entertaining and there is nothing wrong with entertaining people. But, better, smarter producers and creative types can entertain as well as promote admirable role models, healthy behaviors, work ethic, encourage self-improvement, and inspire pride. The better, more creative producers can develop win-win situations by both making money and helping to develop good social character.

3. Build up the social fabric. A lot of good benefits come from a strong social fabric—more social trust, inclusiveness, reduction of frictions, and cooperative ventures. The all-important Local Council (the primary push back mechanism) will be comprised of millions of little people, preferably organized into small groups which will connect to a big network, both to generate economic and political leverage but also to create collective consciousness. We *all* want BMR!

Consequently, it makes sense to promote small groups by supporting neighborhood and local associations like block clubs, community associations, and affinity groups of all kinds. There is some evidence to suggest that most people work best in small groups where they share personal elements like residency, workplace environments, family relationships, and the like. People feel more comfortable with knowing their associates and also having a defined niche in an organization. Small groups facilitate people feeling direct ownership of some mission or project. Even so, they may not need very much encouragement to feel committed to the nationwide BMR network movement, as well. These groups hopefully will accept connecting to a big network while still having their home base, so to speak, to maintain their initial comfort level.

Interconnected groups will grow communities, enhance inclusivity, help condition social character, and orient everyone into the broad-based Local Council where collective numbers and attention will be a large part of the pushback mechanism. If this works like it promises we will have a multi-threaded, rich

social fabric and a powerful political-social-economic institution all in one and at the same time. Furthermore, as people work together and get to know more about each other, they will learn that the trivial differences we have been discussing as dividers are *indeed* trivial and we may see a diminution in vestigial tribalist attitudes. We will then have facilitated the growth of new (better) social groupings, including the American Team. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of the Local Council.)

4. Producers in the popular cultural areas of music, movies and video, art, and literature, especially, and those in the public relations and marketing fields can do their part to **create new cultural forms** emphasizing the public values we want to promote. These professionals are particularly adept at stimulating social and cultural awareness and at utilizing artistic, intellectual, emotional and psychological elements, and multiple perspectives in molding social attitudes and mores. As with businesses, the popular media arts can become conscious and balanced capitalists and evolve into dual profit-making/public citizen entities.

Sociologically-based entertainments can be used to educate and condition people to see, understand, share, the experiences of others different from themselves in positive ways. Creative types will make it fun for people to learn about other people and cultures. Bringing these elements to bear can be especially useful in bridging the irrationalities of trivial differences like race, religion, ethnicity, etc. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of “bridging” strategies.) The 1970's and 80's television shows, “All in the Family” and “The Cosby Show,” are good examples of such conditioning.

5. A reframing of the role of religion in society. Religions and religious institutions play an essential positive role in society in (at least) the following fundamental ways: 1) they mediate the personal fear of death and misfortune, 2) they help alleviate the burden of personal existential responsibility for one's own decisions and actions, and 3) they provide a social community for believers.

The first two roles respond to distinctly *personal* needs; the community role is only “lightly” public in that a specific group may act to share the personal needs (faith) of its members in some communal fashion. People with personal faith needs may group together but the social aspect doesn't *logically* imply being public, as in, say, trying to influence policymaking or an educational curriculum. There is no implication that the *personal* has to *impose* its beliefs into the public sphere, acting sort of like a special interest group. As long as the first two needs are satisfied, whether in a group setting or not, there is *no need* for personal faith or religion in general to enter the social or political spheres.

Religious faith is a great thing for many people but not everyone has that faith or needs it. A lot of people get by fine drawing upon their own inner strengths, without religion. And, they have *no more or less* moral, philosophical, or practical superiority over those who *do* need religion. The fact that anyone is faithful or faithless need not be objectionable, of interest, or harmful to anyone as it doesn't affect anybody else in any practical way.

Religion works as well as it needs to *confined to the realm of the personal* (and any formal community of faith.) However, when religious beliefs and doctrines spill over into the public--politics, economics, education, and the like it creates wholly unnecessary frictions. It threatens to promote a bogus sort of tribalism with all of its negative consequences. Those, for example, opposing scientific research on embryos and more are holding back scientific and social developments. By denying evolution and the truths of science, religious zealots are making fools of themselves *for no good reason!* On both fronts, they should stop! They are striding largely outside of their (necessary and sufficient) jurisdictions at no gain to their essential religious values.

There is no shortage of historical examples of how zealotry causes wars, fighting, hating as well as disrupting and diminishing rational policymaking, medical advances, educational curriculums, and more. This is the opposite of the outcomes we want to have in a 21st-Century America. Our own Founding Fathers over 200 years ago understood the concepts of the religious “personal” versus the public,

recognized the potential frictions, and incorporated the separation into law and government. Too many Americans have not adequately understood and adjusted to this philosophy.

In theory, this jurisdictional issue is also a fairly easy fix. Those who *need* religion can retain it, adapt to and confine it to the personal—and *that is all that is necessary*. Those who don't need it can ignore it. Not everyone sees religion in this limited way but new and great leaders can “reinterpret,” as appropriate, traditional beliefs and doctrines to clarify and separate out the necessary private elements from the diverse public sphere. We will need to draw upon a set of *new interpreters* of religion to condition believers to understand and accept the sand boxing of religion. It's really just a matter of reframing. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of how to do this.) By putting these religions into private boxes, so to speak, we eliminate many of the frictions between religions to other religions, religions to politics and governance, and religions to science.

It will be a grand but workable challenge for inspired and creative religious leaders to make this private faith concept an acceptable philosophy and a practical reality for each religion.

6. Grow inclusiveness. Similar reframing can be done with other essentially irrelevant and trivial dividers like sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, etc. These dividers are generally based on ignorance, vestigial fear, and to a certain extent, habitual close-mindedness to diversity. No one, of course, has been harmed in any *objective* sense by someone else's trivial differences. Fear and habit can be overcome by experience and conditioning strategies. The trivial differences can be reframed out of consciousness by a whole variety of creative strategies—e.g., education via television, movies, and Internet sources, etc. designed to challenge as well as entertain. Can we imagine a game show like Jeopardy, with levels of accomplishment, based on learning *multiculturalism* with a reward system?

We can't force people to be open to new people and experiences but we can entice and reward them to mingle, break bread, exchange baby pictures, and more. Every “foreign” group can try to engage the majority with Open Houses, cultural events, and the like. It really shouldn't take much. Creative bridgers can reorient consciousness so that the trivial differences become empty of meaning and effect.

7. We need a broad-based environmental awareness which enhances the development of conservation programs and respect for the environment both in the short and long-terms. This type of awareness is focused not simply towards maintaining the material basis of where we live--conservation, addressing global warming, etc.—but also in the “how” that we live. Do we continue to consume our material basis—land, oil, air, etc. until it is gone because we don't know any other way to act? Do we continue to buy, buy, consume more and more because that is just “what we do?”—(social habit?) Do we work and work more because that is just “what we do?”—(social habit?) Or do we rethink our roles as citizens of the planet and as participants in a production economy in a deep existential way?

The “consumption and work mentality” which is a major part of our history and a fundamental part, of course, of our capitalist economy may not be appropriate for a 21st-Century America. Awareness of our place in the environment includes an intelligent assessment of what goods and services we need and want, and of what has to be produced for us to have quality lives. We may decide to flip the capitalist imperative of “more, more, more” consumption and work to that of “*only what makes good sense*,” all things considered.

Given the failure of even our *overabundance* of material goods to contribute sufficiently to matters like peace and happiness or to satisfy social meaning elements like contentment, relaxation, and personal worth and identity, “less” *may* be the better approach. That frees up time and resources for way more meaningful matters than consuming and working—community, art, relaxation, contemplation, fishing, and other things that people may unconsciously desire for themselves, rather than what the system demands. Simply being “human” in a philosophical sense (which is not the same as being a consumer or a worker) *may* make us us happier.

Chapter 8 The Program

Close to nothing!

That's what you have when you combine *no more* than:

(Set 1)

-A recognition by millions of people of serious problems in American governance and the way Americans relate to each other

-A good analysis of the causes of the problems

-A huge reservoir of “heart” in those many people who are working, or willing to work, to change things for the better

-Sufficient resources among those people—intelligence, creativity, skills, money, and technology

Close to *nothing*? That doesn't seem like it ought to be, but it is. Set 1 reflects only will and potential. Significant permanent change requires *specific* concepts of what change should look like and *how* practically to create it.

Now, add to the set of elements (Set 1) above:

(Set 2)

-Clearly thought out ideas on how to address those problems, contained in a theoretically-sound vision and a practical plan (i.e., the National Character Program.)

-Website/blog/social media sites set up to *centralize* attention; facilitate communications and collaborations; record reactions (feedback) to concepts, ideas, plans, events, etc.; and mobilize supporters.

-Distribution of the program's ideas in effective ways to enough people and the right people (See Chapter 9 for detailed descriptions of who the *right* people are .)

-Leverage developed through the organization of early supporters into a tentative movement starting to form a coherent operational program complete with formal structures and processes, templates for development and activities, guides, checklists, and timelines for action.

-An easy way for the ordinary Marys and Johns to understand the program and to participate in it.

-Long-term commitment

Only those two sets of elements *together* will be sufficient to start a movement of progressive change. If enough progressive-types buy into the ideas and create a buzz, so to speak, among opinion leaders, intellectuals, and others dedicated to change that may start some momentum. If we can get some support early on from prominent influencers, cue givers, and charismatic leaders who may be intrigued by the Program that would be extremely helpful (but not essential) to jumpstart a *Grand Movement of Change*.

Let's say we got support and endorsements from a group of people who presumably favor intelligent, progressive ideas for change on the order of Jimmy Carter, Bono, Warren Buffett, Occupy Wall Street, Oprah, Bruce Springsteen, Barack Obama, movie director Spike Lee, and others in influential positions that would provide a tremendous boost! In time, the program may enter popular discussion

formats intriguing many in the public and reach a tipping point where the movement may grow to be important.

The previous chapters have discussed the general thrust of the Program, which is to impose a sense of balance in society between the private and public citizen attitudes, to obtain space in society for human meanings, to obtain respect for public citizenship and the little people and to improve governance and social relations. In short, Balance, Meaning, and Respect, combined with Smart governance. In order to do that, we mostly need to: 1) condition and enforce a set of public citizen values representing a new social ethos; 2) implement a shadow government to monitor, react, and act upon legal government, the political system, and Big Business; 3) bridge trivial differences in the social world; 4) develop a “brain” in governance; and 5) mobilize the little people to create leverage to pushback capitalism.

Any vision of a significantly advanced society no matter how practically focused will have some vagueness and uncertainties. No single vision is big enough or sophisticated enough to contain the whole of human life, or even just American governance or social relations. There will be no perfect practical plan, either. There are too many elements and variables to be constrained by even the most comprehensive and sophisticated plan. Furthermore, there are no magical institutional structures and processes that will guarantee to produce what we want to accomplish.

Nevertheless, because of the non-ideological nature of the National Character Program (that is, it is not a *worldview* like Marxism or even capitalism) and the complementary nature of the Program (that is, it works *with and alongside* of capitalism) we need only to focus on *essential* themes and elements to guide a program of significant change. Those themes and elements—BMR, a collective perspective and fairness, trust, credibility, etc.—have their own internal logics which, when *focused* with an accessible, practical plan should provide sufficient guidance for activists and supporters to start building the program at every level.

To start out, we can expect to stumble forward slowly while refining the vision and the plan. We'll have to fashion loose and, perhaps, temporary organizational structures and processes and see how they work. We will build and modify as we go along based on experience and new ideas. We'll draw upon collective intelligence, effort, and resources akin to the way the open software movement operates, to build out the program gradually. We will have to be persistent to overcome elite and private citizen resistance, naysayers, fundamentalists opposed to *any* progressive change whether it makes sense or not, and force of habit throughout society, among other obstacles. However, the *story outline* (the Program) proposed here, hopefully, is sound enough theoretically and well-conceived enough practically to provoke enough readers to become story characters themselves and want to contribute to the narrative, so to speak.

Achieving the results we want from the program will not be easy. We are talking about reorienting the culture of an entire nation having a well-settled set of economic/political institutions and processes. Nevertheless, the vision, theory, and plan seem to be sound.

The ultimate key to success is mobilizing the multimillions of little people like the Marys and Johns. That will not happen unless we make it *easy* for them to understand the program and to have *easy* ways to participate in it. Getting the movement going, implementing its formal institutions and processes, and developing its capabilities to reach and motivate the little people is the hard part. That will require the right people doing the right things at the right times. (See below and Chapter 9 for how this may happen.)

The organizational components of the plan contain three elements: primary structures (see Section 1 below), a set of national conventions (see Section 2, below), and a “Grand Reconciliation Project” (see Section 3, below.)

The Structure of the Program

1. Create the new social ethos
2. Organize the National Councils
 - the National Council
 - the Planning Council
 - the Policy and Problem-Solving Council
 - the Information Council
 - the Support Council
 - the Communications Council
 - the Local Council
3. Develop the National University
4. Establish the national conventions
5. Organize the Grand Reconciliation Project

A) The Structures of the National Character Program

We establish a set of national councils and sub councils at the top level of the Program each with a mission and specific set of professional function. 2) We organize a comprehensive network of activists and neighborhood and community groups at the ground level to facilitate participation at some degree of involvement of nearly *everyone* interested in progressive change. 3) We develop a communications infrastructure linking those organizational levels together comprised primarily of digital networks; substantive databases of information; documents, guides, and templates; and sophisticated but an accessible computer and mobile device user interface. 4) We promote a set of public values from all levels of the Program structure as a new social ethos. And, 5) We set up an academic “University” as part of a long-term plan to continue development of ideas and train leaders and managers with the right set of skills and knowledge to address the needs of the Program. A formal structure of six major councils (itemized below) and a University seems a good start. The Councils together will establish a *shadow government*.

A set of initial fundamental meetings at the national level, i. e., the National Conventions, will get development of the Councils started. Another separate set of meetings dealing with *content*, i. e., The Grand Reconciliation, Project will be a sort of modern social Constitutional Convention bringing together people of all kinds of perspectives to attempt to resolve conflicts over major divisive national problems like racism, sexism, Red versus Blue states, and the like.

1. The National Council

The National Council will be made up of about 30-40 top-level public citizens who will act as the “soul” of the National Character Program and will be the human faces representing its values. It will act as a symbol of the Program itself and the members will be the chief cue givers functioning as moral guides for attitudes and actions by public citizens. The members of the Council will be sincerely committed to the *essence* of the Program (not necessarily every component of it) and will help to convince others by the force of their characters, personalities, and credibility to believe in it, too.

They will be a diverse and inclusive group of leaders, thinkers, and *quasi*-representatives (see below for an explanation of this type of representation) of great competence, experience and accomplishment; of proven honesty and sincerity; fair and nimble-minded; having a proven commitment to humanism and the public interest; and so highly respected that they will command the attention and faith of the public. They will be selected with similar gravity as are United States Supreme Court Justices and have the same or better level of character, temperament, wisdom and credibility. And, like them (theoretically), they will be non-partisans. They will be fully collectively-minded.

The National Council will provide leadership in matters relating to the Program, i.e., BRM and Smart governance. Members of the National Council will function in one way sort of as the U.S. Supreme Court justices stand in relation to the interpretation of the United States Constitution. However, instead of determining fundamental legal rights like the Court does, the National Council members will have a much wider perspectival lens. They will observe, monitor, and reflect upon actions, decisions, events, and trends in American governance and society in general and provide comments, advice, and critique. They will take substantive positions on matters which relate to the private-public balances and Program values. They will filter matters of governance and society through the conceptual and moral frameworks of the Program highlighting a collective perspective, Rawlsian fairness, inclusiveness, rationality, and the other fundamental elements. They will be part Social Conscience, part Brain, and part Soul of a new Smart society. They will direct their influence to legal governments, Big Business, other major public and private institutions, and the public in general.

In some ways the National Council members will be less powerful than Justices of the Supreme Court in that they will not have formal legal powers, like the Justices do, of deciding actual cases, voiding

governmental actions, granting injunctions and the like. They will have, essentially, *moral* authority only. They will stand for, essentially, “Doing the Right Thing” (as the collective sees it.) In other ways, they will be potentially *more* powerful in that that moral authority will be exercised over a much broader and deeper jurisdiction—all those things related to governance and social relations throughout society which touch upon the private-public balance and the values of the National Character Program.

The membership will be inclusive of all or nearly all significant societal viewpoints and will construct their positions from these multiple perspectives. They will accept the “truth” of *each* of these perspectives and try to fashion a meta-level, collective Truth, so to speak. The members will be “world citizens” having broad ranges of knowledge, experience, and vision. They will be nimble-minded people who can see the “Big Picture,” as they say, but also have high-level professional, technical, or spiritual capabilities. Some members may have special credibility in subject areas like diplomacy, technology, economics, and others (see below, for some examples.) In decision-making, the Council will aim for *consensus* on every position. The complexity of its jurisdiction and the diversity of the membership will make that goal challenging but will result in outcomes having a high-level, Rawlsian sense of collective fairness. Its emphasis on consensus ought to give it great credibility and moral suasion with the public.

Members will have heavyweight roles, perhaps unique in world history. Given their mission; the scope of their jurisdiction; and the high levels of expertise, authority, credibility, and collective rationality they represent, it is not an exaggeration to think that these National Council members could be viewed as the most respected and influential people in America, and maybe even the world (or even in world history.) Not only would they stand in a brand-new (informal) shadow governance relationship with their nation but would also represent an advanced concept of national management standing at an apex of social progress. The unprecedented combination of reason and science, deliberation, ecumenicalism, humanism, wisdom, and public citizen attitude, i.e., governance by “brain,” “heart,” collective vision, and social conditioning could become the benchmark standard of governance for advanced nations in the 21st Century.

This sounds like heady stuff and, it is! Hopefully, this level of status and responsibility will be sufficiently enticing for the very highest qualified and balanced people to want to serve their nation in the National Council. Some candidates who have already shown (at least most of) the requisite traits and deserving of consideration are Jimmy Carter (peacemaking), Al Gore (environment awareness), Barack Obama (bridging sociological dividers in matters like race, class, religion, ethnicity, etc.), New York Times columnist David Brooks (journalism-sociology-political theory), Warren Buffett (investments and business), Zbigniew Brzezinski (global governance and diplomacy), and inventor and futurist Ray Kurzweil (technological vision).

There will be, of course, a large number of others of diverse backgrounds who are capable of filling out the membership of the Council. Ideally, we want the Council to contain *all* of the following perspectives and more: gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientations, urban/suburban/rural, elite/middle/lower classes, multiple education levels, religion and spiritualism, technology, business and entrepreneurship, and science.

Notably, we are not proposing that these people act as traditional *representatives* of a distinct group. We are not looking for a pluralist body of competing interests. We want every group's *perspective* to help constitute the *meta*-perspective—that of the collective whole. In other words, we want one well-rounded and developed meta-view. We will need to come up with a set of criteria to screen potential candidates and a process to discover, nominate, and appoint/elect members. Members may serve as long as they like and as long as they perform well in their duties. The individual National Council members, like the institution itself, will need to be (or adjust to being) public citizens without bias or partisanship and free from conflicts of interest.

Americans cannot expect to continue to act as a mere body of individual private citizens and special interests hoping (without good reason) that national progress in governance and social relations will just *happen*. There is more than enough evidence to indicate that we are, in fact, regressing in way too many ways—political competence, macro-level financial management, trust relationships, quality of life (for most people), social progress indexes, etc. It is clear that solutions to our current political, economic, and social problems have to come from *outside* the present system (or from above it--the meta level.)

It's noteworthy that Carter and Gore's social influence came only *after* leaving the formal political sphere and developing an independent presence (as Obama's is likely to as well.) If this nation is ever going to achieve Smart governance as described in this book a combination of collective-mindedness, fairness, and high credibility; professional competence; and inclusiveness in an institution like the National Council may be the *only* way by which it can get done.

Smart governance requires national *leadership*. There must be a national *brain* and a collective *soul*. The National Council could act as a new meta authority to influence government and society and move them to a new level of quality. The Council could address, for example, the dysfunctional political processes and increasingly intractable budgetary issues now dominating national public affairs *where there is no institution or set of officials now able to do so*. In this regard, the Council would be akin to the meta-level idea behind the Simpson-Bowles Commission but having a higher and broader level of professional competence, credibility, and moral authority. Because of its collective perspective, inclusiveness, reliance on a public citizen fairness standard, and lack of bias and conflicts of interests, it may have a *special* Credibility which can act as an impetus to galvanizing our citizens and institutions into believing that remaking America as a 21st-Century nation is a real possibility.

If in existence now the National Council might, for example, 1) promote both a new regulatory scheme to address the financial stability and safety issues which were highlighted in the Great Recession together with a new *normative attitude* regarding the relationship of the financial elite to the rest of us. It's no longer acceptable (they might pronounce to the public) for the financial elite to make (and enforce) its *own* rules of behavior and to have the legal and (individualist/capitalist) *moral right* to exploit the rest of us just because the system allows them to get away with it. The Council might 2) promote a comprehensive redesign of our current political system, including electoral reforms, to better balance the influence and outcomes of the classes (among other things.) 3) It might convince the public that the “war against drugs” is stupid and should stop and it would promote a holistic program of medical, behavioral, and justice system approaches to deal with the issues instead. (See the discussion of the Communication Council below for an explanation for how this educational-type approach may get done.) 4) It might *make clear* to everyone that the aggressive class warfare of the elite against workers and the little people is greedy and overreaching and that the elite should back off. It would, together with some of the other Councils (see below), promote specific substantive programs for each of these positions including implementation schemes.

The members of the National Council will be made up of great Americans, mostly volunteers, supported by paid staff and institutional resources. It is likely that any candidate for National Council membership would be more effective, like Carter and Gore, once outside of the seriously-flawed legal institutions of current American government and the private interest-dominated business environment. We may draw upon retired, but accomplished, people suitable for the role. We may have to have financial support for others. The moral positions taken and practical recommendations made by the Council will be based, in part, upon expert support in the form of information, data, analyses, and evaluations of other high-level councils (the "brain," see below.) The National Council would act as the chief sponsor and promoter to the public of specific content programs designed by the professionals and technical experts in those other councils. In other words, the brain of the program will support the soul.

2. The Planning Council

The Planning Council, together with the Policy and Problem-Solving and Information Councils (discussed below), will be the brain of the Program. The Planning Council will provide a society-wide, generations-deep function which doesn't exist now--that is, comprehensive planning for the collective. The Council will be charged with identifying and analyzing governance and social relations issues and designing proactive plans for the nation taking the multiple time perspectives that are important to Smart governance--short, medium, and long term. It will create, shape, and help legal governments manage the nation's 1 year, 3 year, 10 year, 20 year, and 50+ year plans in the spheres of economics, politics, social relations, and other fundamental areas.

For all of its projects, the Planning Council will take the perspective of the collective, have a Rawlsian sense of fairness, consider the full range of time perspectives, and draw upon the best available credible scientific and technical resources. It may, for example, propose plans regarding: 1) the government's finances, addressing cash flows and budgets considering changing demographics, debt servicing issues, revenue/expense projections, and the like. 2) A comprehensive program to manage population growth including immigration issues. 3) Environmental considerations including global warming. 4) The increasingly dire unemployment situation, including the challenges created for millions of workers by globalization, advancing technologies, and increased productivity methods. And, 5) Be active (perhaps with other components of the shadow government) in steering long-term social conditioning projects, developing the public citizen ethos, promoting inclusiveness, and the creating of an American Team. (See the Support Council, below, at section 4 for more discussion of these things.)

Its outcomes will be expert, rational plans for the collective. High-level rationality will be one of the fundamental building block functions necessary of a 21st-Century nation. "Rational," here, means developing sufficient facts and data, analyzing them in an intelligent and deliberative way, determining options, and promoting the best option(s) free of special interest influences, conflicts of interests, partisan agendas, and other impediments to wise planning.

The members of the Council will be collectively-minded, high-level experts from academia, business, government, and other areas. They will be mostly volunteers to the Program but supported, at least, by paid staffing and other scientific, technical, and practical institutional resources. The Council likely will have subject-based departments and committee structures and the leaders of those entities will have similarly well-rounded and broad-minded personalities as the members of the National Council.

There are already some people and organizations doing *some* of this kind of work at universities, think tanks, and activist organizations especially. However, there is too little, if any, coordination among them; they have little or no formal jurisdictions or power; and they are generally ignored by much of government and Big Businesses. Their good will in public service activities is dominated by the *private* interest political processes which have few or no incentives to address collective and long-term planning. When there is so much shouting, so to speak, by private citizens and special interest voices about their own interests there is little room in public discourse for what *these* collectively-minded people have to say.

If all of these folks, having their own strengths and resources, can be brought together into a coherent whole *under the brand of the Program*, their separate influences can be leveraged into a much more credible and potent intellectual and practical force. The Council may provide the focus, high-profile, accessibility, and high credibility status that these collectively-minded planning projects need. If the organization and focuses are there we may command the attention of both active citizens and the general public. The "Big Voice" of the Council may, ultimately and ideally, be viewed by the public as "*Speaking the Right Things.*"

3. The Policy and Problem-Solving Council

The Policy and Problem-Solving Council will take on specific problems in governance and society to fix from the outside, in a sense, where existing governments or other parties cannot or will not. We can't now, for example, expect elected representatives in Congress to seriously address national budgeting and deficit issues when their perspectives are short-term, their interests personal and/or small group focused, and the structural incentives of their positions *discourage* consideration of the public good. Just the opposite—their organizational situations make them preoccupied in grabbing earmarks and other goodies for their districts, special interest friends, and/or themselves (among doing other self-interested things) at the expense of the public good. We can't expect our major parties' partisanship attitudes (especially at the extremely high level now) to result in good public policy making or good governance in general. The parties attack *each other* way more often and with much more vigor and seriousness than they attack national problems. Their incentives are to oppose even well-intended, high quality national policy if it is sponsored by the other party. How can *that* type of motivation ever be useful and Smart for the nation?

As discussed in Chapter Three there are fundamental structural reasons in both the political and economic spheres now which make it nearly impossible for these most important kinds of national problems to be solved in an intellectually-sound way in the collective's interest. Somebody or some institution (like the Policy and Problem Solving Council) needs to stand at the meta level above the political situations and take an intelligent, collectively-responsible approach to problem solving.

The essential (meta-level) concept of the Policy and Problem-Solving Council is not new. As noted in earlier chapters, there have been previous examples of similarly-intended institutional problem-solving efforts like the Congress' bipartisan commissions charged with military base closures and the Simpson-Bowles National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. These endeavors were intended to go to a meta level for resolution (i.e., above partisanship and private interests) but they were only *slightly* removed from them. Their memberships were not divorced from the underlying toxic private citizen environments and they were hamstrung by incessant pressures from compelling special-interests which overcame, for the most part, the intended national (collective) perspective.

Those efforts have been only moderately successful (base closures) or unsuccessful (fiscal reform). And, they were limited in scope, hardly suitable even if adopted for other problem areas for dealing with the fundamental societal and cultural defects ingrained in our system. They are not representative of the broader, more structured and objective process we need to actually achieve wide-scale, significant, and persistent results. We are not going to have an advanced society by retaining the bulk of 18th-Century principles. We need a new paradigm of governance, like that proposed here.

The Council will have a unique, coherent, modern approach to nation-wide problem solving: 1) It will be comprised of public citizens who, by nature, have a collective perspective. 2) It will draw upon unbiased and credible information and data. 3) It will not be beholden to specific constituencies (as the collective is its *only* constituency.) 4) It will be more inclusive and address more perspectives than other more limited approaches. 5) It will apply comprehensive problem-solving strategies including those directed to the rational, emotional and psychological, and habitual levels of people involved in nearly every major problem area. 6) It will have patience (not locked into electoral cycles) for resolutions to work out and strategies for addressing breaking old social habits and instituting new ones. 7) It will have a moral authority (Credibility) that many other resolution programs and processes do not. And, 8) it will, in principle, have the power of the public citizen movement (especially the Local Council) behind it imposing its own types of influences. These factors as a whole may provide the Council with sufficient leverage for it to be successful where other less comprehensive and sophisticated approaches have not been.

The Council may have a department and committee-based organizational structure oriented to specific professional fields of knowledge and expertise. There will likely be sub councils on economics, republican politics, large and small businesses, entrepreneurship, education, energy, environment, military, foreign relations, social management and administration, physical and mental health issues, peacemaking, and others. The memberships will come from academia, business, and nonprofit organizations some of whom are already engaged in the type of projects we expect the Council to tackle.

Like with the Planning Council, the membership will be comprised of top-level accomplished leaders and managers who know how to get things done and done well. Leading each department and committee will be leaders having exceptional managerial and communication skills who will take on “ownership” of their planning projects. Some members will be volunteers, others funded by the Program. They may be some of America's “best and brightest, having exceptionally nimble minds, people skills, and creativity. They will be proven problem-solvers and executive managers who take pride in really solving problems and not merely in participating in a "process." The public (the collective), of course, wants to see *real* change and not just another process. The Program, in *all* its aspects, is not much interested in simply being a “process.” It intends to Get Things Done!

A high-level Coordinating Committee within the Council will bring the multiple subject perspectives and programs into a coherent whole shaping them into practical proposals and action plans. When the Council has completed a policy design project it will be referred to the National Council to promote to the public, and to other councils to implement. (See Chapter 9 for discussion of how this promotion might work.) The Policy and Problem-Solving Council itself cannot be expected to *directly* fix any of the problems it will address; it will have no legal powers. It can only conceive of and propose holistic and rational solutions for other parties to adopt for themselves. Like the National and Planning Councils, it will rely upon its professional and technical competency, Credibility, and moral authority to influence official government, Big Business, and the general public.

The Council may target projects (in no particular order of importance) like :

- rationalizing once and for all the area of healthcare including coverages, costs, and administration.
- rethinking the “war on drugs” and being *real* (instead of merely moralistic and/or habitual) about the causes of demand and to shift from criminal enforcement to informed medical and social approaches.
- comprehensive regulation of the financial industry to immunize the public from excessive risk-taking by the financial elite, boosting law enforcement, and increasing consumer protection.
- reforming the tax system to make it fairer, more utile, and more rational in terms of the collective good and more adaptable for the social conditioning functions that we want it to have.
- developing a comprehensive immigration policy incorporating a complex balancing of the many competing interests.
- revamping the electoral system to make it more democratic and beneficial for the little people (the vast majority of citizens.)
- increasing the professionalism of governmental leadership and employees.
- rationalizing local governments to eliminate many of them and making the rest more efficient.
- developing strategies to increase *trust* among citizens regarding institutions, processes, and citizens to each other in both government and the private sector.

-developing strategies to increase fact-based decision-making by government, more intellectual deliberation in policymaking, and more coherent, coordinated governmental administration.

-creating conditioning programs that facilitate social inclusivity and the reduction of frictions across trivial differences (social harmony.)

-etc.

These are all big projects and the Council may want to start with the less difficult ones to try to obtain some successes. That will build up organizational competence, confidence, and credibility with the public. There will be institutional learning as successful projects may create templates (precedents, patterns of action, processes, etc.) so that successful results in one project may act as a guide for future ones. The basic problem-solving approach will entail: 1) the drawing in *all* relevant stakeholders for perspectives and input, 2) recognizing all perspectives and making sure all stakeholders understand not only their own but everyone else's perspectives, 3) eliminating the influence of special interests, 4) marginalizing fundamentalists, 5) utilizing conditioning and other tactics to overcome social habits, and 6) fashioning variations of the “Grand Reconciliation Project” (see below at Section C) in each problem area so that everyone feels treated fairly, covers all of the ways which the situation requires for them—economically, intellectually, emotionally and psychologically, and otherwise, and having results which are win-win outcomes. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of *holistic* approaches to major problem issues.)

Certainly, some problems are not that hard to fix *conceptually*, like the medical malpractice area or governmental consolidations. Intelligent compensation systems and organizational management schemes suitable for these areas already have precedents. The complexities are in dealing with the *incidental* elements which are almost entirely special-interest maintained or dominated by unusually powerful emotional and/or psychological attitudes. In the malpractice area, for example, the economic interests of trial lawyers and maybe some insurance companies likely would be greatly diminished by a rationalization. Given their political lobbying heft and financial influence, this small set of parties, almost alone, hinders Smart compensation schemes for millions of injured victims. Another small set of businesspeople and politicians in small towns and villages and low population cities and counties with vested interests stand in the way of rational governance and tax savings for millions of citizens.

A Smart approach to the malpractice area, for one example, ought to include the following:

-a clear explanation to everyone how rationalization is in the collective interest.

-an explanation of how emphasis on the collective interest and long-term perspectives ultimately benefits everybody (although, admittedly, in varying degrees.)

-a recognition by everyone of the economic and other losses to the negatively affected incidental entities (e.g., trial lawyers and insurance companies.)

-programs to minimize those losses to those negatively affected, which might include phase out periods, tax breaks for capital losses, retraining or redirecting of professionals and employees to other areas, and the like. In other words, a soft landing for all of those affected, as incentives and compensation for honoring collective interests.

Those negatively affected parties, no question, will be in an inferior situation than they were before rationalization but their losses will be minimized as much as possible. The upside is big value for way many more people, including some value at least for the affected parties, too. This macro approach to public policy correlates with the confirmation of intellectual-level game theory, classic global economic principles, and even common sense, that productivity and efficiency at the collective level increases economic value for the whole. The “pie” gets bigger, as one might say.

Keeping the status quo reverses that calculus. That is *dumb*. Rationalizing like this is an intellectual variation of the *unmanaged* creative destruction concept of classic capitalist philosophy. Only those who lose can complain, but with the Program's *managed* approach, those losing parties will get assistance in adapting to something else. That is Smart.

An important element to major changes nearly anywhere, like the malpractice one, is to refrain from imposing it, as we typically do now, as a situation of *diffuse* (but large) gains for the collective versus *devastating* losses for a small number of parties. That kind of win-loss, zero-sum approach guarantees intense and desperate resistance from the losers like a cornered animal scratching and biting to save its life. That kind of intensity overpowers the much softer intensity of the large group thereby thwarting change.

Most of these kinds of private-collective interest conflicts need to be addressed in a different, holistic fashion—making it as *easy as possible* for those taking the biggest losses to accept the changes. That means framing the conflict as a *Smart negotiation* instead of as a battle. We: 1) frame change as being clearly in the common good, 2) provide a soft landing, and 3) support a path for the losers to continue viability as participants in the economy in some different way. Enabling all of that requires Smart strategies, as well as medium-long-term perspectives. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of strategies like this.)

Some other problems may have to be addressed at the emotional-psychological level, instead of the rational/cognitive level, with notably different strategies. Examples of these problem areas include the anti-science/reason elements in some of the populace, the reflexive hatred of the federal government by many citizens, the intense Red/Blue State frictions, and the grossly irrational risk assessments (threat of terrorism, fear of crime, loss of privacy, etc.) by many people all of which contribute to dysfunctional governance, bad public policymaking, and social frictions. Addressing these types of issues requires different and longer-term strategies, most of which do not fit well with the parochial and short-term perspectives of our existing governance bodies. We can't expect them to effectively deal with these types of problems. We need an institution like the Policy and Problem Solving Council to take on that function. It can bring to bear: long-term perspectives, science and technology-based strategies, a sense of collective fairness, and its own special Credibility.

Being smart in approach does not imply mere applicability of reason and rationality to the problem-solving process. For the most part, people are not very rational, (according to current research) nor are bureaucracies. Conceptually-adequate designs at an abstract level (assuming inclusive participation of fully rational actors in good faith) is only a *starting point* for resolving many real world problems. There have to be additional strategies dealing with emotional and psychological elements, anti-collective personal and group agendas, and social habit (including bureaucracy imperatives) which have to be part of resolution considerations. We have to intelligently incorporate the findings of social science about how people perceive, interpret, and address their social environments into conflict resolution approaches which take into consideration all of the *multiple* perspectives of *all* of the parties who are relevant to the issues.

The problem-solving efforts of the Council may not always work, or work well. No mere process, regardless of how sophisticated or modern, can guarantee any success with major social and economic issues of long-standing duration. In a collective with a liberal democratic basis, like America, there will always be difficulty in dealing with intense personal (private) agendas, strongly-held popular emotions and firmly fixed psychologies, and fundamentalism. There may be situations where those factors are so prominent that quality solutions are near impossible (perhaps like the Middle East political situation?) although they are likely to be relatively few. While we may not be able to fix every social problem, we can improve upon what we have using advanced processes and strategies.

For designing and implementing major problem solving projects or all of the following elements need to be addressed:

- involvement of *all* relevant parties (broadly construed) in the problem-solving process.
- for those parties which will take a loss of some kind, arrange some set of transition soft landing considerations—phaseout periods; finding new jobs or opportunities; help with transition moving, retraining etc.; payment of reasonable capital loss reimbursements; face-saving considerations; etc.
- for those situations where weighty egos or heavily invested persons representing legal or symbolic representatives of larger groups become obstacles to rational change explore methods (like Internet communications and social media) to *go past* that leader directly to the larger group to ascertain *their* real, unfiltered interests and preferences. In other words, we won't allow self-interested cue givers with vested interests to mislead and/or exploit their members and to stymie intelligent decisions and actions for the collective.
- for big egos (leaders, cue givers, etc.) whose positions will be compromised, offer alternative positions or situations for them to operate in more collegially; or, provide for grandfathering situations where their negative influence will eventually end. In other words, we bring them in (to the Program), to at least “piss out,” instead of “pissing in” (as President Lyndon Baines Johnson stated regarding J. Edgar Hoover.)
- provide long-term conditioning assistance to help people break existing, unwanted habits and to establish new, better ones.
- develop medium-to long-term educational and conditioning programs to help people evolve out of strong or deeply set emotional and psychological attitudes.
- facilitate empathy building exercises to get people to *understand* well the frames of others. Better understanding of other positions and frames will go far to get people to recognize alternative, more accommodating social relationships. (See Appendix A for an elaboration on how to understand social frame experience.)
- design overall outcomes to be “win-win-win, etc.” as much as possible. Try to avoid “loss” situations (as in merely *marginalizing* fundamentalism, for example, instead of successfully negotiating with it, if possible.) We need to move beyond the traditional “Someone wins, Everyone else loses” model of individualist/capitalist competition and problem resolution.

4. The Information Council

The citizens of a Smart society have to be well and properly informed in order for them to perform well as citizens and consumers. Almost as a general rule, public discourse and consumer marketing deliberately misinforms, misleads, or outright deceives us. The Information Council will be an alternative independent source providing quality information about governance and social relations for attentive, deliberate, and fair-minded people. (That *won't* be everyone. See below, for an explanation of who these people are, or who will be, and how they get that way.)

It will have four main functions: 1) Producing substantive news, journalistic facts and data, research, and analyses regarding economics, politics, science, and social matters for its two major audiences--the set of national councils and citizens at large. 2) Assessing for veracity and meaningfulness important communications made to the public by politicians, government, and Big Business lobbyists and marketers, and exposing litigation language and bullsh*t, for what it is. 3) Elevating the meaningfulness of science and the scientific method in governance and policy making and trying to rescue much of traditional science from the clutches of capitalist imperatives which are minimizing or distorting its values and compromising its integrity. And, 4) promoting standards of information distribution in the form of best practice templates in a broad range of private and public areas areas like electoral communications,

consumer disclosures, and employment compensation schemes. It will make those templates universally accessible for use by government, businesses, organizations, and citizens.

The essential idea behind the Council is that much (most?) of what is offered to us now as news, political discourse, public information, scientific findings, and nearly everything out of the mouths (and press releases) of politicians, marketers, and Big Business is filtered in self-centered ways. Because of the underlying imperatives of the individualist/capitalist culture, it is often self-serving, misleading, deceptive, manipulative, and/or outright lies. In terms of its intentions, that material is litigation language meaning only self-selected material and self-serving intended to mislead (or worse.)

In terms of its intentions much of it is downright disrespectful. How many times do we have to listen to Congressmen, for example, vigorously hawking bills as "job creating" when nearly everyone knows or suspects that that usually means more pork, perks, and payola for themselves and their cronies? Why are babes in bikinis used so often to market automobiles, beverages, and even paper clips when that cheesecake actually *inhibits* smart consumer decision making?

Whose purposes are being served by these communication approaches—theirs or ours? This communication is not intended to *inform* citizens in the way classic democracy envisions nor meant to guide consumers to make quality purchasing decisions. It is intended to manipulate citizens and consumers for the interests of the *speakers* themselves. There is so much litigation language and bullsh*t marketing in politics and the consumer area that honest facts, truth, and communications which respect the integrity of the audience are either fairly impotent or drowned out by them. People can't function well as either citizens or consumers in this environment!

A key objective of the program is to make it *easier* for ordinary citizens as well as focused parties (activists and professionals, primarily) to be informed regarding politics and governance, business and consumerism, scientific knowledge, and the social environment. Even the availability of good quality and credible information may be worth little if it is not *accessible* enough. It already is tough enough for most people to just get by just in daily life much less staying adequately informed about broader issues of politics, economics, governance, etc.

We can look to the computer world for a metaphor regarding accessibility. Until desktop operating systems' designs were adapted to the *users'* needs (instead of having the users adapt to the *machine*) computers' usefulness was limited to geeks and some some scientists maybe. When user-based "Human Interface Guidelines" became prominent and software designs became human-friendly with metaphorical concepts virtual desktops, windows, icons, menus, etc. with consistent, elegant designs they became extraordinarily useful everyday tools for nearly everyone. That design competence continued into mobile devices and nearly everyone on the globe now can use hundreds of apps and roam the massive Internet with only a couple of thumbs or a handful of clicks.

That kind of design sophistication and elegance may be applied to information distribution, as well. Ideally, the Council's information accessibility schemes can act, in one way at least, like an Apple desktop scheme or an IOS/Android smart phone interface—easy to access, easy to understand, easy to use, and packed with an enormous amount of quality material behind the scenes. Perhaps, together with the Council's cueing and focusing schemes (i.e., acting as a *professional filter* of worthwhile news and information), the solution to information overload (and manipulation) is to make it *easy* for people to focus on the credible sources, perhaps the Information Council's offerings as a *brand*. For this to work will require at least: 1) professional filtering of worthwhile news and information; 2) established credibility; 3) formatting information in appealing ways; and, 4) channeling it into an accessible "interface," as in a desktop "dashboard" or mobile app with all of that concept's connotations of ease-of-use. (See below in Section 5 "The Communication Council," and Chapter 9 for elaboration of how this might work.)

Some might assess this set of criteria and think somewhat, at least, of Fox News—it has accomplished for a large number of Americans what we are proposing for the Information Council. It has established itself as an authority (with its specific audience) and it's got that audience highly focused on its offerings with compelling presentation and marketing strategies. (Its credibility and professional profile with most people, however, is lacking for many reasons including its special interest motivations, manipulative appeals to emotions/psychology, and implied disrespect for its audience to whom it is telling what Fox News wants them to know and think rather than what the audience deserves.) There may be *some* aspects of the Fox News approach to commend to the Information Council, even though the intents and the contents may be vastly different.

Where Fox News may be the epitome of private interest manipulation, the Information Council will attempt to be the epitome of public citizen perspective, reason, and fair-mindedness trying to appeal to audiences by means of accessibility and ease of use. The content will be professional, competent, and respectful. While studies have shown that the Fox News audience in general to be the *least* accurately informed of any audience, the Council will aim to have the best.

A combination of accessibility and professional credibility will be crucial to developing the quantity of citizens who are (or would be) both rational and fair-minded about matters relating to governance and social relations. We have to overcome the conditions we have now where millions of people, either from their own predispositions or because they have been so effectively conditioned by partisans and special interests, are *not* sufficiently alert and fair-minded. They are so partisan “belief”-oriented that facts and truths are almost irrelevant. Their heightened emotions and psychologies fueled by long-term cynicism prevents them from being deliberate or fair-minded.

This set of people includes auto-reactive environmentalists, anti-federal government Tea Partiers, zealous Red/Blue state partisans, and many others. The information they get (or have filtered for them by partisans—like the Murdoch-led Fox News channel) is directed to powerful emotions and psychological factors rather than reason and truth. Some people, for a variety of reasons, just don't have enough alertness and focus upon their social lives to protect themselves from the manipulative communication strategies of the elite class and Big Business. Some of these reasons include information overload, cynicism about information source intentions, the easy allure of mind-numbing escapism versus higher-level alternatives, the constant drumbeat of clever ideological manipulation, and a “tuning out” due to pessimism and defeatism about their ability to affect change after generations of being beaten down and disrespected.

Many skeptics think it nearly impossible to get a significantly large group of Americans to reach a level of rationality and fair-mindedness where facts, science, and truth are prized. We live in a culture of deep psychological partisanship, slackers, the “mindless” masses, and the everyday realities of overwhelmed workers and parents. That belief may be true, but it *is* pessimistic. Like the goal of major social change contemplated by the entire National Character Program itself, until we try new approaches we will never know. (See Chapter 1 for more discussion of *subjective* optimism.)

It is true that without a sufficiently large group of alert, rational, and fair-minded people we may not achieve a Smart society. But, like the Program itself, the Information Council's efforts to educate and inform don't have to stimulate everyone. (See below for more discussion of this.) There will be a percentage of the population which will deliberately resist facts and truth and even benign benevolent educational and conditioning programs. There will be some who will never be stimulated in the right way for a variety of reasons. The large masses group *may* be mostly unaffected (as per their nature.) Even that still leaves a substantial group of 25 to 40% of Americans which may be amenable to a new approach and that may be all that we need to support a Smart society.

It will take a variety of different strategies to condition enough people to be alert enough about the truths of their social environment. There are a lot of people and institutions already doing *some* of this

work, much like we have seen in the public planning area. The Congressional Budget Office produces quality reports about governmental finances; some political discourse websites (like Politi-Fact) monitor and assess the truth of political assertions made by prominent politicians; and the like. But, like those other public-oriented entities, there are too many separate ones each with only tiny bits of influence, there is little coordination, too little accessibility, and each faces an inhospitable private citizen communications environment (the Big Mouths--Big Media, marketers, political party machines, etc.) which overwhelms their efforts.

Given the capabilities of the typical citizen and the everyday demands of work and life for most people there are way *too many* little voices with *too many* discrete statements and positions, and *too much* information overall that processing that material in any useful or meaningful way is nearly impossible. Most people just want to have the essential truths they need in an accessible, respectful manner. This situation emphasizes the need for a single brand, a simple set of values, and ease of participation. The Information Council will represent a single Big Voice emphasizing credibility, accessibility, and ease-of-use.

The Council may obtain and produce information material itself but mostly will be an aggregator and coordinator of material from many of those existing entities which already produce quality facts, information, and truth. It will filter, focus, and make accessible that material while *earning* special Credibility under the program's brand as its information derives from a unique process made up of professionalism, multi-perspective content, fairness, and respect for the citizen audience. The Council may be recognized as *the* Big Voice, so to speak for rational, fair-minded citizens and consumers.

Ideally, when the Council "speaks" it will be known for speaking the Truth. It will coordinate its efforts with the Communications Council which will be responsible for the *means* of distributing the substantive material via a comprehensive digital network (e.g., the user-friendly dashboard and mobile apps) and other methods. (See below, in Section 5, for details.) The best practices templates for the various types of communications will be created by panels of experts in each of the subject areas and promoted by the National Council and other program institutions

The Council will have three major focuses: news and information, truth, and best practice templates.

A) News and Information: Among the most professional news and journalism media of past generations, particularly when there were only a handful of major sources, there used to be (mostly) plain *community*, accessible facts. Now, partly because of the proliferation of sources and the intense motivation to be partisan, there are right-wing "facts," left-wing "facts," Big Pharmacy "facts," and worse. Most of the economic, political, and social news and information which enters public discourse comes from politically-oriented and Big Business sources which tell us what *they* want us to hear. Like litigators talking *at* a jury it is, for the most part, biased, incomplete, and deliberately misleading.

This scenario is akin to (and perhaps derivative of) the free-market model based on individualism/capitalism. That means private citizen and special interests are speaking for themselves *to* us but there is no one speaking *for* the general public or collective interest. (See more below.) Anyone just sampling typical political campaign materials, for example (especially at the national level), would have to concede that they are typically dishonest and disrespectful. And, it is amazing how many consumer products and services are promoted by marketers outrageously implying that buying them will result in: 1) wealth, 2) weight loss, and 3) more sex, sometimes all in the same product! To characterize a lot of that material as bullsh*t would not be unkind. (Where is the *respect* for the public?)

Even public discourse on science has been poisoned by the capitalist marketing model. Instead of having a cultural respect for scientific truth as knowledge for knowledge's sake, scientific research is filtered by litigation language strategies resulting in biased, incomplete, and misleading claims intending,

primarily, to promote politicians, marketers, and Big Business. Too many pharmaceutical and medical equipment manufacturers (among others), for example, have been exposed promoting “bad” science, i.e., they design and fund experiments to produce the biased results they want, report the science studies that will highlight favorable findings while hiding unfavorable ones, control paid scientists with unfair confidentiality agreements, and support only science which will result in marketable products and services. Shamelessly, these industries swarm over our doctors and health providers with filtered information, biased and misleading information, and tempting economic incentives to tailor their professional counsel to satisfy the marketers, instead of patients.

There is a significant shortage of interest and funding for *basic* research--knowledge for knowledge sake--(which *is* thankfully supported by the federal government, at least) or science which might be helpful to some small set of needy people, even if it is not highly profitable. In the name of science, private interests further their own profit-making even at the expense of patient health outcomes and, of course, consumer and taxpayer expense.

There is no shortage of other similar examples of communication disrespect in both politics and business. Even after the general consensus about the evils of tobacco use, cigarette manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce are *still* deliberately promoting sickness and death globally (2015 news reports.) Our private citizen/special interest environment seems to *discourage* honesty, credibility, and responsibility since those things generally do not pay off in the competitive political arena nor the marketplace.

Much of the professional news reporting we have now, even that from the major outlets, has diminished in professionalism, journalistic leadership, independence from the business sides of media operations, and credibility. Many of the formerly (1950's-70's era) high-quality sources (CBS, NBC, ABC) have evolved into mostly "news-lite" and low-brow *entertainment* services acting directly and indirectly like tools of the elite to brainwash the public ideologically and "tame" them emotionally and psychologically. They function to reinforce capitalist values, promote consumerism, and emotionally numb the public in regard to their sorry social roles and outcomes.

Where is the vigorous *critique* of the government and the financial elite class for failing to seriously reform the financial system after the Great Recession, for example? Where is the vigorous *critique* of the persistent legalized bribery of politicians by special interests? Why is so much time spent on personality trivialities like personal sex scandals instead of political and economic structure and process matters which are vastly more relevant to our lives, like the existence of the elite class itself, its dominance in politics and economics, and similar?

Big Business, with all of its acquisitions and consolidations, has now developed Big Media to serve its commercial interests at the expense of traditional journalistic roles and the public interest. Some media sources admit it and are even proud of it. Consider, especially, the Murdoch media companies, some of which are near propaganda extensions of their owners and of the elite class. From their point of view, it seems, if the capitalists own the media stations and pay for operations, then, rightfully, they should fashion what news and information they want people to know and to be influenced by. As military *victors* write history, they say, the media sources write their own news stories.

The high credibility news organizations we used to have provided professionally filtered news and information to the public. They were accessible (for that era), provided journalistic leadership with fair evaluations and social meanings (e.g., political candidate dumb asses were treated as dumb asses), and kept a skeptical eye on both government and Big Business. They acted as a deliberate sort of counterweight to the elite power role in society. It used to be understood that professional news organizations were an essential ingredient of a good working democracy.

The relationship of much of the news media to the public now, for the most part, is upside down. The professional hierarchy is gone and journalists no longer act as *leaders* of and for the public and the public good but as panderers to the lowest levels of the public and as shills to the commercial market on behalf of sponsors and stockholders. From their cynical business point of view, the tamed and defeated little people seem less citizens of a democracy worthy of credible information and much more as consumers and customers willing to pay for escapist lite-news and entertainment rather than anything else.

In a capitalist-dominated society, businesses (even news companies) are compelled to provide for the market they have. If it is true that news operations are subservient to business ones (as they seem to be) the society has lost an important institution which functioned as the primary government and elite class watchdog and chief supporter of the classic democratic processes.

Political and commercial communications' bias, deceptions, and manipulation may have always been the case in our society and the (theoretical) social response has been that citizens and consumers can *sort out for themselves* what is true and valuable and not. That understanding is contradicted by the proven ease by which the media and marketers manipulate voters and consumers. Even if that wasn't true, that attitude makes the public work hard and continuously to figure out what *is* true and valuable. Not only is that approach an (unnecessary) burden but it includes a fallacy, as well--practical capability. As if the common public had the ability to meaningfully and efficiently sort out all the information which is constantly directed at them like a blasting fire hose among work, housework, and parenting responsibilities! It has become a nearly impossible burden. The professionals who intend to mislead, deceive, and manipulate know exactly what they are doing. Their efforts work. Citizens and consumers are taken advantage of. (And, by the way, where is the *respect* for the public?)

There are some current examples of content models adhering to the traditional function of journalism we want to support. Arguably, the Public Broadcasting Service, the Wall Street Journal, and the New York Times produce the type of quality, fair-minded, and professional news reporting which was common in America in previous eras. People can quibble about "liberal" bias and, of course the editorials, but not about the professional, competent journalism and the intent to provide *social leadership*. Social leadership in the professional media means acting as a counterweight to government and Big Business illegalities and overreaching, upholding public citizen values, and respecting audiences.

The Council will provide an alternative to our current upside-down news relationships and produce and distribute news relating to governance and social relations that deliberate, fair-minded people need/want to have. It may be the beacon of intelligent, fair, credible, and accessible communications to counter the litigation language being pushed out at the public. The slogan of the Council may well be: "All the Relevant News and Facts in the Formats You Need. And No Bullsh*t."

The news and information arm of the Information Council will pick up the leadership role once exercised by traditional news media and will act as a professional filter and evaluator of what news and information should be highlighted and delivered to the public and what it means. It will provide primary reporting, aggregation from other credible sources, and secondary reporting, i.e., correcting, completing, or improving news produced by other communications sources to counter error or deception. For example, when a business publicly lobbies government unjustifiably for tax subsidies for a new operation to "create jobs," the Council clearly and assertively will make known that the jobs are few, that the subsidy out-values the number of jobs created, and that the subsidy money really flows to the business owner's bank accounts. It will start a process (e.g., Local Council Action Plans) to prevent that taxpayer abuse. (See the "Truth" section, below.)

The Council will also sponsor and act as a clearing house for quality academic and technical research important to the Program. It may coordinate with the Program's University to direct scholarship. This role is similar to that of the federal government now which sponsors a lot of basic research and

promotes scholarly initiatives in specialized public interest areas like medicine and health, energy use and development, and the like. It will make scientifically-focused information accessible as a counterweight to the elite and Big Business manipulation techniques.

As a part of major social change the Information Council's influence is meant to be much greater than any single information source now. There may be a substantial "market," so to speak, for credible, collectively-oriented news and information. But, appealing only to activist (progressive?) citizens will not be enough. We will have to have millions of informed supporters drawn from a wide spectrum of Americans.

Since a lot of people, as we have noted, have dropped out of the political sphere, we have to reach a lot of these disaffected and peel off some of the masses to be supporters. We want to appeal to nearly everyone with our communication approaches just to earn credibility, even if not support. For a lot of this audience, we'll have to counter loads of and generations worth of "bad" public discourse having left them sour on traditional information sources.

The key to this effectiveness is the focusing function. The Council will take all of those separate (but quality) voices we have now and aggregate them. Like with national planning, citizen action plans, and the like, effectiveness requires *focus, accessibility, and leverage* obtained from collective organization. The American Team will have its own Big Voice.

We'll need to build out a comprehensive *range* of media channel approaches, to reach all citizens including some kinds of uplifting educational approaches. Many people are eager for this kind of information but some may need to be enticed. It shouldn't be considered paternalistic to try to deliberately condition people to appreciate a certain level of journalism and quality information if *only* as a means to *protect themselves* as participants in a competitive society. Much of the material, at least, has to be made available and presented in a marketable (i.e., accessible, appealing, and provocative) way. We do not want to be paternalistic, or too didactic, highbrow, stuffy, and/or overly serious. Providing quality, socially-minded discourse doesn't have to be like serving up spinach and whole grains to teenagers. There will be opportunities for creative people to work these things out.

Some might think that it is arrogant and/or elitist to condition an audience to accept credible news and journalism for their own good even as their consumer dollars tend to favor low-brow entertainment and diversions. This form of conditioning, arguably, may be no less justified than informed guidance on public health and safety issues, consumer protection issues, bad weather preparations, and the like. It is meant mostly to be empowering. It's not healthy for democracy for citizens to be tamed, numbed, and persistently diverted via public discourse even as it serves the commercial and ideological purposes of the elite.

Clever marketing and conditioning methods, hopefully, may get citizens to pay more attention to news and information which is arguably *way more* relevant to their happiness than mere amusements and diversions. They will, after all, learn that they can pushback, finally, upon the forces which have made their lives a grind (for the most part.) How could that not be fun?!

The news arm of the Information Council will try to develop attention, alertness, and public interest strategies to put the public in a position to know how they are governed and treated by Big Businesses and how they can respond (perhaps with Action Plans--see discussion of the Local Council, below.) For the most part, we can focus on news that relates to the common values appealing to nearly all citizens--their desire for Balance, Meaning, and Respect (BMR.)

B) Truth: Another function of the Information Council will be to act in a protective or defensive role to the aggressive, partisan, ideological, ignorant, and/or misleading information distributed by government, Big Business, special interests, and the fundamentalists who, for example, have an outsized

influence on educational policy and on governance in general. The Council will act on behalf of the public like an antimissile defense system intercepting that material and “deconstructing” it, i.e., interpreting it, correcting it, and/or complementing it, as appropriate, to render it truthful and meaningful. Or, it will simply expose the worst of it as foolishness or propaganda.

When the government, for example, says we need to go to war to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a minor satrap somewhere in the distant hills and deserts of Asia, the Information Council may challenge that assertion, insist upon proof and justification, and provide the right information and perspectives to the public *before* people are killed and money wasted. The Program will enable the public to act upon an Action Plan in response based upon truth. (See below at Section 7 and in Chapter 9 for more explanation of Action Plans.)

When the government (and special interests, especially) say we need to spend hundreds of billions of tax payer dollars: 1) for national security hardware and programs for intercepting, reading, and storing in giant databases all of the e-mails, phone calls, and Internet communications of every American; 2) to perform full body imaging and to grope even children and wheelchair bound travelers at airports and other facilities; 3) to incarcerate and even kill American citizens without charges, legal representation, and fair hearings in order to protect (?) us helpless Americans from potential terrorist attacks (even while it tolerates 250,000+ deaths annually by errors in hospitals without much attention and considerably less funding) the Information Council will provide a proper perspective to the public and enable it to act upon an Action Plan in response.; 4) when Internet businesses like Facebook, Google, Microsoft, etc. tell us that the gathering, selling, and permanent storage of personal data and usage habits of all of us, everywhere we visit online, and for all of our lives is for our *own* benefit, the Information Council will explain to the public that that claim is bullsh*t and enable an Action Plan in response; etc.

When important social issues are at stake, like the education of our children or the selection of our national leaders, it may be useful for some credible institution (like the Information Council) to identify foolish ideas in public discourse and call them foolish and to call dumb asses dumb asses. (Readers might recall campaign headlines from the 2012 Presidential campaign for some of the uglier and more ridiculous examples of personal and partisan foolishness.) With such important issues like these, truth is better than nice, especially when the fools and dumb asses are *holding back* all of the rest of us from social progress.

We can think of this Council intercept/response function as as a “Bullsh*t Translator” which will identify the target, explain the full, truthful story to the public and consumers in an effective and accessible manner, and provide an Action Plan to counter it.

The Translator will work like this:

- Bullsh*t recognized;

- Deconstruction process (facts, complete information, perspectives) goes into effect;

- Truth disseminated in easy to understand formatting; and an

- Action Plan designed and provided to the Local Council, the public, and/or others for implementation.

There are some public-service entities now which explicitly provide *some* of this type of critique already. The PolitiFact website, for example, grades accuracy of political statements on a “Truth-O-Meter” scale indicating whether a statement is truthful and to what degree. Entities like PolitiFact and others--some better news media, university and think tank institutions, not-for-profit groups, etc.--could

become parts of an aggregated, more focused communications network under the *brand* of the Information Council to attack bullsh*t and promote truth.

C. Best Practices Templates: There are some forms of public discourse and public information which are persistent and regular. For example, political party platforms, candidate policy positions, governmental reports of various kinds, complicated consumer transactions like mortgage applications, warranties, etc. However the sources of this information usually decide for themselves what information they provide, what they leave out, and how they state it. Political parties, of course, will pronounce that they stand for a strong national defense, jobs, liberty, and lower taxes without any (or sufficient) details, elaboration, or solid, practical proposals. Big Business' consumer paperwork will *headline in bold color* what they think consumers will be attracted to buy and commit to obligations and put all of the other provisions which detract from that in grey fine print. Most people know how this goes. Most of these information sources do these things, typically, as we've seen, to bias, mislead, and manipulate. They frame the information to service their interests and leave us, often to our detriment, with the burden of trying to figure out what is what.

However, things could be different—citizens and consumers could have the material *they* want and need for *their* interests, i. e., being able to act as good citizens and consumers. That's one area where public information templates are useful. These pre-formed structures of what information is to be provided and in what format can impose standards of accuracy, completeness, accessibility, and consistency upon certain types of communication in ways useful to citizens and consumers instead of allowing the sources intending to manipulative us have *their* way.

Templates may be sample forms, charts, process flowcharts, and/or checklists designed by professional, clear-minded experts having a collective's perspective. The idea is to enhance quality, commercial efficiency, and uniformity for *everyone*, but especially the public. Each template would embody this principle: "Everything An Intelligent/Responsible Citizen/Consumer Would Want To Know About (or should know) this Idea/Product/Assessment/Relationship in an Easy to Understand Fashion." (See Chapter 9 for examples.)

Well-designed templates are efficient and effective communicators and also provide a consistency across parties, transactions, and/or jurisdictions so consumers benefit from simplicity and ease of understanding. In addition, no information source has to reinvent the wheel, so to speak. All consumer warranties, for example, may require the same essential information in the same format—who is the warrantor and how to contact it? What is warranted? For how long? Under what conditions? How to file a claim? How long will it take to process? All done in a clear, accessible format and complemented by an efficient, implementation process.

Some federal regulatory agencies already provide *some* elements of the templates concept in consumer disclosures in loan transactions, reverse mortgages, warranties, etc. The Information Council's templates will make this type of communication standard for use by governments, private businesses, and others in a wide variety of communications and transactions.

The use of these templates will be voluntary but the Program will *assert* them as making good sense for everybody. Those who don't use them will be expected to explain why not. Informal pressures to comply will come from the Council itself and/or Action Plans of the Local Council.

Here are some substantive template ideas:

Governance

Presidential administrations should provide annually to all citizens in a low-cost, accessible matter (e-mail, website, etc.):

-A basic balance sheet and cash flow statements for the nation's finances in a consistent, easy-to-read and understand format.

-A comparison chart of how America rates against other nations in essential areas like productivity, economic growth, employment, poverty levels, education, health, military strength, *number of days at peace*, and rankings on social progress indexes and the Gross Happiness standard.

-One year, five year, ten year, and later plans for the nation regarding national objectives like deficit reduction and cash flows, employment rate, spending efficiencies, and the like, together with an assessment of how earlier plans have worked out.

-All governments should employ a template for elections having neutral and fair (Rawlsian) rules for legislative and office redistricting, voting eligibility and registration, voting practices (dates, times, locations, etc.), ballot monitoring and counting, and the like to maximize democracy and eliminate partisan influences.

-All governments should employ a universal ethics code for public officials. We don't want every department of government now to come up with its own ethical code designed by the very people to be covered (often biased and deliberately loophole-filled) when each can just adopt a well-designed template designed by independent, fair-minded professionals.

-Professionally-designed and publicly approved compensation and benefits packages for all (or most) governmental officials, including Congressmen and public union members. For the Congressmen, let's make them feel economically, at least, like the people they represent feel. That might lead to more empathy and legislation more attentive to needs of the little people. (See Chapter 7 for details of how this may work.)

Public Political communications

Most electoral communications from parties and political candidates should conform, at a minimum, to a standard of professionalism and respect for the recipients. Steering policy and occupying leadership roles in government ought to imply a high standard of professional responsibility (rather than mere enjoying the spoils of electoral victory) and governmental officials need to accept that they are *employees* of the public and not a royalty or even a set of bosses.

-policy proposals should have a clear description of the policy, its intentions, and how it relates to existing law (adds, subtracts, or otherwise); the financial and other effects and implications with *sufficient detail* for voters to understand; and a summary of the direct consequences of the policy and the indirect consequences for all other related subject areas. The more responsible and respectful communications will bear a credibility assessment from an independent body (under the auspices of the Information Council, perhaps) of its accuracy, fairness, and respect for the audience.

- public pronouncements of most kinds should include complete disclosures of which outside parties, if any, have provided financial or other support for a party platform, candidate, or policy measure.

-personal character allegations (of the parties/candidates or of opponents) should be constrained to factual material related to the role and status and other information certified by some independent body for accuracy, completeness, and fairness. (A candidate's sexual interests, for example,–unless criminal–and similar personal trivia ought to be ignored.) At a minimum, there should be no deliberate misinformation and character assassinations at all. Where is the respect for the process and the audience?

Science

-Datasets and results of scientific testing and experiments shall be open and accessible to all interested parties for verification and utility purposes. There shall be no proprietary censorship of such research.

-Scientific reports should disclose the identification of the scientists/organizations involved and who sponsored or funded the research. Scientists and other participants should disclose personal interests and conflicts of interest. There should be no constraining of public disclosures in any way by special interests, including sponsoring entities.

Business and employment

-“Reasonable” compensation packages ought to be established for high-level corporate and nonprofit leaders as well as governmental officials and even some lower-level employees. Many in these groups either set their own compensation packages (Congressmen) or negotiate them with compliant boards of directors or compensation committees (corporate and non-profit CEO’s, etc.) or negotiate with compliant governmental officials (public unions) which may have little incentive to be frugal since they are doling out someone else’s money (stockholders, contributors, and the taxpayers.) There are too many instances of overreaching, abuse, and exploitation. Most people, including some union members themselves, likely believe that double dipping on pensions and retirements at age 50 with full pay from the public till is overreaching and unfair. We can have the public (via an independent panel of experts) determine what compensation and benefits are fair and reasonable. This is an issue of accountability, fairness, and especially credibility of governance in the private and public sectors.

-We can create models of fair compensation packages for many positions. (See below, for more examples.) There is more value to this concept than mere prevention of abuses. We have an opportunity to modernize and rationalize compensation schemes in general while incorporating public values into the compensation area. For example, the Council (guided by experts and with input from the public) may determine a baseline of benefits as fair for *all* employees of a certain type or level. Shouldn’t *every* worker, for example, have a certain amount of paid bereavement, sick, and vacation time? Shouldn’t every worker have livable minimum wages (adjusted to conform with the capital-labor allocation ratio described in Chapter 7. Shouldn’t even highly paid professionals have a decent work-like balance regardless of business or industry? We are dealing with human beings not mere “workers.” Trying to balance life, work, and everything else is an important program goal.

-Employer/employee relationship “contracts”—informal or otherwise—providing specified rights, duties, and expectations regarding many employment situations. The contracts would include a set of fair compensation and benefit elements for workers (see above), *some* involvement by labor over workplace conditions including health and safety issues, flex and comp time adjustments, holiday and other scheduling matters, risk-free labor-to-management suggestions relating to the work environment, work-life balances, and the like.

These employee “rights” may, of course, be objectionable to a lot of managements as they prefer to continue the unfair and demeaning “Master-Servant” relationship which is still explicit in much of labor relations. That means near total domination by management over labor, at least in non-unionized, non-civil-service positions, as to pay and benefits, work conditions, and the imposition of a hierarchy of work over family, privacy, and dignity. Employees are not only exploited in the capital-labor value ratio but disrespected, as well. We have to push back this attitude in favor of class/status fairness and work-life balances.

There are some employers, especially those rated in the “Top 100 Places To Work,” which already maintain excellent relationships with their employees, both unionized and not. These relationships include most or all of the relationship items noted above and more, fostering trust, mutual interests, and pride. Those kinds of relationships can act as models for the more comprehensive template for all workers we are imagining.

On the other, we want to avoid abuse of managements and taxpayers by overly powerful labor organizations via (collectively) irrational and inefficient work rules, unfair import tariffs, job protections, and an inflexible workforce. Other than pure self-interest, there is no reason for labor unions, for example, to insist on some kinds of job protections when the employment is not reasonably there and it makes sense (even from the collective's view) for a business to downsize when it makes economic sense. No employment situation should hold back productivity advances and workplace efficiencies. However, as with the macro-economic adjustments concepts discussed above, workers, too, will need soft landing provisions when sensible efficiencies reduce jobs and compensation. Ideally, workers will adapt to a culture of flexibility where they evolve into different jobs; accept cross training for jobs; retain insurances, pensions/401(k)s; seniority rights, and other similar benefits across jobs; and get fair unemployment compensation and relocation financing and assistance, as needed.

Social and Environmental

-All major nonprofits organizations should employ a universal ethics code for their leaders and employees. Like in the case of government, we don't want every organization to come up with its own ethical code designed by the very people to be covered (often biased and deliberately loophole-filled) when each can just adopt a well-designed template designed by independent, fair-minded professionals.

-Elementary and secondary school level educational programs may be modeled, perhaps, after the International Baccalaureate Program and Common Core Program where American students are instructed at world-class levels. Student evaluations should be universalized so that a Dallas, Texas student, for example, can be validly compared with students anywhere in the world. The realm of education and its environments are vastly different now 200+ years later, like most everything else. We should modernize and become more professional regarding both instruction and administration. A Smart nation will have students instructed in multi-national, multicultural disciplines, not only as a matter of economic and political imperative, but as one component of the program's inclusivity idea and the intent to eliminate unnecessary frictions due to trivial (e.g., foreign) differences.

Where is the competence (and justification) of every school district in America, small or large, to design curriculums, teaching standards, and instructional and administrative methods for their local children? We are near a 19th-Century America level in how we administer educational programs.

-More uniformity and standardization in areas now subject to local governmental jurisdiction, like legal codes, business regulation, consumer affairs, health and safety standards, etc. Let's make it *easy* for entrepreneurs to establish new businesses, homeowners to improve their premises, and similar citizen initiatives to deal with government and for local governments, especially, to administer their responsibilities. We no longer are much of a local, parochial social environment. The artificial legal jurisdictions which made sense 230+ years ago are mostly obstacles to commerce and governmental efficiency. (Why is the United States one of only three nations—other being Liberia and Myanmar—still avoiding use of the metric system?)

One way to do this is to have a set of templates of various sorts for governance matters and even areas of the private sector. One model might be the national Uniform Law Commissions which provide templates for state governments in some specific areas of law. They promote uniform rules for commercial transactions (the Uniform Commercial Code,) partnership law, authentication, transactional rules for banking and financial instruments, custodial financial arrangements for children (Uniform Transfers to Minor Acts), etc.

Similarly, we don't want to continue with literally thousands of differing electoral schemes, hundreds of differing housing codes, hundreds of differing business regulation schemes, or even who is

considered married or not in one place or another. We can improve governance and simplify the lives of citizens and reduce costs to boot. Good deal!

This uniformity concept is important, too, in rationalizing the supra-structural affairs (law, bureaucracy, industrial standards) of American governments and businesses vis-a-vis a global economy and multinational society. The European Community has set the standard for rationalization and smart governance, to date. We should emulate them.

-A broadening use of the federal templates already in use for consumer warranties, mortgage applications, loan documents, banking rules and fees, etc. The relatively new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau can be a model of the type of consumer protection we want for a broader range of consumer and commercial transactions.

The uniformity and rationality concepts will also help advance the “bridging” we want to assert throughout society to make it easier for people to interact and to develop social cohesion across increasingly arbitrary boundaries—national, state, local, tribal, etc. It will be hard to imagine, as time goes on, a good justification for a Texas-style body of consumer warranty law versus a New Jersey one, or of differing state child protection schemes (although *some* policy areas may still be highly parochial—but maybe no less irrational—like gun regulation.) Governments of limited jurisdictions and parochial governance are becoming obsolete, even the States. (No disrespect, but why do South and North Dakota, Delaware, and Idaho even exist as separate governments? The legal status to number of people ratio is so out of balance! And in what significant way can they consider themselves so different from the rest of us?)

5. The Communications Council

The Council will be responsible for putting together and operating the communication infrastructure, databases, and tools we need to: 1) allow early supporters and activists to talk up the Program; 2) create the websites, blogs, social media, and other digital communications means that the Program will want for collaboration, information distribution, feedback and critique, information/template sharing, and the like; 3) design and implement the user-interface (i.e., Dashboard) necessary to *make it easy* for even the least savvy user to become active; 4) link the Councils together; 5) build the distribution methods to get the Program's communications out to the government, the private sector, and the public at large; 6) develop conditioning strategies to keep even the least-motivated people to participate in the program at whatever level works for them; and 7) facilitate some of the Action Plans of the pushback function.

It will likely be comprised of a lot of geeks, social networking gurus, computer/user interface experts, public relations experts, and other specialists in making information and data accessible. The main communications network will link all of the Program structures together and have channels to reach government and the general public. At the lowest level, the Council will start with creating grassroots “nodes” (i.e., networking the local level block clubs, neighborhood associations, and small groups.) Each node will be linked to other nodes eventually growing over time into a more comprehensive and sophisticated network. There will be specific tools to enable citizen/consumer pushback, e.g., feedback and review sites, alerts, mobilization programs and other action tools. When the network is mature, we'll have the set of National Councils informing, cueing, coordinating, mobilizing, and directing pushback activities while also being informed and stimulated by feedback communications flowing upward from the lower levels.

There might be three separate levels to this network: 1) the higher-level leaders and professionals at the Council levels, 2) the professional activists made up of public citizens and public interest institutions

which have found their niches in the middle-level of organization, and 3) the general public participating in the Local Council.

There will, of course, be different amounts of attention that participants at each level can and will bring to the Program. Some of the leaders and high-level professionals will have full or part-time jobs with the Program. The large number of existing activist groups will have a range of attention and capabilities to bring to bear but are likely to be significantly active and fully committed. Some people will be full or part-time volunteers, some only moderately active, and others active only when called upon (for execution of an Action Plan, for example.) The largest number of people may be the millions at the Local Council level--the Marys and Johns, the people who work to survive and raise kids, etc., and don't have a lot of time to contribute to the Program but may be willing to do *something* to help out.

Like marketers and retailers who know dozens of strategies to make it easy for people to *buy*, we must find ways to motivate people and make it easy for them to *use the network*. To get enough of these people to participate even at the lowest level of involvement may take a variety of approaches: 1) a direct rational approach to public citizen values and including class interests; 2) emotional and psychological motivations, including appealing to ego gratification; 3) appeals to group affiliation (e.g., the American Team), 4) social conditioning and motivational programs to forge habits of participation; and maybe more.

Regardless of how we get people to support the Program's philosophies, we must acquire the attention of many millions of ordinary folks if only for a few minutes on an almost daily basis. We will need to develop a state of persistent, permanent alertness to BMR and the need to enforce it. We are pushing back the individualist/capitalist Leviathan after all, and like the monster that it is, it will continue to push *us*. We'll have to push back continuously and *forever* or get thoroughly dominated again.

Of course, nearly everyone in American society on a daily basis has too much information and too many demands, etc. to tend to and has to prioritize--jobs, family, and church (for some) have to come first. Since the program's primary leverage comes from our strength in numbers (of supporters), we will have to maintain a large number of *even* casual supporters in a strong Local Council (see more below.) We need to condition habits in this group to get the National Program at least at the back end of people's priority list and make participation at the lowest level *easy*. We can't expect too much attention from most people and can't place too much of a demand on them. We won't need much of either if we come up with a smart public communication means to garner attention, alert, inform, and mobilize people on a regular and needed basis. The accessible computer/mobile interface may work to condition a habit of daily attention for at least a minute or two.

We need our own simplified and specialized variation of the Apple Macintosh and IOS and the Android interfaces designed by experts who understand the relationship of people to digital machines and to software. We can consider it a sort of National Character *app*, so to speak. The hardware and software of the network must be well adapted to the users and their capabilities, focuses, traits, and habit forms. Interacting with it will have to be quick and easy: click on an icon on one's computer or mobile device, see a dashboard or app of Program-related information and links (containing news headlines, alerts, survey and action requests, etc.), and press a button or two to support some aspect of the program. When an Action Plan event requires their participation, people need to be ready to perform even if it is only clicking an e-mail response to a consumer protest, for example.

We want to condition people to think of the National Character dashboard/app as if they were checking the local news headlines or the weather or their text and e-mails. Attending to the Program must become a habit of daily life like texting or e-mailing or taking vitamins. It must be near the top of their minds or the first thing they think of when some important public citizen issue needs to be addressed. Think of making the Program's app the "Google" of information search, the iPhone of digital mobility, the ESPN of sports, or the Twitter of breaking news. The quality of the pushback leverage we want from the

Local Council will correlate to how much we establish this attention function. Maybe some sort of reward system could be built-into the system to reinforce a *habit* of attention.

While participating via the digital network may be the better and most efficient way to engage the Marys and Johns, it can't be the only way. Some participation may only be in the form of visible social support. For that we might utilize an outward sign like an entrance door logo posting (signifying a Program supporter) or similar "analog" communication types like doorpost flags or car bumper stickers or lawn signs. Creative people may be able to find ways to build out interest in the program and membership in the National Tribe at every level of participation.

6. The Support Council

The Support Council's functions will be to: 1) groom volunteers for the many roles in the Program; 2) solicit financial contributions, in-kind donations, and endorsements; 3) developing selection processes for filling the higher level positions in the National Councils; 4) helping fill roles and functions into the Program's structures with existing organizations and activists and coordinating them into the brand, Big Voice, etc.; 5) acting as a sort of traditional lobbying group to influence government to enact legislation, regulations, appropriations, and constitutional amendments; and 6) developing much of the social ethos and conditioning programs.

The Program will need people at all levels and, at the higher levels especially, the *right* people (See Chapter 9 for a list of categories of the right people.) Some positions, staffed by professional and technical experts, higher-level managers and administrators, and support personnel will be paid positions. Most of the work effort will be done by volunteers at every level of the organizational hierarchy. There will be enormous opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and similar positions for college students, for example, eager to participate in a grand, meaningful life project.

Hopefully, some professionals from academic institutions, think tanks, and non-profit organizations who may support the program politically and/or morally will volunteer skills and resources. Existing progressive, well-balanced businesses may find it easy to associate with and support the new social ethos. Even some traditional businesses, which may be considered part of, or affiliated, with the elite class, may volunteer manpower and other resources. They may see the program has a new option to doing the right thing; they may be influenced by the new social ethos; or they may just feel pressure from Program supporters who may be clients or customers. In any case, we want to make bridges to Big Business and to the elite. They are part of the American Team concept, too.

Ideally, Apple and Google would lend interface design expertise and Amazon, Microsoft, and other big cloud services could offer digital tools and disk space and the like. We could use their technical and funding help but also want to reorient them (and other Big Business members) into the balanced, private-public citizen value system. The Local Council, on the other hand, may be built out, in large part, by grassroots public service organizations many of which are already experienced at activism of this sort. The key is for everyone to buy into the *single* focus— the brand and components of BMR and Smart governance.

Some of the Support Council people will be “node builders” doing the personal and organizational politics to get individuals and separate groups to coalesce under the brand. Some will organize the content components bringing scholars, researchers, and activist organizations together, establishing specialization roles, getting organizations to take “ownership” of their own piece of the structure, and getting everything to work coherently. Network coordinators and bridgers will create a National Character “ecology” which will not only bring together now disparate groups and organizations but make it easy for everyday citizens to find reasons to participate. One partial motivation may be “payback,” of sorts, where some people may

find it fun to assert newly-obtained influence against those private citizens who have abused them for so long..

Since existing legal governments and traditional political processes are not expected to go away and the Program intends to work only as a complement to them, other people in the Support Council will specialize in traditional political, lobbying, and public relations activities. Even though the bulk of the Program's activities are meant to work outside of, instead of (or in spite of) existing government, some functions of the Program will rely on producing new laws, regulations, policies, obtaining appropriations for projects and funding for the program, and constitutional amendments. These things must rely on existing government as it will still be the legitimate legal authority no matter what influence the Program develops. In this sense, the Support Council will operate *somewhat* like a traditional special interest even as it represents the collective. We can think of it actually as a *general interest* participating in the existing political processes.

Another function of the Support Council will be to act as a sort of a cheerleader focusing on building the social ethos. It may engage marketers, educators, public relations experts, writers, leaders by example, and charismatic types who will engage various strategies and tactics to build a different American culture. These will be people who have skills and know how and, once focused and organized by the Council, can make BMR, trust, fairness and Smart governance a part of American culture.

Ideally, public relations people and marketers in the commercial area who know how to motivate people and condition attitudes and behaviors will volunteer expertise. They understand better than nearly anyone else how to push people's buttons to get them to buy, donate, and vote, and support political parties and candidates. We just need to redirect them to *public citizen* projects. They will get people to "buy-in" to the Program, so to speak, by force of reason; appeals to values, emotions, and psychology; and conditioning methods of various kinds. Unlike some in this field, our volunteers will not improperly manipulate anyone, of course, as we have to maintain the highest level of sincerity and credibility.

Some of the things that the marketers and PR people may consider:

-using news, educational, and entertainment media--movies, TV shows, musical events--role models, school curriculums, and other means to inspire interest and admiration for public citizen values, attitudes, and behaviors. We need to balance, or better yet, *supersede* at least some of the negative traits now being promoted and even glorified throughout culture by the capitalist ethos. These traits include hyper-competition, bourgeois and vanity consumption, competitive relative social status, sexism and misogyny, and the slacker and "crude and rude" culture.

We especially want to condition a culture of *trust* where people embrace a collective, public interest mentality for most of what they do instead of holding onto the cynicism of the intense capitalism environment. We can make celebrities and heroes of those doing acts of public service and of honor roll kids instead of hard-partying narcissists and exhibitionists. They can get people to embrace intellectual, sober, and responsible public servants instead of loud-mouthed, irresponsible egotists, and leader wannabes.

-creating reward programs of all kinds to motivate the public (and organizations) to develop good citizen values and habits

-developing relationships between Big Business and the public where businesses reframe their missions so that they understand that they exist within a social ecology with other stakeholders and should accept responsibility for more than the mere maximizing of value for stockholders or private citizens. Like with individuals, Big Business needs to be dual-perspectival--capitalist *and* collectively-minded. Creative entrepreneurs and managements can fashion operations and philosophies which could be win-win situations for them and society, i.e., refocusing on doing good (or doing no harm, at least) for the

The National Character Program

A New Social Ethos - Balance, Meaning, Respect, and Smart governance and social relations

A New Set of Public Values

- Collective fairness
- Trustworthiness in governance, business, and society
- Pride in oneself regardless of status
- Economic efficiency and meaning from a collective's perspective
- Enhanced respect for reason and science
- Consideration of multiple perspectives
- Humility in social engineering
- Insistence on quality of character

The Shadow Government

The National Council

The Brain

The Policy and Problem-Solving Council

The Planning Council

The Information Council

The Support Council

The Local Council

The American Team Players

The National University

collective while still making money.

Think Subway, Inc., with its symbolic representative, "Jared," for example. He had been made into a social hero and role model (his 2016 *personal* difficulties notwithstanding) for showing discipline and eating healthily and, presumably, has helped increase sales and profits for the company. We might reorient school food vendor attitudes to think beyond merely providing lunches into supporting childhood development in health, nutrition, discipline, and more. They could sponsor strategies to motivate children's food and health choices and behaviors, like games, contests, inspirational models, etc.

We can try to convince retailers like McDonald's to make their businesses into "combo" food retailer/public citizen organizations taking into consideration consumer health matters, lessening energy and environmental footprints, training and conditioning employees in work ethics and personal improvement, and adding economic value to the community (by paying living wages, etc.) There will be many opportunities for creative businesses and organizations to reframe nearly all segments of their entities to become good public citizens.

If these companies are not interested in adapting a public citizen attitude, the Program will use its consumer leverage—via Action Plans—to get people to patronize other, more responsible corporate citizens, for one thing.

Overall, the Program, in any case, will likely be remarkably inexpensive. There will be expenses, of course, for personnel, the network and computers, digital tools, and the organizational overhead, among other things. It is expected that much of the funding will come from voluntary donations, including cash and in-kind resources. Like with any good cause (and this may be the grandest) people at most every economic level may voluntarily contribute because Americans are a generous people and once convinced of the merits and good intentions of the program and its potential success they may see the value in contributing. If the Program develops enough public support, it may even work out governmental subsidies. (After all, it will be performing--as a shadow government--some of the functions legal government cannot, or doesn't, do itself.)

7. The Local Council

The Local Council will be the "heart" of the Program made up of thousands of smaller, local-based activist groups, and multi-millions of public citizens and the Marys and Johns. In some ways the Local Council will be the most important of all the Councils in that it will have the *people*-numbers, the voting numbers, and the consumer weight to provide much of the pushback functions of the Program. As part of the shadow government, it will have major responsibility for monitoring government and Big Business activities, alerting the public to improper ones, and implementing Action Plans to counter them. The watchdog and pushback functions will be administered mostly by volunteers who might perform (without much effort) such activities primarily by accessing online databases from home or office computers.

By promising people empowerment against the grinding individualist/capitalist system, just the existence of the Local Council may inspire people to be more active in their social and public lives. It may motivate them to participate in mobilizing efforts and other instances of the pushback function. The Council will be alert to and react to political activities of government, political parties, and special interests and act to condition compliance with Smart governance. The Council will enable the consumer impacts necessary to condition businesses to appropriately respect their customers, their employees, their communities, and their environment. It will be proactive in attempting to shape the behaviors of government, businesses, and other organizations to conform to public citizen values.

It is entirely conceivable that this empowerment of the little people may also provide a "venting" function giving those millions of people formerly resigned to lives of being pushed around, ignored, and

disrespected a new attitude towards life. Some may evolve from “moaners and groaners,” frustrated and depressed, and hopeless to some much better happiness profiles. A lot of people in the Council might be delighted at pushing back on the “Man,” (or the elite) at least once in a while.

The Council will be comprised of city block, neighborhood, village and town, and affinity-based associations created and managed by the local people themselves. At the lowest level will be small groups of under 300 people, say, taking responsibility for their geographical areas or specific subject matters of interest. They will be bonded to other such groups and coordinated at higher-level nodes. These local associations will share personal resources and act as anchors of local pride in the communities. They will populate niches in the Program's structure and do their part in support.

The Information Council will have templates (e.g., checklists for starting up, model by-laws and election forms, funding support, etc.) to help local people set up these grassroots organizations. No one will have to start (with difficulty) from scratch. Node builders, network managers, and other types of facilitators will help create pathways to link organizations together thereby building out the network. There will be opportunities for all to participate in some way in developing the Program at their own level of ability and commitment.

Assembling the Local Council will also go a long way towards rebuilding the decaying American social fabric. It could, hopefully, help to reverse the effects (driven by the private citizen attitude) of conditioning people to believe that they are on their own in an increasingly competitive and harsh environment where they need to resort to atavistic behavior to compete or even to survive in it. Building the social fabric will diminish frictions among people and drive positive social relations. The more people know each other, even in the most mundane ways like eating and drinking together, sharing family adventures, socially networking online, and the like, the more the perceived trivial differences (and potential threats) will disappear (or at least, become benign.)

H. The Public Citizen University

The University will be a college-level academic program with a curriculum designed to develop students to become theorists, leaders, managers, high-level administrators, and bridgers for the Program itself and for other positions in both the public and private sectors. The students will be specifically trained in Smart governance and in the meaning of an advanced 21st-Century society. The University doesn't need a brick-and-mortar presence but may be comprised of specialized curriculums at various academic and research institutions which might appreciate the intellectual basis of the Program. The curriculum may contain courses in political science, sociology, management, psychology, economics, and philosophy and will emphasize collective issues, multiple perspectives, a holistic view of society, and the complex, multiple social relationships of people to people, people to the environment, and people to the future.

The Program has plenty of intellectual content and sophistication for the intellectually-minded to learn, to develop, and to critique. The theoretical underpinnings in some ways can be understood as a new and unique variant in political organizational philosophy: 1) It blends traditional governmental institutions with a non-governmental structure (a shadow government) operated by mainly public citizen volunteers. 2) It conceives of dualist private and public attitudes in citizens reframing the citizen from a mere worker/consumer in a capitalist economic system to (at least) a hybrid "consumer/human being." 3) It adds a human existential component to an abstract inhuman political-economic system. 4) It suggests an evolutionary development from American capitalist economics to a mixed planned/private economic system. 5) It reframes traditional *economic* class analysis to a *psychological/sociological* one of the private-public citizen relationship instead. And, 6) It includes a vision of an advanced society emphasizing reason, collective fairness, technology, inclusiveness, and multiple perspectives.

The theoretical basis of the movement seems to have sufficient intellectual weight and depth for it to constitute a legitimate academic study area akin to race, gender, critical studies, and similar paradigmatic programs already established in the academic world.

The Program will need different types of managers and leaders than the type we train now. They need to be holistically-oriented, intellectually nimble and adept, pragmatic, humanist, socially creative, and able to engage society and government with multi-perspectives including medium-to long-term time perspectives. This is nearly the opposite of what capitalism typically encourages in its managers and leaders—i.e., specialization, deep technical and focused knowledge, short-term perspectives, profit-oriented research and scholarship, and personalities which can comfortably conform to existing economic production and marketing processes like cogs in a machine.

The curriculum will also develop a specific type of person called a bridger—one who can newly frame and/or reframe social concepts, ideas, and attitudes in a meta-level way intending to break the (artificial, arbitrary, reductionist, and/or obsolete) confinements of existing ways of thinking. While the individualistic/capitalist paradigm focuses on "Me against you, us against them, and every man for himself"—(No wonder we can't get along!)—bridgers will specialize in turning social conflict situations into win-win situations. They will develop proofs of how and why it pays for people to work and live together.

B. The National Conventions

The story outline of this book is a mere sketch on paper of a vision and plan; it has to be brought to life by a broad set of real people characters. (Chapter 9 will detail an implementation plan with a timetable.) While there will be a number of ways for the Program to get built: 1) from the bottom up by grassroots organizing by activist groups, 2) piecemeal adoption of the public value set by different entities throughout the multiple levels of society and a corresponding development of an *amorphous*, progressive movement, or 3) a managed, top-down organization steered by a small set of high-level activists and executive producer types, there will, nevertheless, still be a need for a well-articulated organizational philosophy at the highest level. That philosophy may be considered like a set of architectural plans which can provide broad guidance and direction to others lower in the hierarchy.

A pure bottom-up (i.e., uncoordinated) approach would be like building an edifice brick by brick. It *could* produce an effective movement but the probabilities that such an approach could form the coordinated leverage, accessibility, and constancy needed to *actually work* is very low. (Many failed change efforts have tried this approach.) The bottom-up approach also may have focus and coordination problems, may require way too many bridger types working too hard, and be subject to elite co-optation at the personal level.

The top-down approach, on the other hand, may appear (at least initially) as elitist and therefore not an authentic representative of the little people. It also will take time to develop the structure and process and require quality coordination among a number of big ego-types who may not get along together, as a matter of personality.

A top-down approach would engage two different sets of heavyweight supporters—influencers and cue givers who will spread ideas and inspire followers and admirers and those who have executive producer type skills to formalize the beginnings of the institutions, processes, digital infrastructure, and structural templates. The producers will set up the initial meetings to appoint temporary leaders, divvy up responsibilities, and start the building up of support at the lower levels. Just articulating the Program's philosophy in the right way to enough people may be sufficient to inspire building activity at the middle and lower levels by existing activist groups.

There are, of course, benefits to each approach: the bottom-up approach may take less management effort; the top-down approach will have efficiencies. Obviously, there is no theoretical claim to the optimal approach to the World's Grandest Project! Engaging the best of each approach may be what we want to do. The Program will start to get built out from multiple directions and in multiple ways.

There may be meetings at every level, coordinated (at least lightly), by the top-level executive producers. Assuming the initial meetings generate enough interest, follow-up meetings may become more numerous and get larger and more focused.

We can think of these larger meetings as the National Conventions. There ought to be three sets of meeting types: 1) for structural/process development, 2) for content development, and 3) for bridging efforts. Subgroups may be formed for specific functions or areas with everything coordinated, perhaps, by a temporary steering group. That group may have to come together by the efforts of self-selected, high-level activists and producers willing to take charge. (Here's where big egos come in handy!) Team players will be essential and egomaniacs, dogmatics, and fundamentalists will not be welcomed, especially in the structural/process meetings.

The structure/process people may include the executive producers, managers and administrators, fundraisers, activist leaders, technology gurus, social networking communication experts, and marketing and public relations people. They will build the Program's shape and processes from scratch. They will be responsible for creating the "vehicle," so to speak, for the ideas. But much of the Program structure, like the vision and plan itself, will really be more of a *synthesis* of existing resources than something completely new. The program will draw somewhat upon existing institutions and/or models of organization (although the National Councils concept will be brand-new, as will the shadow government idea.) It will enlist personnel from activists in progressive sources but the movement will be more of a reframing and focusing of existing resources than a total new build, so to speak. The added value comes from the organizing concepts of the brand and the focus on basic values (BMR.)

The content meetings will include a similar set of organizational "builder-types" but be comprised primarily of professionals in economics, politics, sociology, psychology and religion, and other content areas. These are the people who will focus on the substantive planning, policymaking, and problem-solving issues. These participants will represent a broad range of approaches and perspectives. We want to develop a meta-level consensus of ideas and plans to address the content issues. If the experts can't develop a working consensus on how to address any particular issue, the Councils will not assert themselves in that area. Caution and humility are part of the program's philosophy and approach to major social change.

Ultimately, these content conventions will evolve into the six permanent Councils.

The bridging conventions may be the most complex and perhaps most dramatic as their primary function is to moderate or eliminate the faux dividers which prevent the little people from working together *as they need to do* to effect pushback. We are seeking for this set of meetings a broad-based diverse set of liberals, conservatives, libertarians, progressives, minority groups, youths and old hippies, rural and city folk, etc. We want to show inclusivity and collective-mindedness as soon as possible as much as possible.

In the bridging areas conventions we will strive to include all major identity and position perspectives. After all, we are seeking to build a consensus on fundamental issues of governance and social relations for the nation and the collective. Bringing these representatives together is *not* for purposes of traditional horse-trading and pluralist political negotiation. They will be representatives of *perspectives only* and expected to join efforts to forge a meta-level consensus (or near consensus) on content ideas, to bridge the trivial differences which inhibit social harmony, and move forward towards a

collectively-conceived advanced American nation. The bridging conventions will eventually lead to the formation of the ultimate set of meetings—the Grand Reconciliation Program (see below.)

While we will want nearly all perspectives, we do want to keep out absolutists and those not fair- and nimble-minded, those not in good faith, and those not interested in furthering a collective good. The intent is to include almost all perspectives with the goal of reaching consensus.

This diversity at this stage of development is important for a number of reasons: 1) To cover all necessary perspectives in designing the Program's components and programs to show that we are thinking clearly and comprehensively. 2) To show that we are serious about collective fairness, utilizing the Rawlsian principle of consideration of multiple and different interests. 3) To show the rest of society that this diversity is a positive thing in itself. 4) To make the Program's institutions and processes as attractive as possible to the broadest range of people who will know that they will be welcomed into an American Team. And, 5) demonstrate that the set of public values may be universal enough to appeal to even these disparate groups of people and positions.

The underlying belief is that most (but not all) people, of whatever political affiliation, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, etc. share the *same basic values*, once the superficial incidentals and the ignorance-motivated threatening “skins” are scrubbed off, so to speak. We are promoting a new collective social ethos, after all. Participants, although, who early on may be representatives of group interests, will be expected to evolve into more than *mere* representatives of those groups and positions. They will have to be empathetic, courageous, and sincere enough to evolve into collectively-minded *public citizens*. The only divider we want to have relevant is the private versus public citizens' attitude.

The bridgers will try to get the Tea Party people, for example, to understand accurately that the target of their efforts (rage?) ought to be the private citizen elite, not the concept of the federal government itself. They will introduce the Occupy Wall Street people to our practical plan who otherwise seem to understand (mostly correctly) the causes of their resentment. They will try to get people to effectively ignore race, gender, sexuality, Red/Blue State differences as trivial, emphasizing commonalities instead, especially the potential as members of an American Team.

The participants will try to tone down the heat on the potent issue dividers like abortion, the conservative/liberal dichotomy, conflicts of religion and science, and others which have no *positive futures*. They ought to be able to “turn on the light” so that those things become framed by new meta-level 21st-Century perspectives. Those perspectives would include the private/public citizen dichotomy, sand boxed religions, greater respect for reason and science, belief in the capability of people and society to improve themselves, and the awesome potential of smart governance to advance American society.

The meetings may have both face-to-face and online components so that many people can participate anytime from anywhere. Wiki's, blogs, social networking, and other interactive and collaborative means may be part of the process. Sort of like how complex software applications are developed, the structures and processes of the Program will be roughly conceived, alpha-formed, beta developed, and improved and coordinated until a workable program appears ready for real-time operation. Creating an ambitious program like this mostly from scratch is made easier, perhaps, by being able to be organically constructed in modular and scalable formats somewhat like complex software systems are made up of snippets of code, component modules, API's, and plug-in functions. With enough contributions from the right people eventually there will be a grand, coherent operating construction.

The national conventions stage will likely extend over several years. If the executive producers and managers perform as we expect the Program should be able to develop organically over a period of roughly three to eight years, maybe, drawing upon a large set of story "characters" from each level of the organization. (See Chapter 9 for a description of key characters.) The costs and resource demands of the conventions should be relatively modest, at least early on, and be subsidized by donations and volunteers.

C. The Grand Reconciliation Project

In the aggregate, the bridging conferences will act as a sort of new (informal) Social Constitutional Convention. It will create a collective frame of reference for matters of American governance and social relations and raises, at least, these questions: Do enough people see value in making a collective perspective a prominent component of our American society? Can these people formulate a large enough “common ground” to make the tough going-forward efforts worthwhile? Are there enough people, especially at the leadership, cue-giver, and high-profile levels who can be fair-minded, nimble minded, empathetic, creative, and patient enough to make the reframing possible? Can the efforts of these people, together with the ordinary Marys and Johns, sustain conditioning efforts long enough for the program to advance American society?

Of course, we'll never know until we give it a good try! There are historical models of people coming together into rational common enterprises. The United Nations and the European Union are major examples. Comprehensive international trade and business treaties are a lesser but still instructive set of examples. What we want to do with the program is way more ambitious but there are good reasons to think that the time is here to remake our ways of governance and social relations. A 21st-Century social constitutional convention may be the way to get started.

Fair-minded people will likely accept reinterpretations, meta-perspectives, sacrifices, and a reordering of rewards, incentives, and positions as long as everyone is treated fairly and with justification. We will try to put everyone into a Rawlsian-view position and ask them to assess Convention proposals with the veil of ignorance implied by that concept. Assuming we can get everyone to see eye-to-eye at the abstract level then we use strategies to bridge the gap to our current realities. That will take time as everyone has vested positions which may have to be upended. But, fair-minded people who have witnessed or acquired lessons from generations and centuries of wars, hatred, and inhumanity will eventually learn to get along (with some difficulties, of course.)

The Grand Reconciliation Project will be a start. In a metaphorical sense, we put all of the relevant parties together in a large room, let everyone stomp around and vent about the others, let the heat dissipate, and then cool-headedly bang out a Grand Compromise about everyone's place and role in the newly conceived society. Nearly everyone will need to adapt to new frames and multiple perspectives. They will have to break old habits and form new, better ones. Not everyone, likely, will be very happy, but every class, faction, group, perspective, etc. participating in the conferences will know that they have been *treated fairly* in the new social constitution and that the compromise makes good sense for the *collective* (meaning *everyone* will benefit to some degree, at least.)

Certainly, the elite will have to bend and give up something (and not even a lot) and the lower classes will have to provide consideration of some kind in exchange (initiative, responsibility, social value of various kinds). Those stubbornly adhering to intolerances, especially of the trivial differences discussed previously, will be disappointed and may be subject to sufficient marginalization by the rest so that their objections will become mostly irrelevant. Maybe we can peel off *some* fundamentalists but the hard core ones may diminish in numbers over time and more flexible and fair-minded successors (i.e., younger generations) may be more supportive or, at least, not so adamantly opposed to the Program. The overall result may be a *Grand Reconciliation*.

The Program will require patience as we are talking about a radical reframing of governance, society, and the social meaning of life itself. Just developing the intellectual design, management and administrative matters, the technical components, and getting enough people early on to buy-in to the Program to prove its feasibility will take a lot of time, perhaps extending to ten years or more after the serious business of the national conventions has taken place. Content development, depending on specific subject matter, may take less time, as much scholarly work has already have been done and conceptual

and management work is easier to complete than the conditioning of a private-public citizen duality in millions of people, the breaking of habits, and the forming of new ones.

Full implementation of the Program, where the formal structures and processes are in place, most of the content developed, a lot of bridging accomplished, and major progress made in the social conditioning of values in the public will extend to decades. It may require a generation or two or even longer for many Americans to decide to even buy-in, conceptually. As a paradigm, the National Character Program presents a fundamental shift of perspectives and some people cannot or may not want to adapt no matter if it makes sense or not. As hardened, inflexible old-timers die out their children may likely be more supportive after having been exposed to a developing environment where public citizen values are promoted and reinforced.

Chapter 9 The Story: End of Part 1-What's Next?

A. Completing the story

What can *you readers* do with these story elements?

- 1) Two large sets of characters, private citizens and public citizens
- 2) A capitalist environment that is here to stay
- 3) A back story of 230-plus year old economic, political, and social systems
- 4) An extended narrative thread of millions of little people getting beaten down by an elite class and having this set of emotions: resentment, frustration, confusion, fear, anger, and alienation
- 5) A developing narrative thread in the form of new technologically-advanced information, communications, and organizational tools
- 6) A narrative idea in the form of a unique comprehensive vision and plan proposing to break centuries of governance traditions and habits and upsetting the historical hierarchy of the elite over the little people.

Maybe nothing. Maybe an entertaining but short-lived fantasy like the early Occupy Wall Street or the Arab Spring events. Maybe one of the *grandest stories* ever written! *Any* of those outcomes is feasible. This book contains all of those story elements noted above and is offered as a challenge to its readers and supporters to finish its story with a Final Chapter which could be historical. Don't think this Grand Story can't be written, it *can* (see below.)

It can't be assumed, however, that more than a few people will ever read this book. In a dominant market system, including that of ideas, there is an enormous number of books and ideas all seeking readers and followers. Furthermore, nearly one half of all Americans haven't read a book since graduation. Of the rest, most read solely for light entertainment. (Nothing wrong with that.) That, however, leaves not too many potential readers of a complex non-fiction book about working hard to achieve social change that *future* generations (mostly) will benefit from. This is a tough sell!

There will have to be some creative ways and persistent effort to acquire readers and to draw enough attention to the Program ideas (see below.) Even assuming a lot of people *do* become aware of the ideas, some might just dismiss the National Character Program as: 1) too complicated, 2) requiring an awful lot of work by a lot of different types of people, 3) subject to strenuous resistance by the elite class and others, 4) requiring a lot of time to produce significant results, and 5) having no guarantee of success.

All of that is true. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean that a grand story can't or won't be written. We've noted in previous chapters that civil rights for all races, genders, and sexual orientations were nearly inconceivable only decades (or less) ago. But now in many (but not all) ways, we are past racial, gender, and sexual orientation discriminations. Millions of righteous progressive citizens (maybe some of you readers) made those changes happen. As they say, where there is a will (and a vision and a plan) there is a way.

We can author a bigger and more important story than even that of civil rights. (We are striving for significant improvements for nearly *all* Americans.) And, our potential resource group—multi millions of little people—is bigger than any other group in American history striving for social justice. Readers with

courage and creativity willing to make a just social reality happen for the little people and Smarter governance for all Americans *can* complete "The Story Of How The Little People Obtain BMR and An Advanced Nation."

Readers should recognize, of course, that we need to be real about our situations. In one sense, the Program is akin to a comprehensive medical prescription for an old, fat, lazy, cigar-smoking man—lose weight, exercise, stop smoking, eat a healthy diet, and continue that for years. Well, that prescription is likely to make that old man fit, healthy, and happier *provided he follows it*. Among patients like that in the real world, some will be self-motivated to follow that challenging prescription; some others will, but only with external support; and some will not at all. Truly, fixing American society requires the same kind of intelligence, motivation, and persistence that that medical prescription implies.

There may be no other way. We either suck it up and write *our own* story or the private citizens/ elite will continue to write a sorry, mostly miserable story for us. Our America will remain old, fat, lazy, and sick and the little people will remain largely worker capital, unfulfilled, and disrespected. Your *desire* for significant social change has been made clear in a lot of ways over a lot of years (although not everyone shares the same exact goals.) The set of public values and the concept of a Smart society articulated here are matters which nearly everyone (especially the little people) thinking clearly *should* have an interest in.

As argued above, the necessary *resources* are available right now. But it remains to be proven whether the *will* is there for enough people to follow a challenging, long-term prescription. If you really want to fix America for yourself and your children (and theirs) you are challenged to find something you like in the National Character Program and make it happen. Encourage your family, friends, bosses and coworkers, neighbors, and political representatives, too. There may be no other way!

Here are some things that need to be done, organized in a rough timetable:

1. Distribute the Ideas

This book will be formatted into a full text paper edition and made available at (or near) cost on Amazon.com or some similar distribution site. Digital versions (pdf's) will be available for viewing and downloading from a dedicated website acting as an initial information source for the Program. A separate, abbreviated "Lite" version of the book ("The Action Manual, Lite.") containing a simplified presentation of the Program will be available as well. The full text version is for those who want to fully appraise the intellectual basis of the Program to determine for themselves whether it is theoretically sound and practical. The Lite version is for those people curious about the Program who won't want to read a 300+ page book of fairly high-level political science material but may be willing to absorb just the basics.

The intellectual framework of the program *has to be* acknowledged by political scientists, economists, and other intellectuals as theoretically coherent *at least*, even though they might not support its purpose or any specifics, or believe in the probability of its success. If it doesn't pass intellectual muster as a coherent program and plan it doesn't matter how many people it reaches or appeals to psychologically or emotionally. The Program will fail and contribute more grief to an already disappointed and frustrated public.

The books (and some associated materials, like the website, videos, etc.) will be brought to the attention of a large handful of academics, activists, journalists, cue givers, and other potentially influential people who have an interest in social progress. Hopefully, some influential folks will be intrigued, at least, and word-of-mouth will increase the number of readers and interest in the Program will grow. Program materials (including new ideas, comments, and suggestions) may be distributed via snail mail, e-mail,

**A New Social Movement for
Change -the National Character
Program**

1. Disseminate the concepts, ideas, and plans for all Americans
2. Explore and fine-tune the program
3. "Early adopters" put into place some aspects of the program
4. Organize and run the national conventions and the grand reconciliation project
5. Organize the rest of the councils
6. Organize and categorize and energize the people needed, including the division of labor
7. Fit people and organizations into the focused whole
8. Implement the rest of the program
9. Fine-tune, adjust, refocus as necessary

social media, and the website/blog set up as a contact point for communications.

The books themselves will be governed by a Creative Common license authorizing free, noncommercial use by anyone, including redistribution. The website will be supplemented by social media and other communication tools including collaboration software. Like with open source software development we want people to comment upon, critique, add, revise, and fine tune the fundamental ideas, all in the furtherance of improving the ideas of a common cause. We'll want critics to poke at the ideas to give us a chance to develop them better and to fix flaws.

If we are lucky, enough readers and supporters will like the ideas and recommend the book to like-minded people who then will help turn the nascent vision into a serious practical movement. Maybe sympathetic university professors will have study sessions and seminars; labor and political organizations will have conferences and lycea; bloggers and social network mavens will introduce the ideas in the blogosphere and to audiences online; journalists, political pundits, and TV/radio commentators will explore the ideas with the general public and get reactions from them and generate more interest and buzz; and business and nonprofit leaders will provoke their organizations and members to rethink missions and organizational philosophies. Ideally, the Program ultimately will resonate with millions of Americans, many of whom may be thrilled to be participants in something so different and ambitious.

If too few people like the ideas or even read them then that will be the sorry end of the story. As it is, there are *no* other significant, intellectually sound and feasible programs being proposed by anybody having the potential, arguably, to achieve the extent of the social progress we are contemplating here. As explained in Chapter 4, there is a long history of out-of-date, theoretically limited, impractical, and/or half-baked social change program failures. Unless and until someone comes up with something similarly comprehensive and coherent the proposals here may be the best that we will have. If, indeed, they are not good enough, or if too few people think that they are, we will continue to deal unhappily with the situations we have now. That would be a disappointment and a shame.

2. Educate, Collaborate, and Refine

Ideally, we would like the Program to inspire early “sponsors,” so to speak, in a number of areas who will generate interest: 1) among their colleagues in academia, where the theoretical and paradigmatic components of the Program can be evaluated and critiqued; 2) among progressive activists, where the organizational and pushback components may appeal; 3) among journalists, bloggers, and other influential media people who may be intrigued by the Program's novelty and potential; 4) with forward-thinking people in government and business who may be interested in conceiving of their organizations and social roles in a new way; 5) with digital and internet gurus who will recognize the unique technological requirements of the Program and be challenged to solve them; and 6) with cue givers in organizations of all types (including some not typically connected to the type of progressive change contemplated here—classical conservatives and libertarians) who may see positive applicability of *some* of the ideas, at least, to them and their followers. Some high-level cue givers--e.g., religious and cultural leaders, major philanthropists, Big Businessmen—may recognize original opportunities to fundamentally reframe their organizations and be leaders of a movement towards an advanced society. They could achieve historic greatness of a sort.

We want to not only get people talking and thinking about the Program but to brainstorm ideas on making the vision a reality. We need them to collaborate. This is where the digital, internet, and networking gurus need to build out the digital infrastructure and online tools to connect all these people together.

3. Build the Brand

Once enough people are talking about making the Program work we can begin the crucial focusing and branding efforts. The focusing has two aspects: 1) leveraging our major resource, i.e., people numbers, via a *single, unified* framework, and 2) concentrating on the small set of fundamentals--i.e., public values and Smart governance--to make it *easy* for people to understand the Program and why they should support it. Focusing will help overcome the elite's major advantage over the rest of us--that *they* are generally united and we are not. They, of course, have perfected all kinds of techniques to divide us and we ourselves have failed, up to now, to recognize that the most relevant social category in American society is not that of partisan political positions, race, gender, or anything else but that of the private versus public citizen.

This book is meant to expose and explore that category as clearly as possible. (Chapter 2 explains why this is crucial.) Once that new categorization is understood, people can readily slot themselves into one group or another. The general public will need to be persuaded to see themselves as members of a *new* and *different* social group--the *American Team* of public citizens (versus political party, regional, ethnic, or other similar social categories.)

In addition to the proper social categorization, we'll have to convince existing activists and progressive groups to stop doing their own things, so to speak, and to find their niches in a *single, unified program*. As explained in Chapter 8 thousands of little pokes at the elite have generally been ineffective and cannot match the power and influence of the one Big Stick! If individualism/capitalism is to be pushed back at all, it is likely that only a *single, focused, branded* movement of thousands of activist groups and multi-millions of little people will do it.

Branding is primarily intended to make it *easy* for people to be aware of the Program, to understand it, and to organize and act in support of it. Because some of the theoretical concepts of the Program are complex and sophisticated we need to articulate them in simplified forms to reach enough people, especially at the Local Council level. The Lite version of this book is intended to do just that but a set of alternative approaches and strategies will be needed, too.

It would be useful if creative public relations and marketing types could come up with ideas to simplify, relabel, and/or "perk up" the concepts to make them easier to understand and more appealing to a broad number of people. (See section B.4, below, for more discussion of this.) We will not only have to make the set of concepts *relatively* simple for most people to understand but also appealing enough to connect with them at emotional, psychological and, especially, values levels. We want to engage with people regarding their heads, hearts, *and* souls, one might say.

Arguably, the starting point to selling the ideas to the general public will be the fundamentals of BMR and Smart governance. Everyone with a conscious (or even unconscious) alertness to their personal and social lives feels the struggle to *balance* personal and work demands, wants to be treated as a *human* being, and wants to be *respected*. And, regardless of how people feel about more or less governance, not too many people will long argue about *smartening* the governance we have, especially if it is based on collective interests and fairness.

The concept of BMR can be like a simple trigger for people to respond to nearly every social interaction in their daily lives--is it balanced, humane, respectful? Ideally, they will develop a reflexive habit of reacting against situations in the workplace, politics, consumer market, and elsewhere which do not support BMR and react positively to those which do. When, for example, the boss refuses to grant paid sick leave to single moms they will recognize this as an abuse of the balance principle (and, when the Program is mature enough, have an Action Plan to respond.) When Congressmen enact more pork expenditures for themselves and their cronies citizens will recognize it as abuse of the respect principle

(and enact an Action Plan to stop them.) When businesses do the right things for their workers, customers, and communities, they will be *rewarded* with increased patronage, a positive consumer profile, and more.

It might not take very long for the little people to develop a group consciousness and learn to see themselves as targets (and opponents) of attacks on their public values by private citizens/the elite. With the assistance of program resources, they will then be willing and able to assert themselves. They may come around to being proud of being members of an American Team and like the empowerment that will come from their participation in the Local Council (among other elements of the program.)

Program activists and organizational leaders will have an additional focus on Smart governance issues as well as the fundamental BMR ones. Many are already proponents of the Program's interest in good governance, rational policymaking, fiscal economy, planning, social harmony, and the like. They will have to recognize that their interests will be way more effectuated with a single, unified framework than they would when acting separately. Ideally, they will become team players in the Program; find their subject niches in one or more of the Councils; and frame their specific organizational values, goals, and activities as being *general* Program ones.

That approach not only draws on the size and focus leverage it needs to be effective but also makes them way more *accessible* to potential supporters. It doesn't do an awful lot of good, for instance, for thousands of organizations working for progressive values and rationality in governance, to *each* reach out to the public with their own voices or personas. From the point of view of the ordinary person looking to participate in social change that situation is confusing and numbing. Who are *all* of these organizations and programs? How to sort out who does what and with what effectiveness? How to engage and with whom? Where to start? What to do?

To give any worthwhile attention to the Program the public wants *ease* and *accessibility* as they have work, family, and lives to attend to first and mostly. Let's make it *easy* for the public to support us. Let them have this *practical* choice: 1) a clear, accessible Program or 2) a confusing morass of hundreds/thousands of small entities squeaking out for attention. Instead of having to decide or to engage with a Vegas-sized buffet of good governance entities—Republican/Democratic, conservative/liberal/libertarian/socialist, environmental/free enterprise, national/regional/local, designated interests of all kinds, etc.—*lets offer them just plain BMR and Smart governance*.

Therefore, give them *one* symbol/trigger, in a sense, to prompt people to react positively and almost automatically to Program activities. Like the conditioning strategies of the behavioral scientist, Ivan Pavlov, where the hunger and pleasure feelings of his dogs were automatically prompted by the ringing of a bell, the Program, too, needs a similar distinct trigger to prompt support from the public. One Symbol, One Voice, One Persona, the Automatic Reaction; that is, *One Program*—the National Character Program.

Program Fundamentals

1. Me people (private citizens) versus We people (public citizens)
2. Balance—we demand space for both private and public interests
3. Meaning—people are to be treated as beneficiaries of the system and not as subordinate to it
4. Respect—living the small life well is to be respected. Being the best that one can be is our standard of success
5. Pride—good social character is rewarded
6. We insist on *Smart* 21st century governance and social relations

Hence, the Program fundamentals—simple and easy:

- A. There are “Me” people (private citizens) and “We” people (public citizens.) Team people are preferred people and citizens (as we see it.)
- B. Balance—We demand space for *both* private citizen and public citizen interests. “No one needs to be *too* selfish,” in the economy, in politics, in the workplace, or in the community. The arrogant and patronizing excuse, “Business is Business,” will no longer be acceptable.
- C. Meaning—People are to be treated as human beings and not merely as “human capital.” “Government and business are for *people*; people are not for government and business.”
- D. Respect—(Even for the lowliest Marys and Johns) “Being the Best We Can Be,” and “Doing The Right Thing” should be respected at least as much as personal and competitive achievements are for others.
- E. Everyone who takes pride both in themselves *and* their communities (i.e., good social characters honoring BMR) will be rewarded for it. (Merely making big money by itself does *not* indicate good social character.)
- F. It's time *now* for the American political system to have a brain (Smart governance) which can make intelligent decisions for us as a collective. After all, we are smart, educated people; and, this *is* the 21st-Century!

The brand will have these benefits: 1) it will readily attract attention; 2) it will focus public citizens into a single vision; 3) it will make things easy for people to understand the meaning of the Program; 4) it will provide a value-laden symbol to prompt positive emotional and psychological feelings and activities; and, 5) it will facilitate mobilizing multi-millions of Marys and Johns into an effective pushback mechanism.

Of course, it is difficult to promote a brand without *content*. People have to know what the Program stands for. And, they have to know what it means (or could mean) for them. Some things we could do at this point: 1) Start producing and promoting some of the best practices templates (see below) to give people an idea of what specifics the Program will address. 2) Early supporters of the Big Voice component of the Information Council can start producing public value-infused news and journalism content and begin building credibility and audiences. (See section E, below, for more on the Big Voice.) Information content sincerely intended for truth, credibility, and respect for the audience may be such a novelty that people may pay especial attention to it.

3) Local activists can start to reframe or reinvent their organizations to conform to the Program's principles and become part of the brand, in spirit at first, and then formally later, when the Council structures are up and running. For many entities not much of what they do has to change; they just have to get under the cloak of the Program's brand, so to speak, to promote focus and accessibility. As more and more entities affiliate under the brand, we will be creating the presence and credibility we need to elicit public support while also generating the focus leverage we want.

4) High-profile supporters could promote their endorsement, at least, of the Program's principles early on and often. These influential people may act as primary cue givers and develop support by the force of their personalities and characters. A large handful of folks like Oprah, Bono, Pope Francis, and the like can influence millions of people. 5) Preliminary bridging efforts may start at this stage, as well, where we promote hard the social membership categories of *private versus public citizen* and loosen up everyone's ties to other social categories. We want to weaken affiliation for the social categories of: the 1% versus the 99%, individualists versus government, Red versus Blue State residents, Republican versus Democrat, urban versus suburban/rural, etc.

Ideally, we would like the private versus public citizen distinction to resonate with Americans like the 1%/99% concept of the Occupy Wall Street movement did (see Chapter 2 for an explanation), at least early in its development, but be *permanent* (as well as theoretically more valid.)

Getting most people to confront this choice of social categories ought not to be very hard in principle as it requires little change in their objective lives. They are merely joining a new Team. That subjective change of affiliation may be all that is necessary, in many cases, sort of like how most people came to view (subjectively) blacks as *citizens*, women as *equals*, and sexual orientation as *irrelevant*. (Objectively, no one changed anything—color, gender, or orientation—only *perceptions* about them changed.)

All of these content factors will percolate the Program's brand throughout society even before the formal councils are established. This will be when the new social ethos will develop. We can expect the overall process to work slowly, like building a foundation brick by brick, but the edifice, so to speak, will eventually become apparent.

4. Build Out the Best Practices Templates

Best practices templates are a big part of the content component of the Program. Among other things, they reflect the public values we want to build into our culture. They reflect the character traits we want to see in our political and business leaders, our teachers and public servants, our citizens, and our neighbors. They reflect the standards of practice and professionalism we want to have in our government, the Big Business realm, and in other social areas.

They are not only instructional in nature but economical in implementation in that they make it *easy* for people to be good public citizens. People won't have to rely solely on early school learning, personal experiences, intuition, or amorphous or ambivalent social expectations. The Program's principles are clear and concise. The idea behind templates, of course, is that once a good design is made by someone and shared everyone else can just adapt them for their own situations nearly without effort. Templates are mightily efficient, saving time, money, and thinking. They also facilitate human progress, as constant learning and evolving positively in a complex world becomes a *good social habit*.

The template concept has to be expressed and illustrated often and well enough so that people learn to accept its relevance and meaning. Smart, well-meaning experts, in other words, will be providing behavioral and character standards for others to use to assess themselves and to learn from. This may seem to some people as someone trying to manipulate and/or exploit them. However, all of the conditioning will be voluntary and is in the nature of education and guidance.

This is sort of like what administrators and teachers do for students, coaches do for sports participants, bosses do for workers, and parents do for children. (Why not have panels of sincere, collectively-minded experts offer suggestions on how to improve a good deal of our adult lives? What American adult *fairly* thinks of themselves as fully complete and unwilling to learn more and to develop better?) Activists can start implementing templates in those areas where they have experience and expertise in exerting influence—the workplace, Big Business mission statements, political campaigning, etc.

Early Program adopters, i.e., empathetic organizations, businesses, and even some smaller governmental bodies, may identify existing quality best practice templates (or create them from scratch) and adopt them for themselves. These best practices templates may relate to, for example, quality customer service, harmonious management-employee relations, smart energy use, forming block clubs and neighborhood groups (constitutions, bylaws, etc.), and checklists for “How to Remake Yourself/Your Organization as a Good Collective Citizen.” The ideas of the Program may reflect their own values or

they may see the Program as a new positive vision of the future and want to get a start on participating now.

Some businesses like 7th Generation, Wegman’s Food Stores, Amazon, Patagonia, Norvo Nordisk, and Starbucks already are, at least generally, in harmony with public values and are doing many of the right things. Ideally, these entities may become associated with the Program brand and help establish pathways for others. They will be charter members of the American Team.

Perhaps, some of the experts and activists who may eventually populate the Policy and Problem Solving and Information Councils can come up with tentative content templates early on. They may contain lists of expertly-conceived characteristics and objectives for: 1) the Good Corporate Citizen; 2) the Good Big Business Employer; 3) the Good Political Candidate; 4) Responsible Voting District Mapping and electoral practices; 5) the Good Journalist/News Source; 6) the Good Parent; 7) the Good Neighbor; and the like. These templates don't have to be fully completed or refined at this point but developed just enough to make clear that a new social ethos is developing made up of public values and credibility, together with trustworthiness and respect for all Americans.

Quality templates will be made generally available to everyone (perhaps under the aegis of the Information Council, see below.) There may be a cumulative learning effect across industries, regions, and subject areas where we can reorient a lot of society just from the use of shared cross-industry, cross-geography, (and more) templates. How efficient is that?!

5. Start Building the Big Voice

The Big Voice, primarily, is the communications component of the Program—our news, journalism, and information sources, including formal institutions (see Chapter 8.) It also includes the communicative output of the activist organizations which promote public interest themes (which will be mostly situated within the Local Council and connected with the general public into a large pushback network.) All of these, plus supportive existing news and journalistic organizations (and any similar new sources which come to be), may fall under the jurisdiction of the Information Council for purposes of focus and accessibility. That Council will focus on being a counterweight to the litigation language-speaking sources now dominant in American public affairs. It will speak the Truth respectfully to the American public.

Activist organizations rising above their own organizational interests and becoming part of the Team and the Big Voice network need to figure out which specialized roles they can play within a sophisticated division of labor and how to coordinate with the other entities. Even while voicing specific topics, every organization should be understood as standing for the basics— BMR and Smart governance. We don't want thousands of organizations connecting to the general public with separate voices addressing discreet needs or interests and seeking support and aid for itself. That means divisions, confusion, diffused influence, and weakness. That also means loss of leverage, accessibility, and even credibility. That plays right into the hands of the elite who want us divided and our influence diffused.

We want *one* Big Voice to speak from *one* brain to make it *easy* for people to connect to the movement, through the Brand. Specific entities need to adjust from connecting themselves directly to *the public* to connecting to *the Program*, which itself will connect to the public, via its Brand.

"Node makers" (see section B.7 below, for more descriptions of who these people are) will start building out the middle levels of the network and focusing the communication channels by consolidating the separate resources of all those activist individuals and organizations. They will shape the specializations and divisions of labor and organize the entities by function—monitoring, overseeing, reporting, researching, mobilizing, etc. They will shape the communications from all program sources into BMR and Smart Governance categories.

Node makers will have to have exceptional people and organizational skills to create this Big Voice. Getting disparate people and groups to see things in the same way and to act in common will be a big challenge even though those folks may generally have similar goals and organizational personalities. Building the Big Voice communications channels, like building the pushback network, is partly an issue of harmonizing multiple, differing perspectives and individual preferences and priorities. It will be partly a problem of coordinating egos and logistics. There will be some existential policy and methodology differences to work out. There will be the usual management and administrative obstacles involving consolidation of resources, leadership roles, and finances. There will be a range of leadership vision, skills and resources to adjust. And, of course, there is no guarantee that everyone will act in good faith or maintain the perspective of the common interest.

No one said this would be easy! But effective organization of the little people, including all the little activist groups into one Big Voice, is *essential* to the pushback of capitalism. We have to make it *easy* for the little people to hear what they ought to be hearing and to understand the essentials sufficiently, regardless of the complexities of their practical situations..

6. Start the National Conventions and the Grand Reconciliation Project

The next phase of the Program will be organizing the National Conventions and initiating the Grand Reconciliation Project. The conventions will be a series of meetings preliminary to the creation of the permanent Councils. They will bring together supporters who are executive producer types, organizational experts, and Big Project managers with expertise in public relations, management and administration, communications, financing, and fundraising. We could use some big ego types here who know how to build mostly volunteer organizations from scratch.

The national convention process is a vitally important stage, as is the start of the Grand Reconciliation Project, as we want to: 1) give to the public a general idea, at least, of a set of fundamental principles and goals early on; 2) show people a structural outline, at least, of a new movement for social change; 3) demonstrate the weight of the movement by having formal structures building out, 4) avoid a perception of the Program's development itself as just another protest movement powered mainly by emotion and psychology--it has both structure and substance; 5) highlight a historically unique combination of *process components*--reason, will, science, new public values, inclusion, new technology, etc. that is outlining a story of significant social change; and 6) provoke a wide range of people into thinking positively about a *common good perspective* that is a fairly unusual concept in the American experience.

There will be both process and content meetings. The process meetings will deal with managerial and administrative matters, recruitment and personnel, logistics, communications and technology, finance and funding issues, and filling leadership positions and other roles. They will bring together people with relevant skills to construct the Program's institutional structures and processes--the "bones and connective tissues," so to speak--including establishing the formal Councils. They will also design the all-important selection process for the National Council, a matter filled with both functional and symbolic importance.

The content meetings will require their own set of executive producer types mostly focused on organizing and managing *professional talent* who may populate the brain positions in the Planning, Policy and Problem Solving, and Information Councils. That talent will include scholars; researchers; writers and reporters; and similar professionals, together with support personnel for the various substantive fields (e.g., national planning, policymaking, social conditioning, etc.) The producers may recruit some of our country's current managerial-academic-technological elite who specialize in the relevant content areas. People with expertise in large-scale organizing, planning, and problem solving can set up the research, scholarship, and project management components of the national councils. A lot of the professional people may be happy to participate in such a unique and challenging program even if it is only in a volunteer role. They may be motivated by social morality, ego, adventure, or the technical challenges.

There will have to be some coordination between the content and process groups, of course. The essential focus on the American Team and on public citizenship should help guide some of this but a lot of it will rely on conventional organizing and management skills. We'll need some "Big Picture" people, coordinators, and managers to keep things focused and projects on track to completion. The details will have to be worked out as the organizing proceeds.

This project has no historical organizational precedent. It is a new disruptive-type event that seems to be coming more common in recent years in altering major industries, governance, and social practices. Think of the Web 2.0 database/distribution developments, Uber and Airbnb businesses, and the like. 21st-Century disruption (like economist, Joseph Schumpeter's 19th-Century "creative destruction" in market economics) may be the face of the rest of this century.

It makes sense to have a separate organizational process for the Grand Reconciliation Project. Its focus will be different from those of the national conventions as it will deal immediately with the hard-core substantive issues which have to be worked out among Americans with quite different opinions and attitudes about traditional social categories of all kinds—race, gender, etc.—, the philosophy of governance, and existential questions of what it means to be a human being in a social setting in the 21st-Century. If the little people are to organize and focus as a pushback group and if there is to be an American *collective* perspective, people of widely divergent attitudes and positions will have to find common ground and learn to get along at some high levels. The highest level, of course, is reaching a consensus on the values of BMR and Smart governance. There will be many others, too, at different levels of importance.

The Project will be an attempt to forge an "Agreement to Get Along," if you will, among now competing groups and social positions most of which have little consideration for the collective and for medium-and long-term social planning. These competitors include the elite and the little people, parties like Big Business and workers, liberals/conservatives/libertarians/socialists, the religious and not, and issues like the role of religion and science in society, abortion, tax and immigration policies, and others.

The Project will engage "facilitators/bridgers" who are experts at empathy, negotiations, and personal communications. (See below in section C. 7 a more detailed description of these types of people.) They will identify the serious yet truly trivial dividers which inhibit the development of a group consciousness by the little people and of an American collective perspective. They will work with project participants to find common ground on divisive issues and positions. They will propose goals of what America could look like if these dividers were eliminated and then engage the participants to negotiate the means to get there. In essence, this process is *bridging* activity intended to forge a sense of the collective and to organize an American Team. Successful bridging activity may be a necessary precursor to Smart governance.

The Project may tackle those difficult social issues which have resulted in legislative and executive gridlock in government, the interminable "culture wars," and the group frictions generated by misperceptions of the trivial differences among us. Its approach will *not* be on detailed policymaking levels but on attempting to forge uniformity in the *factual bases, perspectives, and approaches* to these matters. For that, it intends to create the meta-level consciousness required to get people with differing interests and statuses to think like a collective America, going beyond parochialism, special-interest, and short-term perspectives.

The Project will be a unique opportunity for participants to reason and negotiate solutions to those *really old and tired* (18th-Century) ways of thinking and acting within a 21st-Century society which has greatly evolved in nearly all objective ways. How long are the little people going to scrap among themselves over a couple of science-related sentences in schoolbooks and what an obstetrician can or cannot say to a patient, and other basically foolish, insignificant issues while the elite happily grab most

Grand Reconciliation Project

Meetings and Resolutions

<i>trivial discriminations</i> - race - gender - sexual orientation - other		<i>-role of religion in public affairs</i> - jurisdictions - relationship overlaps	
<i>capital and labor</i> - allocations and relationships - labor rights - managerial rights and prerogatives		<i>governmental affairs</i> - ethics - compensation - jurisdictions and efficiencies - tax policy - welfare state/ public services	
<i>democratic processes</i> - elections, etc. - campaign financing - terms of office - ethics - compensation - communications		<i>foreign affairs</i> -aid -limitation of war powers -military state	



New Magna Carta-like Proposals

- public information, hearings, etc.
- referendum
- legitimization
- implementation and legalization—gradual and deliberative

of the economic goodies and write the rules of economic and political behavior to maintain their utter dominance over us while we are distracted?

How much longer does the elite think that they can completely dominate the little people who are irate about political dysfunction, are cynical about governments in general, and are becoming more and more restive about unemployment, economic injustice, and lack of hope? How much longer can our society avoid environmental disaster? How much longer can conventional governments succeed when economics and globalization have made even nation states themselves nearly obsolete?

Smart, patriotic citizens can't allow the nation to continue as politically polarized and paralyzed, seriously economically divided, and regressing as a civilized society.

Nevertheless, some might think it to be the highest folly to even attempt to gather these competing and even antagonistic groups together to try to develop consensus on any of those contentious political, economic, or social issues. They may be right. But they may *not* be either. Sudden historical events like the 9/11 attacks, the Pearl Harbor bombings, and the Katrina disaster show that people can readily drop parochial tribal affiliations and become collective "Americans" for purposes of defense and humanitarian aid. And, *long-term* persistence eventually dissolved traditional social groupings and entrenched discriminatory attitudes and blacks, women, and gays, for example, became accepted (mostly) into American culture as *regular* people.

This project is bigger and more complex, obviously, but given smart strategies and enough time, getting Americans to sort into private and public citizen categories to assert their own class interests is, indeed, feasible. In one sense, it's just a matter of rethinking. Subjective conditioning can make a big difference. Objective reality, like income/wealth levels, tribal affiliations, etc., don't necessarily permanently fix peoples' attitudes.

In essence, the Project is paradigmatic, meaning it brings a fundamental new frame of reference to existing realities. That frame of reference includes the private-public citizen categories, a new set of public values, a shadow government, and more. Getting people to understand and accept a paradigmatic movement like the National Character Program (or an alternative one, perhaps) is not going to be easy but it happens often enough to think it could happen in contemporary America as well, especially when the desire for significant change is so intense.

The upsetting of the monarchies in the 18th-Century in favor of democracy is a powerful example of society-wide paradigmatic change. The broad and deep expansion of the United States federal government in 1930's-40's is a lesser, but still salient example, as are globalism, multiculturalism, and the virtual world of digital technology. Arguably, the major changes in race and gender concepts over the past century or so are examples of sociological paradigmatic change. Due to the frustration caused by the broad and intense dislike of the political and economic status quo that exists nearly everywhere in America (and as well as elsewhere in the world as demonstrated by the rise of populist-based parties of both the right and left positions), a lot of people may be ready to accept something different, especially if it appeals to their essential values and appears to be fundamentally fair. In other words, this is a project that is both worthwhile and doable.

One key will be in populating the Project at the beginning with fair-minded, sincere, empathetic people who can step out of their personal/group perspectives and take a view from the *national/Rawlsian* perspective. The Grand Reconciliation Project, especially, will bring representatives of the *perspectives* of all classes, groups, and individuals in American society rather than direct representatives *of* groups and/or interests themselves. The project is not intended as just another example of pluralist interaction and democratic horse-trading involving the divvying up public power and goodies but as a maker of a collective perspective made up of an inclusive set of individual and group perspectives of all Americans.

The selection process for participants in the Project, however, will need to filter out the small subset of fundamentalists of various kinds, those with rigid psychological dispositions not amenable to reason and negotiation, and those with vested interests in the status quo, leaving only those sufficiently fair-minded and empathetic people who remain and are willing to negotiate a new social constitution of sorts. That privileged set of representatives will have an opportunity to set a standard of political and social problem-solving *greatness*.

The Grand Reconciliation Project's facilitators will cognitively raise the cultural representatives to a meta-level above the parochial, self-interest attitude characterizing nearly all of our current leaders in both public and private sectors. From all sectors of society these participants will bring to the table their own individual and/or group positions, perspectives, needs, wants, gripes, and peeves. They can argue, rant and rave, and rip each other's "vices" and "flaws" while ultimately learning to see and understand multiple perspectives.

That concept is entirely different of how we think now of our representative congressmen and group leaders, for example. The Project's participants will be *independent* from supporters and followers so that they can think clearly about collective interests without incurring negative consequences from reorienting, compromising, or really just participating in a collective endeavor. In other words, they will not get voted out of office, lose jobs, or be in a position to sacrifice anyone else's interests. They will be committed solely to *seeing and thinking clearly* about resolving social issues from a collective point of view and a Rawlsian sense of fairness. Their charge is to work out a (near?) consensus of what America should look like going forward in the 21st-Century—politically, economically, and socially, and stand behind their positions before the public as symbols of a Smart America.

The Project will provide the layer of *trust* and *credibility* that is needed for individuals to let down their private interest "guard," so to speak. The new social ethos and its imperatives will provide them with protection never before available. Participants will be pushed by project facilitators to see the multiple ways of looking at every issue and to learn to understand perspectival conflicts and how they may be resolved. Everyone will be in the same boat, rationally and socially. They all, in a sense, will be behind the Rawlsian veil of ignorance and see with new eyes.

There will be fair-minded and honest critique and individual *conceivable* adjustments in positions held in suspension until everyone has had the same opportunities to present, listen, and consider. Everyone will be treated fairly and everyone will understand that compromises on the specific issues may be tentatively worked out on a grand scale where it is understood that no one has to commit to anything until everyone has exposed their own potential adjustments and compromises. In that way, they will know that they will not be disadvantaged by acting early or solo. An evenhandedness in the process is crucial to expectations of the mutual adjustments that will be made by the multiple parties. There will be a collective logic which, if pushed far enough, may create a critical mass of sorts and the whole set of issues addressed, adjusted, and ultimately worked up into a Grand Reconciliation Agreement.

For a simplified example of how this may work in one area—healthcare—lets reasonably assume that the facilitators get from the participants at least a *modest* agreement on the following:

Facts and Goals:

1. All Americans should have quality health care—an almost universal acknowledgment
2. *Ignoring for the moment that there may be some economic winners and losers*, a single-payer program like an enhanced Medicare program would be the most effective means (that's readily supported by good evidence.)

3. The medical errors area can be most effectively and efficiently addressed by a no-fault system like the workers compensation program (that's readily supported by good evidence.)
4. Employers don't really belong in the health care system like they are now—there is no logical connection and it's a historical and geopolitical anomaly in any case.
5. Healthcare cost efficiencies ultimately mean less government expense, hence potentially lower taxes (that's simple logic.)
6. Better health outcomes for way more people produces incidental benefits like more worker productivity, better educational outcomes for children, less stressful home environments, and a more secure populace—(that's supported by good evidence.)
7. A simplified payment process reducing or eliminating the healthcare bureaucracy like insurance companies, claims, billing personnel, and the like would simplify and ease nearly everyone's lives--(that's just obvious.)

Once we've established a set of facts, we examine the (potential) consequences of them:

(Potential) winners:

1. The healthcare consuming public (i.e., nearly everyone.)
2. Taxpayers.
3. Medical professionals removed (mostly) from the litigation and legal systems get cost savings and emotional and psychological benefits.
4. Medical professionals, made free from much of the payment/expense bureaucracy which impinges on providing healthcare itself.
5. Business employers, made free from responsibilities and costs of supporting the health care of employees.

(Potential) losers:

1. The medical insurance industry
2. Medical malpractice attorneys and incidental parties
3. Some medical support staff, including billing clerks, etc.
4. Medical professionals who may face both regulatory and market limitations on billings (caps and procedures regulation) resulting in *incrementally* lower (but more stable) incomes

It is important to note that *everyone* in the losing category is *also* included in the winning category, as everyone gets some positive value from this hypothetical redesign to some degree. Even more importantly, from the fair-minded, Rawlsian veil of ignorance perspective, the redesign is the *correct* one for *the collective* given all circumstances. It is a “no-brainer,” in actuality, from that perspective.

But what about the losers? From one perspective, it *still* makes sense for society to implement the redesign proposal even over their opposition as the amount of positive value for the collective greatly outweighs the negative for the losers. In other words, the proposal easily satisfies the utilitarian principle

of the greatest good for the greatest number of people, at a minimum. Nevertheless, there are alternative philosophical standards of evaluation which makes that particular evaluation relevant only from *one* point of view. (The individualist/capitalist ethos would be opposed, for example.) And, as we know from practical experience, intense opposition of even a small group of potential losers (e.g., insurance companies and/or personal injury lawyers) usually trumps the diffused interests of a much larger one of potential winners. In other words, without more than its abstract collective rationality, this proposal will never approach a workable consensus much less ever be implemented.

We can deal with these obstacles by being Smart. Being Smart implies creation of a collective perspective, respect for Rawlsian fairness, and adequate programs for soft landings for the set of losers. It also implies good timing, in that everyone has to feel that they are part of a fair process where everyone has to sacrifice, and when sacrifices have to be made everyone gets net benefits, all pretty much together. In other words, you can't target the fixing of the health system alone, without getting, at least, starts on fixing the legal system, the political system, the unemployment issues, and the like.

Under auspices of the Grand Reconciliation Project, more than one social area at a time will be subject to this kind of problem-solving approach. Work groups may address: a) reworking the politics, bureaucracy, economics, and irrationalities of the legal system; b) reworking the inefficiencies, exploitative personality and party politics, and high costs of the national and local governmental functions; c) reworking the inefficiencies, unfairness, sometimes mismatched incentives of the social welfare system; d) reworking the unfairness and complexities of the tax system; etc. No social areas will be off-limits as we are, after all, working up a social *constitution*. We will not be picking at or targeting only one area or set of small groups. Many areas of society and perhaps nearly everyone in some big or small ways will be affected by this comprehensive rationalization.

By working this whole set of social areas there will be essential fairness (and the *perception* of fairness) for everyone (while we get our big problems addressed in unison.) Rationalizing many of these areas of the American social system at the same time means that everyone can assess how they are *making out overall*, since everyone is subject to wins and losses in each of the area rationalizations. Losers in one area may be winners in another. Regardless, everyone will know that they have been part of a fair process and treated fairly overall.

Of course, there'll still be some net losers (see below) but the reality for some of the losers is that they *deserve* (from one perspective) to be losers as they will be those in inefficient, incompetent, obsolete, and/or counterproductive industries and businesses. Not many people in good faith can *justify* the continuing existence of the cigarette manufacturers, the sellers of bogus health and nutritional products, or the development of massively expensive and unnecessary military hardware simply because they support jobs and profits for some. It's also collectively irrational to support those stubbornly clinging to jobs and businesses made unnecessary, for example, by technological progress, economic productivity, and/or consumer good sense.

Nevertheless, we *still have to do enough* to help the losers and make their reorientation status acceptable. Like with most other aspects of the Program, we have to make it easy for people to understand, accept, and to accommodate to change. We can make transitions as easy as possible by having, for example, a) wind down periods to allow industries and workers to adjust; b) compensation programs for extraordinary capital and employment-related losses; c) comprehensive retrainings, relocation assistance, and, d) other similar strategies. There will be soft landing programs for everyone making it easy for them not only to adjust themselves practically but to feel good about *doing the right thing* for the collective.

Ultimately however, some losers, particularly the elite, will end up with some negative consequences like lower incomes and more oversight regulation over their economic dealings with consumers and taxpayers. That means, mostly, that private citizens/the elite will not be able to run

roughshod over the rest of us as they do now. They will not be able to exploit the rest of us as much. Their hierarchical status in society may drop a bit. They may have to think twice about spending upwards of \$200,000 for a leather handbag. (If that's the worst outcome for someone, that arguably, is not *too* bad!) Obviously, given the changes we expect, there will have to be give-and-take and *someone* has to give. And, it has to be those who have taken the most from the littlest for nearly forever.

Significant social change may not be very easy for *anyone* and will be relatively more difficult for some. In any case, it will objectively not be very significant for the elite; they will still have plenty of wealth and a great deal of influence. If anything, they may feel much worse emotionally about the little people being able and willing to pushback on elite *egos*. Oh, well!

The transition adjustments may eventually work out pretty well but some people and industries which rigidly resist or oppose may have to be considered just plain greedy and willfully exploitative of the collective. They are unfairly holding back social and economic progress for everyone else. If the elite, for example, can't or won't accept the results where they lose, let's say a maximum of 10% of their existing incomes while the corresponding value to the collective is positive by a factor of 2, or 10, or even 100, then shame on them! Mere reason and ethical approaches will not always be effective as some private citizens and the elite are just greedy and selfish and will squawk no matter what. That is why we have to have pushback.

While pushback is necessary we still prefer to *reconcile* interests, perspectives, and values. Getting back to the medical area example above, would physicians agree to consent to more market competition in fee practices and rationalization of medical care (by governmental regulations which might include a single-payer national health program) in exchange for an immense reduction in the insurance and payment bureaucracies and a rationalization of the malpractice system saving them time, aggravation, money, reputations, and psychic grief? Chances may be quite good (according to some surveys) that many (most?) will go for it!

Furthermore (because of the breadth of the comprehensive reconciliation process), if they know that similar collective rationalizations are being made by parties in nearly *all* other major industries and markets and in government, too, they may be even more amenable. They'll know that everyone in America and not just *their* industry is being included in these rationalizations. They will know that everyone is being treated fairly and that they will be doing their part in making America an advanced 21st-Century nation.

Consider this reconciliation idea akin to a comprehensive pre-trial settlement process of a massive, multiparty lawsuit—after all the evidence has been presented, all the legal arguments aired, all consequences considered, and a proposed settlement deal evaluated by all parties. A judge gently but firmly guides the parties to a creative compromise which results in less than optimum results for all parties but ends the lawsuit, caps legal costs, restores reputations, and allows a fresh start for everyone. This result works, in large part, because of the formal authority of the court and the wise guidance of an independent, neutral judge having a perspective of fairness under the totality of the circumstances.

In the case of the Grand Reconciliation Project, the “court” is the credibility of the Project itself, given its intents and fair process. The “judge” is a public citizen chairperson or top-level facilitator having a strategic approach and a skill set appropriate to framing a collective resolution for a set of contentious parties. In essence, the Project's facilitator guides the parties to negotiate at least *components* of a new social constitution in a process reminiscent of what our Founding Fathers faced 230+ years ago in building a new nation. They worked out separate mini-compromises of relevant governmental elements and consolidated them into a grand agreement. Like then, not everyone will get everything they want—some will get perhaps nothing at all—but all perspectives will participate in the process and have an opportunity to make their cases and all parties will be treated fairly and with respect.

Notably, all of this process will be subsumed within a *unique* historical context—a comprehensive meta-perspective for the remaking of an 18th-Century system of governance and social relations by an extraordinary group of public citizens acting as statesmen in a 21st-Century sort of constitutional convention. The Project will be an opportunity for Americans to obtain a social "fresh start," advancing us as a vanguard nation.

The audacity of the Grand Reconciliation Project proposing to radically update a 230-year old way of American governance and social relations may provoke some people in the right way as a wonderful, positive challenge but also many in opposition. Forward-looking people could get plenty excited about a constructive path towards a more rational, modern society, a new set of national problem-solving institutions, and opportunities for everyone to participate in the endeavor, especially those who have had little say or influence previously. Those people are presented by the Project with an opportunity to create new meanings in their lives, socially and personally.

On the other hand, there will be people outraged at the thought of altering a system which has worked well for Americans (most Americans? some Americans? mostly elite Americans?) for so long. Many, without any thought, will resist the ideas mainly out of the force of habit. Rigid private citizen types and fundamentalists may not want to "play nice" with everyone else regardless of the process or the potential positive consequences even for them. The biggest group, the masses, will likely be oblivious or merely passive observers.

The *idea* itself of a Grand Reconciliation Project too, obviously, is distinctly out of character with the traditional American individualist ethos. Furthermore, the substantive issues it intends to address will brightly expose private interests, deeply-rooted psychologies, and strong social and emotional habits which a lot of people might not want illuminated, critiqued, or made subject to conditioning and revision. But, a lot of (most?) Americans have strong desires for an escape from our near paralyzed systems of governance and hateful and conflict-filled system of social relations.

The *process* of the Program (fairness, inclusiveness, rationality, respect for science, etc.), all by itself, may garner credibility and support with much of the public, especially given the gravity and historical significance of the effort. The National Character Program and the Grand Reconciliation Project could become *authority substitutes* for all those other failed and failing institutions in America which have squandered *their* credibility. Achieving some *substantive* goals like a more rational federal budget and lower taxes will make the Program all the more respected. Participants may make history and be American heroes.

7. Create the Councils.

Once the idea of a new social ethos has gotten some good traction and the Grand Reconciliation Project is pending (but not necessarily near completion) public citizens can proceed with building out the rest of the institutions—the Councils, specifically. The value in the Councils is irrespective of the results of the Grand Reconciliation Project. That Project can fail and even blow up spectacularly without compromising the worth of the rest of the Program. There are worthwhile social functions to perform and goals to achieve even though there may be no agreement on a new social constitution or even if bridging results are not very well advanced. If the Grand Reconciliation Project achieves even a rough general consensus (leaving out fundamentalist positions and hard-core private citizen attitudes) it will be fantastically successful. If it creates only new levels of *empathy* among participants it will still be successful. In any case, the inclusive nature and sincerity of the reconciliation *process* all by itself may create increased credibility for the Program overall.

In one sense, the National Character Program's process and content components really are *all* about process; they set out an intelligent *approach* to important content resolution issues but themselves are content *neutral*. Nothing about the Program itself determines what specific policies, plans, and decisions

we ought to implement. There is no bias towards conservative, liberal, radical, or whatever policies. In essence, the Program stands only for being Smart about policymaking, planning, and decision-making and with a collective's perspective. The Councils are merely the formal mechanisms to achieving Smartness. It should be very hard (but not inconceivable) for anyone to object to governance being Smartened, even if a collective's perspective is not achieved. (There are, after all, all kinds of contrarian people. Opponents of simple Smartness will be subject to pushback, too.)

There is no definite order in which the Councils have to be constructed. They probably will develop bit-by-bit in a relatively unordered fashion until they mature and eventually coordinate with the other Program components into a coherent set of structures.

A. The National Council

The National Council can be set up once the Program has at least some modest profile, the national conventions well up to speed, and the Grand Reconciliation Project started. Members of this Council may be more amenable to serving once they recognize the viability of the Program's vision and see that a lot of serious people are interested in volunteering to participate in it.

A nomination and selection process for membership should be set up during the national conventions. For the selection process we need a rough balance of "due process" and efficiency. This is not meant to be democratic process like an election. While the criteria for eligibility for National Council membership will be strict and demanding (see Chapter 8 for details) we can't afford to bog down and slow down with excessive process, e.g., detailed and complex rules regarding the eligibility of voters, who can be nominated, the voting itself, etc. We just need a sort of "good enough for purposes of the Program" standard rather than the more rigid, formal standards of traditional governmental elections, legal process, and the like. We will, however, offer participation to everyone, perhaps entailing mostly online mechanisms including nominations, vetting against a set of pre-prescribed criteria, and voting for candidates.

Our goal is just to get the *perspective representation* necessary to provide the inclusiveness and credibility we need. That means having the high-profiles, character traits, and credibility to represent each of the major multiple perspectives which exist in society. No one ought to think of themselves as entitled to nomination, it shouldn't matter much which personalities (among equally qualified persons) represents any particular perspective, and electoral participation (as in voting) won't have the same the determinative consequences as that of our traditional electoral system.

Relying primarily on online components for much of this process in lieu of more traditional electoral methods is almost a necessity for practical reasons--time and money. That probably will leave out some segments of the population, for now, who lack an online presence but there is only so much we can do under the circumstances. After all, we are contemplating an *advanced* society. We can't let old practices and habits hold back the new; some people need to get up to speed with the online world or they will sacrifice potential influence especially going forward.

Think of how Apple, Inc. abandons old technology for the new without much compassion for those content with the old. It is conditioning people (rightfully, perhaps?) to move forward even if it is faster than they would like. The Program may want to encourage and take steps to facilitate everyone into having an online presence for a lot of good reasons but primarily to be able to participate in Program functions including selecting the important National Council members and, especially, for pushback. We may need to educate and condition some people about the digital world and maybe financially subsidize computer capabilities for some.

Once selected, the National Council members will start to "preach the gospel" in whatever ways fit their personalities, backgrounds, and strengths. They will act mostly as Program endorsers, initially, until

What's Next?

A. What Has To Be Done?

- Distribute the Ideas
- Educate, Collaborate, and Revise
- Build the Brand
- Build out the Best Practices Templates
- Build out the Big Voice
- Start the National Conventions and the Grand Reconciliation Project
- Create the Councils
- Amend the U.S. Constitution

B. The Right Characters

- Executive Producer Types
- A "Conductor"
- Symbolic, Emotional, and Spiritual Leaders
- Public Relations and Marketers
- Content Developers

-Node Builders

-Computer Geeks, Internet Gurus, and Social Media Mavens

-Fundraisers, and volunteer coordinators

-Lobbyists and political operatives

-Bridgers

-Monitors

-Public Citizens



the rest of the Councils get up to speed. When the formal structures are mature the National Council will offer macro-level wisdom and guidance while providing top-level influence and support for the substantive programs of the other Councils.

B. The Communications Council

The Communications Council should get an early start as a host of communication channels, collaborative worksites, and social media sites will be needed almost immediately for participants to tie into the Program. We need to develop the all-important Brand and other attention focuses as soon as we can. We will do that mostly by technological means utilizing the Internet and our own network and software tools.

Building the primary network infrastructure may follow this progression: 1) developing a master plan about system standards, applications, distribution methods, etc.; 2) putting hardware and network gear into place; 3) creating the databases of information and resources to support the specific sub projects; 4) setting up collaboration and communication sites for activists and organizations already working on the Program's goals to link with; and, 5) implementing the ultimate linkup to the members of the general public via the "Team America Dashboard," i. e., universal User Interface (see Chapter 8.)

After designing and building the network and experimenting with the Dashboard, especially, to get it right we must work on making interaction with it a good habit with the public. That will be a complex undertaking and it may take multiple strategies to make the Program part of everyday online life for millions of people. Creative folks will need to use attentiveness, excitement, reward, and other strategies and enticements to create this new social habit. Early on, assuming some decent level of use, pushback experiments can be run to demonstrate and reinforce the usefulness of the system thereby building support and credibility. Perhaps other components of the Council will include digital/Internet training programs, hardware/software subsidies, and software based conditioning programs.

C. The Local Council

The development of the Local Council can get started early on (and in coordination with the Communication Council, as noted above, and the Support Council) not so much as to implement the ultimate consumer/citizen pushback mechanisms, but to lay a foundation for them by the building up of the middle layer of activists. Those are the people who will make up the backbone of the Program, the Big Voice component. They will establish, primarily, the credibility and accessibility of the Program to the general public.

Getting the ordinary Marys and Johns into the Program may take the motivations of a growing movement and a consumer/citizen level maturity of software tools like the team America Dashboard. They probably won't participate until we have made it *easy* for them to do so. After we have done that, the next goal is to build a better and stronger social fabric by helping people recognize the value of membership in the American Team. People need to be prompted to recognize each other as Team members at the local level via neighborhood and affinity groups and the like. They may have to have some substantial amount of public citizen value conditioning. After the Program has reached a sufficient level of presence and credibility and there is a sufficient level of organization we can start the all-important pushback functions. (See Chapter 8 for details.)

D. The Support Council

The Support Council can be built out in phases. Certainly, the fundraising and volunteer recruitment components can start now. The marketing component can start early on, too, in developing tactics and strategies to spread the ideas of the Program and to make it easy to understand, inspiring, and felt as morally right. In building a new social ethos the public relations efforts will need to appeal to the

various aspects of experience: reason, emotion, psychology, as well as getting people to break old habits and form new ones.

The Council will also work on the logistics of building out the middle level of the network—the Big Voice. Probably the biggest challenge will be in getting the multitude of activists and progressive institutions to identify themselves as Team members and subsume their identities into the Program. We'll need to create organizational frameworks, coordinating processes, financial and resource consolidations, and people management techniques, especially at the leadership level. We are building a giant set of Team Players, after all.

Later in the process, the Council will develop its education, rewards, and public citizen conditioning programs reaching out to the Marys and Johns and conditioning a daily habit of attention to the Program. It will also establish its general “special interest” political arm. In a way, implementing the political arm will be one of the easier projects, as that type of activity already fits in well with the functions of existing organizations which may be expected to become part of the Program.

However, it will be important to make sure that *our* political activity is always clearly for the general interest and strictly within the ethical standards of the Program. We don't want our activity to be perceived as simply another instance of the usual forms of special interest activity. At worst, our activity must always be seen as general interest-oriented, trustworthy and credible even though utilizing to *some* degree traditional channels of influence.

E. The Information Council

The Information Council also may develop in phases. It may need to draw upon existing independent and alternative news organizations initially to produce and distribute content, albeit under the Program's Brand, until it gets sufficient funding to go bigger, as in a discrete communications network. While this news and information component is being developed the Council can work in coordination with existing communications organizations to develop, among other things, its Truth and Bull Sh*t Translator function. It will also work with entities which may end up under the aegis of the Policy and Problem-Solving Council on a repository of templates perhaps focusing initially on developing the Program's institutions themselves. For example, there may be templates for organizing the Local Council groups, public service standards, ethical standards, general principles of good public citizenship, etc.

Later on the Council will develop templates of Good Campaigning, Good Big Business social profiles, and more, all made easily accessible for use by governments, businesses, organizations of all types, and the public. Eventually, the Council will set up its own research component and design a distribution system to make that research material salient and accessible for public citizen activities.

F. The Policy and Problem-Solving Council

The Policy and Problem-Solving Council can start at any time to recruit substantive experts and to assemble databases of information, research, and scholarship keeping in mind that it will not likely have much influence until a good deal of the rest of the Program is in place. A collective sense of public citizenship has to come first, before grand ideas and programs. We can't expect significant, sophisticated national problem-solving and planning efforts to even get much attention until: 1) the social ethos and values substrata are sufficiently developed, 2) the Program's credibility established, 3) sufficient respect for rational policymaking and planning has been cultivated in the public sphere, 4) the Grand Reconciliation Project is well along (with whatever substantive outcomes), and 5) a new social consensus on the values of reason, science, and planning is reached with substantial support of all of the social classes.

In a sense, we have to birth and nurture the Council for an extended maturation period until it is competent and its environment amenable to its virtues.

We can't move too fast. We have to develop competence first or else we invite disappointments, frustrations, frictions, and loss of Credibility. We will be back to where we started from, or worse, but now suffering a perhaps fatal loss of credibility. We cannot afford to squander our delicate Credibility status! We can still get the problem-solving programs and planning well advanced at the *intellectual* level, at least, and ready to go for when the country is ready to accept them and be amenable to their implementation.

Depending on the specific projects, the timetable for this Council and the Planning Council to be fully effective could stretch out to decades. No matter, as any rationality is better late than never. Early on, at least, we have to motivate and inspire people to be patient and to appreciate the deliberation concept of the process. We are changing fundamental approaches, after all, from the relatively primitive to the advanced. For now, we can point out the potential achievements and value to come once society is ready for it.

Eventually, the Council will address substantive issues, smaller ones at first. Assuming we can manage successfully one significant program/problem resolution we'll have shown that we have competence and will earn credibility making the next project easier to implement. Developing a pattern of “doing things right” will, hopefully, become a new social habit.

G. The Planning Council

The Planning Council development will by necessity lag behind the other Councils because its time perspectives are the medium to long-term and its content scope generally encompasses macro-level matters which are of a higher and broader level of management than the others. It needs, for one thing, to see how the other components of the Program develop before it can coordinate its particular functions with them to guide the Program overall. Of course, if the Program falters in too many respects at the start then no one will pay attention to an institution focused on the medium-long-term. Secondly, without the the overall credibility of the Program established its offerings unlikely will carry any weight with anyone regardless of how wise.

This is not to say that some planning projects can't be started now, even building off of projects already initiated by others or which the country is already participating in, like the global warming initiatives, alternative energy projects, and the like. Our professionals and experts can adapt to those projects and try to shape them with collective principles. They can start to design long-term plans in other various fields, as well.

H. The Public Citizen University

The Public Citizen University is not a priority and it is unlikely to get started until the Program shows that it is intellectually coherent, is working at least somewhat at the practical level, and has a sufficiently positive social profile. It falls into the medium-long time term perspective of the Program. Hopefully, university officials and large non-profit organizations will eventually develop a public citizen curriculum in the schools and internships in organizations. It would be ideal to see National Character curriculums in the universities like we now see previously unknown curriculums like black and Hispanic, gender and sexuality studies programs, and “critical” studies courses nearly everywhere. Eventually, we would like to see graduates from the University moving into leadership positions within and outside of the Program.

I. Amending the Constitution

Fixing some political problems and rationalizing governance will require amending the U.S. Constitution in some relatively modest respects. Since amending the Constitution is an unwieldy process we want to have all of the provisions we want to deal with addressed all at once. Clearly, we'll need constitutional experts, political people, and the public to weigh-in on what set of provisions may be necessary to make the electoral system and governance overall more suitably democratic and rational while considering the interests of *all* classes.

Amendments to the Constitution will have to be Smart. We don't want to merely rework some language, we need to lay the groundwork for the entire program to succeed. For example, reforming the electoral process to incrementally diminish the role of money by overturning the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision killing limitations on campaign expenditures by corporations and unions as some urge will *not* suffice to enhance the political influence of the little people. Only comprehensive rewriting of the electoral processes will increase the ability of the little people to influence elections and governmental performance. That will likely entail broader elements, too, than just constitutional reform. At a minimum, we do need to amend the Constitution to authorize that type of broad reform. Here are several considerations to include in the constitutional reform package:

1. Reworking Article 1 dealing with the legislative/electoral processes by:
 - a) extending terms of House and Senate offices
 - b) increasing the ratio of House representatives to citizens
 - c) making Senate representation more proportional to population

These proposals go towards rationalizing elections by minimizing perpetual campaigning versus actual *governing* and increasing proportional representation to diminish the outsized influences of arbitrary minorities.

2. Rewriting Amendment Number 1 of the Bill of Rights (speech) to allow a fix of the role of the elite and of wealth in elections and campaigning. This is where a *comprehensive* system reform makes sense. Also, we need to add more protection for workers to act collectively to ensure their ability to engage in pushback activities.

3. Rewriting Article 4 of the Bill of Rights (unreasonable searches) to protect privacy in the digital/Internet age. This is an opportunity to rethink the meaning of privacy where nearly everything about nearly everybody is stored permanently and made accessible to anyone willing to pay for it. We may never reverse this development or its access but we can limit legal effects upon citizens, say in governmental employment, health insurance, crime investigations, and similar situations.

4. Rework Amendment 17 (Senators) to make Senate offices more proportional to the population and extend terms. (See above, under I. 1.)

There may be other adjustments as well, to be determined by a comprehensive review of program needs and present constitutional limitations.

B. The Right Characters

Here are the most important types of people the Program needs to be successful:

1. Executive Producers and a Conductor

Big ambitious visions and plans require big ambitious people to implement them especially at the top-level. The National Character Program is essentially a remaking of a national culture and a renovation of the governance of the world's most prominent nation. What we are trying to do is not unsimilar to the American nation-building challenge in the late 18th-Century (or the formation of the European Union in the late-20th-Century.) It's unlikely that the grand outcomes of that earlier period--the United States, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights-- would have occurred without James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, and a large handful of other heavyweight individuals having top-level intellectual, management, and political skills, as well as courage.

Today, we need the same kind of leaders and executive producer types to shape and steer the Program's early development, at least. The Program's ideas will have to reach these people, convince them of their value and potential, and provoke them to take on the unique challenges it provides. In one sense, the Program is a top-down driven one, at least initially, relying on its intellectual principles to set a frame and an agenda and a large set of heavyweight executive producer types to convert ideas into structures and action. Only after the Brand gets some traction and the national conventions complete some of their work will activists and supporters at the lower levels (e.g., the Big Voice and the Local Council) have the direction and structure to do what *they* can do.

The executive producers will take on the following functions, at least:

- a) organize the national conventions
- b) set up the Grand Reconciliation Project and recruit the right people for it
- c) recruit content professionals, especially project manager types, to the Program and establish the content development operations
- d) organize a top-level public relations and marketing campaign to manage the Program's brand
- e) create a nomination and selection processes for some major Program roles, e.g. National Council members, top-level national convention leaders, and chairpersons of Council organizations and content committees
- f) coordinate all of these components into working together well as a single unit
- g) obtain the start up funding and resources

Big ego, heavyweight personality types, may work best as long as they fit the mores of the Program--collectively-minded, fair-minded, team players, goal oriented, and having a willingness to embrace inclusivity. These people must be perceived by everyone as having Program-standard credibility. We can't have megalomaniacs, people too associated with special interests or partisan positions, those with selfish egos or personal agendas, or other characteristics which make them lack the credibility we need. Ideally, we will find sufficient numbers of such people with one (or a small set) of them acting as a conductor or chairperson of sorts who will direct the overall production.

2. Symbolic and spiritual leadership

Even assuming that the Program were to be considered by rational minds as very well-conceived, worthwhile, and feasible those traits *alone* are unlikely to be sufficient to get enough people to buy into it. Furthermore, even considered as an intellectual-level construct of economic, political, philosophical, and social elements, the Program is essentially a structure of human *values*. It ought to resonate with most

people's hearts and souls even if not their minds. Nearly everyone can relate to its public values of balance, human meaning and social respect at least on an emotional and/or psychological level.

Most people, probably (if at all), may be attracted to it for reasons other than its intellectual virtues. For example:

- it appeals to fundamental human values (BMR)
- it resonates with some peoples' emotions and/or psychologies (sense of fairness, inclusivity, etc.)
- it has been endorsed by high-profile, respected, and/or admired people (authority figures, celebrities, etc.)
- (lower-profile) cue givers close to them have endorsed it (family, neighbors, church leaders)
- they are socially attracted to it because others of their group(s) show interest in it (tribal affiliations)

Others may *reject* it for a quite different set of reasons from those just mentioned:

- they are too busy and are subject to more demands than they can reasonably handle; learning about the Program, much less deciding to participate in it, may not be feasible
- it's something new and many people don't like new, especially if they are asked/compelled to change themselves (force of habit)
- it conflicts with some people's emotions and/or psychologies (individualism, insecurity, ideology, fear of the new)
- influential cue givers, both high and low profile, will promote opposition to it perhaps for less than good faith reasons—private citizens, the elite, those in comfortable positions in the status quo now threatened, etc.
- most everyone “muddles” through most of their life most of the time and participating in the Program will likely will require more than mere muddling (it's too complex or confusing or requires *some* attention.)

In addition, not everyone will be able to intellectually grasp a program encompassing fairly high-level economics, sociology, politics, philosophy, and more and will withhold attention. Also, there will be the plurality of the population, of course,—the masses--who will not participate or support the Program no matter what (lacking framing interests or abilities.)

While the Program's principles by themselves may appeal to some or a lot of people, certainly, there are huge “non-objective” obstacles to turning the “Big Ship” of the American State around, so to speak. We are going to need some dramatic activity to get people to give some attention to the Program, especially early on. The Program will need to draw upon the charms and high profiles of symbolic and spiritual leaders to stand tall in support of the Program. That means endorsements of a lot of cue-givers, e. g.: 1) high Q rating types like Jimmy Carter, Oprah, Pope Francis, etc.; 2) activist leaders like Ralph Nader and the like; 3) ethnic, class, and religious leaders at national, regional, and local levels; 4) news anchors, bloggers, and journalists; 5) academics; 6) business and labor leaders; 7) popular writers and musicians, and more.

Public relations and marketing functions will be crucial. Each individual and organization may have her own approach to inspiring support for the Program, including Twitter and other social media,

and will have to utilize multiple approaches to impact the public. Eventually, the Program will rely heavily on the National Council membership for its symbolic and spiritual leadership.

3. Public relations specialists and marketers

The Program is as much a mental *construct*--a paradigm--as anything else. Although it will have institutional structures, processes, and personnel it will take the form, primarily, of a *new and different way for people to look at and think* of other Americans and their political, economic, and social lives. It asserts some new categories of organization, e. g., private versus public, elite versus little people, a shadow government etc., which need to be adopted by the public for the Program to work. Getting that to happen may require the professional expertise of those who know best how to condition thinking and acting--i.e., public relations and marketing people. Once that happens, most people will be able to figure out for themselves what the Program means for them, the nation, and the future.

Think of how Occupy Wall Street's categorization of people as 1%'ers or 99%'ers brilliantly re-labeled the historical political concept of class consciousness. It remarkably clarified and refocused economic and political actions and galvanized many people into seeing their economic-political identities in a more relevant way (although not, arguably, *as* valid as the Program's private versus public citizen category.) Our own PR and marketing people would do well to come up with similar relabeling of the private versus public citizen concept and other Program categories like BMR, pushback, American Team, bridgers, advanced society, and the "National Character Program" itself.

Public relations brilliance can package the Program in more appealing and resonant ways, as easy to understand as the 1/99% one, without in any way diminishing its intellectual credibility. There may be ways to articulate and market the Program by new labeling, symbolism, signature logos, flags, songs, etc. The lite version of "The Action Manual" may help in this regard, also, with its attempt to make most of the concepts more accessible for those non-intellectually inclined or having only so much time to devote to these things.

We would like creative writers, musicians, filmmakers, and other artists and communicators to work out a comprehensive set of strategies to condition people to absorb the Program's values. Artists, especially, are great at tapping emotions and psychologies where people's values mostly lie. Accomplished, public communicators could articulate Program concepts at every level which works for people and to reach them.

Ideally, a Program "Great Communicator" (or set of them) will emerge with charisma, charm, and people skills to act as a human symbol of the Program. Imagine a new "progressive" Ronald Reagan? A real-life Jed Bartlett? A 21st-Century Martin Luther King type humanist? A David Pogue-like communicator (Yahoo technology feature writer, a/k/a "World's Greatest Explainer") articulating BMR, Smart governance, and public citizen values? Whatever it takes, we want to reach governments, business, organizations, and individuals with our messages at whatever level works for them.

4. Content developers

A major part of Smart governance is making smart policies and plans for the collective. Those come from a brain-like rational process based on data, deliberate assessment, and logic together with the collective perspective. The brains of the Program will be the content people-- scientists, intellectuals, subject experts, technical specialists, and other similar contributors. They will be mostly volunteers from academia, not-for-profits, think tanks, public interest organizations, and more. We may not need to create many brand-new institutions. We can just *impose a network concept* upon existing resources drawing them into the Program's brand. In other words, it's the organization and focus of the resources which may make the big difference not necessarily any new bureaucratic elements. Getting this done, however, will

require money and resources which may come from donations from both government (eventually via taxes) and publicly-minded citizens and businesses early on.

Our content experts will populate the Planning, Policymaking and Problem-Solving, Information, and Support Councils. It ought to be a mark of honor, hopefully for these people to be appointed or selected to these Councils as they will represent the collective's assessment of both professional expertise and good *social* character. We want our experts to be of high quality, of course, but only with the right personalities and temperaments— balanced, fair-minded, acting in good faith, and non-biased (politically and theoretically.) For credibility reasons, we don't want people too closely associated with partisan or private interests. We also want the best social guidance we can get from a collegial mix of multiple theoretical and practical perspectives, approaches, and orientations.

Nevertheless, we are talking about human beings, of course, and they will unavoidably have political and/or theoretical biases and irrationalities. We will have to build in limits and safeguards to protect against excessive bias and irrationalities and professional overconfidence. Furthermore, there can be no absolute deference given to even the best science, the most confident experts, and the best-intended people. Being even super-smart does not mean being wise or correct. Given a choice between scientifically and technically-informed approaches and impulsive or muddled approaches, we'll favor the former, of course. But, the Program, by philosophy, will be cautious and will condition its planners, policymakers, and decision-makers to tread lightly into complex policy and planning situations or new content areas.

There are inevitable risks in large-scale policy and social conditioning projects. Nevertheless, we can't do much better in program design, policymaking, and planning than prioritizing reason and fact-based decision-making, science, professional expertise, and non-biased participants all sensitive to a cautious philosophical understanding of the limitations of "Grand Theory" and "Grand Programs." As with our political decision-making we are seeking everywhere for as close to an intellectual consensus as we can get. If we can't approach that then the proposal process will shift down into a low-gear caution, so to speak.

Some of the specific projects contemplated by the Program may have already had some amount of development elsewhere. There are plenty of working models of single-payer, universal healthcare, for example; the unemployment and workers compensation programs may model fairly well for the medical malpractice area, etc. Other specific programs may not be that hard to design (assuming an approach utilizing perspectives of a common good and Rawlsian fairness)—electoral design, voting, and democracy issues; municipal and governmental consolidations; a rational approach to the drug war; etc. The Program's approach may be able to reinvigorate and put to good use much of the quality scholarship on these issues which has been routinely ignored and/or marginalized by our political parties and governmental leaders.

Of course, most major social issues cannot be addressed solely on a fact/science basis. There almost inevitably will be societal-level *subjective* value judgments, personal and partisan preferences, and existential perceptions and decisions outside of the scope of even the best reason and science. Those things have to be addressed by our traditional political processes (reformed, hopefully, as contemplated here.)

This Smart approach to governmental and macro-level planning and decision-making will need a hospitable social environment and support of the general public which is now used to seeing things determined by private interest exploitation, impulse, muddling through, habit, and distasteful "sausage making"-like approaches. It might take some innovative strategies and time to get the public to appreciate the values of Smart governance.

5. Managers, administrators and support personnel

Like all formal institutions and programs there will be typical organizational, administrative and clerical, logistical, and other functions to be done at all levels. There may be existing organizational models we may draw upon for our infrastructure, maybe from the large not-for-profit or nongovernmental organization areas, but some of the components are going to be basically built from scratch, as the Program is unique in some ways. There are no existing models for the shadow government, for example, or for the comprehensive monitoring process, or for the Local Council computer network.

There will be exceptional management design opportunities for capable people like nothing else, perhaps, since the New Deal's ambitious jurisdictional, institutional, and program developments in the 1930's-40's. Almost certainly, there will be organizational fits and starts. However, each experience will likely produce quality templates of organizational structures and processes which will contribute to the Program's steady development. Probably, most of the people doing this level of work will be paid employees of the Program.

6. Local Activists and Organizers

Like with the content development area, this component of the Program may be primarily an imposed network over the hundreds and thousands of existing activist and progressive organizations. While we may draw new people in to organize and promote, many of the participants will already be active and experienced. Those people can just continue to do what they know how to do but within the organization, focus, and imprimatur of the Program's brand. There will be Program-specific organizations, also, which will provide functions which will require their own sets of professional and volunteer personnel. These functions include devising motivational, educational, and aspirational projects for enhancing the social fabric, among others.

Activists and organizers will have a range of objectives:

- organizing communities and linking groups to groups
- building trust levels among people and organizations, especially Program institutions
- convincing people of the benefits of belonging to a public citizen American Team
- motivating people like Marys and Johns to develop a habit of being active and/or supportive of the Program
- increasing the number of people with an online presence so that they can participate in the pushback functions
- instructing people on using the universal User Interface (Dashboard) and making it a habit for as many as possible

There will be plenty of opportunities for participants to be creative in getting these things done. Probably, most of the work will be done by those already in activist and progressive organizations having their own funding. Some of it may be done by volunteers with donated money. It seems as if some of these roles may be ideal for public interest-minded college students seeing opportunities to shape their own future America.

7. Node builders

These people will be similar to traditional organizers but more focused on consolidating separate existing activist groups and organizations already harmonious with the Program under the Brand. They will be partly organizers, partly managers and administrators, and partly charismatic leaders able to persuade distinct personalities and groups to rethink their missions and operations. They will help consolidate entities, facilitate divisions of labor, rationalize operations and processes, manage communications and activities, encourage volunteers, etc. They will develop management and administrative structures as well as trust relationships to tie people and organizations together and concentrate focus. They will work on making the middle level network into the Big Voice. They will work on building the Local Council. They, too, will be a mix of employees and volunteers.

8. Computer geeks, internet gurus, social network specialists, and techies

While the digital infrastructure of the program is likely to be unique there may be no shortage of capable technical people to set it up. We'll need a comprehensive network of databases and distribution channels, digital communications systems including collaboration sites, forms/templates repositories, and social media sites. A key component will be a beautifully designed, accessible Dashboard (User Interface) mechanism for end users. The hardware and software tools are probably all available now but designing the connective links and making them *easy* to use (mostly) will be the greatest challenges. The technical challenges themselves may motivate some to volunteer services and resources to this project regardless of their attitudes towards the Program itself.

Beyond that, there is much in the Program for these folks to admire and want to support:

- an approach to problem-solving emphasizing reason, science, and technology but as applied to the social world
- harmony with the open, collaborative, “socialist” mores of much of the online world, especially among Internet pioneers and their successors in the Open Source movement.
- harmony of the Program's developmental processes--open, inclusive, modular, scalable, etc.– with the software developmental processes they favor in programming and coding applications.
- a shared belief in continuous advancement and improvement by application of reason and creative engineering.

There are numerous examples now of how some modern technology development can work in the social world. Think of the social networking aspects underlying the citizen uprisings in the Middle East and Asia, the online-based protests in America, at least, against anti-consumer/citizen legislation, and the online negative feedback campaigns against consumer-unfriendly business practices resulting in retraction of offensive business policies. Those examples are almost trivial compared to what functions are contemplated by the Program but nevertheless, instructive of the power of new technology.

Organized and focused applications of new, creative technology may flatten the elite-lower-class hierarchy, compel government to act for the little people, too, smooth over long-standing frictions among disparate groups, and more. As some might say about these new possibilities: "To infinity... and beyond!"

9. Fundraisers and volunteer coordinators

These people will fill a traditional role little different than that of those who fund raise and recruit volunteers for traditional nonprofits, political parties, and similar others. There will be a mix of paid professionals and volunteers. High-profile, wealthy people sympathetic to (at least) some of the Program's goals may tap their friends and colleagues for hefty contributions. Marys and Johns may offer \$10's and \$20's. Later on, everyone may be able to check a contribution box on their income tax returns.

As most volunteer and activists' organizations know, getting new people to act or support a cause is often frustrating. It's not usually sufficient to convince them that their participation may benefit them personally especially in some indirect or diffuse way. As a rough rule of thumb for any volunteer project, out of a random set of 10 people, four may be indifferent and unwilling to act in any way, 1-2 may volunteer and participate, 1-2 may be in opposition (although maybe passively), with the others *open* to motivations of various sorts.

The Program can provide a unique motivation: Our people can realistically and sincerely point out that contributors and volunteers will be helping themselves, their families, communities, and nation in a historically unique endeavor which can change their lives and American society forever. There may never be a greater project for Americans to support, not even the war effort of World War II or the responses to the 9/11 and Katrina disasters. This endeavor will affect even more people, in more positive ways, and for generations.

We would like from supporters whatever they can give—money, services and related resources, and even merely kind words and symbolic support. Simply displaying a home entrance way sticker or car bumper sticker helps to demonstrate *numbers* of supporters and that may be a big help in itself. It has to be made clear that *everyone* can participate in some fashion and a role will be available (or made available) for everyone to do whatever they can. Keep in mind that we don't need everyone or even a majority of Americans; it may be sufficient for a mere 15 to 25% of the general population to participate in some positive way.

10. Lobbyists and Political Operatives

For our traditional political action functions we can enlist most of these participants from existing organizations. They are specialists in the ways of policymaking and governance and already have contacts and connections. However, we don't want any of them to act as just another special-interest motivated entity. They will not offer goodies, favors, etc., for example, in a quid pro quo relationship with officeholders. They will propose the substantive worth of collectively-minded policies and promote them with public citizen standards. They have to make clear to everyone that they are working for the general interest and operating with appropriate ethical standards.

How, one may ask, can these lobbyists succeed in our scratch-my-back/scratch-your-back environment of political opportunism? At a minimum, they will make a public record with background justification of public interest proposals. Together with the Support and Local Councils they will frame a public *attitude* which may make it difficult for opposition elements to ignore. The monitoring aspect of the Local Council will track legislative responses and pressure for support in that way. At best, those efforts will be within a new context of a *reformed* congressional and governmental environment (see Chapter 8 for more on this point) where collective rationality and fairness may be much more relevant.

11. Bridgers

No one is called a bridger today because that job doesn't even exist though it should. We'll have to find people with bridging skills, or train them. They will have one of the most difficult jobs of all—re-

weaving the social fabric—bringing different people and groups together, and building the American Team. They will need to be charismatic people and framers. They will be empathetic and understand multiple perspectives and figure out how to get others to see and understand in similar ways. This is mostly a matter of adaptive communication techniques and also techniques addressing emotions and psychologies to “negotiate” new frames of common understanding. (See Appendices A and B for more explanation of negotiations of multiple frames.)

Ideally, leaders of existing groups will take on bridging roles. For example high-level religious leaders or new generation thinkers who have bought into the Program (or just components of it) can reframe or reinterpret their group's tenets and attitudes towards others to find common understandings. Some bridgers may develop from lower positions or even from the outside as some existing leaders may *want* to maintain tribal frictions for personal agenda reasons, as in keeping their preeminent roles in their groups.

That purpose, of course, is a primary strategy of political parties, politicians, dictators, and religious and tribal leaders of all sorts who deliberately frame an “us versus them” category manipulating their own membership by inciting fear, insecurity, and self-interest responses. Consider how the American elite class, for example, has perpetually scared the lower classes by promoting the (mostly) bogus threats of foreigners, Commies, terrorists, atheists, Muslims, and the like to keep us fearful, passive, and obedient. There almost always has been some form of “bogeyman” to distract the little people from recognizing or doing anything about the economic and political shenanigans of the private citizen elite.

The ethos of the Program is different and bridgers will do the opposite of dividing--they will focus on bridging the conceptual, emotional, and psychological frames which unnecessarily distinguish people and result in frictions. They will highlight the good and the common in everyone *to* everyone. They will turn “lose-lose” situations (where all of the little people--in separate groups-- are disadvantaged) into ones where the little people benefit from collective consciousness in a single group. The only losers will be the *deliberate* dividers who may lose credibility and their privileged positions, too. (That would be just, but we will have a soft landing program for them, too.)

Everyone else will have new identity opportunities in the American Team. The bridgers will educate, facilitate positive cross-group experiences, and build trust. Bridgers may borrow strategies and tactics from earlier successful bridging efforts (civil and gender rights, for example) utilize new tools to inform, educate, and facilitate interactions; create focused and dedicated inclusivity programs; and develop new leaders who are charismatic, creative, and courageous enough to promote inclusivity and harmony. They will convince and/or pressure current leaders to become *unifiers*. (Reformed leaders will have opportunities to become new group and social *heroes*.)

Here are some specific ideas:

a. Bridger's help set up leadership “pathways” to make it easier for younger generation of leaders of parochial groups to evolve into unifiers supporting program goals. This may entail reward and support systems of various types.

b. Religious and ethnic groups arrange “open-houses” and invite the general public and members of groups and other religions, especially, to visit for educational, social, and entertainment purposes. They can stimulate interest with prizes, free food, etc. (According to some scientific studies, simple cross-cultural experiences by themselves can evaporate misconceptions and irrational fears.)

c. Exalt benign cultural differences (food, dances, usage, etc.) and promote them as fun and positive life experiences

d. Neighborhood groups can reciprocally invite other such groups to “area” parties to share food, music, and conversation.

e. Movie, book, and music producers can generate media to educate and create bonds among disparate groups using humor, melodrama, etc. “All in the Family” and “The Cosby Show” are decades-old examples of general audience TV shows which highlighted cultures and attitudes to inform, educate, and socially condition. It would be especially helpful if celebrities and entertainment stars took the lead in creating the new public identities and attitudes we want.

f. Distinct cultural *provocations* (for urban blacks—the gangsta look and attitude; for homosexuals—outrageousness; for Muslims—the burqa; for evangelicals—overt disdain for science) can be consciously toned down (at an internal group level) as a tactic to soften edges between cultures. It seems as if some of these expressions are deliberately designed to *enhance* the “us versus them” attitude and to exacerbate tribal differences. That’s the opposite of what we want to have.

g. Overcome geographic distinctions as a precursor to governmental consolidation attempts. Bridgers can help set up events and activities--sharing food, music, and conversation--to break down suburb versus city, town versus town, and village versus town differences.

12. Monitors

One function of the shadow government will be to keep an eye on governmental and business activities and report misfeasance to the Local Council. The Council will then implement Action Plans to counter it. There are existing organizations which perform some of this oversight now for some activities but our Program will cover nearly all of government and a lot of Big Business. It will be unified into a single system to facilitate the pushback function via citizen Action plans and the like. Some of this work can be fairly easily done by a mix of professionals and amateurs including home-based volunteers accessing databases and other information sources. This activity will be made possible (and efficient) by the technological systems we anticipate we'll have including the Dashboard.

Beyond implementing the crucial pushback functions for the Program, some people may righteously *enjoy*, for example, fingering their local congressman for inserting a giveaway provision into a piece of legislation to benefit a special interest campaign benefactor. They may feel good exposing the hypocrisy of that congressman's accepting a fully paid trip for him and his family by lobbyists to some exotic locale to be “educated” about some special interest-sponsored legislation. (All these parties directly involved will, of course, deny that this perquisite will influence legislative decision-making in *any way*!) This could be an attractive role for some--a pol gets fingered, the special interest initiative gets withdrawn, a public citizen gets acknowledged and rewarded, and justice is done! Cool!

There are a lot of righteous Americans right now (some of the Tea Party folks?) who are enraged at the crony capitalism which characterizes our political system. Instead of trying to stymie and dismantle (even good) government they could be ideal participants for some of these monitoring roles helping to fix and advance it.

13. Public Citizens

Probably a lot of existing public citizens will be happy to participate in the Program. They already voluntarily recycle, donate blood, coach youth sports, contribute to online information and consumer rating sites, and participate in other collectively-minded activities. An opportunity to participate in a Program which has the potential to remake America into an advanced nation, improve governance and social relations, and even improve the overall happiness quotient of an entire society may be seen as a *gift*. Other people, hopefully, like some members of the masses, “soft” private citizens struggling with the conflicting realities of the “Me versus Team” attitude (dual citizenship experience) compelled by their

environment, and public interest-oriented youths may be persuaded to become public citizens by our conditioning strategies and by new opportunities.

These people may take on some of the roles in the Councils, especially the Local Council, where they can perform even low-intensity pushback functions, display Program support materials publicly, or contribute to consumer/citizen surveys, and/or Action Plans. No one has to do much and some may want to do much more. People will be getting a unique opportunity to demonstrate their character and values. Let's see what Americans are really made of, especially those who have been denied opportunities to express themselves all their lives by deleterious circumstances or the inhibiting deliberate choices made by others (private citizens/the elite.)

Almost unavoidably, participating in the Program may involve some elements of confrontation--specifically, open resistance to elite dominance and disrespect, demands upon reluctant public servants for competence and professionalism, assertive political conflicts (akin to the Tea Party reactions to *their* perceptions of misgovernment), employment-related frictions, and other similar conflicts. The private citizen elite will not readily accept the diminishing of their influence and status. Pushback on individualism/capitalism will result in some butting of heads inescapably and inevitably.

The Program will embolden and empower some but others may choose not to engage even in mild confrontations for a variety of reasons. That's okay. We don't need 300 million participants; probably 30 to 40 million will do. A lot of them are already active in some progressive activities. It is an open question whether we can persuade the rest. That's partly what makes the rest of the Program's story interesting.

14. Critics and naysayers

Any new public program of any type, but especially one of this ambition, scope, depth, and complexity will have its critics, legitimate and not. Any intellectually-honest program *wants* to have critics and even some naysayers, at a minimum to point out flaws and weaknesses, while also provoking the caution and reasonable doubt that an ambitious program like this ought to have as an operating philosophy. Of course, there will also be a certain number of annoying but mostly passive naysayers and moaners and groaners *no matter what* the Program proposes or what it does .

Listening to critics and naysayers is healthy and Smart. The Program will give all of the critics a respectful listen. Some of the critics will be right and we will have to revise the Program accordingly. The naysayers will keep us on our toes and force us to reflect on everything we do. We'll deal with the legitimate critiques by intellectual persuasion, modifying our positions, fixing errors, and maturing. We will work around the moaners and groaners and hope that they are minimal in number and can be marginalized while the rest of us continue to do good work to better ourselves and our society.

C. What Do We Do *Right Now*?

This book and other related materials will be distributed to a large number of potential cue givers and made publicly available at a website (www.theactionmanual.com). Assuming the Program intrigues enough people and generates some buzz here are some ideas of what activists groups, businesses, unions, governments, the classes, Marys and Johns, and everyone else can do to help develop it.

1. Activists and Progressive organizations

These people need to consolidate into one overall organization whether it's under the auspices of the Program's brand or not. The unifying principle ought to be a focus on *one* set of essential principles (like BMR and Smart governance.) The early organizational efforts will be a type of coalition, but permanent and more focused and accessible. The coalition has to be focused and be accessible to the

people it needs to connect to—the little people. This organization, together with some of the communication sources, can be considered the Program's Big Voice. There will be separate components and functions organized into the Council structure as detailed in Chapter 8, above. Many existing organizations are already well-positioned to take on specific roles and new ones may develop to complement them.

The functional categories will include monitoring and reporting; research and data collection; news, journalism, and information production and distribution; fundraising and recruitment; public relations and marketing; building the technological infrastructure; planning and problem solving; building the social fabric; traditional political activities; and pushback operations. Each organization should examine its mission, interests, strengths, and resources and see where it fits specifically into the Council structure. Organizations can adopt a particular niche in the Big Voice and assume responsibilities for performing that role well and coordinating well with the other entities.

Some roles may be geographically-based--monitoring governmental and Big Business activities, for example, can take place at local, regional, and national levels. There may be city or town-level monitoring organizations, for example, everywhere. Each one can find meaning and have pride in doing their *local* part well, at a minimum.

Organizations which believe they have good models of decision-making, communications, information management, and the like can offer them as templates to others. Building the middle layer/ Big Voice network can take place simultaneously from the top-down (national councils level) and bottom-up (mostly grassroots organizing.) This consolidation and re-focusing of existing resources will be an evolutionary process where organizations--while maybe maintaining separate *substantive* focuses--environmental, social, political, etc.--negotiate among themselves and with program leaders (executive producers, managers) regarding specific roles, functions, and jurisdictions.

The thousands of existing organizations most likely should reduce to many fewer. Everyone has to appreciate the need to concentrate resources, sharpen focuses, and become as *accessible* to the public as possible, via the Brand. We have to make it *easy* for people to understand what we are doing, who's doing what, and what they can do to participate in it. Good communications and coordination among entities, too will result in organizational efficiencies thereby freeing up time and resources for what is most important--substantive work, i.e., pushback.

At some point, a Comprehensive Needs Chart has to be created indicating what major functions need to be addressed and what geographical areas need to be covered. That chart may be developed out of the national convention process or come together organically as the Councils form up. Organizations will cover all functions and find their own niches. It's important to make sure that there will be a role available for every organization and person. (Certainly, we do not want to waste any resources but we also want to reinforce the Program's *inclusivity* theme.) If an existing organization's profile duplicates or overlaps others it should negotiate with those others to merge, find a different niche/role, or dissolve itself and have its members look for opportunities elsewhere in the movement.

It will take good organizational and people skills (see bridgers and node builders, below, at Section C. 8) and time for the consolidation and functional assignments to get done. Coordinating entities may then rationally reallocate financial, leadership, and personnel resources; tie into the common digital network; share databases and other information resources; and adopt common templates. Some of these templates may deal with internal organizational best practices like: 1) decision-making, 2) financial and ethical standards, etc., 3) establishing network and communications protocols; 4) access to the public; etc., and 5) externally-related functions like how to perform “function X” well. When all of these separate organizations learn how to operate under the Program's brand the Program will have intellectual and operational coherence, focus, and accessibility. It will constitute the Big Voice *and* be an important part of the Big Stick (i.e., pushback via Action Plans.)

C. What Do We Do Right Now?

-Activists and progressives —form local coalitions, refocus on BMR and smart governance, and find a niche in the Brand.

-Big Business (& Small) —Adopt BMR principles in the workplace, industries and the environment

-Unions— Reformulate into general interest organizations

-Non-union; non-professionals— pressure informally by relying on templates

-Professionals—draw upon the templates to obtain BMR

-Governments— not much

-Politicians & Governmental Officials—Adapt the social ethos to the extent possible from the inside

-The Elite—Get on the right side of the movement early; make opportunities to become program leaders

-Bridgers & Node-builders— Propose plans to unify activist groups; propose strategies to unify
(Cont'd.)

Activists on the Right—Reformulate your theory and practices to the new private/public concepts;
Adopt BMR principles and join the Big Voice

College Kids & Youths— Help create the new social movement on campuses and elsewhere.
Pressure campuses and employers to adapt to BMR.

Minority Cultures—Lesser identity and positions groups & continue with other activists into the America Team.

Marys and Johns—Develop an attitude of entitlement to BMR. Assert it in the workplace, consumer world, and political sphere.

D. How Long Will It Take?

No one knows.

But, getting the ethos started — 2-3 years
Getting the structures going— 4-8 years
Implementing the entire program - two generations.

Fitting into the Program, of course, requires each entity to accept Program values and to play nice with everyone else. It also means, among other things, that each component of the structure has adapted to the Program's *approach*—facts and data based; rational; science and technology respectful; and humble in its assertion of policy and planning positions. Every organization must follow quality "best internal practices" templates just like we want everyone on the outside to follow. Affiliation with the Program necessarily implies a duty to protect its Credibility.

We have to recognize that not every social activist change position (even though generally in harmony with Program principles) has been clearly thought out or has appropriately balanced multiple perspectives. We *can't* have that. There have been, for example, efforts among activists (of all parts of the political spectrum) which are too narrowly focused, lacking in perspectives, and stubbornly rigid in principles (and therefore not *Credible*, by Program standards.)

Some examples of non-credible positions include environmentalists reflexively opposed to economic development who espouse a high-principled hierarchy of holding even the most minor of species (e. g., the snail darter) over people, jobs, and development *no matter what*. Some environmentalists prematurely and intensely oppose hydraulic shale oil extraction even *before* sufficient evidence has been developed regarding its negative effects upon the environment and an assessment made of overall benefits and detriments. Some are not open to rational compromises which might be made between economic production and human and environmental needs. A pretty good consensus exists that genetically-modified foods are safe and offer a tremendous overall benefit to society but many well-meaning but wrong-minded folks act as if they represent a sci-fi type catastrophe.

Even worse, the activists lobbying hard against incandescent light bulb improvements (apparently out of reflexive resistance to "government intrusion") regardless of any objective merits or balancing of interests are making outright fools of themselves and killing their own credibility among fair-minded people. The most extreme example (and irony) of lack of good judgment is that of pro-life zealots killing physicians (with spouses and families) in order to save the lives of fetuses (cellular organisms with *no* social history.).

For the most part, normally well-meaning folks get off the right track because of distortive psychological attitudes, limited thinking, and bad habits which diminish credibility and can be counterproductive. There are also cynical, hardened *haters* of nearly everything and everyone except those sharing their parochial attitudes. They have little credibility outside of their own group. The most ideologically strident have been contrarian almost out of principle, picking fights (which should not be fought) perhaps from habitual or irrational psychological motivations, or just reflexively opposed to anyone not surrendering completely to their way of thinking (i.e., zealots.)

It is surely understandable for anybody in our cynical cultural environment to *start* with a jaundiced view of private citizen activities or partisan positions. The point, however, is that the Program supporters need to *earn and protect* their Credibility. That's done by adhering to the Program's approach to issues and problem solving. But the *necessary* next steps of a credible approach are: 1) acquiring all the relevant facts, 2) understanding all the relevant perspectives, and 3) using *good judgment* (a balancing of multiple perspectives) in taking a position. When the Program speaks, it wants people to know that what it says contains truth, seriousness, deliberation, and good judgment. In so many things, Credibility is nearly everything! It should not be compromised or squandered.

2. Big Businesses (and even small businesses)

If the social change movement contemplated here gets some substantial momentum, Big Businesses may have to pay attention. One of the major objectives of the Program is to pushback on Big Businesses which are not in conformity with principles of BMR. Existing within a capitalist environment, businesses, of course, are entitled (and encouraged) to invest, market their products and services, and do

their thing to make profits *but not at the expense of the community, environment, workers, the government, and taxpayers*. Merely creating jobs (= good) does not compensate for damaging the environment, exploiting social resources and the taxpayers, and (in some cases) exploiting their own customers. (*What customers? Consider smokers, buyers of worthless consumer products, retail investors of some of the worst Wall Street financial services companies, etc.*)

Businesses will be encouraged to focus, like nearly everyone else, on BMR:

Balance: Those businesses (a small minority now) already in harmony with BMR will be *rewarded* by the Program with increased patronage, favorable consumer profiles, and other benefits. Those not in harmony will be encouraged to change. Some businesses will need to redesign their missions and operations to incorporate perspectives other than that of only (as they say they must) enhancing their bottom lines. Some publicly-traded corporations, at least, may have to amend legal charters changing stockholder-only focuses and fiduciary obligations so that investors clearly understand that the pursuit of profit will be balanced with external perspectives of multiple stakeholders. (Socially responsible businesses—SRB’s—and B-Corporation charters are harmonious examples of what is already developing momentum in the business world.)

Private/public citizen attitude balance means, at least: 1) producing products and services which *do no harm*. Cigarette manufacturing is one example of a harmful business which exists to make big profits just because it can, regardless of consequences to the consuming public and society in general. If that industry was socially responsible it would commit to a planned suicide. No one should be making products/services of no proven value, e. g., vitamin supplements, bogus self-help items, and the like. Instead of just fooling the people, businesses should identify a real social need and produce for *that*.

Even more significantly, no one should have a business model which relies on making consumers feel *unhappy or insecure* about themselves while offering products/services to “remedy” that. Think of the whole slew of beauty and vanity businesses which profit through their marketing practices by making people feel bad about their looks, social status, and the like. It's easy for some to think of that kind of business as disgusting and even *evil*.

2) Businesses need to treat their employees as human beings instead of human capital. That means appropriate compensation and benefit packages (guided and determined by templates developed by experts), work/personal time balances, and influence over their own workplace conditions, and more. 3) Customers should be viewed as people with needs to be filled rather than merely as targets of marketing strategies. That means refraining from making consumers think that they need certain products/services by manipulative means, making it easy for consumers to obtain warranty services, and having honest and accessible product/service descriptions, disclosures, and the like. 4) Every business ought to be responsible regarding its role in the communities and environment. That means implementing practices like reducing energy footprints, softening environmental impacts, foregoing exploiting the taxpayers for subsidies and the whipsawing of communities in competition for jobs and investments, etc. And, 5) Providing solutions to problems that businesses have either created or bear some responsibility for. Food manufacturers and retailers, for example, can address consumer nutritional and health issues, product waste management, and have protocols for their management and employees to balance both private and public interests in all of their operations.

Realistically, there will be some businesses which *can't* make money by balancing private and public interests—(tobacco product manufacturers, bogus health supplement makers, etc.) Their competitive competencies or their limited-focused business model compel them to exploit labor, consumers, the taxpayers, and/or the environment in order to make money. Given Program principles, these business don't fit into a modern, rational economy. They should responsibly wind down operations and discontinue, or evolve into another type of business where they *can* make profits and still do the right

things. There is no shortage of under-served markets or neglected economic areas like public infrastructure, elder care, public education, and others where their resources can be put to better use.

That conversion, of sorts, may be very disruptive and established jobs will be lost, of course, but the choice for society is to accept continuation of a socially harmful, ineffective, and/or exploitative business forever or bite the bullet now, so to speak, and implement a soft-landing conversion for those kinds of businesses. If the Program has enough influence there will be plenty of economic opportunities for those businesses in entirely *new* areas like social conditioning projects of all kinds, peacemaking, bridging projects, adult education, technological development, and others.

Of course, our society will *still* be faced with a persistent, long-term reduction in overall employment as economic productivity, especially driven by digital technologies, increases and even global markets become fully saturated. There almost inevitably will be too many workers and not enough jobs. That problem will require long-term, radical social change resolutions (perhaps, guided by experts from one or more of the Councils.)

Meaning: The single-minded pursuit of optimal profits no matter what the consequences to everyone else and the compulsion for more and more production no matter what the market saturation may be has to be seriously tempered by alternative perspectives, especially humanism. All aspects of business need to adapt to the concept of business being *for* people rather than the other way around. Employers need to compensate workers sufficiently for them to enjoy a decent economic life (a standard to be determined.) Workers should enjoy a decent work-family balance including—family and medical leaves, childcare accommodations, educational and training opportunities, positive employee conditioning in work ethic and pride; and partnership relationships with their employers. Big Businesses need to respect local economies and help bring international labor markets and production standards and conditions (e.g., environmental concerns) *upward*. That is the reverse of what they do now. Worker, community, and soul-crushing capitalist efficiencies will no longer be the sole standard of macroeconomic practice. “Destructive” capitalism will be tempered by adequate unemployment compensation programs, health/safety compensations, and retraining/relocation programs after job eliminations.

Businesses responsible for economic externalities resulting from operations should assume a duty to pay compensation to those affected—communities, government, workers, and future generations (especially for environment damages.) The financial elite, especially, should refrain from exploiting taxpayers for subsidies and bailouts. They should feel inhibited about exploiting international currency markets, among other socially damaging activities just because the private attitude opportunity is there. Just because someone *can* make big money at the cost of disturbing entire national economies doesn't make it *acceptable* for anyone.

The “forced insecurity” industries, like some fashion, glamour, cosmetics businesses, etc., may need to rework their philosophies. They need to respect the humanity of their customers and not exploit them even if it is easy to do and the customers don't complain about it. If that strategy reduces revenue and/or requires job losses, so be it. People come before business. The Program will push Big Business to recognize the human dimension in all phases of their operations and to adapt to human needs.

Respect: Businesses with good social character will treat *all* of their stakeholders with respect. That means partnering with their employees (unionized or not) in an appropriate capital-labor allocation ratio, providing for employee participation in work rules and conditions, adopting principles from Total Quality Management (TQM) and similar principles, etc. They will implement best practice templates regarding customer services, warranties, truth in advertising and marketing, and do no harm. They will not exploit the government or the public for regulatory waivers, subsidies, and tax breaks merely because they know how to pressure government to get them. Sports franchises and investors of all sorts will not whipsaw communities for public investments, infrastructures, subsidies and tax breaks merely because

they have the leverage to do so. (Where is the shame?) They will not store enormous amounts of cash overseas at the expense of potential investments in America just to avoid United States taxes. (Where is the shame? The little people pay *their* taxes.)

The Program will expect Big Business and the financial elite to respect workers, the consumers, the taxpayers, the communities, the environment, and the future. Those businesses which do not honor BMR principles will be targets of the Program. They will, for example, be exposed by the monitoring institutions contemplated by the Program. They will be labeled as “bad actors,” criticized, shunned, shamed, boycotted, and subjected to whatever tactics it takes to get them to reform, or to terminate operations. Those businesses which *are* socially responsible will be rewarded and the irresponsible ones will incur consequences. The (respect) “market” may work like a traditional capitalist market in these situations.

3. Unions

Despite all of the benefits that unions have brought to workers and society they are no longer appreciated by most people, rightly or wrongly. They have a near toxic public profile except with those people who truly understand their crucial economic role for the little people. Unionization has resulted in better capital-labor allocation; more humanity in the workplace with personal and family leaves, disability compensation, influence on work conditions, etc.; and some level of organizational respect for workers. They have brought up the compensation and benefit floor for *all* workers, whether all of those workers realize it or not.

The union successes in the economy partially explains why the union movement has been thoroughly demonized by public relations efforts of the elite. However, unions have also undermined *themselves* by elements of organized crime influence, benefit overreaching and internal corruption, and especially *special interest attitudes*. When unions started acting like every other self-interested group they lost their credibility with the public.

Now, instead of inspiring non-unionized workers to “move up,” so to speak, to the economic-social levels achieved by unionized workers, generally the non-unionized (irrationally) *resent* those who are adept or savvy enough to improve their situations. They perversely support the elite against both the unions and their own interests.

That is really self-defeating as the capitalists are taking advantage of it by taking more and more value out of the capital-labor relationship and taking other liberties at the expense of both unionized and non-unionized workers. Much of this resentment is motivated, perhaps, by irrational psychological elements but is also stoked by the capitalist's PR machine in the media and elsewhere. It's not easy to counter the steady drumbeat of “union bosses, thugs, lazy public servants, and greedy workers.”

All of the factors noted above have contributed to a severe general public relations decline for unions, a lower level of political and governmental support, lower membership rates, and lesser levels of influence. Who's left to fend for the little people? If not for the little bit of support from government when it is not *completely* dominated by the elite, there is nobody.

Since the unions have been so overwhelmingly discredited, and since the Program sees *reformulated* unions (see below) as a key component to the pushback of capitalism, the union *concept itself* needs to be reformulated. To become relevant and respected again unions have to change the way they operate, what they stand for, and how they appeal to the public. They need organizational and mission *credibility* and a very good rebranding on top of that. Conceivably, they can reformulate by themselves but it would be way easier and better for them and for the progressive movement in general to associate with the Program's Brand and its values.

Here are some thoughts about unions:

a. They can be early adopters of best practice templates for their organizations regarding internal governance, operations, and professionalism. This means, among other things, strict ethical standards for leaders and for the relationship of higher level officials to the rank-and-file. There cannot be any more “bosses” and fiefdoms controlled by strongmen and cronies. There should be only modest differences in pay and benefits for leaders versus the rank-and-file. Union leadership can take a tip from the Catholic Pope Francis and set a standard regarding privileges and benefits. That means, leadership modesty, authenticity, and a sense of fairness and proportion in compensation and perquisites. Internally, unions need to be clean, professional, democratic, accountable, transparent, and fair. They also need to *prove* all of this to its membership and to the public with appropriate disclosures, audits, and public-relations efforts.

In the legal area, there is a concept expressing the need for a party seeking remedies from a court to maintain “clean hands.” That means that it has done the right things and has done no wrong. Reformulated unions need *really* clean hands!

b. Most importantly, unions need to stop acting like special-interests little different from business and political special interests. Even though, understandably, they are playing by the same rules as everyone else, equivalency in this regard leaves unions with the same public profile as other special-interests--reviled, distrusted, selfish, socially inconsiderate, and lacking credibility. That status reflects a (labor) private citizen versus a (management) private citizen attitude and, in a way, both of them standing *against other stakeholders*, that is, taxpayers, consumers, citizens, and the public interest.

From this perspective, more compensation for workers and public servants, for example, typically means higher prices and/or taxes for everyone else. That is not *necessarily* objectionable unless the profits/employee pay levels are seen as unfair. When at outsized levels the other stakeholders become rightfully resentful and cynical. The unions can maintain this status relationship and may win some short-term battles--gaining increased pay and benefits, perhaps--but they will definitely lose a public relations war, so to speak, and incur negative medium-long-term consequences. The metrics now of union membership, influence, and even diminished compensation disparity with non-unionized workers indicate that they have *already* lost the war and are just holding onto smaller and smaller turfs. They have lost Credibility.

The unions can turn that around. They need to re-focus on the interests, rights, and conditions of *all* workers and must balance their interests in goodies for themselves with the consequences for their social environment including the interests of consumers, taxpayers, and others. They need to broaden their scope and jurisdictions and consider themselves less as mere employment-focused organizations and more as sturdy components of a *larger movement* towards an advanced 21st-Century America. Each union may have its own pushback situation with its employer, and collectively they almost *have* to be a major element in the economic pushback of capitalism, of course.

Every union local and council should see itself in a much broader perspective which allies them to all public citizens in America in a progressive movement. They need to become *public citizen*-oriented like the great unions were in the 1930's-50's when they acted on behalf of all workers and citizens in helping to create (among other things) the Great Society, Social Security and Medicare programs, pensions, workman's and unemployment compensation systems, as well as being among the leaders in the battles for civil and gender rights. The great unions had a great history including being a primary factor in the development of the American middle class in the 1930's-70's. They have gotten away from most of that and have become mere organized *private* interests.

Fortunately, the principles of the National Character Project dovetail nicely with those of that great union history and can provide new opportunities for unions--with their substantial membership numbers (new and potential), organizational skills, and intensity--to be social leaders again.

c. Associated with a renewed public citizen attitude, the unions, especially in the public sector, need to have a “fairness” component in their relationship with management. Instead of thinking of just themselves and management at the bargaining table they need to broaden their consideration to include other stakeholders--consumers and taxpayers, particularly. Some unions, especially in the public sector and in major national industries, have exceptional leverage and may be able to unfairly overreach against a soft employer. They need to keep in mind the effects their collective bargaining agreements may have on at least the *perceptions* of their external environments including those of consumers, taxpayers, and citizens.

Achieving great direct results against a (profitable business/deep-pocketed government) employer in the nature of extraordinary pay levels, uncommonly generous pensions and retirement benefits and the like, typically means indirect unnecessary or unfair higher prices for consumers and/or tax increases (or service cuts) for citizens neither of whom *are part of the negotiation equation*. This situation represents a type of economic gouge of those people and is perceived as unfair. These external stakeholders ought to be an element in this bargaining, to *some* degree and fashion.

In the public sector, the unfair gouge works because of the weak accountability of elected officials and public employers to the taxpayers while dealing with strong unions. They can be too willing to use taxpayer money to accommodate to their own bureaucratic and political agendas. In the business world, there is some quirkiness in how this market works in certain bi-polar bargaining (private versus private citizen) which results in indirect exploitation (gouges) of the larger environment of consumers.

Think of the labor economics of professional sports franchises and even of the big-time entertainment industry. Players (mostly now unionized) and entertainers have leverage because of the nature of their talents to negotiate “fair” splits of gross revenues with team owners and artistic producers. That seems reasonable and fair until one considers the gouge it effects upon fans and consumers who are not direct parties to the economic negotiations. The sports and entertainment figures can squeeze owners for larger and larger shares of revenue while the owners compensate for this “lost share” by extracting higher prices from consumers and larger subsidies from taxpayers. There is a sort of informal “conspiracy” between owners and employees which allows the two of them to gouge the rest of us.

What is odd about this situation is that, as a matter of capitalist economics, employers ordinarily pay employees only as much as they *have to* to obtain an employee's services. But, look at player compensation in major league basketball, for instance. Many players make in excess of \$15 million a year yet would any NBA player, for example, agree to play ball for a mere \$200,000, let's say, if their alternative was to work as an accountant, civil engineer, or Uber driver? Almost certainly! Who wouldn't!

Arguably, professional ballplayers are grossly overpaid even by their own standards. It is the lowly consumer and taxpayer who are subsidizing (unwillingly) that extraordinary premium pay due to the owner/player “conspiracy,” as in the “powerful union” scenario described above. The third-party--the consumer/taxpayer--is *not* part of the negotiations, formally or informally. In the typical union situation however, for some reason, consumers and taxpayers perceive the gouge and resent it greatly while in the entertainment and major league sports situations they either fail to perceive it or just fatalistically accept it. (After all, no one wants to think negatively about their own sports teams—“Go Team!”—and favorite celluloid heroes.)

Consideration of all relevant stakeholders and being fair and reasonable regarding employment economics (perhaps following *templates* produced by the Councils) may help turn around the resentment that many non-unionized workers and citizens have for the unions. Reformulated unions can act as cue

givers and leaders in advocating for the advancement of all workers while still maintaining a responsible relationship to the communities. In order to regain credibility and respect they need people to see their efforts as being in *balance* with public interests.

Of course, until capitalists and management act fairly with employees and other social stakeholders in this way as well, it is difficult to suggest to unions that they unilaterally take the high road, so to speak. Doing the right thing may facilitate outright exploitation by private interests where those private interests unfairly absorb a “premium” in the management-labor transaction that otherwise would have gone to workers (the little people.) In other words, if the unions settle for a less than “fair share” of the profits and productivity of the business as an accommodation to consumers and taxpayers and the owners *fail* to maintain or lower costs for those same people, those owners will reap a really unfair premium. Unless something is done about that, unions (and other employees) may end up just shorting themselves in a way, as well as letting down the rest of society. Owners, of course, will be quite pleased. In effect, our hoped for reallocation of the capital-labor ratio and economic pushback may not happen and the elite will just get richer.

The choice for unions (or others) should not be, as it is now, of going “down” to the individualist/capitalist level in a bi-polar fashion and competing cutthroat like as private interest versus private interest. The better situation is to bring the individualists/capitalists “up” to a status where all stakeholders have at least some influence in a *multi*-polar fashion and a comfortable balance is negotiated among all parties. The hard way to do this is by having consumers, taxpayers, and the public directly participate in labor bargaining transactions. That would be administratively difficult, at a minimum, not to speak of the content-based complexities and the introduction of outsiders into a specific employer-employee relationship.

The easier way to address this situation is to have expertly-designed templates of compensation and benefit structures for various types and levels of employment. That seemingly could address the fairness issues for each of the stakeholders *other than the owners*. They will remain acting as the capitalists they are. However, the premium they receive can be addressed relatively easily via the tax system extracted from them by increased taxes going into the public purse. We'll have fairness, then, for all, without having government or anyone else to be very much involved in the detailed management of business operations. (See Chapter 8 for an explanation of how useful and efficient the tax system can be for adjusting many of the flaws of the capitalist system without direct involvement of outside parties.)

There will be pressures from the Program on capitalists and managers as well as on unions to reformulate in conformity with Program values. If that works, it will make the unions' choice to become “holy” (i.e., doing the right thing) more acceptable to them. It will take time to effectively pressure business and employers to do the right things themselves and compliance may be uneven, especially early on. Whatever shortage of compliance that there may be can be adjusted in ways by the tax system. For example, tax surcharges on businesses benefiting from “premiums,” credits for workers, and the like. From a collective's perspective, this approach achieves a good level of fairness for all stakeholders.

However, to get back in society's good graces, so to speak, the unions have to become holy *now*. To participate well in the system just described they need to rebuild credibility and respect first. They will have to take the high road even if capitalists and management balk (at least initially.) Call this the “Jackie Robinson Strategy.” Robinson, the now renowned black baseball player from the 1940's and '50's, was subjected to all kinds of ugly attitudes and inappropriate treatment by owners, teammates, and fans but maintained his character, dignity, and composure (as well as his performance.) He (and civil rights in general) ultimately won the sociological and psychological war and Robinson became a great hero for many and a model of resistance to racial discrimination. His tormentors and opponents lost influence and status and their attitudes eventually became socially distasteful.

In our case here, reformulated unions acting pursuant to Program principles (and the Robinson strategy) will earn a similar profile of good character, dignity, pride in performance, and composure and can expect to garner respect, admiration, and Credibility from not only workers but the general public. In their economic relations with capitalists and owners and in their status in society they may come out on top (in the medium-and long-term) like Robinson (and the civil rights movement) did.

Reformulation is essential. Staying the course will not stop the decline in membership numbers and influence and certainly not reverse it. Even *if* all the current union efforts to rebuild membership and organize more industries succeeds, the unions will *still be special interests*. That means hated by capitalists and management, resented by non-unionized workers, disliked by taxpayers and the public, and politically supported by fewer and fewer voters (mostly older mainstream Democrats.) In addition, they will be out of harmony with the Program and subject to pushback as well. Both the unions and the Program will be diminished.

4. The new traits and perspectives of this reformulation need to be effectively communicated to the world by the unions themselves and by public relations experts to rebrand unions in the public eye. There must be a huge buildup of public citizen credibility, earned first through public citizen *actions*, then effectively communicated to the public. Doing this will also positively impact their traditional role as workplace advocate.

4. Non-unionized, non-professional workers

These are vulnerable people or who feel vulnerable. They have no reason to be hopeful that their political-economic situations will change for the better as they will have little leverage for anything. Capitalist economics, of course, means that they will get the bare minimum compensation required by the market or by law. Elite domination in politics means that their voting activities will have little influence there, too. The elite easily intimidate and dominate workers with no leverage. For these non-unionized workers to get more requires pushback of some sort. The relationship of capital to labor does not *have* to be adversarial but pushback by labor will almost inevitably result in hostility from the elite to anyone threatening its power and egos, especially if that pushback comes from the ill-regarded lower classes. Unfortunately, having little to begin with means the lower classes cannot risk much, if anything, in any adversarial relationship with employers.

These folks will need *outside* help to get their employers to allocate them anything more much less comply with best practices standards. It would be preferable for these workers to be union organized because the basic union model is already established and proven to be effective in countering the economic and political power of the elite. Reformulated unions which have newly earned Credibility may renew efforts to organize these workers and likely enlist some but probably not very many of them. Many workers are too fearful of employer reprisals (although much stronger labor laws and enforcement of them may help fix that.)

In theory, unionizing these people would be the more *efficient* option, too. However, even if unionization doesn't happen to a great degree, these workers may get some support from improved government legislation and much more serious enforcement of labor laws. That means, for example, an enhancement of statutory employee rights like higher minimum wages, personal and family leave time, workplace health/safety improvements, and the like with sufficient enforcement means. Those things may come about, in part, through the political activity component of the Program's Support Council. (Non-unionized workers can at least quietly support pro-labor candidates and policies in the political sphere.)

The legislation effort, however, is likely to be only modestly successful unless the workers themselves take more significant steps to assert their own interests. If well-publicized best practices templates were available to condition these workers to expect more and better from their situations, they could subtly condition change in the workplace from the inside, at least. Program-sponsored best practices

“Employee Bill of Rights” and “Good Employer/Good Employee” templates may provide moral guidance, at least, for both employees and employers. (See Chapter 8 for more discussion of these kinds of templates.)

Information about these matters can be made available from the Councils to employers, to workers, and to the public rating employers on labor and work practices. Managers resistant to change may have to account to their workers why comparable workplaces have better compensation policies, labor conditions, and privileges. Workers may eventually learn to develop a sense of self-esteem and expectations of what a quality and fair workplace ought to be. The Program's assertion of BMR principles in the workplace may create a social frame where people *as workers* become class-conscious and *visible* to society as symbols of BMR principles like black, female, disabled, and gay people have become visible due to their assertions of identity and rights.

This type of social framing may work well to support all workers, unionized or not. Being able to draw upon new digital tools of communication like social networks, ratings and feedback websites, and some of the resistance strategies used by the civil rights and feminist movement, non-unionized workers can organize at least informally and develop a class consciousness sufficient enough to change the cultural aspects of the workplaces at least incrementally. These kinds of self-help actions can make quality, respectful employer-employee relationships become a norm in every workplace.

5. Professionals

This category of workers represents a fairly wide range of compensation levels, benefits, self-directed workplaces, autonomy, and time commitments to work. From their own individual work situations, different people may have different perceptions of what Program principles mean to them. For many (most?) of them, however, the issue of work-family balance is paramount. Many professionals work longer than most other workers and some are almost never “off the clock,” so to speak. For those content with that, good for them. For a lot of others, especially women with child and/or family care obligations, the Program commitment to balance and meaning offer welcome enforcement tools to their situations. It offers an alternative career model for them to promote to their employers, clients, and customers.

Unlike the non-unionized, non-professional group, these people are likely to be assertive, have more invested in them by their employers, and have more leverage to exert. This group can work from the inside to promote the alternative career models and they can speak louder and more effectively in the political and social spheres. Not being formally organized, however, still leaves them at individual risk of consequences for trying to break long-established workplace or professional mores.

The Program, however, nicely offers them “cover,” so to speak from the outside providing them an intellectual and social frame where new community standards (i.e., Program templates of good work environments) for a pushback effort against their employers. What these people can do now is to spread the Program's (template) ideas to colleagues, to informally organize on social media sites, and to create useful templates for their businesses or industries to guide an “informal movement” as pushback against the capitalist-based careerism which dominates them at the expense of their family and personal lives.

6. Governments

There is little in the Program which would impel governments to change much. They will continue to act as they do now as facilitators of elite interests and legal enforcers of elite capitalist mores reinforced by decades of habit. They will have to be *forced* to change from the outside by Program pushback means. Governments may change only when pushed by Program prescriptions for reformed elections and governance processes, the effects of shadow government monitoring, and the repopulation of governmental offices with sincere representatives of the people complemented by a large set of real Mr. Smiths, perhaps. If those things *do* happen, it will be in the middle-long term time frames. Then, as

governance becomes more accessible to the lower classes, there may be some progress made in consolidations, at least, as the idea of rationalization becomes more accepted by newly-educated, conditioned, and empowered voters and citizens.

7. Politicians and governmental officials

Until the major structural elements of governance are reformed, politicians and government officials will not be able to do much from the inside even if they *are* supporters of the Program. More likely, many (most?) of the current occupants will be opponents as they may lose jobs and influence and have to change long-standing, sometimes cozy habits of operation.

Forward-thinking politicians, civil servants, and good governance supporters on the inside could try to implement *some* mechanical reforms in structure and process at least in the legislative and executive areas. An exciting example is that of the "Thinking Long Committee" in California which, since 2010, has openly acknowledged the negative impacts on good governance of individualism, special-interests, and short-term perspectives and has proposed new structures of government to try to achieve what it calls "intelligent governance." (This is similar to the Program's idea of a collective brain.) It tries to promote deliberative decision making, long-term perspectives, layered decision-making (where different levels of competence and character have jurisdiction over different levels of governance), and more.

The Thinking Long Committee shares a good deal of the ideas behind the Program's Planning and Policy and Problem-Solving Councils, although on a more limited basis and working from an internal perspective instead of from outside of the system. Those limitations, among others including the lack of a commitment to overall *cultural* change, means that its outcomes and influences will be quite limited. The broader, permanent, and more significant effects on politicians and governmental officials which we desire will happen if and when the political (*and* economic, cultural, and social) reforms from *outside* the system contemplated by the Program take root.

If the structural reforms we propose happen, including the electoral reforms and the sandboxing of governmental officials, then that will provide opportunities for sincere public interest-oriented people to actually govern professionally, competently, and ethically (by public citizen standards.). Officeholders and officials will be considerably more isolated from improper influences and have much more space to act professionally as legislators and decision-makers. There is no doubt that many competent and good character people will be happy to serve their government and nation in the public citizen sense articulated here and will do it well. They just need an environment which will allow them to do that. Ideally, the formerly disenchanting Mr. and Mrs. Smiths will stream back to Washington D.C. and the state capitals with new expectations!

8. The elite

Of course, we can expect a lot of opposition from the elite in all sorts of ways. They will criticize the theory, deny the factual bases, and slander the Program and its proponents--(Collective rationality and fairness? Social harmony? Thoughtful governance? Sort of Commie-thinking! they might say.) We can deal with that.

On the other hand, some of the elite, at a minimum, may feel relieved about paying even increased taxes knowing that their money is being better spent and handled fairly. Others may take pride in seeing government in general and citizens themselves sharing pride in quality governance and social harmonies. Some of the more progressively-minded elite will have little problem with much of the Program and may actually appreciate the new opportunities for them to take leadership roles in a progression to an advanced society. Hopefully, some of them will take on the prime high-profile executive producer and national convention and council roles described above. Others can partner their skills and resources with Program people and resources to tackle specific substantive problems and projects at both regional and local levels

helping to build a Smart society from the bottom up. Some can simply contribute money and resources to the Program.

There will be incentives for these people to act as public citizens including appointments to prominent positions in the Program, opportunities to accomplish results in areas of interest to them in association with an enabled class of public citizens, and a new type of recognition from society of their public service. Some may become National Heroes.

Forward-thinking elite members who run businesses or organizations (even opponents of the Program) may want to get ahead of the curve, so to speak, before the movement starts to pressure them to reform. They can achieve operational and/or public relations benefits by adapting early on to a balance of private and public citizen attitudes and adopting best practices templates.

There are more than a few elite business and financial leaders *now* who share the Program's concerns about the state of our governance and social relations and are actively trying to fix them (at least incrementally) from inside the system. Howard Schultz of Starbucks, the 100 Leadership Group, George Soros, Bill Gates, Jr. and others are prime examples. Within the overall framework and focus of the Program, these people may be able to produce more and better substantive outcomes, be cue givers and influence others of their status into the Program, and become high-profile exemplars and symbols of the new public citizen attitude.

Wow! Rich people who are public citizens! Business people who are leading an economic partnership relationship of capital and labor! What's next—peace and social harmony? Social happiness? Why not!

9. Bridgers and Node-builders

These people can act now. Bridgers don't really need the overlay of the Program's principles to work to eliminate social dividers in their own ways, at least, initially. They can work to bridge religious, geographical, ethnic, and racial dividers much like some people are doing right now. This type of work is an example of building a collective by reducing frictions among trivial social categories. If Program principles and its sense of a new social ethos become somewhat accepted, then they can frame their activities under the Program's brand, building an American Team.

Node-builders can start bottom-up development by connecting activist groups under the concept of the Program inspired by the top-down *conceptual* framework which hopefully will have become part of the national conversation about social change. These people will be managers, administrators, and influencers savvy about personality and organizational politics. There will be opportunities for the highest-level religious and other leaders to harmonize perspectives and relations with others. They can express their leadership, charisma, and framing capabilities in the churches, affinity associations, social clubs, neighborhoods, etc. They can enhance the social fabric, contribute to a new social ethos emphasizing a collective consciousness, and build up the American Team. The best of them may also become National Heroes.

10. Activists on the Right

This includes some members of of the Republican Party, the Tea Party, and libertarian organizations. We're referring here to Classical Conservatives; the fiscally-oriented, small government Tea Partiers (not the fundamentalist evangelicals or the Trojan horse elite proxies); and libertarians who have a more granular understanding than some of the liberty concept and its limitations. Initially, (most? all?) of these people will be repelled by the Program's progressive emphasis and rejection of individualism/capitalism as currently configured. They shouldn't be, as many of the Program's essential values and principles overlap theirs. There should be no opposition about Smarter governance; the values of BMR

harmonize at least somewhat with the conservative's idea of "a Good life," the Tea Party's emphasis on fairness and public morality, and the Libertarian's affinity for reason and respect.

Those people however, who really want to see substantive *results* will need to find another way than what they are doing now. Mostly everyone in the activist right groups favor social change of some sorts--at least better quality and more efficient government, a better balanced class profile in governance, good character in public officials and Big Business, and more attention given to personal and social values in public affairs. And, no one should object in general to plain smarter, more rational governance. These parties should support some or many components of the National Character Program, especially if their true motivation is to *really obtain* social improvement (rather than merely satisfying emotional or psychological motivations for negativity or to be negative agents.)

However, there are many activists on the right (who call themselves conservatives but might not be among the set of parties noted above) who seem animated by emotional, ideological, and/or psychological motivations and they will adhere to rigid positions *no matter* if they have real likelihood of being adopted by mainstream America or not. These people are unlikely to adapt to new ideas no matter if they lead to net social improvement. The psychic status is their identity, not any intent to obtain real progress.

Arch-social conservatives stubbornly trying to hold back science, globalization, multiculturalism, secularism, and the like are on the wrong side of history and rationality. Extreme libertarians adhering to liberty concepts which may have made good sense in earlier centuries when the relationships of people were considerably simpler and fewer need to reorient to the modern world of complex multi-relationships. The more people interact in a global, multi-cultural world (voluntarily or compulsory) necessarily the less space for personal freedoms (where *your* liberty is my *burden*, and vice versa.) Fundamentalists of all sorts will almost always be marginalized and ineffective (at least in American society.).

Of course, there are elements of the Program which won't necessarily appeal to many on the right—the emphasis on *collective* rationality and fairness, for example. But given the choice of marginalization and/or irrelevance and a good deal of substantive change in their favor, a lot of activists on the right ought to think clearly and provide *some* support for the Program. The public citizen values of the National Character Program are not universal, but close to it. The *authentic* Tea Party people, for example, share the same antipathy to the ruling elite as does the Program (although for different reasons and identifying different targets.)

Those groups which do think clearly (as in multiple perspectives, multiple time frames, etc.) can find a niche in the middle level network of the Program (or cozy up to it at least) and become at least an informal part of the Big Voice. Some righteously-indignant Tea Partiers for example, may have a particular affinity for the monitoring and reporting functions of the shadow government and already have resources to fill that role. Fiscal conservatives and anti-elite populists can engage in traditional political activities to support the legislative and executive reforms we propose in order to eliminate "crony capitalism." The better socially-exposed and educated can participate in bridging activities if they buy into the public citizen *inclusiveness* concept. There should be no conservative-liberal or Red-Blue State distinctions, for example, regarding good governance. *All* of the little people share a dislike for elite level crony capitalism and exploitation.

The Program's prospects of success are seemingly far better at obtaining significant national-level change than those of anybody else. For the Tea Partiers, for one, most of whom know that they've been had (by someone) and want to change that, the Program may present their *only* opportunity to see success (assuming that they are persuaded that the proper target is the *private citizen attitude* in both business and government and not the government itself.)

11. College Kids and Young People

Few, if any, major social movements have succeeded without a generous number of college students and young people to support them. They have resources no other group really has—youthful vigor, health, optimism, idealism, and substantial numbers. They have ambition and a belief in progress. The ambitions of the Program combined with its practical plans may be appealing to a lot of these people. The intellectually-inclined can help develop the theory and concepts. Others can distribute the ideas and make them part of campus, club, and barroom conversations. The most ambitious can fit into bridging, node building, and Local Council roles.

Young people can strive to create BMR-compliant campuses and local communities--inclusive, environmentally aware, energy conscious, labor relations-wise, etc. Students can form National Character Program study and discussion groups, maybe chapters on campus, where the principles are spread and integrated in various ways with local businesses and community, political, and labor organizations. They may socially condition their friends and colleagues, future employers, governments of municipalities where they decide to settle down, and their own children of a new attitude of class fairness and public citizen attitude. They can be leaders in helping create the new social ethos much like youth activists in the 1960's-70's articulated and emoted a whole new counterculture.

Participating in the Program may have a generational identity effect especially appealing to those who can appreciate a positive *forward*-looking cause more than anybody else. Not since the counter-cultural era of two generations ago has a more substantial and exciting set of ideas promised so much.

12. Minority Cultures

This group includes African Americans, women, Latinos, gays, and similar others who are either population minorities or just marginalized in social influence. All of them have less influence than they should have, given their numbers. (Nothing against straight, old, white males but their time as Kings of the Hill have passed.) Each of these groups essentially seek the same things—to become socially “visible”, to get a sincere invite into the general public, and to enjoy balance, meaning, and respect (BMR.) Pursuit of BMR may be especially relevant to minority cultures because they have less of it than anyone else. They typically have to spend much of their lives with identity-related issues rather than being able to just be plain “Americans,” (or, “Team Americans.”)

Like with the more overtly political activists, there are a lot of separate identity groups each with separate voices each appealing to the public for support resulting in a lot of little squawks, diffused influence, and too little accessibility. Allying them all under the Program's Brand would add significantly to their influence and accessibility while contributing to the Big Voice and the Big Stick. It would also greatly reinforce the inclusiveness theme.

Each of these cultures within the last century has had *some* good success in breaking the divider categories with the white, male mainstream society while employing a wide variety of strategies. In one sense, the essence of these strategies has been to make their “differences” invisible, or at least, irrelevant to mainstream America. The Program's intention is to bring *all* of those groups, as well as all (or a major part) of mainstream America, into a new social category—that of the American Team.

Each of these cultures may have special individual values and/or resources to contribute to the collective (or special goals to strive for as *part* of the collective.) For example, for black Americans, a revival of the Black Panther-type of positive, proudful cultural conditioning emphasizing BMR and motivated for *inclusion* in the American Team (and *de-emphasizing* a threatening attitude) may be a nice fit into the overall social conditioning programs of the Program. They are appealing directly to their subgroup while acting to assimilate them into the American Team. It is an inclusivity activity.

We want to see everybody brought upward economically, politically, and domestically as *people*, not simply as black people or female, or whatever, using strategies that perhaps work specifically well in

their cultures. Besides more opportunities to participate in the economy (jobs, business organizations, etc.) the black community, for example, may benefit from new role models in high-profile positions who emphasize stronger family structures, greater education, and the like to make inclusion more likely.

Other minority cultures, too,—gays, Latinos, ethnic groups, Muslims, etc.—have to discover the right mix of internal strategies to emphasize their similarities to everyone else. They need to reframe their identities from "minority" to just plain "people" where trivial differences become invisible or irrelevant. Aligning with the new *general* public (i.e., the American Team) will thread them nicely into the social fabric. Like with the Black Panther movement, a lot of the work can be done from the inside out. Some other ways to do this is by educational outreach and by sharing experiences with the predominant culture. While the "mainstream" world has to do its part as well, it is incumbent upon the minority cultures to take the lead. They have the most to gain, after all, and the most motivation.

There may be a lot of strategies: 1) TV and Internet videos showing (via compelling characters and plots) who they are; 2) church and community groups hosting open houses; 3) holiday and special event invitations to cultural experiences; etc. Seeking "invisibility" does not preclude an emphasis on promoting *benign* positives of their cultural differences—dance, music, food, etc. Those things may make bridging experiences fun and interesting, hence more effective.

Women have a special interest in obtaining balance and meaning in their lives as mothers and caretakers since they still provide the better part of child raising and maintaining family relationships. Those roles are clearly treated as secondary or worse in our capitalist, high-productivity, high-intensity culture. We need to emphasize their roles in childcaring and domestic care as in the *collective* interest. Pushing back capitalism in this way will address the disadvantages suffered by many women in careers, the workplace, the home, and nearly everywhere else. More importantly for the collective, balancing priorities between work and family will likely have a positive effect on marriages, childrearing, social conditioning, and the general happiness quotient.

While not without their own leverage, most of these minority groups will need outside help from: 1) the diffused effects, at least, of the new social ethos in subtle, individual ways in workplaces, homes, and elsewhere; 2) the more direct influence of templates of Good Employer/Employee relationships, Good Parenting, etc.; and 3) from new governmental regulations and enhancement enforcement of the rules promoting the little people (the American Team) in general.

13. Marys and Johns

It would be great if ordinary folks got *attitude*. and, not just any attitude but a Smarter, focused, attitude emphasizing BMR. They may have a bad attitude now—frustration, cynicism, rage, etc. That attitude does little good and is easily ignored by the elite. With the right attitude, the little people will no longer tolerate private citizen actions which: 1) cause them harm (e.g., Wall Street shenanigans, corruption in government, special interest exploitations), 2) ignore their humanity (treats them as human capital, deny them work/family balance), and 3) disrespect them (lies and misrepresentations from political parties and candidates, deceptive marketing by bogus public-interest organizations); etc.

Marys and Johns can assert a demand for BMR everywhere and at all times in their daily lives—in consumer transactions, in the workplace, and in their electoral and other governmentally-related matters. They can speak out to family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers, write letters to newspapers, post to online sites, and participate in online rating and survey sites, and more. If some folks can't or don't want to, for whatever reason, assert the right attitude, they can at least show support for the Program in lesser ways. Merely displaying symbols of support like a home entrance door decal, a car bumper sticker, a lawn flag—(a Program-sponsored logo of sorts?)—will be significant.

With the right kinds and sufficient amounts of social conditioning, together with the full implementation of the digital networking Dashboard system, Marys and Johns can just take a look at their computer or mobile device before going to work or taking care of the kids and pets and show support with a few clicks to surveys, ratings, and/or Action Plans of the Local Council.

Marys and Johns can assert a new pride in themselves and as members of the American Team. In due time, if the Program develops as we hope it will, these folks will be further greatly empowered by the pushback operations of the Local Council. They will be able to regularly participate in Action Plans against governments and Big Business (and others.)

D. How Long Will It Take?

The timetable for the Program contains short, medium, and long-term components. Ultimately, the Program will take a couple of generations or more to mature. That sounds like a *very* long time! But, before despairing or giving up on it, that's a mere blink of an eye compared to the hundreds of years that the elite have dominated the little people. We have already endured *that* so a couple of generations or so of gradual, incremental (if not more) *improvement* should feel pretty good for all but the seriously impatient. The extended timeframe shouldn't discourage any of us from being a part now of what would be the World's Greatest Achievement. Besides what other effort can make your life more meaningful?

Participating in a grand endeavor like that contemplated here will have *immediate* emotional and psychological benefits for many. Standing up for ourselves *now* will indeed feel good right away. Seeing substantive results, even gradually and incrementally, will be satisfying each time. What's more, Americans will have a faith *now* that their lives and their nation will get better for at *least* their children and future generations. Young people, especially, will have inspiration to work towards achieving a vision that will make their lives as meaningful as anyone's, anywhere, anytime.

Here are the stages of the movement and a rough guess as to their duration (all time periods from Day One–5/10/2016):

1. Distributing the ideas and starting a national conversation–1 to 3 years.
2. Building the Big Voice–3 to 8 years.
3. Completing the National Conventions–3 to 8 years.
4. Completing the Grand Reconciliation Project–3 to 6 years.
5. Completing the digital network/Dashboard–3 to 8 years.
6. Having good momentum on establishing the new social ethos–7 to 12 years.
7. Reforming the political/electoral system--10 to 14 years.
8. Having a well-running Local Council–12 to 20 years.
9. Implementing the shadow government and having a pretty complete set of substantive templates–12 to 20 years.
10. Amending the Constitution–12 to 20 years.
11. Implementing the national brain and the National Councils–12 to 20 years.

12. Completing the bulk of bridging activity and having a substantially renewed social fabric—18 to 40 years.

13. Establishing a significantly sustainable level of social trustworthiness—30 to 40 years.

14. Having the National Character Program firmly in place—25 to 40 years.

In sum, readers, here's what we can look forward to: 1) Commitment Now! 2) Meaningfulness Now! 3) Incremental, Permanent Improvement! 4) Persistence for Decades!

Please help to write the rest of the Story!

Thank you!

Appendix A: Framing

There probably has never been any concept which has confounded, confused, and frustrated more people than that of framing, which implies a *subjective* element to what we consider “reality.” Most people probably subscribe to (or think they do) an objective framework (objectivism) which implies a single, observable world “out there” of which people may describe their experiences differently but which has an essential integrity. The subjective approach (subjectivism) doesn't deny that but asserts an equally valid understanding (especially as far as the social world is concerned) of “constructed” and multiple realities. For it, the objective perspective doesn't go far enough because it doesn't contemplate the fundamental effect that the human mind (rather than mere perceptions) has on what we consider “real.” The objectivist observer might say “I'll believe it when I *see* it.” The subjectivist one might say “You'll see it when you *believe* it.”

For the objective proponents, it is the eye (and other senses) which *discover* reality. For the subjective proponents the mind selects, organizes, characterizes, and gives its own meanings to what the eye and other senses perceive. In other words, the mind slices and dices, so to speak, into subjective frames and at all times. We never have a full picture of a whole at any time. There are two basic kinds of frames, cognitive ones which reflect different *rational* ways of organizing perceptions, and subconscious ones which derive from emotions, psychology, habits, and our physical being. Each of those elements has a “mind of its own,” in a sense, which create discrete frame realities usually without the person being alert to it. One might say that we each have (at least) five separate minds each of which frames for itself (sometimes in multiple ways by itself) and *all* the resulting frames make up our experience of reality. This sense of reality has been described as the *richness* of experience (humanism), the *irreducibility* of experience, or as a *blooming, buzzing confusion* (William James.)

Appendix

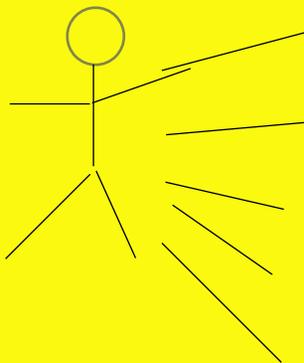


Gestalt Image

- One Object -a vase or 2 faces looking at each other
-
- Two Characterizations (at least)
- only 1 characterization at a time
- -matter of choice as to which is "real" at any one time

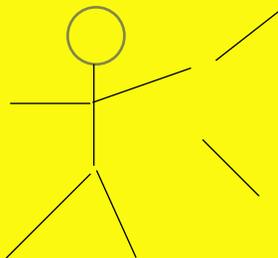
Types of frames: Each has a MIND of its own
 -All active and creative at SAME time

- Cognitive
- Emotional -
- Habit
- Psychological
- Physical

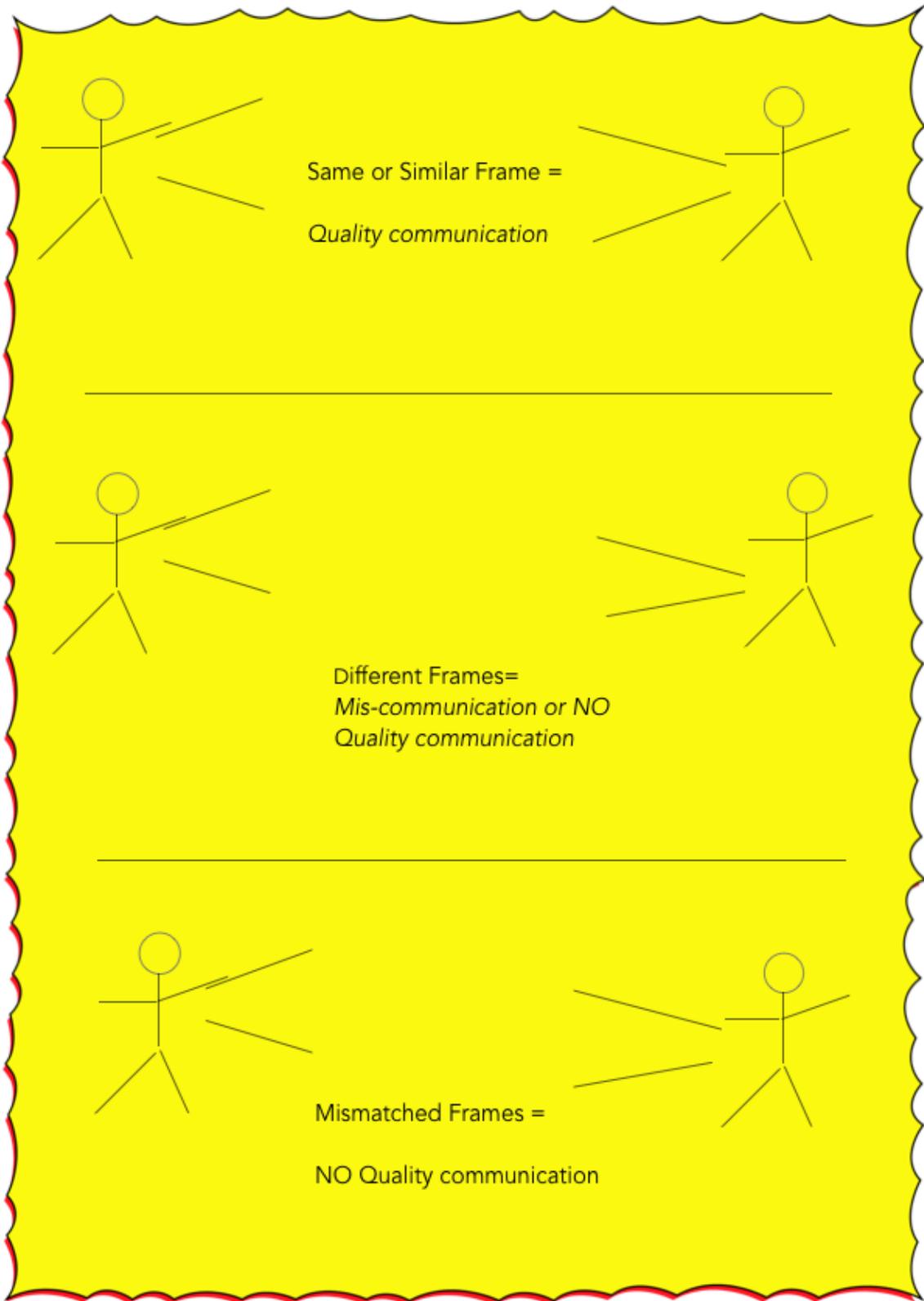


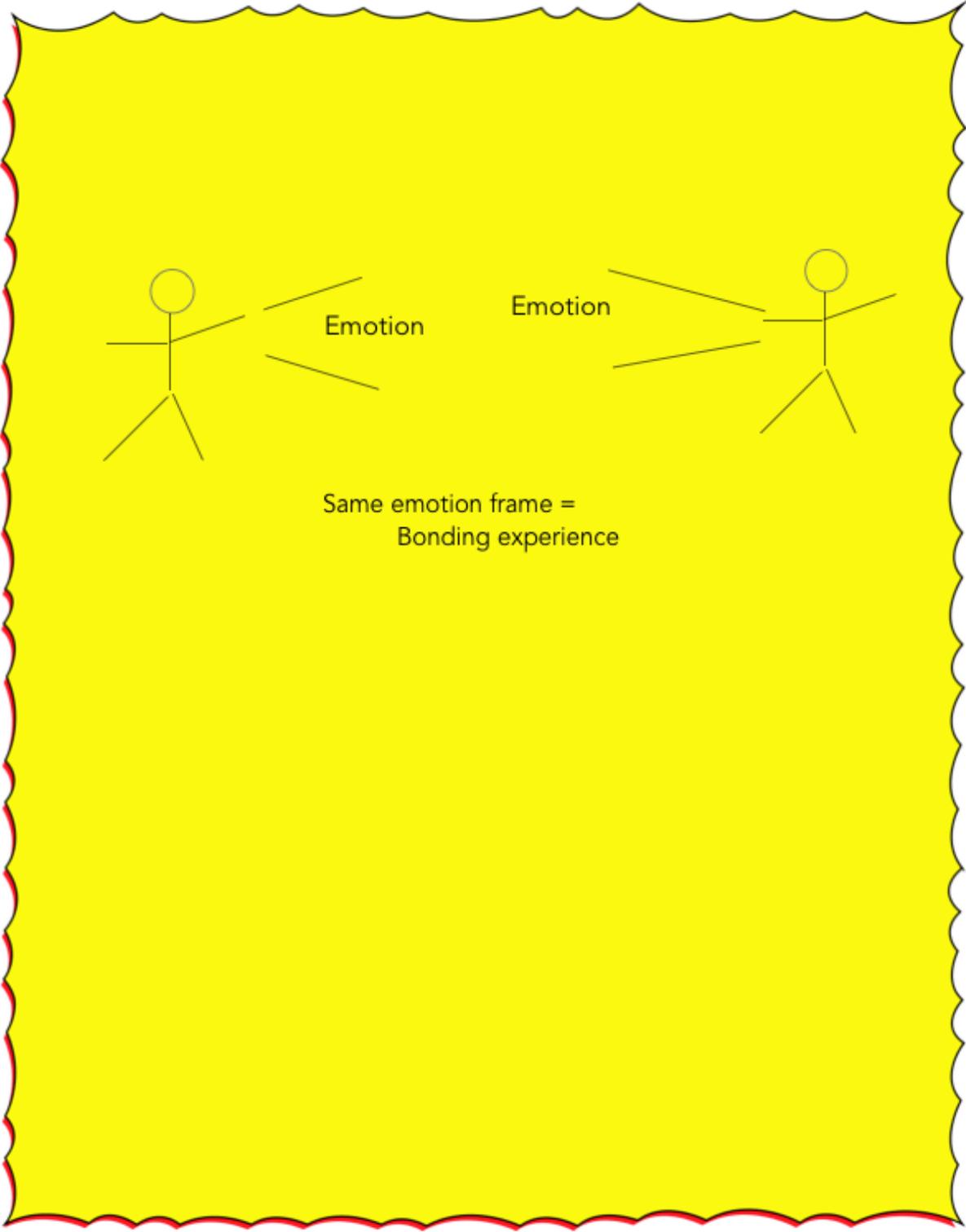
Cognitive:

- Capable of MULTIPLE independent frames;
- each the result of different intellectual frames of reference



As an example of an unconscious frame reality, people who study the precise experiences of the everyday world—called ethnomethodologists—relate how a simple 10 minute drive from home to work entails a driver making hundreds or more decisions almost none of which would be remembered or acknowledged by her afterwards. Ethnomethodologists would analyze that trip in extreme detail, however, revealing a surprising amount of unconscious realities being formed and processed along the way. These decisions were not made by her consciously, i.e., perceiving objects and situations, sorting them out, determining and calculating options, etc--they just sort of *happened*. Frame analysts would say that the *habit* element of her personality defined realities for her unconsciously while her cognition was attending to, perhaps, upcoming job responsibilities or the like.





A remarkable example of how the brain's filtering functions can overcome true visual perceptions and determine factual beliefs that really are *never actually seen* is represented by a series of paintings by the 19th-Century Impressionist artist, Claude Monet. He set up an easel some modest distance from the Cathedral at Rouen and illustrated precisely (no more or less) the images presented to his eye under the changing light conditions continuing from early morning until late evening. Each one of those visual perceptions was represented by a dot or short stroke of paint. The whole building and sky was comprised of these paint markings. He did a new painting every hour or so afterwards until he had a series of a dozen or more. Those paintings had a variable range of light and shadows and an even greater range of colors across the whole color spectrum.

In spite of their utter familiarity with the Cathedral the images on the canvases remained mostly unrecognizable to the townspeople. While Monet's canvasses were active with multiple colorations and effects of light, the audience “knew” the Cathedral to be dark gray in color. This disjunction strikingly emphasized recognition of which most artists are aware that for most people and in most situations it is the cognitive mind which “sees” and hardly the eyes.

Cathedral at Rouen



Colors are predominately redish-brown



Colors are predominately greenish-blue



Colors are predominately grayish-brown—brown



Colors are predominately purplish-blue

This example is meant to illustrate the fundamental point of those people who study individual frames—phenomenologists—that the immediacy of actual experience is seldom comprehended and appreciated by those involved in the experience even when the particular details of that experience are present to the senses in a very obvious way. For the townspeople who insisted that, “The Cathedral is just gray,” their brains completely overcame their senses falling back into a kind of objective reductionism which tends to simplify and abstract often without alertness to what it is doing.

For the subjectivists, the brain acts as a set of filters which produce a constructed reality not necessarily in high correlation with the senses (i.e., “objective” reality.) *This happens all the time for everybody.* When people agree on some “thing” they merely are sharing a frame, something which the subjectivists call intersubjectivity. That means that for much of social reality the purported objective world is real only to the extent that people intersubjectively agree to it, via a conscious or unconscious frame negotiation.

Here are some sample frame examples:

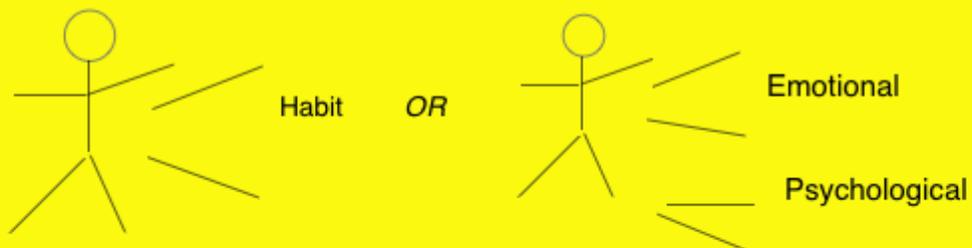
Extreme environmentalists

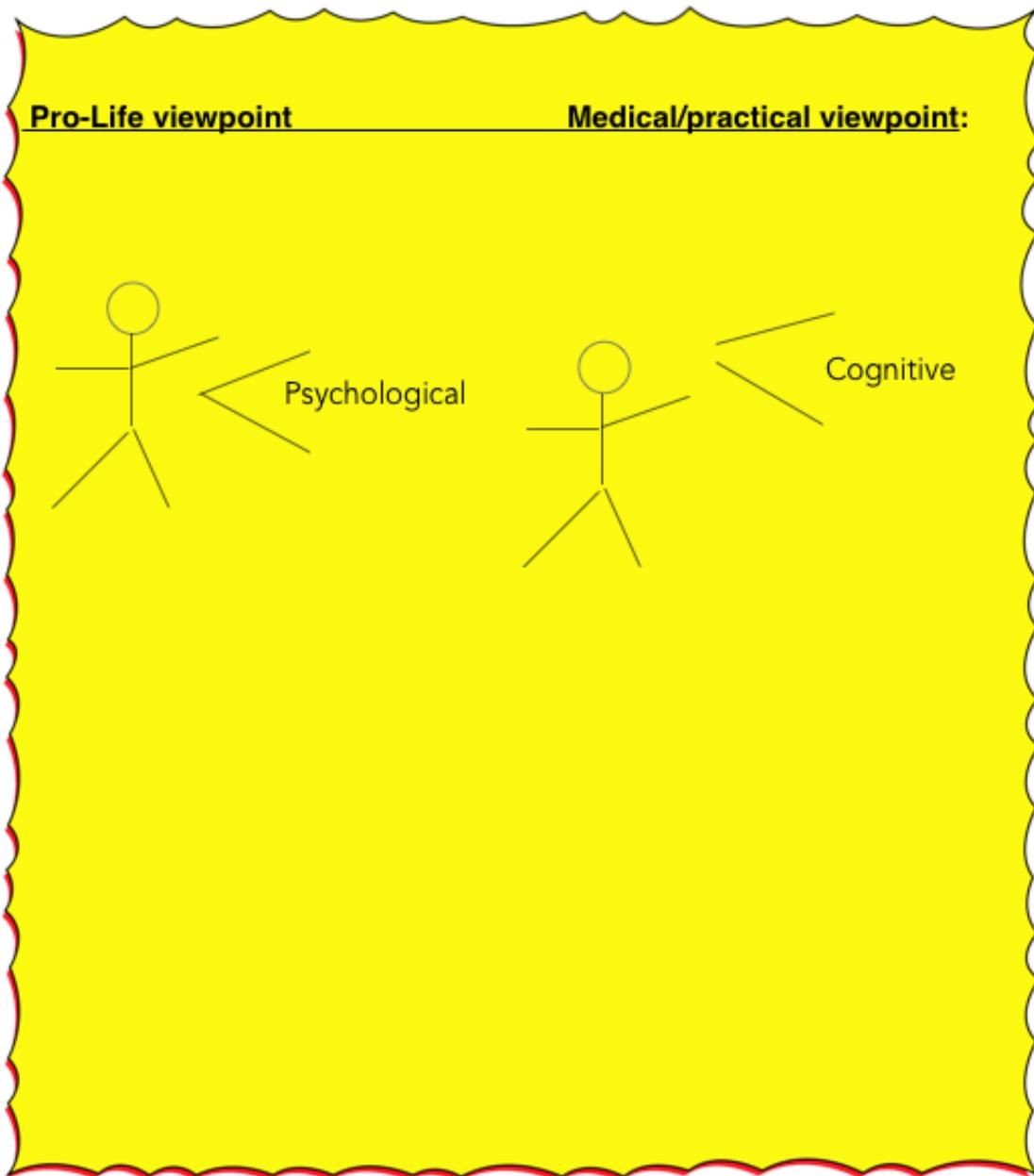


Extreme anti-government people:



Voting for (significant) "change":





For those who have some knowledge of the photographic processes think of how a lens selects, organizes, and conditions an image. A photographer may choose from any number of different lenses ranging from the wide-angle (fisheye) to the narrowest telephotos (close-up.) Each lens selects more or less an objective reality, arranges the relationships among objects included within its perspective based on lens optics, determines depth of field (or focus), and distorts shapes and object relationships at the edges. The resulting image is further conditioned on which direction the photographer pointed the lens, from what angle, and at what distance. The visual outcome is not simply an objective reality independently "out there"--it is the *photographer's* constructed image/reality. Photographers making different subjective choices of lens/positions may produce quite different realities.

Telephoto perspectives

Wide Angle perspectives



What you know is dependent on HOW you see and how MANY perspectives you draw upon

Some consider the everyday, practical human perspective comparable to a normal, middle range (50 mm) camera lens. Now, imagining experiencing reality with *nothing more* than that single lens. Even if that lens scans in all directions it still produces images all with the same reality biases--same selection size, same focus, same depth of field, same internal relationship ratios, etc. In other words, each image is limited and distortive of a whole. Arguably, if other lenses were used, the quantity and quality of what we can refer to as reality would be increased (a multiple perspective idea.) Without those multiple lenses, one would be constrained to one very flat perspective (and understanding) of reality. (This may explain, in part, how and why ideologies work.)

The human mind works in much the same way as the photographer's perspective with similar choices of options. At *any one time*, it can bring perception to bear upon a single piece of the world, so to speak, organize it with categories it is familiar with, and highlight what it *presupposes* is important. It produces, in a sense, a certain worldview. Some people with more empathy and with more nimble minds, may bring to bear *more than one* frame of reference and thereby produce multiple world views. Each one of those world views may be as valid as the next. The essential point is that viewpoints (and especially the choices among alternative viewpoints) create reality and how we understand reality leads to important consequences. What we choose as our own reality may differ from someone else's and that conflict may result in mere social misunderstandings *or* to the annihilation of the entire globe by nuclear war!--(See below.)

The kind of objective reductionism that we are philosophically critiquing as having limited and distorted views of the reality it produces has stimulated a lot of philosophers, artists, and critical thinkers to respond with a huge amount of material demonstrating the validity of the subjectivist approach as a complementary one to objectivism. Here are some fairly well-established academic-level subjectivist approaches, with examples:

-Gender studies (showing how males and females may have (create?) differing realities based on their biological and cultural makeups.) As noted in Chapter 2, a group of people, for example, may present as a set of *competitors*--male--or as a *community* to be nurtured--female.

-Race studies (showing how sociological experiences relating to racial differences can result in differing realities.) A man browsing in a department store may present as a *shopper*--black--or as a likely *thief*--store owner or security guard. It is hard to imagine a white person coming up with reality concepts like "shopping while black" or "driving while black."

-Phenomenology (the examination of frames themselves identifying the internal reality *and* the external elements which they leave out.) A foreign military warplane nearing Alaska may present as a *deliberate* national challenge to America's sovereignty--rational theory approach, a *mistake* resulting from flawed software--bureaucratic approach, or as a lone, rogue pilot seeking *personal* glory--personality politics approach. See below for a more elaborate example using these three approaches.

-Ethnomethodology (the study of everyday reality emphasizing the unacknowledged and unconscious elements of behavior and decision-making.) A candidate for office *automatically* opposes an opponent's public policy agenda, even though he hasn't read or reviewed it, simply out of habit deriving from partisan *standard operating procedures*.

-Hermeneutics (the interpretation of text showing how differing literary approaches may result in creating differing realities.) The so-called "Canon of Great Literature" up to only a couple of decades ago had no or almost no examples from women, blacks and other races, and others not from advanced Western nations. In other words, what some describe as *world* literary intelligence is really only that of a white, male, capitalist, mostly elite point of view.

-Deconstructionism (the critical diagnosis of words, ideas, and actions to show the limitations and distortions of the realities they create especially emphasizing political and sociological consequences.) The current war on terrorism, while meaning in part to protect ordinary Americans from harm, also and maybe more importantly, means the imposition of a militaristic government, the suppression of civil rights, and the near elimination of privacy, all of those perhaps deliberately intended by an overreaching government and/or elite class.

-Critical studies/textualism (the analysis of how choices of words and language influence meanings and realities.) An analysis of mainstream American media political content may identify its journalistic choices of focusing on individual personalities, discrete transactions and events, and short-term perspectives, as a *pluralist* worldview. That view hides the class bonds among the elite, fails to see patterns in the long-term outcomes of political activity, and in other ways misses much of what intelligent, fair-minded people would--should-- want to know about political reality.

-“Modernism” in the arts--impressionism, expressionism, minimalism, cubism, stream of consciousness, and many others (representing how pure visual elements, emotions, psychologies, and more in artistic forms create their own realities and conditioning what is thought of as “real.” A little story: a skeptic asked Picasso why he painted distorted figures on canvas like 5-breasted nudes with multiple faces and unnatural coloration since they were so “unreal,” unlike a photograph which showed true reality. Picasso asked him if he had a photograph of his wife. The skeptic provided one from his wallet and handed it to Picasso. This shows what a woman really looks like, the skeptic insisted. Picasso held the photograph for a moment, looked at it closely, turned it over, and then responded quizzically to the skeptic (paraphrasing), “Your wife is light as a feather, only a couple of inches tall, and has no sides or back!” (A question for readers, which approach is *the real*?)

-Etc.

Some people think that these “x-studies” and “isms” are all pretty crazy stuff. A significant number of philosophers, including the Classical Conservatives, assert that the objective approach is the *only* valid one. For them, there's always certain truth even in the social world (not to say that it is easy to discover it) and a correct morality. In the political philosophy world, at one extreme, we have the neo-conservatives (especially the disciples of 20th Century philosopher, Leo Strauss) some of whom argue that they (as wise and highly-moral intellectuals) know the truth and the right morality better than everyone else. They believe that they are justified in doing whatever it takes, including rhetoric and deception, to implement what they think is best for us.

On the other hand, there are subjectivists (especially existential phenomenologists) who accept the fact of multiple and constructed realities, alternative moralities with uncertain hierarchies among them, nuances of meaning and values in social affairs, and exercise a hesitancy to presume that any one approach to major social topics is superior, correct, and/or complete. (There are other fundamental views which exist somewhere in the middle of these two.)

It should be clear that the Program is basically subjectivist while acknowledging objectivism and seeing itself as complementary to it. That helps explain why it favors inclusivity in viewpoints, collective perspectives, frame negotiations, caution, humility, tolerance, and other similar virtues. It is also sensitive to the social and political consequences that frame *choices* have. From all of that, a number of principles follow:

1) There can't be true social understandings without some degree of frame agreement. Framing behavior has to match up among participants or they will be talking past each other, as they say.

2) There likely will be no frame agreements on major political and social issues unless people understand the nature and prevalence of framing behavior, including the variety of cognitive and subconscious frames and find ways to matchup, or create meta-frames which meld them.

3) It seems to be a matter of both good judgment and social acceptance as to what frames the collective and a Smart society decides to use regarding actions and decision-making in any given area. A preference ought to be for balancing multiple approaches steered by a rational process of decision-making.

4) If people don't properly assess frame making behavior about actions and decision-making they can make mistakes in communications, policy and decision-making, and in responses to external events. Those mistakes may have enormous consequences.

A very good example of how this works in practice is contained in a 1971 book called, “The Essence Of Decision: Exploring the Cuban Missile Crisis,” by Graham T. Allison, a Harvard academic. He describes the Cuban missile crisis of the early 1960’s as seen by the high-level participants in the United States and Soviet Union governments. A number of suspicious Russian transport ships was nearing the island of Cuba just off the American coast. For observers in the United States, what did it mean? What do we do?

Participants on both sides were trying to size up what the other side was thinking, doing, and planning to do, and developing suitable responses. As the crisis got more tense and more mysterious, potential responses included initiating a nuclear war, so the consequences of seeing and thinking correctly about the facts as they were happening were as significant as any other situation, *ever*. However, knowing what the “facts” *were* was frighteningly difficult. In truth, there were multiple alternative sets of facts, as some people realized. Depending on how one looked at the situation and from what perspective, which set of facts (if *only* one) was the “correct” one could have meant the difference between nuclear warfare or not.

Mr. Allison details at least three different frames of reference (cognitive frames) that were relevant to this situation—the rational actor model; the bureaucratic model, and the personality politics model. Each one selected different parts of reality as being relevant, ignored others, highlighted and focused on elements it believed most relevant, and had its own internal logic about what the (selected and organized) facts meant. The rational model, for example, focused primarily upon the (supposed) *mindsets of nations*--the United States and the Soviet Union-- as discrete decision-makers with their respective leaders, Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy (and their advisors) as proxies, reflecting national intents. Actions and decisions in Cuba, Washington, and Moscow were the results of calculated thinking, like in a chess game by national players. This is the conventional approach for high-level strategic thinkers. (But, just *think* about it, do *nations* actually have minds and make decisions?)

Another approach, the bureaucratic one, focused on the more plebeian elements of governmental structures and decision making meaning the styles and practices of *bureaucratic organizations*. It focused on organizational structures, coordination among bureaus and branches, standard operating procedures, organizational competences (and incompetences), and the like. From this perspective, actions and decisions were the result of these organizational characteristics. In the Cuban crisis situation, detailed analyses of bureaucratic behavior on both sides show that there was a fair amount of miscommunication among bureaus, lack of coordination among different parts of government, and even secrecy between institutions and the highest political leaders. In other words, imagining nations, as nations, making strategic, coherent decisions, was not true.

The third approach is the governmental politics model which sees leaders and organizations as separate individuals, players so to speak, in a cultural competitive game of personality-level politics. High-level outcomes are really mostly the results of bargaining games among the many people and

organizations all with separate interests, responsibilities, and jurisdictions. They share power subject to political processes and pursue agendas focusing on their own personal interests. From a distant view, what may appear as coherent and strategic decision activities are really only *aggregates* of individual personal interests competing for power and influence within organizations. Detailed analysis of these kinds of facts show that egos and personality traits of the many people throughout the United States and Soviet systems were acting on their own in their own ways to achieve personal goals. There was no single mind, so to speak, making decisions for a *nation*.

Depending on which view one held, what was happening included these inconsistent possibilities:

1) The Soviet Union suddenly and deliberately decided to extend its sphere of influence into the Western Hemisphere to gain leverage over the United States in economic and political affairs. In other words, it was a poke in the eye to the U.S. government and an aggressive power-play. OR,

2) The naval action was a mere continuation of standard operating practices by Soviet bureaucracies providing supplies to an ally which they had been following for years, an example of business as usual only now with a new friend, the Castro regime in Cuba. OR,

3) Personal and institutional jockeying for position and power within both the United States and the Soviet governments shaped decisions and actions without there being any coordinated or coherent process. On the Soviet side, there was no concerted decision by anyone to strategically challenge the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The transport of missiles and advisors to Cuba was an outcome of an aggregation of egos, personal perspectives, and political gamesmanship among politicians, military personnel, and bureaucratic officials. On the United States' side, there was similar personality-based jockeying for influence, and more than one participant favored aggressive military actions against the Soviets both in the Caribbean and elsewhere, not necessarily based on *national* rationality calculations.

In other words, the three conceptual perspectives produced three different realities. Each one was quite valid in its own view yet limited when one recognized the other perspectives with their own legitimate realities. For the United States at the time, figuring out which one of these frameworks (or *more than one* of them) was "correct" was crucial to its response. Was it dealing with an immanent existential threat? A modest, incremental and mostly benign extension of resources by a foreigner? Or, an event incoherently generated by internal politics among rival Soviet actors which had a life of its own, no clear intentions, and was pretty much unpredictable in its ultimate outcome.

Much of our social world is comprised of frames of all types. They shape some major political and social conflicts, some of them on cognitive and intellectual levels and many more on subconscious levels. Quality collective decision-making and Smart governance requires dealing effectively with these frames. That includes bridging some of them and creating new, better ones.

Here is a set of simplified frame analyses as applied to certain positions in contemporary political and social affairs to illustrate how frame analysis can be helpful in understanding them. Also, there are comments on how these frames may be dealt with in furtherance of a Smart society. Each position is examined for its frame nature and how it may be approached for Program purposes.

-Extreme environmentalism. This position frame is primarily psychological, with a bit of a habit component meaning that adherents have developed a pattern of (reflexive) opposition to corporatism and natural development and other things not compatible with their psychological mindset. They may not be amenable to deliberate consideration of facts, trade-offs, and alternatives. The attitude doesn't square with the rationality principle of Smart governance. They may have to be approached by attempting to transition their attitude into something new and more sophisticated either moderating the psychology or mutating it into something less irrational. We *do*, however, want to harness their social attention, energy, and spirit but directed in a better way.

There is another aspect of psychological framing which is important, not only with this group but with many others with similar attitude profiles. Their “cause” is more than a mere goal—it has become their existential *meaning* in life. Everyone needs some substantial meaning in their lives, almost regardless of what it is. Some meanings are better than others in that some are divisive (anti-government extremism), some impractical (protecting the environment at all costs), and others just inferior in ways to alternatives (e.g., collecting things.) A Smart society, trying to formulate an American Team, rationalize society, and improve governance and social relations, ought to try to offer new meaning options for many of these people. That may be done by developing new options (like positions and roles in the Program), making it easy for people to move into them, and providing rewards for those people helping move society forward.

-Extreme antigovernment attitude. This is a strong psychological frame. Some with this attitude will have a deeply rooted fear complex or mistrustful aspects of personality regarding society, community, and/or anyone other than themselves. This attitude, too, will not be amenable to a cognitive approach. They will have to be approached, perhaps, with strategies to increase trust levels, decrease fear levels, and make these folks more comfortable with collective society. Clearly, complementing a culture of individualism and capitalism with one of community and cooperation, as contemplated by the Program, may help quite a bit all in itself. At a minimum, strategies to minimize the negative *consequences* of this attitude will be required if changing the attitude itself won't work.

-Electoral behavior intending significant “change.” This attitude is part cognitive and part habit. Some of the people participating regularly in the American electoral process maintain a pluralist perspective on how politics works. That perspective has its value, of course, but as discussed previously, it fails to understand the elements of elite class internal cooperation and *consistent* long-term outcomes favoring that class over the little people. Not knowing better, in a sense, and perhaps because of the absence of good alternatives, these people have made their activity a habit. They regularly vote to “throw the bums out” but no significant change ever occurs. They may be amenable to some cognitive-level education regarding alternative perspectives on politics. That may convince them that alternative political options, like those advocated here by the Program, may be better strategies to effecting change efforts. The key is to make alternative behavior truly effective and *easy* to do.

-Antiterrorist programs of the United States government (in general.) There are two sets of frames, at least, which apply to these programs. One is that of the government itself. It's a cognitive frame, mostly, to address real threats but also to deliberately manipulate the public. It provides cover for the government and the elite class to control the little people by fear tactics. That allows for the overwhelming militarization of the society, the diminution of civil rights, and near elimination of privacy. That kind of “quiet” control is an extraordinarily potent form of public control.

The second frame is that of the public which is psychological and habitual. The public is fearful, partly because of the legitimate belief in the probability of terrorist violence, but mostly because the overwhelming breath and depth of the terrorist programs themselves condition them to be fearful. That tends to make them tame, passive, and obedient which makes elite control pretty easy to maintain.

-Pro and anti-abortion attitudes. The pro-life people have a strong psychological frame. (See Addendum B for more detailed discussion of this.) Like the extreme environmentalists and others, they will also have to be addressed at the existential meaning level. They will unlikely be amenable to cognitive approaches. For the most part, they will have to be reoriented (by a variety of strategies) into different, more rational frames. The medical/practical people (pro-choice) have a cognitive frame, mostly. It is realistic and practical. Nevertheless, in dealing with the pro-life people, they will need to forgo rational/practical arguments and have to modify the psychological frame.

If all of this philosophical and social science discussion is getting confusing than you are understanding correctly. It takes some intellectual interest and effort to just grasp the framing concepts. It takes some nimble-minded examination of social perceptions and experiences to discover specific frame natures. After that, one has to figure out one's own frames and how to interact effectively with those of others. If all of this wasn't true, social communication would always have been way easier. However, knowing the framing behavior aspects of social understanding is a start to reducing difficulties.

Appendix B: Problem-Solving Examples

It may seem pretty audacious to assert that this book presents new or better approaches to solving long-standing, national social problems like rationalizing of the federal budget, harmonizing relationships among groups which regularly spew venom upon each other, and others. That is true; some of those problems have existed and persisted for decades or more. But our national decision-making (if you can call it that) still operates under 18th-Century principles with 230+ years old institutions and strategies. Of course, Americans *have* fixed some major problems and overcome big obstacles even with its 18th-Century-based governance approaches. We have constructed a continent-wide nation, navigated successfully through a Great Depression and a Great Recession (mostly), emerged victorious in a couple of global wars, and earned the informal title of World's Greatest Nation.

However, as a collective we have not successfully addressed long-standing massive wealth/income disparities, persistent economic insecurities for much of the population, deeply entrenched social frictions, an embarrassingly dysfunctional government, and other more contemporary problems like unprecedented environmental degradation and a looming permanent underclass of unemployed citizens. Some might say that our biggest achievements in recent times include only having a Big Economy (benefiting a tiny segment of the population mostly) and a super-dominant military presence everywhere. By a large number of standards America is a declining nation and other nations, especially those in the European Union, have achieved more in areas like social welfare and relationships, bridging trivial (nationalities) differences, and happiness levels, among others.

Some might say that many of our current problems are the *result* of our 18th-Century based governance approaches. Solving those problems (at least in large part) seemingly requires new thinking and approaches, new social and governmental organizations, and creative uses of technology and the efforts of newly-empowered citizens. As explained in the main section of the book there are feasible ways to move beyond our really old ways to 21st-Century Smart governance and Smart social relations. They include, among other things, new approaches to problem-solving based on rationality and a collective mentality. Let's examine one new approach to a social problem and goal noted in Chapter 7, a rationalization of the federal budget and, specifically, a reallocation of excessive government spending on military hardware. This is a “one-bone, two-dogs” kind of issue involving *objective* interests and often zero-sum situations.

A 21st-Century Approach: Objective Problem—Rationalization of the Federal Budget

For a simplified example of how this may work, let's start by assuming that our society is *ready* to use 21st-Century approaches. That means that the Program will have developed fairly well in the following respects:

- A new social ethos has garnered a fair amount of support and has momentum.
- The Council system is up and running.
- The Councils, and the Program as a whole, have developed a decent level of credibility and demonstrated competence on at least some small projects.
- Social conditioning programs have gotten a large measure of the public to trust a collective process of rationality guided by professional experts.

This project would fall under the primary jurisdiction of the Policy and Problem-Solving Council. The Planning Council will be involved, too, at least tangentially, as nearly everything the Program does

will **coordinate** with much of everything else. The Program won't propose solutions to a particular problem without consideration of the short-medium-long-term time perspectives, for example, that the Planning Council will bring to bear, among other planning considerations. The Policy and Problem-Solving Council will engage its teams of experts in areas relevant to the problem (a **professionalism** principle), solicit (*perspective*) representatives of each of the relevant stakeholders—e.g., business owners, employees, local community and business leaders, governmental officials, taxpayers, and maybe the general public in some form (**multi-perspective** principle)—to brainstorm ideas and negotiate agreements (**inclusivity** principle), and develop a tentative, coherent, comprehensive plan (**rationality** principle.)

Let's (reasonably) assume that the participants get at least a modest agreement (a **collective–perspective**) on the following minimal set of considerations:

Facts and goals:

1. The government should not be spending taxpayer money on products which it doesn't need. (A reasonable goal of a collective.)
2. There are a handful, at least, of major hardware programs which produce equipment which will not be used and are unnecessary. (That's reasonably established by fair-minded, intellectually-honest professional evaluators.)
3. The value of those “wasted” programs is in the hundreds of billions of dollars making major efforts to reconsider and reevaluate them worthwhile. (That value is easily calculated.)
4. Saving that money will result in lower taxes or more resources for more worthwhile projects (determined by yet another Council-based process), or both. (That's just simple logic.)

(Potential) winners:

1. Taxpayers
2. Benefactors of the freed up budget money which could be allocated elsewhere. (Could be anyone or all of us.)
3. Citizens as a whole being able to feel proud about their country being Smart with social and governmental resources.
4. Foreign governments which could react (to a perceived reduced threat to them) by reducing their own military spending resulting in lower taxes and other benefits to their citizens and, perhaps, encouraging a *global* de-escalation process.

(Potential) losers:

1. Military manufacturers, including suppliers and incidental support parties, which will lose gross revenues.
2. Investors in the effected industries and companies who likely will incur capital losses.
3. Employees of those industries and companies who will lose jobs.
4. Local communities where jobs are lost likely resulting in reduced incidental business and tax revenues.

Like with the healthcare coverage issue detailed in Chapter 9, it is important to note that *everyone* in the losing category is *also* included in the winning category, as everyone gets some positive value from this hypothetical reallocation to some degree. And again (and more importantly) from the fair-minded, Rawlsian veil of ignorance (collective) perspective, the reallocation proposal is the *correct* one for the nation given all circumstances. It, too, is a “no-brainer,” in actuality. Ideally, if we are successful enough in developing the macro-level measures of trust, collective rationality and fairness, and credibility and competence we are hoping for in this type of process we may be able to get some level of **consensus** on the ultimate decisions.

This is the set of Step 1 elements to Smart problem-solving: 1) coordination, 2) professionalism, 3) multiple perspectives, 4) inclusivity, 5) rationality, and 6) collective perspective. As a bonus, we would have 7) consensus. All those good things are still not enough, however, to produce the Smart outcomes we hope for. It is clear that the benefits to the winners (the collective) in the example above are *diffused*—i.e., they are spread out over the collective body. No one citizen is impacted to any great degree and no one citizen has a compelling interest in the outcome.

On the other hand, the detriments for the losers are focused on them only and are highly significant for each of them. We can expect the opposition of the small group of potential losers usually to trump the diffused interests of our much larger one of potential winners unless we complement the first stage of our problem-solving approach with other elements. In other words, without more than its abstract collective rationality, this reallocation proposal may never be satisfactorily *implemented*. We need a complementary Step 2 set of elements to address those issues which are necessary for a successful implementation of even a great plan, particularly given the difference in *individual* value/detriment between the winners and losers.

Here are some implementation-related issues: 1) Some (most?) of the losers (whether directly involved in the decision-making process or not) may oppose the plan for self-interested (private citizen) reasons. They never really accepted the process as applied to them or are just sore losers. 2) In a sense, it is not fair to the losers to have them sacrifice for the interests of the collective without getting something in return. 3) Rationality or not, there are still other factors like deeply-rooted (even unconscious) variations in human perceptions (and misperceptions), ways of thinking, and feelings potentially leading to mis-aligned communications and understandings. Knowing, for example, that reallocating the military budget is the right thing to do *cognitively* does not necessarily mean losers will accept it emotionally or psychologically. People can accept the fact of mortality, too, but going through it almost always triggers an array of understandably irrational reactions—denial, anger, depression, and the like. 4) In addition, the process is part of a transitioning from the old ways to the new and the old attitudes and habits are unlikely to adapt or to dissipate soon or easily regardless of even its direct benefits to the participants or to society in general.

Ignoring for a moment the potential opposition for whatever reasons from the losers, from the collective's perspective it *still* makes good sense for society to implement the reallocation proposal for all kinds of reasons. It is collectively rational; the amount of positive value for the collective greatly outweighs the negative for the losers; and the real economic value to the collective in eliminating completely wasteful spending is enormous (among others.) Not only that but the “found” money can be allocated to more worthwhile and compelling areas including capital investment ones—education, infrastructure, etc.—where the eventual total economic value outcomes will be even greater while accomplishing socially *useful* things. How does this reallocation decision not make eminent good sense from nearly every perspective (except for those losers having a private citizen attitude?)

Keep in mind that if a rationalization process at least similar to this is *not* implementable even under the best set of circumstances we can think of (see below) due to positions taken by or on behalf of a small set of people, no such rationalizations, savings, or intelligent governance will *ever* take place! Having the short-term only consequences of a small group trumping the collective interest (replicated

thousands of times over with other small groups in similar situations) means that the nation will remain trapped in a perpetual pattern of governmental and social absurdity (from a collective's viewpoint.)

This is the kind of logic which has created (among other things) our existing \$17 trillion-plus debt and little hope to alter our behavior. Our governmental processes resemble the situation of a medical patient who will not stop smoking; continues to eat a diet heavy on fats, salts, and sugars; refuses to exercise; drives without a seatbelt and is bitter that "circumstances and fate are against him"; and that "somebody should be held responsible!" Like that patient, Americans will have what we deserve (in a sense)—an impaired and frustrating present and an increasingly unpleasant future. There will be no social progress and no Smart governance.

Fortunately, this sorry outcome is avoidable if we approach the situation with collective intelligence. Like with most other aspects of the Program, we have to make it *easy* for people to understand, accept, and to accommodate to progressive change. We are looking for win-win outcomes even in situations of substantial capital and job losses. In the reallocation example, the consequences for the losers are depreciated investments, lost jobs, and diminished communities. When the rationalization process is replicated in other areas of the economy (as it should be) the nation-wide capital and job terminations will add up to a *lot* of financial and personal losses. An outcome of big winners (the collective) and big losers (the defense industry, etc.) is not our preferred option. We have to address the consequences to the losers and do something about them for both practical (implementation), fairness, and for humane reasons. The consequences for the losers have to be short term only and morphing into positive ones for them and everyone else relatively quickly. Here are some ideas:

1) Convince the losers that the reallocation proposal is the correct one for the collective (and remind them that *they* are included in the collective.) They should be able to **feel good about doing the right thing** for the collective, at least.

2) Make sure that they understand that they are not being singled out for sacrifices. Many parts of governance and social relations will be subject to similar comprehensive rethinking and reevaluation, anticipating a fresh start for the nation. Rationalizing many areas at or about the same time means that everyone can assess how they are *making out overall*, since everyone is subject to wins and losses in each of the area rationalizations. Losers in one area may be winners in another. Regardless, everyone will know that they will have participated in an overall fair process and there will be an **essential fairness** for all.

3) Condition them well in advance of any implementation that change is coming and have strategies ready to help them deal with it. That implies **conditioning** at all levels of experience—emotional, psychological, habitual, as well as for the tangible consequences. We want to **make it easy** for the losers to accept and to adjust to change.

4) For those tangible consequences, implement a **soft landing**. That soft landing could include a lot of things and could stretch out transition for 5 to 10 years or longer depending on the specifics. a) For the military manufacturers and associated industries, it may include relatively painless re-orientating of capital and assets into more socially worthwhile industries, receiving public subsidies and tax breaks, and receiving preferences from government contracts and the like. This public assistance may act as a *nudge* to the industries to wean themselves off of collectively worthless public expenditures and to reorient themselves into something better.

b) Employees will receive comprehensive short-medium term help for transfers, retraining, reallocations and whatever else is necessary to **make it easy for them to adjust**. Workers will not just get dumped into the cold cruel world to fend for themselves as they mostly do now in conventional labor economics. They will have a long lead time to make the adjustments that fit them—early retirements, transfers to new industries, etc. We will need to firm up the public safety net substantially, perhaps with

tweaks to existing regulations regarding mobility of health and other insurances, 401(k)'s, and more substantial aspects. All of these transition proposals will cost taxpayers money, of course, but it may make good sense, for example, to pay industries and workers adjustment expenses which will likely improve the collective economy *elsewhere* or to pay some employees to do meaningful public service work than put that public money into clearly *useless* jet fighters or other boondoggle projects.

c) For investors, a **long lead time** before implementing change would allow them to minimize capital losses by divesting early on and/or prompting their operations management to start reworking the businesses early on by selling off assets, retrofitting land, buildings, and equipment to service new industries, and the like. Investors may take a haircut, as they say, but they are capitalists who understand and accept risks. So be it! No one can expect to be immune from all consequences of a collectively-rational reallocation of taxpayer money especially when many of them have been responsible for the *wasting* of taxpayer money for generations. (And, of course, they will still benefit from existing tax breaks for capital losses.)

d.) Local communities may get tax breaks, subsidies, and preferences from new governmental contracts and expenditures nudging them into adjusting in positive ways. Communities could be reworked in fundamental and creative ways including consolidations. This kind of outside help for governments will be done in the context of comprehensive planning perspectives (e.g., from the Planning Council), as some governmental jurisdictions may just become obsolete and we don't want to subsidize continuity just for the sake of compensation if it doesn't make long-term sense. Citizens will be taken care of in other ways.

Ultimately, we may have a national economic philosophy of *increasing flexibility* in both business and governmental operations. Part of the new 21st-Century governmental and business concepts will include abandoning some of the old ways of doing things— permanent bureaucracies; spending programs without periodic reviews, including cancellations; seemingly permanent private-public-sector economic transfer relationships, *overly* protective job tenures in some occupations and job situations. Most importantly, we want to especially change the multiple incentives for both public and private sector workers and officeholders of all kinds to prioritize protecting *their* positions or turfs against public/consumer interests at the micro levels. Like with contemporary football coaching philosophies, an emphasis may be placed on economic and governmental **mobility, speed**, and ability to **adapt** and **adjust**.

Doing those things, however, may greatly increase insecurities and instability for workers, create life-family disruptions, and result in economic uncertainties and excessive risks for businesses and investors. Much of that can be fixed with *macro*-level replacement concepts and structures which will provide the safety-net like elements while facilitating a much more flexible government and private sector workforce. The key is to allow people to have *trust* that this flexibility will not be at their individual cost. Most will accept and adjust to a new reality provided that they know it is good for the collective and that they will be taken care of.

We can add this level of **security** with a broad variety of legal, governmental, contractual, and cultural elements. They might include a universal single-payer healthcare program, pensions/401(k)'s, etc., unlocked from particular employers, broad-based training and cross-training programs funded by both government and Big Business, income protections of various sorts, location-less work situations, greater uniformity in laws and regulations and the like making relocating less difficult, and more, all making mobility and flexibility way more feasible and acceptable. Like with the modern footballers playing multiple positions, people will grow to be proud and content to be successful in flexible situations. While we would be giving businesses the flexibility that they say they need we'd be making government way more nimble and enhancing BMR for everyone.

This is the set of Step 2 elements for implementation: 1) feeling good about doing the right thing; 2) essential fairness for all; 3) conditioning; 4) soft landings; 5) long-term time frames; and 6) security.

A 21st-Century Approach: Subjective Problem—Attitude towards Abortion

Let's look at a different type of problem involving *subjectivity* where the issues are a matter of people seeing and thinking about social matters in different and often conflictual ways. These can be *cognitive* level communications problems like how one sees and understands the political world, as in the pluralist, elitist, or Marxist frameworks noted in Chapter 3, or as in the rational, bureaucratic, or political governance frameworks noted in Appendix A, as articulated by Graham Allison regarding the Cuban missile crisis. Other, usually more difficult, subjectivity problems arise from the *subconscious* level with framing schemes motivated by emotions, psychology, and habits. While people may say that they have factually-based beliefs about a topic, it is probably more accurate to say that they *feel* those beliefs, instead, based on personality, values, and/or tribal affiliation reasons.

One might think that the objective "one bone—two dog" conflicts involving people's jobs, capital, and material goods would be the more difficult to resolve but the subjective ones involving mere differences in *characterizing reality* often are *way* more difficult. Not only do they have the frame characteristics of cognitive frames implying differing perceptions and their meaningfulness but they are typically powerfully attached to emotions and psychologies. They are often brutally contentious dividers-- e.g., abortion positions, conservative/liberal perspectives, gun and environmental regulation positions, etc. These matters are rarely recognized as *frame* issues (as detailed in Appendix A) even though, arguably, that is their essence. They are irrational attitudes being masked by the false assertion of beliefs. They present as facts or fact-based but are resistant to rationality, science, and logic. Communications attempted between those frames and others more rational just "bounce off" each other, so to speak. As some say, "(God, Marx, or Some Charismatic Leader) said it, I believe (feel) it, and that is all to it!"

All frames, whether cognitive or subconscious, imply limitations—each highlights and makes meaningful some aspects of reality while hiding or (mis) characterizing other aspects. At the macro level, cognitive frames are like ideologies or worldviews. They have internal logics which makes them seem comprehensive and intellectually complete but they are not. They are almost always exposed eventually as reductive and distortive of a whole. Fair-minded people, presented with explication of how each frame has specific limited focuses and hidden elements, will often come to an understanding (a "negotiation" of frames) of how the *multiple* frames need to be examined and evaluated together before one can have confidence about really understanding complex social topics like political science and economics. By doing that they are in a valid position to derive a meta-frame which incorporates the others or they nimble-mindedly juggle the others and balance the respective contents. The justices of the United States Supreme Court often act this way in resolving competing legal doctrines, for example, after reviewing briefs from interested parties advocating *preferred* doctrine(s) over others.

Subconscious frames, on the other hand, are typically invested with personal or group identities, values, and emotional/psychological elements like fears and insecurities. People present these frames (asserting to be facts) as a statement of who they are, as a marker of tribal allegiance, and/or as psychological defense mechanisms. A great many people, for example, hold the belief (really a psychological *attitude*) that government in general is bad, committed to suppressing their individuality, and even evil. They reflexively recoil at nearly all governmental regulation and reject government's presence in their lives generally.

Think of the motorcycle enthusiasts outraged by helmet wearing legislation even though they favor the safety concept, as they say, "100%." (!?) They just don't want government to tell them what is better for them, they say, regardless if government is *correct*. The same kind of irrational animus is present in the current kerfuffle about the light bulb efficiency rules even though the government was a minor player in the making of the policy and the asserted objections make no rational sense.

Think also of the Red Scare experience in the 1950's and the terrorism scares of today. Although the objective reality of a critical communist presence throughout society was nearly nonexistent and the probabilities of terrorist damage in contemporary America extremely modest (especially as compared against deaths from a hospital stay or on the roadway), irrational fears and insecurities generate invalid beliefs. They result in paranoia and conspiracy theories for many people. Some people imagined (or felt emotionally) a dangerous Commie lurking nearly everywhere or anticipate a terrorist inclination in nearly every foreigner, especially the darker-skinned or Muslim.

The subconscious frames from which these purported threats derive have little basis in objective reality but, nevertheless, have their own internal logics implicating public reactions like support for drastic security measures (even demonstrably ineffective ones), overreaching and counterproductive diminutions of civil rights, and hugely wasteful public expenditures. (Note: some of this fearful attitude is driven, we know, by the elite as a strategy to control the little people.) There is no shortage of subconscious frame positions about a whole a lot of things like this in all kinds of people with a wide range of political attitudes generally.

The problem-solving approaches useful with cognitive frame differences pretty much are useless with these subconscious frames. Facts, reason, sensitivity to multiple perspectives, etc. just bounce off an emotional/psychological frame like BB's hurled at a bulletproof vest. There is no shared basis for communication.

Curiously, many of these intense communication/belief/attitude conflicts are "mountain-out-of-molehill" types of situations. For example, being required by law to wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle is at most only a tiny inconvenience and/or expense to a rider but having large safety and other benefits for the public at large. For riders to have such an emotional reaction to the rule (and to government in general) is way out of proportion to the rule's effects upon them. Even more remarkable is the intense reaction to the lightbulb efficiency regulations which at worst increases the cost of a standard light bulb by a very modest amount (while providing for disproportionate *long-term* value) while enhancing national energy efficiency and stimulating innovation. Other out of proportion reactions (often from people on each side of a position) include those regarding school prayer issues, environmental protection, educational standards, and even abortion (see below for more discussion of abortion.) Clearly, there is much more going on here than mere reasoned disagreements.

These intense subconscious positions present some of the most heated and enduring political and social conflicts all for no *good* reasons. There *are* reasons, of course (based on irrational elements), and we have to figure out creative ways to resolve these communication/belief/frame conflicts. Without a shared basis for communication in the public policy sphere there will be serious limits to intelligent national decision-making and policymaking and progress towards a Smart Society will be inhibited. We can start by recognizing the nature of these kinds of frames, accept the subconscious ones (as much as we need to) for what they are, try to level the intensity of them (especially the molehill-types) to the objective level of the effects, and find ways to bridge them (if even they can *ever* be bridged) with the more rational frames we want to use to smarten governance and social relations.

The reality is that there are no *easy* ways to dissipate or change subconscious frames once they become set. Against fundamentalism, there may be *no* ways at all. (We will have to rely on techniques which only marginalize it.) Each specific issue and situation may require multiple approaches each of which may work with some subset of the adherants. Perhaps, a focused *set* of approaches and strategies may reach enough people to defuse the intensity, find common ground for communications, eliminate the divisiveness aspects, and ultimately *resolve* the disputes by building accommodation and compromise positions which can garner sufficient support.

Let's look at a particularly contentious subconscious frame problem—the role of abortion. Arguably, the disputes about this one are as intense as any. The issue is a particularly potent and enduring divider. The unresolved dispute between the pro-life and medical/practical positions has been responsible for some bad public policy choices, but way more significantly, it has been responsible for dividing major social groups in serious ways inhibiting social harmony, fostering group frictions, and dividing the little people thereby politically weakening their influence as a class. This is all the more frustrating as the issue, arguably, is of the molehill-type (as explained below.) Some might say that this issue (among others) has been intentionally roiled by some of the elite class as part of a class control strategy to divide the lower classes. It diverts attention away from the elite-lower-class hierarchy issue which, to them, is the *objectively* important one which must be protected.

Regardless, unlike objective concerns like capital investments, employment, or political power statuses, abortion is about the subjective *characterization* of what it means to be a "person" at the earliest stage of life. The nature of the fetus can be our starting point of discussion. Characterizing the fetus one way (pro-life) implies the relevance of the full *criminal* code, including the murder rules. For pro-life adherents, the fetus is a person on the same ethical and legal order as those of us who work, vote, go to school, and the like. Terminating the life of a fetus at any stage of development, even immediately after conception (and even *preventing* conception, for some), is murder, or at least a major transgression against morality.

Characterizing it another way (medical/practical) means a relatively modest medical procedure (although having major pro-active consequences for the patient and her family and for society in general.) They characterize the fetus essentially as a physical clump of cells having almost no human characteristics and no history. It is almost nothing like we are or like anyone we know. It has no relationships with anyone, either, except the very modest biological one with its maternal host. Termination of the fetus implies few to no legal, ethical, or practical consequences and proactively *avoids* a myriad of legal, personal, family, economic, and other (often major) consequences.

In a sense, this is a remarkably striking kind of molehill to mountain comparison. From the medical perspective, an abortion is a minor procedure while for the pro-life position it is a murder. Keep in mind that each position perceives the *same* objective reality; the difference is based entirely on subjective characterizations! In order to try to bridge these positions we need to **think out clearly** the nature of these characterizations. 1) Where do the characterizations come from? 2) What are the consequences of each characterization? 3) What is to be accomplished with either view?

Philosophically, characterizations are *made*, not found, somewhat like how photographic images are made, not merely taken, (See Appendix A for more details on this concept.) How in the world, some might say, does an outwardly invisible clump of cells not much distinguishable from a small tumor become classified as a human being with a full set of legal rights? From at least one view, that is a pretty strange concept, but it is not strange at all for most pro-life adherents who are almost always religiously-based, especially Christian. There is doctrinal material (as *interpreted*) which views the fetus as a human being based, presumably, on a theological sense of what life is—it is magical, mysterious, precious, and spiritual, even at the earliest stages of life. It is projected to grow into something which is essentially like us. And, because of that, the life of the fetus is something that only God could have jurisdiction over. It is significant that this focus upon the fetus allows a sort of a bright-line, *simple to administer* morality.

That's an important element for maintaining group solidarity as moral *nuances* would only make it more likely that multiple or gradated beliefs/rules/characterizations might be considered valid by some members, thereby softening solidarity. (Note: the *Roe vs Wade* Supreme Court decision of 1973 ruling that the legality of abortion varied with the developmental status of the fetus reflects just such a type of gradated morality.)

Arguably, there is nothing objective (in a practical sense) which drives this bright-line concept of fetus status. Notably, others not part of the religious group(s) which hold this belief, do not share that characterization. For many (most?) people the fetus is something either never brought to mind (as in some miscarriages); or is invisible, has no connections of any sort to anyone (except the maternal host), and has no practical relevance until late in its development. In terms of objective significance, no basic human characteristics normally associated with typical human beings are present. There's no name, no identity, no recognizable features, no history, no experiential associations with anyone or anything (other than the biological host) so that no one has a memory, life experience of any kind, or other kind of connection. For some (those considering abortion) a completed childbirth is a *potential* difficulty in their lives as it means bearing and raising a child which may be unwanted or seriously impractical to endure. An abortion means proactively eliminating the problem.

From the medical/practical view, the fetus is sort of like an acorn might be to a mature oak tree. With an acorn, no one has any significant relationship with it and barely any basis to acknowledge its existence. It is living, of course, is situated in a living environment, and expected to *possibly* mature into a grand oak which may be enjoyed for its physical splendor, utilized for lumber, used for shade and landscape design, and more. If it is accidentally crushed or eaten by squirrel no one would reasonably feel a significant loss. The crux of the differences between the abortion positions is in the characterizations—cell mass or (potential) person? Little acorn or (potential) stately oak tree?

Characterizations like the Christian view of the fetus (and similar doctrinal materials of all sorts) are plentiful within many religions but are not usually shared by outsiders. Think of the doctrine prohibiting the mere *illustrating* of Mohammed which is penalized by death; the usage of even pedestrian electrical devices on the Sabbath being sinful; and many others. Many of these concepts (including the penalties and enforcement associated with them) are considered very strange indeed by most nonbelievers and certainly not subject matters which should be imposed upon the rest of us as a matter of public policy.

As noted in Chapters 3 and 8, these doctrines, including the pro-life characterization of the fetus, are mostly unimportant in themselves but significant primarily as social concepts meant to maintain the coherence and solidarity of a particular social group. The integrity of the social group *is* important and justifiable, no doubt. However, accomplishing that goal *doesn't require* these specific doctrines—almost any others (perhaps more innocuous and practically-minded ones) would do. Religion's sufficient functions are about easing the pain of mortality and misfortune and maintaining a social community. Those functions are really independent of doctrine (as comparative religious studies show.)

If there is a storyline needed to keep members together it can be nearly anything--preferably public policy innocuous and practical; i.e., in a sense, Smartened! If these doctrinal beliefs are only characterizations of people or interpretations of events or ideas, as described here, they can be re-characterized. This notion presents a fertile area where new and maybe younger intellectual and spiritual leaders can modernize religious doctrines and reinterpret them to accommodate to the 21st-Century and especially to the Smart society contemplated by the Program.

That means getting rid of divisive and unnecessary “us versus them” concepts and promoting beyond themselves even broader communities to provide the same support functions that nearly everyone needs, religious or not. They can turn traditional concepts from dividers to bridges, so to speak, eliminating unnecessary frictions and helping to support the American Team concept. If abortion and other similar religious/group doctrines were confined (i.e., sandboxed) to believers alone, there may not be any reason for others to be concerned with them. These kinds of things would not have significant social and political consequences. That would be the end of these unnecessary dividers.

Unless and until that happens (see discussion in Chapters 8 and 9), the collective needs ways to deal with the negative consequences. It may be useful for dealing with divisive subconscious framing to draw upon the model of the Grand Reconciliation Project. In essence, that means producing a meeting of

leaders, cue-givers, and potential bridgers having the following set of characteristics: 1) made up of *perspective* representatives of all relevant views, 2) fair-mindedness, 3) acting in good faith to actually try to *resolve* this issue, 4) amenable to empathy conditioning, and 5) dedicated to rational frame negotiation seeking a meta-level or balanced framework.

Let's assume that we have established a focused, mini-Reconciliation Project for the abortion issue. Let's imagine the participants reach at least a modest agreement (**a collective perspective**) on the following minimal set of considerations:

Facts and goals:

- 1.) All things being equal, abortion should be something to be avoided. (That acknowledges the strongly-held beliefs of the pro-life people, the emotional elements of a woman's decision to abort, and even the economic costs to the woman and society.)
- 2.) Regardless of even strict legal prohibitions, many abortions *will* occur, as they always have. (This is a clear lesson from history and the acknowledgment of the abortion *preferences* for many people.)
- 3.) An *illegal* abortion industry will develop and likely result in many negative medical outcomes, increased physical harms to pregnant women, substandard medical processes, and increased economic and psychic costs and impractical inconveniences for many people. (This is an acknowledgment of the history of abortion and the logic of the satisfaction by the economy (at a variety of levels) of human needs.)
- 4.) Some pregnant women are minors and arguably not competent to make rational/ethical decisions about having an abortion. (This is a matter of generally accepted law based on known child development capabilities.)
- 5.) In the absence of educational programs of various sorts, some women (for a number of reasons) may make irrational decisions for themselves, their families, and/or society regarding having an abortion. (This is an acknowledgment of the range and limitations of human decision-making capabilities.)
- 6.) The birth of an unwanted child may have significant negative consequences for the child, the mother, the family, and society in the short and long terms. That means dealing with new personal and financial responsibilities, new time demands, new emotional and psychological duties, inhibition of employment/career opportunities, and many others similar and more complex. (These consequences include broader sociological effects, too. All of these aspects are fairly obvious, their significance long-established over decades or more of social and economic research.)

Consideration of these factors allows us to **size up the consequences of each characterization:**

A. Pro-life:

- legal prohibition of abortion everywhere
- little to no reduction in actual abortions
- significant negative medical outcomes
- significant psychic and economic costs to pregnant women
- significant legal liabilities and the stigma of the legality
- large increases in unwanted childbirths with generations of negative personal and social costs

B. Medical/practical:

- continuation of the intense emotional/psychological opposition to abortion from a large active group(s) fostering social frictions and divisiveness
- a significant number of pregnant women making poor or irrational decisions about having abortions

Let's **evaluate what is/may be accomplished by each characterization**. For the pro-life proponents it's *not* the stopping of abortions. For the medical/practical proponents it's *not* the obtaining of a rational consensus or a harmonious social acceptance of abortions. The fact that the best outcome for the pro-life position is a *legal* outcome only with a modest (if any) reduction in actual abortions is why it may be considered a molehill of a position. The modest effects are way out of proportion to the the antiabortion effort and the emotional, psychological, and economic capital contributed to it and the intensity by which the position is asserted. Obtaining this legal outcome would be a *symbolic* victory of sorts reinforcing a sense of personal and group identity for the proponents. That, however, is an outcome *way* different than the one ostensibly demanded. Nearly equally unsatisfying is that the best available outcome for the medical/practical position leaves society basically where it is now with the continuation of an intense divider with its associated frictions, etc. with no end in sight.

Neither outcome is satisfactory for a Smart society. There needs to be a resolution and there *may* be one provided we use a Smart approach. A Smart approach will include the following elements:

a) **Thinking out clearly the nature of the characterizations.** We want to rationally articulate the positions to get at least these people who are truly results-oriented to understand exactly what these positions are, what they mean, and what they can realistically accomplish. Not every partisan starts out with clear thinking about his/her issues and so may look for an alternative based on re-evaluation.

b) **Identifying and itemizing the consequences of each characterization.**

c) **Determining what is/can be accomplished by each characterization.**

d) **Producing a mini-Reconciliation Project to bring fair-minded, problem-solving people together to develop a bridging resolution.** We start by identifying leaders, cue givers, and intellectuals of the proponents of each position and selecting for inclusion those who are fair-minded, willing to try to resolve the issue in good faith, amenable to empathy conditioning, and nimble-minded enough to attempt rational frame negotiations. These people will not try to promote one subconscious frame over another but work towards resolutions from *sideways* or *above* those existing frames with creative new meta-frames or alternative frames which impel protagonists to think and feel in new and socially beneficial ways. This may entail various techniques of finding common grounds, compromises, and just new paths to promoting mutual interests and group respect.

e) **Developing meta-frames** incorporating the values and valuable components of each of the conflicting characterizations, or creating a new frame offering a nimble-minded balancing of them.

f) **Creating a cultural acceptance of rationality** where reasoned, fact-based, and practical approaches to social divider problem-solving gradually replace (at least in most part) the emotional, psychological, individual/traditional attitudes which predominate now in this area.

g) **Supporting the bridging efforts of leaders, cue givers, and intellectuals at the grass roots levels** who will *reinterpret* irrational frames (i.e., subconscious ones, doctrines, attitudes, etc.) and invent newer, more modern ones in conformity with the meta-level frames or balanced position developed in the mini-Reconciliation Project. We may develop a set of leaders and cue givers to inspire people to at least *act* rationally, if not to think out complex positions clearly.

h) **Developing conditioning programs** to guide the proponents to adapt/adjust to the new frames as easily as possible.

i) **Have patience enough to allow the conditioning approaches to work.** If sufficient numbers of proponents are not able to adjust or adapt, then we will work to condition their children and grandchildren while waiting for the rigid ones to die off. (Some philosophers believe that paradigm shifts—like this kind—happen only when the proponents of the old ideas die off allowing the new to replace the old.)

Appendix C: Contacts

1. The National Character Program maintains a **website** at: [www/theactionmanual.com](http://www.theactionmanual.com)
2. A **blog** with open commentaries is accessible at: [www/theactionmanual.com/the-blog](http://www.theactionmanual.com/the-blog)
3. The **Twitter feed** is at: [@theactionmanual](https://twitter.com/theactionmanual)
4. **E-mails** are received at: author@theactionmanual.com
5. **Financial contributions** can be made to the National Character Program at the website at:
[www/theactionmanual.com/contacts](http://www.theactionmanual.com/contacts)
6. **Paperback versions** of this book can be purchased at: Amazon.com

About the Author

Why is the author here listed as anonymous (New Ideas)?

He is a very private person who prefers the low-profile. He believes the ideas presented here ought to stand on their own and personal identification would just get in the way of attention to those ideas.

There is not much interesting about him in any case except for these facts:

1. He is one of the little people. He has always felt bad that so many hard working, high quality little people living the small life well so often get beat up in the political economy without good reason.
2. He truly believes that the National Character Program is a sound vision and plan to change their status in society.
3. He feels an existential urge to add what *he* can to that goal.
4. Beyond the moral imperative, the author has credentials. He has a Phd. in Political Science from a national university and concentrated on "grand theory." He also has a JD and has been an attentive observer of social science topics like economics, politics, and social relations nearly all of his life.

'Nuff said?

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