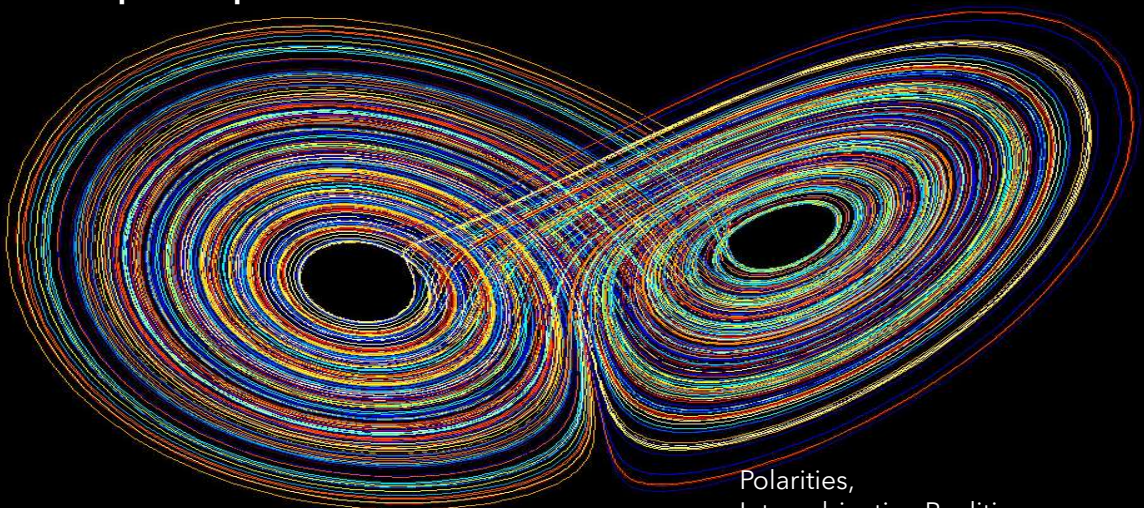


Wicked Problems & Intractable Predicaments In a Complex Adaptive Universe



Polarities,
Intersubjective Realities,
Mass Formation,
and the Assimilation/Contrast Effect

Not Problems: Intractable Predicaments

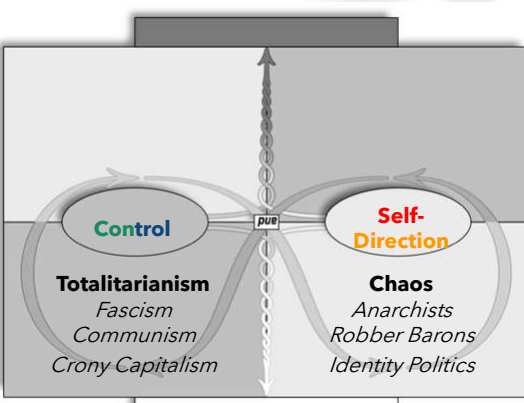
Polarities

Multarities

In complex adaptive [*psychosocial*] systems, the whole is usually **LESS** than the sum of the parts.

There is little wisdom of the crowd;
just mob rule.

Result of Intransience on a Polarity



Polarity: two forces that are interdependent yet opposite each other – both are necessary
A “Multarity” is an entangled interdependency of more than two forces.

<https://www.polaritypartnerships.com/applications-impact>

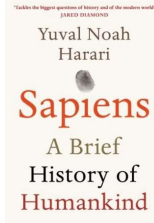
12/16/2023

WFS Jan 2024

3

Intersubjective Reality

We Need Better Stories



Collective Unconscious (Jung)

Toxic, viral Memes (Dawkins)

Constructed Reality (Kegan. . .)

Intersubjective Reality (belonging)

Yuval Harari [Sapiens]

Everybody is always partly **WRONG**

- “Homo sapiens rules the world because it is the only animal that can believe in things that exist purely in its own imagination, such as gods, states, money, and human rights.”
- Everybody in a society tells the same story (myth). True believers are self-deluded into believing their myth. The prefrontal cortex shuts down.
- Social cooperation is based on a shared myth and is more powerful if the myth is less probable. (secret knowledge)
- Myths about the past limit our ability to imagine the future.
- Religion/Ideology (myth) tells what to do with tech.
- Governing Myths: Deism → Humanism → Dataism

<https://www.ynharari.com/book/sapiens-2/>

<https://youtu.be/UTchioiHMOU>

12/16/2023

WFS Jan 2024

4

Mass Formation

Hannah Arendt

Basis of Totalitarianism

The banality of evil - I was just following orders.

Ultimately a toxic expression of competing intersubjective realities that are **not capable of coping with complex life conditions**

Fear, absence of meaning, free-floating anxiety and anger and wide frustration leads to Totalitarianism- Mass Psychosis

- Mattias Desmet sites the proliferation of “woke” [cancel] culture and the growing calls for “strict government controls from within the population itself”
- On issue after issue – ‘terrorists, climate changes, heterosexual men, and, later, viruses considered too dangerous to be tackled with old fashion[ed] means’ – society’s response was the same: massive government programs and/or draconian laws and regulations.
- “the emergence of a new totalitarianism, no longer led by flamboyant ‘mob leaders’ such as Joseph Stalin or Adolf Hitler but by dull bureaucrats and technocrats.”

12/16/2023

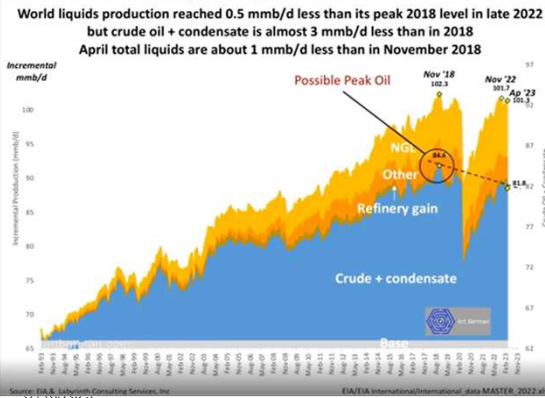
WFS Jan 2024

5

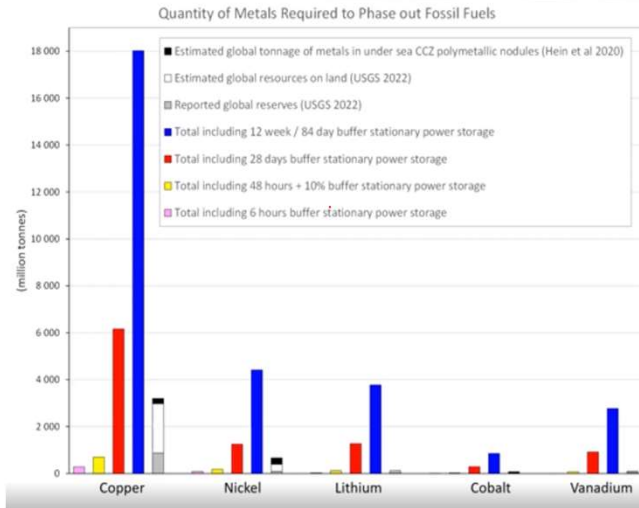
Mass Formation around bad ideas

Delusional Solutions to Complex Dilemmas

- We can have exponential growth on a finite planet- tech saves us
- There's plenty of fossil fuel



Wind and Solar will save us



WFS Jan 2024

<https://www.simonmichaux.com/>

6

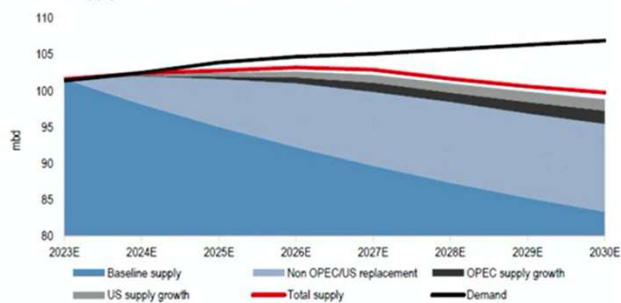
Mass Formation around bad ideas

Delusional Solutions to Complex Dilemmas

- There's plenty of fossil fuel

Figure 1: We see 1.1mmb supply deficit emerging in 2025E widening to 7.1mmb in 2030E, driving upside risks to oil prices

Global oil supply & demand balances forecast

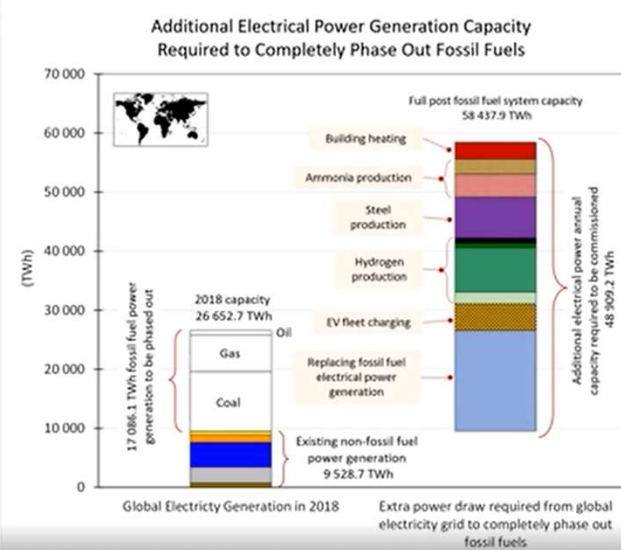


12/16/2023

WFS Jan 2024

7

Green energy will save us



Conflict Degenerates into two (or more) belligerent Masses

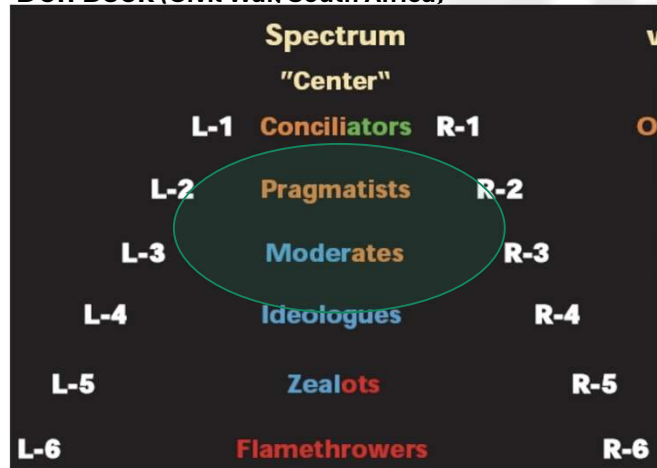
(ACE) the **Assimilation/Contrast Effect**

Looks at how invested your ego is in a belief

- 'Assimilation effect' – you find pleasing and acceptable information that is not really that close to what you believe.
- 'Contrast effect' – you find unacceptable even information that is fairly close to what you believe.
- In political conflict, moderates objectively on "our side" are viewed as "giving aid and comfort to the enemy" and moderate opponents' views are distorted as much more extreme and demonized.

12/16/2023

Assimilation-Contrast Effect in Social Conflict Don Beck (Civil War, South Africa)



The **Assimilation-Contrast Effect** is grounded in **Social Judgement Theory**, developed by **Muzafer Sherif**

<https://integralleadershipreview.com/8135-the-master-code-spiral-dynamics-integral-2/>

<https://www.integratedsociopsychology.net/theory/assimilation-contrast-effect/>

Disavowing the Extremists (abandon base)

- The population consensus is often around moderate and pragmatic policy proposals (that don't satisfy extremists)
- Politics is funded by big money that seems to be supporting extremists
- Cancel culture stifles calmer, more rational voices

If **reconciliation, or compromise, or the good offices of neutral intermediate voices** are not available, **the only option is for one side to remove the other though force.**

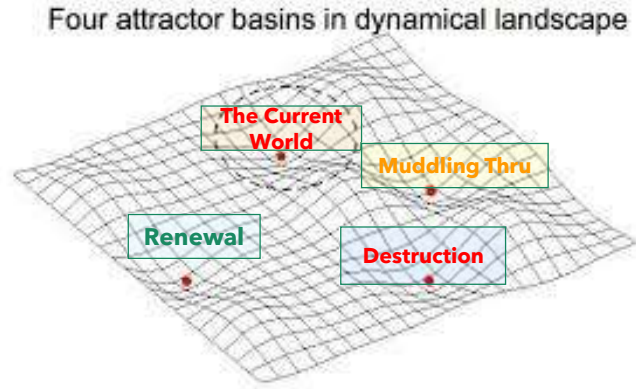
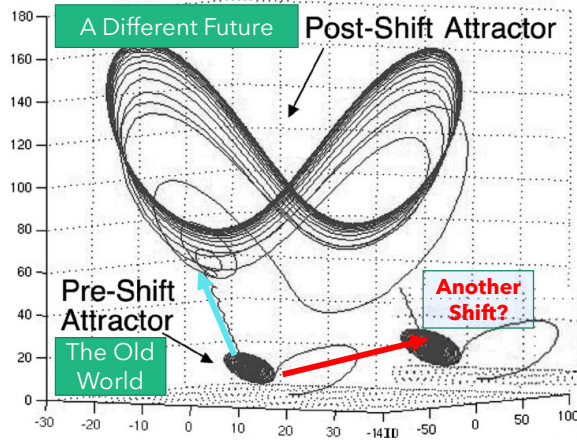
Only one of the dialectical truths can dominate; and only one side can occupy the behavioral space. (Beck)

12/16/2023

WFS Jan 2024

9

Dynamic Attractors – The World Evolves

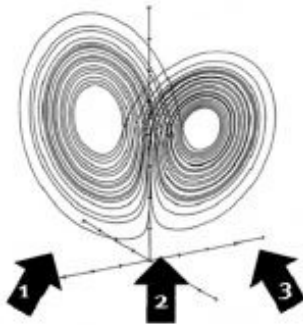


12/16/2023

WFS Jan 2024

10

Strange (Dynamic/Static) Attractors



1
What factors are locking organisation into existing patterns? Structure, hierarchies, rules, controls, culture, defensive routines, power relations, psychic traps? Is the attractor pattern appropriate? Should it be changed?

2
If change is required, how is the transition from one basing to another to be achieved? How can small changes be used to create large effects?

3
What are the ground rules of the new attractor pattern going to be? How to manage through the 'edge of chaos' of Stage 2 while remaining open to emergent self-organisations?

Does this scale?

Operating at the edge of chaos?

“Implication: Manage contexts and ensure decision-making approaches are appropriate to the system

Certain social, economic and political domains seem – at least metaphorically – to fit the image of the strange attractor metaphor, with discontinuities, perpetual novelty and ever-changing elements but recurring patterns and discernible structures.

Equilibrium and stability should not be viewed as default and ideal states for a particular system, but as situations of stasis and ossification.

There are bifurcation points that tip systems from one state to another.”

[Exploring the science of complexity](#)

Living systems exist in a state of dynamic stability, not equilibrium. Only dead things can be at equilibrium.

12/16/2023

WFS Jan 2024

11