

An Hypothesis of Values Systems as Foresight Frameworks

Introduction

The hypothesis of this paper proposes that Value Systems, as initially identified by Prof. Clare W Graves (1) and subsequently developed by Don Beck (2) and Chris Cowan (3) into the Spiral Dynamics™ (4) model, provide clues as to how people approach the subject of time.

By identifying someone's central Values System (VS) we are able to anticipate their likely approach to time, their orientation toward the future (and therein foresight) and their potential expectations of the outcomes of planning. We are also made cognoscente of the fact that varying life conditions demand alternative methods of resolution. As such, the ability to consider the future for each of the Value Systems is influenced by differing factors of importance and foresight practitioners and strategic planners will benefit greatly from being aware of those differences.

It is expected that this hypothesis can also be mapped across to social systems and that in so doing, we will enrich the way managers, consultants, teachers and strategists engage their forward thinking and planning for the future within organisational contexts. This will enable foresight practitioners in particular, to more effectively utilise the array of methodologies and tools at their disposal by bringing to the fore awareness of variations in how people approach the concept of time.

It is probable that the Value Systems approach to understanding these variations will expose structural limitations within popular foresight methodologies. By alerting foresight practitioners to the limitations and by making suggestions for improvement, we will be able to personally deal with a greater variety of subsets within a foresight process and can anticipate enhanced forward thinking outcomes for our 'clients'.

I shall offer insights into the inherent structures of each VS and make suggestions to foresight practitioners for ways that they can enhance their implementation of foresight tools using Values Systems as foresight frameworks. This paper assumes that readers have an understanding of various foresight methods and tools and will not explain what the tools are or how they are used. Readers wishing to expand their knowledge should consider using the references provided or seek alternatives in order to improve their information base.

The research underpinning Value Systems extends over 40 years and will only be covered in general detail in this piece. Readers seeking richer understanding are advised to contact the National Values Centre at the address provided in the 'references' notation at the end of this paper. (5)

The Variations of Time

As referred to in 'The Quest for Strategic Foresight – Using Foresight Methodologies to Move from Unconscious to Conscious Awareness of 'Future'', (6) time tends to be viewed as occurring in 3 distinct streams – Spiral, Circular and Linear.

Where time has defined start and end (you are born and then you die and in between you make a life for yourself), the interpretation is of a linear progression. Where time is seen as having defined stages of growth then decay, followed by growth and so on, it has a cyclical nature and an ebb and flow. In the case of time being interpreted as having a spiral nature, life and death are intertwined in an upward and continuous spiralling loop - in your next life you take another step towards being more 'complete' as a 'being', and death is merely an opportunity to reflect on your progress to date.

In any of the 3 contexts of time, it is usually the future that draws us forward. In this sense, 'things that happened' (past), 'things that are happening' (present) and 'things that might happen' (future), enable people to interpret or classify their understanding of events in time. Questions that arise in this paper address how each VS might work through aspects of time in order to achieve their appropriate end aim and proposes that for some of the VS, the 'future' is clouded by historical factors and ascribed patterns of belief and for others, may not exist in any conscious way.

Each distinct VS has its own interpretation of past, present and future yet commonly these differences are ignored in social assessments - the 'western worldview' is one distinct lump, as is the 'economic worldview' or a 'technological worldview' or a 'social worldview'. These paradigmatic themes ignore the markedly different interpretations of each paradigm as viewed through the eyes of particular VS. What passes for 'technology' to one group can be vastly different from another's view. What counts as an appropriate style of social inclusiveness to one group is unlikely to be the same as that for a *different* Value System. Please note that I am talking about the 'style' or method of application – this is a process-orientated dimension in much the same way that thinking about time is a process. Essentially this approach asks us to deal more with the 'how' than the 'what' (often referred to as 'content').

The implications for the way in which foresight methodologies are applied are significant. Selecting the 'right tool from the toolbox' now demands that the foresight practitioner also consider how the particular method or tool is applied or fits each of the thinking processes (Value Systems).

Foresight and Strategic Foresight Awareness in Value Systems

Foresight is 'A universal human capacity which allows people to think ahead and consider, model, create, respond to - future eventualities'. (7)

The old saying 'forewarned is forearmed' expresses the underlying benefits of foresight as a capacity – that being aware in advance will enable you to be better prepared for an eventuality. So if foresight (as defined by Slaughter in the quote above) is a universal capacity that will better prepare us for possible future outcomes, why do we still hear of people who are shocked when an arguably foreseeable event (like another stock market crash, a house being destroyed in a tornado or bushfire prone area, a car accident on a busy street or job redundancy in 'old world' manufacturing plants) occurs?

My interpretation is that for the most part, foresight operates at an unconscious level - we sense an understanding, expect a predictable outcome and think no more of 'what may be'. Of course, when our senses aren't well tuned, our expectations unrealistic and our thinking shallow or misinformed, we open up the possibility of being surprised by the unanticipated events. This is where the Value Systems approach begins to expand our conceptual thinking around strategic foresight because they alert us to variables in *expectations of the future and approaches to the future*. These variables provide an awareness of what type of information is likely to be found in the unconscious realm and the type likely to be found in the conscious realm for each of the Value Systems.

If we are to learn from our 'mistakes of judgement and anticipation' we need to be able to assess just 'how' we came to have the belief we did and seek to improve for next time. The VS understanding will be particularly enlightening as it provides a framework by which we can see what data will be first filtered by each VS prior to accepting it as relevant and valid information to be acted upon. Information that does not fit within the established VS framework will be discarded or ignored and rarely make it to the person's 'radar screen'. Futurists attempting to enhance their own or their client's forward thinking would do well to heed this message - make it specific and relevant to each VS and then present that information in the most suitable way for each VS.

It could be argued that in industrialised worlds where we are bombarded with so much information and our immediate attention is constantly being called upon to 'attend to stuff', that many have lost a connection to the innate qualities of awareness that our 'less civilised' ancestors were so attuned to. The result is that we seek to remind ourselves through *conscious labelling* of the importance of the task at hand. To this end we use the term '*strategic*' foresight to indicate a conscious, deliberate, structured and methodical approach to alerting ourselves to the potentials of what may lie ahead.

The functional difference then between foresight and strategic foresight is that where foresight (unconscious) is an innate quality of human beings, strategic foresight (conscious) deliberately questions the very assumptions upon which our beliefs are based. By bringing our thinking about the future into the conscious realm we begin to create quality, deep and broad strategic foresight approaches. These must then consider our understanding of time and how different approaches to time will lead to different ways to think about the future and how to deal with those possibilities.

I propose that certain VS are more likely to operate at a strategic level when utilising foresight and that for others, bringing to conscious awareness information not previously considered, will only succeed where that information fits within the VS process (framework) used. To that end, notions of 'action' and 'inquiry' (as per Torbert's model) (8) improve our approach to foresight when we consider the differing VS and that which they accept as valid information. Potentially this also leads us to address the notions of 'open' and 'closed' (as developed by Milton Rokeach) (9) states of thinking. The remainder of this paper seeks to unlock the hidden domain of VS and temporal perceptions.

An Overview of Value Systems

The late Clare W Graves was a psychology professor at Union College, Schenectady, New York. (10). His theory of human values began as he tackled a consistent problem in teaching his students – ‘whose theory was right?’ Graves was constantly asked similar questions as he taught other psychological models and eventually his frustration in being unable to reconcile the variety of psychological approaches sparked him into action.

Graves decided to conduct a profiling research experiment on his own students and began by asking them to answer the following 5 questions:

1. Can one substantiate that conflict and contradiction, confusion and controversy are represented in the conceptions of psychological health?
2. If so, what are the conceptions of psychological health extant in the minds of biologically mature human beings?
3. Do the existing concepts suggest that psychological health should be viewed as a state, a condition or as a psychological process?
4. What is the nature of psychological health if it is a state or a process?
5. If psychological health is a state or a condition, can our state of confusion and controversy become, in theory, comprehensible and resolvable by clarifying that state which is psychological health? (11)

The essence of the Graves questions was to define a meaning of a psychologically healthy mature adult personality and seek identifiable ways to aid people to a state of psychological health. His research revealed some startling discoveries and at the time moved the psychological field into uncharted territory. In fact Graves’ theory smacked head on into the doyen of the day – Abraham Maslow and his ‘hierarchy of needs’ (12) theory. In subsequent years, prior to his own death, Maslow deferred to Graves indicating that ‘...he has it right’. (13)

Graves would summarise his model as ‘An emergent, cyclical, bio/psycho/social double helix model of adult human behaviour’. Whilst somewhat complex, it is an accurate description of his body of research and subsequent theory. He identified that adult human behaviour was influenced by external life conditions of increasing complexity. This complexity was derived from the social world (environment) in which the individual ‘found’ himself or herself. The approach undertaken by the individual to dealing with that external complexity was influenced by their biological and psychological makeup. These two intertwined & influencing streams (external life conditions and internal abilities) provided Graves with a ‘double helix’ linkage and the more complex thinking in dealing with life conditions provided his ‘emergent’ stages with a swing from a ‘self orientation’ to an ‘others orientation’ providing the cyclical nature of development.

Don Beck and Christopher Cowan were two students of Graves who worked closely with him in the decades prior to his death and began to expand Graves’ comprehensive research studies to a wider audience. After Graves’ death, Beck & Cowan coined the term ‘Spiral Dynamics’ and co wrote ‘Spiral Dynamics – Mastering Values Leadership and Change’. (14)

The work of Cowan & Beck added an additional dimension to Graves' work – a 'short hand' for the model in the form of colour codes. The intention was to enable the complexity of Graves' Value Systems notational style to be more user friendly for those with experience in the model. These colour codes have led to a wide level of discussion in a number of 'communities of practise' who have begun to understand and interpret the research data. The important thing for this paper is to note that all of Graves' research along with that subsequently produced by Beck & Cowan, have confirmed that there are differing approaches to how people cope with their external environments. It is these differing approaches that create the variations in how people deal with the concept of the future.

The Gravesian Notation and Corresponding Spiral Dynamics Colour Codes

Graves initial research identified four distinct VS subsequently classified as CP, DQ, ER & FS. He also gained a 'hint' of a fifth system (GT) but felt that he did not have a big enough sample to confirm this system's existence. Graves intuited that CP was probably a more fully developed system than stages that existed before CP became established and later based his AN and BO Value Systems on the findings of other researchers of his day. As indicated earlier, the model has two linked streams – the 'external life conditions' (listed as A, B, C through to G) and 'coping mechanisms' (listed as N, O, P through to T).

Beck and Cowan refined Graves' research, confirmed the existence of the GT Value System and added the level 'HU' with potential for another. Discussion by groups not fully conversed in the Spiral Dynamics model have theorised levels beyond HU, but to date, no quantifiable and supportable research has been provided. These colour codes have been 'grouped into cool colour codes with a focus on achieving externally ascribed aims (purple, blue, green) and warm colour codes with a focus on achieving the individual's aims (red, orange, yellow). The Spiral Dynamics colour codes and corresponding Gravesian notation, with brief explanation of the operational style of the Value System are –

AN / Beige This Value System operates almost solely at meeting the basic biological needs – hunger, sex, shelter and has no conscious awareness of itself as an individual entity existing in an environment.

BO / Purple This Value System operates in closely bonded clans (tribal) and though aware of itself is only aware of itself as a part of a larger group.

CP / Red The Red Value System is the first with a recognition of itself as an individual with the desires separate from that of its tribe and to also experience self-determination within its surroundings.

DQ / Blue This Value System is the first to recognise that its own life is finite and seeks a structured order to its environment.

ER / Orange In the 'Orange world' we find the first Value System recognising that whilst a system cannot be controlled, it can be manipulated to meet its own goals.

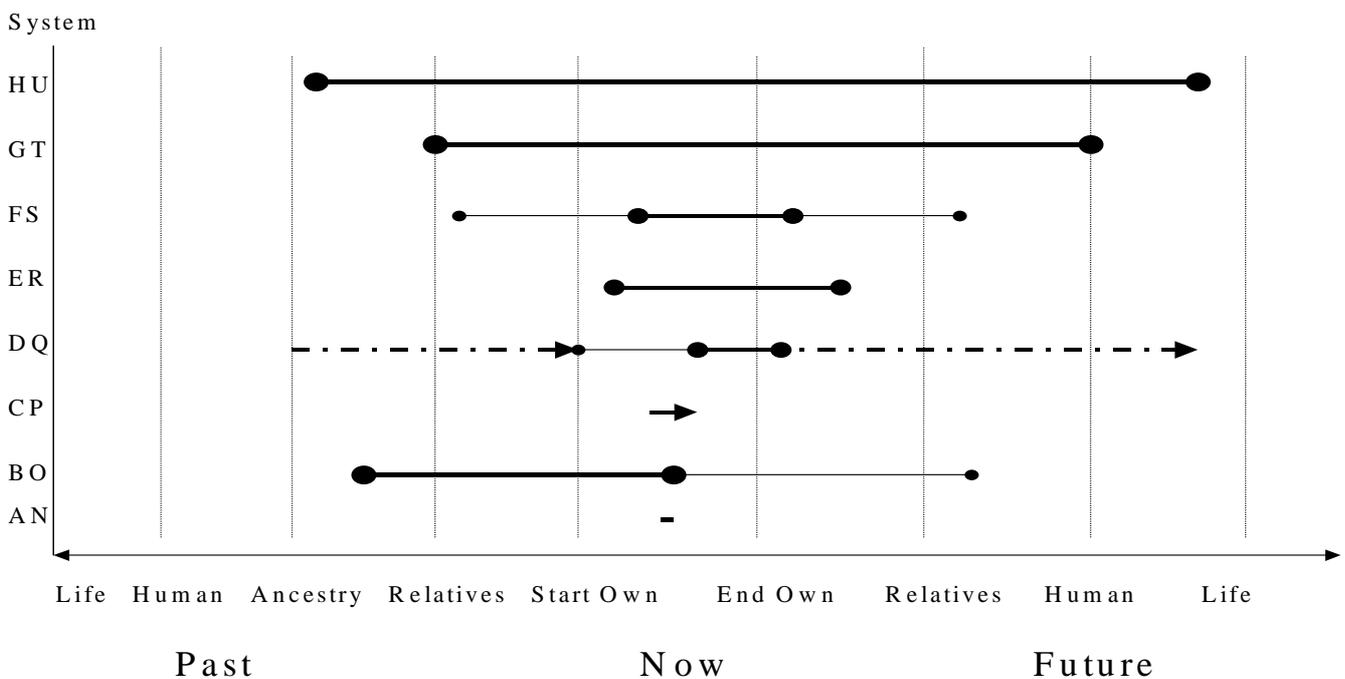
FS / Green This Value System is the first to recognise that multiple perspectives are valid and worthy of consideration and seeks to adapt the system to meet the needs of a wider range of perspectives, rather than to manipulate it for its own ends.

GT / Yellow This Value System is the first to take a systemic perspective and also incorporate all of the previous value systems in its planning and thinking.

HU / Turquoise The data uncovered to date indicates that this Value System is the first to address the planetary system as a living unit and is able to make decisions based on what the planet needs to sustain life. No particular species is necessarily considered to be more worthy than any other, though the human 'tribes' hold sway.

Value Systems & Approaches to Time

Value Systems & Time Orientation © MP BARBER 2003



The Value System Time Orientation (15) diagram above demonstrates that an awareness of time and the ability to contemplate the future varies for each Value System. Additionally it highlights that certain VS may lack a capacity to think 'long term' and others still have awareness of or focus on historical factors.

What the diagram provides are 'influencing aspects' able to be considered with regard to time in the sense of life, from all 'Life' that existed in the past through to all 'Life' that will exist in the future. Further definition of each temporal marker is provided -

- 'Human' in the temporal past refers to the species Homo Sapiens not able to be traced to any ancestry.

- ‘Ancestry’ is those with whom an identifiable bloodline can be delineated from the entity, backwards in time.
- The ‘Relatives’ notation placed in the past temporally refers to living elders of the family of which a person belongs.
- ‘Start Own’ is the commencement of a person’s current physical life.
- ‘End own’ is the completion of that person’s current physical life.
- ‘Relatives’ in the temporal future refers to the bloodline heirs whilst still living (children, grandchildren, great grand children).
- ‘Human’ in the temporal future refers to the species Homo Sapiens yet to be born.

The thickness of a line indicates the level of temporal focus – the thicker the line, the greater the focus, the thinner the line the lesser the focus. Looking at the example given for the DQ/Blue system we can see that there is some focus on the ‘living past’ and extensive focus on time up to the person’s own death. There are also two dotted lines indicating a focus on a time before their birth and after their own death but it is disconnected from their physical life. All Value Systems have ‘start’ and ‘end’ focus points except for the CP/Red Value System whose focus is solely on the instant future (as shown by a small arrow) and the AN Value System that has no awareness of temporality other than that driven from the biological impulses.

It is important to note that the above diagram of time orientation only provides indications as to the span of temporal awareness likely within each VS. The foci within each system are also inherently different. So what we can see above is that both the BO (purple) Values System and the HU (turquoise) Values System have an extensive temporal awareness of ancestry. However, the way in which each VS contemplates historical factors is dictated by the ‘double helix’ make up of each system so that the necessary life conditions determines how any reflection on historical factors occurs.

From the descriptions provided earlier and expanded upon in the next few pages, we know that connection to the ancestors within the BO Value System will likely come through tribal rites, story telling and blood lines. Here we accept the wisdom of those that came before, that the decisions of the tribal elders are based on what is right for the clan and that they are following the well worn path of the ‘family legends’ that form the foundation of the group. This is the realm of the ‘Hatfields and McCoys’ and similar ancestral based rites and lore where the myths and legends form a framework of the world.

HU on the other hand is likely to take a completely different approach to assessing ancestry. Here we know that the emphasis is not on ‘my tribe & bloodline’ but on the vast ‘tribes’ scattered around the planet of which ‘my bloodline’ is in someway connected. HU understands that at some level, we all come from the same stock.

We also see that DQ (blue) has a temporal span that extends from the start of one’s own life till its end and that there is a dotted arrow denoting an awareness of the past and an existence into the future for perpetuity. We’ll discuss this in more detail later and for now an explanation is as follows – the DQ VS believes that time in the physical sense is limited and that the purpose of it is to gain existence in the after life

ad infinitum. This system strictly follows the 'laws' ascribed to it from the 'past' with the living time span being a test of worthiness to a greater outcome.

These brief examples show how time orientation can vary for each Value System within the notion of future conceptions. Because each system has differing foci, the extent to which they perceive the future is influenced by what each system considers 'important'.

For futurists, consultants, managers or change agents, being aware of the VS process that assigns validity to information that is presented is a vital component in understanding what aspects of a futures methodology are likely to be accepted as 'real'. Building a scenario framework cannot then be limited to the consultant's view of the future, no matter how broad or deep that view may be. The search for a conceptual space **must** consider that which is deemed valid for each Value System. Again we begin to see the link between 'open' and 'closed' states of thinking and why consideration will benefit foresight practitioners as they assist their clients.

Simplistic and shallow futures methodologies like 'trends' could be greatly enriched if we can include within our thinking, how the trend may play out in the minds of each VS, though coming off an extremely low qualitative base, that shouldn't be too difficult to do. Trends are wonderful examples of 'Closed Thinking' in reality.

'Trend Spotting', that wonderful craft made famous by such 'futurologists' as Faith Popcorn (16) and so gleefully accepted in business circles as a legitimate business principle (as seen by her list of complicit clients) shows how a closed thinking approach to possible futures delivers the exact result demanded by the proclaimer of the trend. In searching for a trend, anything that confirms it is automatically ascribed value. Anything that does not is automatically dismissed as 'irrelevant' to the trend and so you create a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is no wonder that economists love trends - it is hard to be wrong when the only information you include is that which you claim to be valid confirmation of your desired trend.

But what happens to a trend when you ask of the proclaimer - "For **which** Value System is this a trend?" To answer that, the 'futurologist' would need to have an open mind and in so doing, risks exposing the so-called 'trend' as a creative fabrication because that which is relevant and valid varies within each VS. Simply stated, Value Systems expose shallow foresight methodologies for what they are – media sound bites and throw-a-way lines not to be taken seriously.

VS approaches to the future

It is suggested you refer back to diagram one when reading these VS profiles.

AN / Beige Has no cognitive awareness of time at any sense. All actions are geared towards meeting biologically connected functions.

Recommendation for foresight practitioners -

This value system will not respond to anything at a cognitive level of awareness. If you discover an adult exhibiting these characteristics it is likely that you will have an elderly person suffering variations of dementia like disorders or someone with a brain injury trauma. Even if this is not the reason, (as in cases where severe psychological trauma is likely to have occurred) attempting to engage this person in discussion of the future is a futile exercise. Provide sustenance and keep them warm and clean.

BO / Purple Has an extensive understanding of time with emphasis towards 'learned history' acquired through rites of passage and clan like rituals. The proven history of ancestors and elders generates a sense of perpetuity of the clan into the future, providing the ability to consider the future BUT only as it fits within the sense of continuity of the tribe, especially as this VS is not yet aware of itself as an entity separate from the group. Respect to the elders is a significant driver.

Recommendation for foresight practitioners -

Generating a notion of 'the future' will need to be well connected to the ancestral values that form the structure of this VS thinking. Attempting to expose discontinuities of the past as a means of suggesting change into the future will likely meet with explanations revolving around the idea of 'gods and spirits being angry'. Mythology of the past may provide an avenue into enhanced futures thinking through questions like - 'What would (revered ancestor/guiding spirit) do or recommend?' and 'If this event were to happen in the future, what have you learned in the past that would advise you how to deal with it?'

CP / Red Arguably this VS has taken the notion of existence into perpetuity (as learned in the BO/purple VS) as an absolute. This VS has broken free of the clan identification. Because existence for eternity is taken as a given, this VS spends its time seeking immediate gratification of the senses. There is no recognition of the value of historical fact and no consideration of potential future outcomes as everything is in the here and now. Fear of 'losing face' or being shamed are strong drivers of behavioural responses as are opportunities for immediate gain.

Recommendation for foresight practitioners -

Potentially the best thing you can do is provide some avenue to entertain them whilst working through the foresight process. You may be able to involve them only in so far as there is a perceived sense that instant gratification for engagement is likely. This VS is passionate, enthusiastic and loves challenges. Options occur only as single blips to be acted upon. Multiplistic thinking is not yet available and all options will be accepted one at a time and acted upon, one at a time.

If a process (such as a group scenario development) was waning it may be possible to have this VS inject immediacy and action, particularly if you can establish this task as a test of their 'skill'. Alternatively if you have managed to keep this VS involved at some level, asking them for their idea of what the first action step should be (following say a Backcasting process) could see them able to contribute a useful first stage. Questions such as 'Well if you were boss and this was the world in which you lived, what would be your first decision?' may get them involved. Do not however

expect this VS to be able to contribute much by the way of a deep assessment or consideration of what the future may hold. Most feedback will be couched in terms of immediate gratification of some impulse – “I’d sack everyone and start again” or “Burn the factory down and claim the insurance”.

If responses like these are given, use them as a launching pad for further discussion by the group as in ‘Okay if the factory burned down, what would that mean?’ etc

DQ / Blue This VS operates in a predominantly linear mode and considers time like two book-ends - there is a ‘start’ at one end and a ‘finish’ at the other. In between is a constant battle to do the right thing today, so thinking about the ‘now’ requires much attention. Slaughter’s ‘Bounded Present’ (17) represents delightfully the way this system thinks about time. There is a strong guilt (history) association generating ‘baggage’ that then clouds the future orientation thinking within the ‘now’ time frame and this leads to a limitation of choices as there is ONLY one ‘right’ way to proceed.

There is an ordered structure to the world and anyone who does not follow this structure deserves to be ‘punished’. The key driver is sacrificing his or her own desires (as dominated the CP/Red system) for greater reward in the long term. The past exists as accepted fact laid down by the proper authority and shall be accepted without question. All future activity shall be undertaken using the rules of the rightful authority as THE way forward. Prescriptive forecasting methods, historical (proven) trends will be accepted.

Recommendation for foresight practitioners -

Foresight practitioners will need to ensure that they are accepted as the appropriate bearer of the potential future. In order to do this, introduction to the group by the senior official of the organisation is a must or alternatively, the practitioner’s reputation must be held in such high regard (by all others) as to be considered THE authority by this VS.

This VS is an almost polar opposite to the CP/Red system that preceded it. The future is ‘a gold watch’ upon retirement of faithful service to the company or ‘salvation in the afterlife’ for a life lived honest and true. Attempting to expand the range of options will be extremely challenging for the foresight practitioner. For this VS there is ‘one true way’ and only the self-indulgent seek alternatives. The (company) bible or other such artefact is held sacrosanct and change agents that deride the founding fathers will face the ire of a VS with its ‘back up’.

Foresight practitioners who gain the trust and confidence of the DQ/Blue VS will discover ‘loyal soldiers willing to keep the flame lit’ during the difficult stages of more challenging foresight processes. Utilise their skills at being thorough and robust in their application of the foresight tools and methods. Documentation of ‘How to do’s...’ will be absolutely essential as will certificates indicating attendance and contribution to a foresight workshop.

ER / Orange This system can generate multiplistic options though they are geared toward achieving an outcome for itself. This VS learns how to manipulate the ordered structure of its environment to better suit its own desires, looking for the best option from a number of potential choices – often seen as ‘cutting corners’. The guilt driver associated with the DQ/Blue VS has been transposed into questions over self worth and the ‘toys and trinkets’ of success are sought to overcome feelings of inadequacy. For foresight practitioners this system can be useful at overcoming roadblocks and will engage in a process readily if it feels that a sense of achievement and ‘one upmanship’ will accrue them a higher status.

Recommendation for foresight practitioners –

This VS will love Scenarios, Wildcards and anything that can test their imagination of ‘what is’ against ‘what might be’. The multiple options often generated through scenario work will appeal though any thinking of the future is tinged through lenses that seek constant acquisition of recognition and status for the individual. It is recommended that you utilise the skills of option generation and then attempt to add depth to each option as your foresight process evolves.

Long term thinking that aims to consider future generations may not be high on the agenda and ideas that were not self generated may be derided or ignored. This is the realm of the 3-year business cycle and predictions of the ‘next quarter results’. There is a constant search for the latest result and leading edge ideas and this may lead to ‘shallow’ thinking. Trends indicative of increasing wealth will be well received whereas myth and metaphor themes uncovered through a Causal Layered Analysis (17) may shake their beliefs (and may still be worth pursuing).

These ‘knowledgeable amateurs’ will readily take part in foresight work, in particular if there is a competitive element amongst peers. Outcomes will need to show a near term benefit for participants and generation of multiple options. Leave this VS system to determine which of the options is the ‘best’ option. Outputs tend to be ‘methods’ or technology reliant with any human element possibly playing second stage.

FS / Green This VS begins to use tools that no other system has yet to employ. It attempts to find equivalent value in every option and every point of view. Where as the DQ/Blue system believed that there existed only **one** valid opinion and the ER/Orange system believes there is **one best** opinion of a selected bunch, the FS/Green system attempts to reconcile differences by assigning value evenly across all present view points. As such the type of outputs likely to be generated in foresight work will be distinctly different from anything else generated.

Recommendation for foresight practitioners –

This VS will design humanistic approaches to foresight and look to adjust the current system to better fit a wider group of ‘stakeholders’. Where the CP/Red ‘was’ the system, the DQ/Blue ‘acquiesced’ to the system and the ER/Orange attempted to find a quicker way through the system, the FS/Green approach is to tweak the entire

system – a preference for a ‘work with’ rather than a ‘work within’ approach to systemic frameworks.

Scenarios that enable the FS/Green system to ‘walk a mile in the shoes of these (future) people’ will be highly regarded and unlike the BO/Purple VS that understands through the lens of ancestral stories passed down from generation to generation, the ability to step out of one’s own mind set to seek understanding from the outside, has begun to develop in the FS/Green system.

Futures work that centers on social sustainability of the enterprise, community or group will have strong appeal. Futures methods generating suggestions that ignore human capacity for caring and understanding, or for advancement for the sake of advancement will be derided. Where relevant, practitioners should seek to ask questions that look for ways that humans can use technology to improve the human condition, not to gain financial or political advantage.

This group will generate significantly different outcomes on the subject of ‘globalisation’ than will the ER/Orange VS. Practitioners that have an opportunity to separate these two systems and have them work on the same idea should do so, particularly if the future worlds generated can then be handed over to the opposing group with a suggestion of ‘What’s wrong with this world and how would you fix it?’

GT / Yellow – This VS has the capacity to hold multiple points of view concurrently and considers that whilst they are all valid, some will add greater value than others. This thinking is considerably different from the FS/Green approach that attempts to assign equal value to all perspectives, or the ER/Orange that seeks the best one approach of a bunch of choices. Another significant distinction between this system and the others can be explained as follows –

AN/Beige knows nothing of a system (of being)
BO/Purple is connected to a system
CP/Red ‘IS’ the system
DQ/Blue obeys THE system
ER/Orange manipulates the system
FS/Green works WITH the system

GT/Yellow seeks to **improve the system** and attempts to do so in a way that enhances the lot of all other Value Systems simultaneously. This is the first VS that seeks to find ways to enhance, downplay, replace or add to existing components that make up the environment in which they exist. This system may clash with any of the other systems by suggesting a multi resolution platform or way forward. The previous Value Systems mentioned will be of the firm belief that their way of approaching or preparing for the future is the right one. GT/Yellow does not hold this to be true, being far more open to taking a bit from here or there to construct alternatives.

For foresight practitioners, it is likely that the perspectives generated from within this way of thinking will consider their living elders and those of future generations not yet born. This may or may not include their own descendents.

Recommendation for foresight practitioners –

Given this VS' ability to generate much deeper, broader and complex considerations of the potential futures, foresight practitioners should seek to utilise participants at this level of thinking to help generate options. They will be highly critical of thin or poorly constructed foresight methods and attempts to pass off such approaches as 'critical' or 'sound' methods are likely to be openly challenged. Alternatively if they feel that time is being wasted or the process is futile, they will 'cut their losses' and seek an activity elsewhere.

Potentially the level of complexity of an idea or option generated by this VS may need to be explained - so seek to draw them out on how they arrived at such an option or why they feel it is a valid perspective worthy of inclusion. These insights may provide excellent learning opportunities for other participants about how such a future world may eventuate, though this does not mean all people will agree with such perspectives. If you recall the DQ/Blue VS, you will remember that the DQ/Blue VS thinking process believes there is only ONE way forward.

The GT/Yellow thinking system will be drawn to Causal Layered Analysis (18) and other critical methodologies and will generate foresight outputs that can include consideration for the needs of future generations as well as outputs aimed at improving the immediate needs.

HU / Turquoise *Please note: Due to the lack of available research data, this perspective of the HU Value System is an interpretation of ongoing discussions regarding HU that appear on the Spiral Dynamics Yahoo chat group and the author's own understanding gained from his own reading, training & discussions with the authors of the Spiral Dynamics book over previous years.*

This VS holds extensive understanding of the macro-historical trends and potential futures across a vast array of life. It believes that the human species does have precedence over all other life forms, however it accepts that other life forms are essential to the 'web of life' and as such, are to be included in thinking.

Unlike any other Value System, the turquoise thinking style looks to maintain the existence of the human species and will not shy away from making hard decisions that remove completely, malignant members for the good of the overall 'global tribes'.

Foresight Practitioners are unlikely to recognise this thinking style and even in the event that a participant in the room is centred at HU, the type of exchanges generated in any forum probably will not alert other participants to their perspectives or complexity of thinking. What is more likely is that this VS will seek collaborative groups of like minded individuals to identify useful tools (including other people) who can help them achieve the desired aims of the group, or will manipulate the voice of an accepted authority in order to have the views raised.

Foresight Frameworks

Readers should be aware that for simplicity of understanding the overviews provided here are interpretations of the 'nodal' stages of VS development. In reality people are rarely creatures of one central state, nor are they necessarily (as in Myers-Briggs typology) (19) 'locked in for life'.

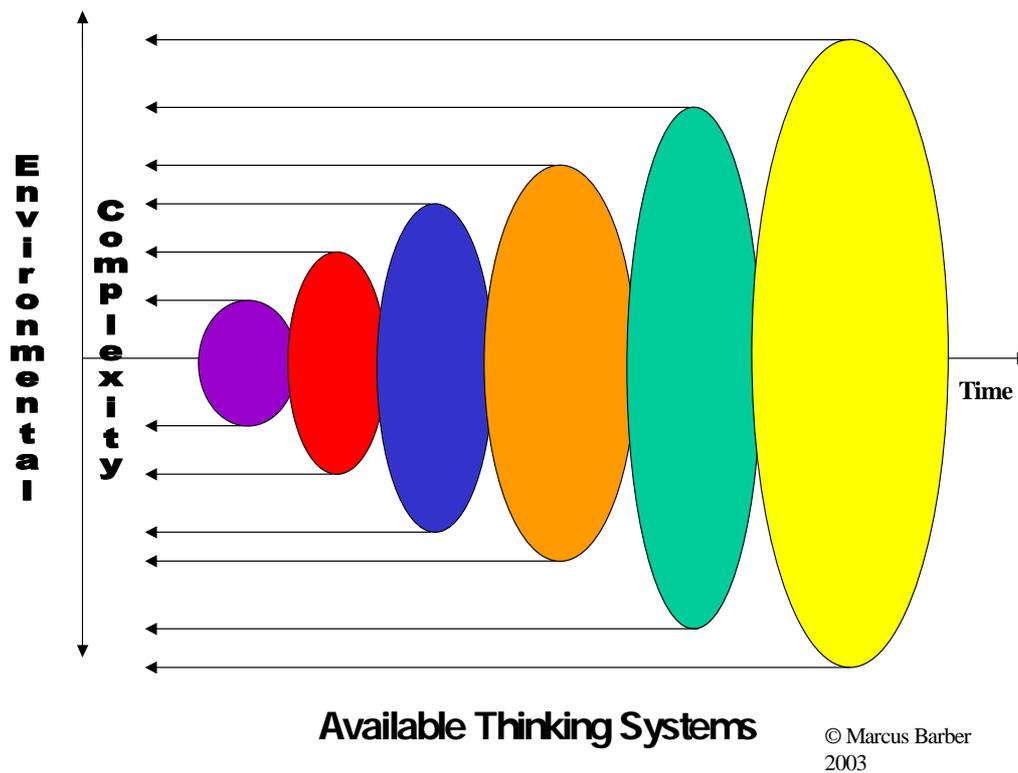
The SD model clearly shows that people can and do change as their life conditions change and other development occurs. This means that growth and recession can be a normal part of Value System development. It is important to remember that Graves and the Spiral Dynamics framework are clear on one vital aspect of their models – older Value Systems stages are retained and incorporated into the overall thinking capacity of the entity and are available as required. Unlike linear models of development, older VS stages are not discarded and replaced by newer ones, they instead form foundation stones for further growth.

The most turbulent stages of activity occur in the transitional stages between each nodal point. Here the entity wrestles with holding true to previously held notions of existence and accepting that they no longer provide a sufficient means of coping with their world. The changes in orientation from a 'me & mine' focus of the warm colours, to the cool colours' 'we & our' focus (and vice versa) pose enormous challenges and can consume extensive amounts of energy. Not everyone succeeds in making a transition and may experience extensive or permanent fixation at a transitional point.

For foresight practitioners the ability to spot VS transitions occurring, or being able to plan for future VS transitions is of utmost importance. Arguably this is where the majority of futurist methodologies come unstuck for whilst claiming to provide a long- term perspective, for the most part the outputs of a methodology are geared towards achieving a quantifiable end result that can be claimed as 'most likely' for a nodal state. The trouble with this approach is that 'most likely' varies for each VS and what was valid in one sense, may no longer be valid as transitions occur.

The next step is to assess the ability of each VS to deal with greater levels of complexity in their worldview. The diagram below ('SD Value Systems & Complexity')(20) indicates the coping-ability development available to deal with increasing environmental complexity available to each Value System. The diagram lists the VS colour codes in an order that shows a growing capacity to deal with increasing complexity (as seen by the arrows that define the breadth), and also allows subsequent codes to draw on the perspectives of any code that preceded it.

When combined with the knowledge of orientation toward time (past through to future) along with the inherent drivers of that orientation, an extensive (and somewhat complex) appreciation of using VS as foresight frameworks is added to the foresight practitioner's understanding. For the purposes of this paper I have excluded the AN/Beige and HU/Turquoise Value System codes and the diagram indicates each colour code and its ability to cope with expanding complexity over time. As previously indicated, there is no compulsion for development beyond any level.



We now have a useful structural model for using VS as foresight frameworks that addresses a variety of situations for foresight strategists –

1. To what extent (i.e. – Can?) this person/entity understand the notion of future?
2. If so, how does this person/entity approach thinking about the future?
3. What are the influencing drivers for this person/entity in thinking about the future?
4. Does this person/entity have the ability to cope with complex interpretations of the future?
5. If so, to what level and depth?
6. Knowing what I know about the person/entity, what would be the most appropriate set of foresight tools to meet the desired outcome?
7. How do I build increased strategic foresight capacity in line with what this Value System would be open to accept?
8. How do I structure a foresight process that allows for transitions between Value (thinking) Systems to occur?

These eight questions provide the consultant with set points for building a foresight process that will more closely match the needs of the client in a way the client can accept. They also provide clues to remind the consultant to add depth to the client's understanding about potential future(s) and allow for changes in thinking processes.

Summary

An understanding of Value Systems, how they influence a person's thinking of the future and allow or constrict differing perspectives of time, will provide the foresight practitioner a much richer appreciation of how to deal with their clients.

Significantly it places an enormous responsibility on the practitioner when utilising their foresight tool kit. Gaining a deeper understanding through something like a Causal Layered Analysis can now be seen to have multiple perspectives. Scenarios too are enriched when the 'storytelling' and future spaces incorporate an understanding matched to each of the VS present during the process. Selecting an 'ideal future' prior to a Backcasting exercise and then expecting agreement on the appropriate steps can now be seen as no simple task when differing VS are present. Even when all are in alignment as to each step, there is no guarantee that the 'content' will be agreed upon.

Any futurist attempting to build foresight capacity and increase their client's or their client's organisational foresight quotient (FtQ) (21) will benefit greatly from utilising the recommendations provided with regard to each of the VS. Knowing how to encourage engagement, being aware to how that engagement may play out and how to further develop participation and acceptance of a foresight process for each VS, is likely to significantly increase the client's satisfaction with regard to the use of strategic foresight approaches.

Overall the Value System frameworks add a broader and deeper capacity for consultants by raising their ability to handle multiple perspectives of the future and how the issue of the future is accepted. Developing further understanding of each VS and in particular the transitional stages between them is strongly encouraged. Taking that enhanced knowledge and using that capability as a foresight framework will open up a world of improved possibilities for the use of foresight.

It could be argued that ultimately, the aim of foresight is to increase the level of contentment of our clients by giving them greater awareness of possible futures, the alternatives available and to increase their capacity to deal with change. To that end, I offer the following quote (22) –

"Happiness is that state of consciousness, which proceeds from the achievement of one's values" - Ayn Rand

For foresight practitioners, the real challenge may be in designing processes and outcomes that better enable people to achieve a conscious state of happiness. Using Value Systems as foresight frameworks should go some way to realising that aim.

References

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22. Quote taken from the ‘Stuff that Matters’ email newsletter - <http://ncmail.netscape.com/msgview.adp?folder=SW5ib3g=&uid=273819>

Suggested Further Reading on Futures and Human Values –

Milton Rokeach’s ‘*Understanding Human Values – Individual & Societal*’. The Human Press 1979 (Available through McMillan Publishers as a reprint in 2000)

The field of Emergenics may also interest readers – www.emergenics.com

A useful foresight glossary can be found at www.foresightinternational.com.au