# Aspirational guidance for wiser futures: toward open-sourced ascension from ego-centric to eco-centric human communities

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – *This paper aims to explore and demonstrate how the meme of aspiration can help guide human cultures through an epochal transformation triggered by a global megacrisis and leading to sustainable maturation of human cultures.*

**Design/methodology/approach** – *Aspirational futures process, intuition-based visioning and "Type II" thinking that has high credibility for knowledgeable experts but low credibility to most others.*

**Findings** – *Megacrisis is a Type II wild card needing anticipatory mitigation via strategies such as are suggested. While descent paths may be a suitable meme for technical professionals, ascent paths to higher levels of civilizational maturity are a better guiding image for the public. Aspirational methods whose core involves intuition-based creativity, wisdom and co-creative emergence are a vital complement to rational/analytic futures methods, especially in times of epochal change and uncertainty when a new "regime" of guiding world views, institutional processes and innovative technologies may emerge.*

**Research limitations/implications** – *Results represent a high degree of uncertainly as well as "fringe" thinking needing to be more widely considered.*

**Practical implications** – *Strategic suggestions based on Type II thinking are a unique category for "leading edge" funding and application.*

**Originality/value** – *The Type II perspective offered here is unique and offers a promising approach for transformative megacrisis mitigation.*

**Keywords** *Forecasting, Transformation, Intuition, Scenario planning, Foresight, Ecological sustainbllity, Epochal change, Type II wild cards, Aspirational, Intuition, Ascension, Descent paths*

**Paper type** *Research paper*

> When one species attains a position of dominance over all the other species in the ecology of its planet, if it is both ego-centrically greedy, and has a powerful set of technologies through which to amplify the expression of that greed, then unless that dominant species can find a way to limit or to transform itself and its greed-based systems into something more wholesome, it will foul its planetary nest as surely as the night follows the day . . . perhaps even to its own extinction.
> [Source Leitmotiv statement from "The Fourth Wave: A Normative Forecast for the Future of Spaceship Earth" (Markley, 1995); based on the writings of eco-anthropologist, Gregory Bateson and visionary science fiction writer, Olaf Stapledon].

## Introduction

This is an invited contribution for a special issue of the journal, *Foresight*, focusing on descent pathways[1]. It directly continues the thrust of a series of journal articles published by the author within the past three years that use non-traditional futures methods – such as

a special "Type II" category of wild cards having high probability but low credibility, and intuition-based "imaginal" foresight – to better inquire into strategic and "prophetic" foresight about epochal change (Markley, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; 2012a, 2012b). It is also something of a "next generation" call for a new guiding image for humankind, extending the thrust of the provocative 1973 SRI report, "Societal Consequences of Changing Images of Man", later published as Changing Images of Man (Markley and Harman, 1982) and "Changing Images 2000" (Hurley, 1999)[2].

In the midst of the research and writing for the current article, I became persuaded that while "descent pathways" may be a good technical term for professional futurists, a more motivating guiding image for the public at large would somehow symbolize the positive growth of what is both desirable and healthy, rather than the negative decline of what is arguably unhealthy and ultimately unsustainable, although desired by many for the foreseeable future. The best possibilities I found for this purpose are both the "branding" symbolism and the operational thrust of two books: *The Open Source Everything Manifesto: Transparency, Truth and Trust* (Steele, 2012) and *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies* (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013).

Both are highly recommended for experiential vetting by competent individuals and teams, especially if complemented by the types of "civilizational dialogue" advocated by authors such as Dallmayr (1998, 2001, 2002, 2010).

The plan of the article is to first introduce the specific methodological concepts which most influenced this entire article, namely, *a typology of wild cards*, *intuition-based foresight tools* and *aspirational futures thinking*, and then to organize subsequent sections according to the sequence of phases embodied in the aspirational futures method – schematically displayed in Figure 1 – as something of an operational "proof of concept" for students, funding sources and the three types of thought leaders posited as a target audience in a later section.

Midway in this introductory exposition, then, there will be a switch from "descent" pathways to open-sourced "ascent" from ego-system to eco-system economies, as a suggested meme for motivating regime change that is just, productive and sustainable. The article will then continue by treating the principal categories of Figure 1, and will end with the sections shown on its right hand and bottom, where specific suggestions for research and action are made. Due to length restrictions, however, a full set of scenarios and certain other illustrative material are not part of the published version of this journal article, but are available from the author in an online expanded preprint[3].

**Figure 1** Aspirational futures process



Source: Bezold (2009), p. 86
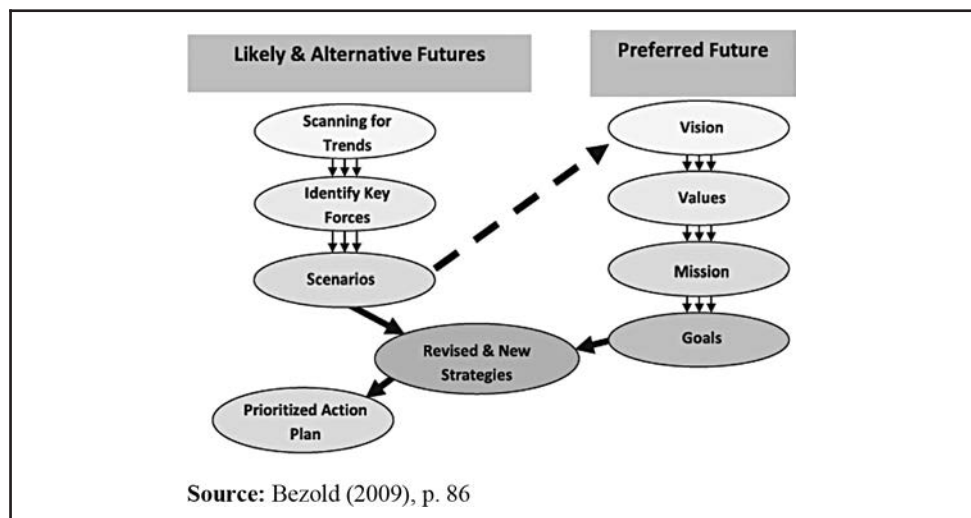
*A typology of wild cards*

In long-range forecasting and strategic planning, futurists often use the concept of "wild cards" to denote possible change drivers that are considered to have a low probability of occurrence, but a very high impact (often negative) if they were to occur (Petersen, 1997). An asteroid hitting the earth is a good example. Recently the term "black swan" has come to be used in a similar way (Taleb, 2007).

"A new methodology for anticipating STEEP surprises[4]" (Markley, 2011a)[5] demonstrates the usefulness of considering a second distinct type of wild card having *high*, rather than low probability (as seen by experts who can specify why), but low *credibility* for most others who don't believe that such a thing is plausible. Thus:

■ *Type I wild card*: Low-probability, high-impact, high-credibility.

■ *Type II wild card*: High-probability, high-impact, low-credibility.

Two more archetypal wild card categories are useful to distinguish as well: a Type III wild card, defined as being a Type II wild card that has come into enough public awareness as to engender heated dispute about its causal credibility (and derivatively, its assumed probability), and a Type IV wild card category for a far-out forecast that has gained general credibility about it being a highly likely event with huge impacts if current trends continue, and therefore a public policy priority.

Thus, the following additional archetypes of wild cards are proposed:

■ *Type III wild card*: High probability, high-impact, disputed-credibility.

■ *Type IV (legitimated) wild card*: High-probability, high-impact, high-credibility.

The lack of credibility that characterizes a Type II wild card can stem from at least five sources:

1. *Ignorance*: Where the relevant knowledge about the wild card has not yet disseminated.

2. *Disbelief*: Where there is an active belief in the impossibility of the wild card.

3. *Disinformation*: Where the relevant knowledge about the wild card has been publically camouflaged by propagandistic distortion.

4. *Taboo*: Where if you even talk publicly about the wild card, it will severely undermine your legitimacy as a credible actor as with the proverbial "elephant in the room".

5. *Denial*: Where the wild card is unthinkably unpleasant for whatever reason.

The whole global warming hypothesis is probably the most well-known contemporary example of what (for scientific thinkers at least) was originally a Type I wild card (i.e. there was general acceptance of the science involved, just no recognition that is likely to become much of a problem). It became a Type II wild card when futurists and climatologists showed that a continuation of long-range trends for fossil fuel use would likely lead to disruptively high levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, global warming and climate change – a hypothesis whose merit was not yet established for most scientists and was seen as too far out for concern by most non-scientists. When industry-sponsored propaganda did what it could to discredit the science behind it, this wild card forecast clearly moved into the Type III phase as the debate heated up. Now, for most informed observers, it has attained the legitimacy of a credible, but "wild" forecast with catastrophic impacts if current trends continue unabated (i.e. high probability, high impact and high credibility). Global warming deniers, of course, would argue that this forecast could never reach the Type IV stage because it is simply *wrong*, never mind the evidence, such that "climate change" is now often used as a substitute term.

It should be emphasized that the methodological significance of this approach is less about the typological categories than about their importance in guiding the monitoring of shifts in

the credibility of a given wildcard forecast by thought leaders in science, the media and activist communities and derivatively politicians. To greatly oversimplify, when the evolution of a given Type II wild card achieves Type IV status, it becomes something that conventional wisdom would suggest that politicians must act on. But "realpolitik" can dictate otherwise, as is currently the case in the USA, where large self-serving lobbying contributions by global warming deniers have prevented politicians from taking effective action on climate change. More will be said about this in a later section on global megacrisis as a Type II wild card driver of change.

*Intuition-based foresight tools*

Although intuition is widely accepted as a vital source of creativity (Harman and Rheingold, 1984), it is much less widely accepted by futurists and most of their clients as a valid source of knowledge for practical use in strategic foresight (Agor, 1989). In that sense, intuition might well be considered a "Type II" process tool, having practical utility as seen by those with competent knowledge and experience, but low credibility for those influenced by the logical positivist knowledge paradigm holding that valid intuitive foresight is impossible[6]. Indeed, this entire article might be viewed as an experiment in the use of Type II foresight methods using aspirational intuition.

As described in "Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight" (Markley, 2012a), my own development of intuition-based research methods began at the Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International), in 1972, when our team discovered that:

- Of all the plausible, probable and preferable scenarios we explored, virtually all of the preferable ones involved either incredible good luck or deep-seated civilizational transformation related to patterns of increase in population growth, consumption, production, pollution, ecological degradation, etc.

- Rational/analytic modes of thinking, which are essentially based on patterns of the past, are naturally less suited for exploration of transformative futures than are intuitive/ visionary modes.

As we developed various intuition-based visioning tools, we found them demonstrably useful as a *complement* (not a replacement) for rational analyses. We also discovered that even the mention of using intuition-based tools to our clients caused some of them to feel uneasy about our public credibility. So we took this side of our work underground, so to speak, and did not mention using intuition as an operational research method in our reports. Recently, however, I have begun to describe this history in peer-reviewed journal articles, such as this one, often using the term "imaginal visioning" so as to contrast it with the types of "imaginative visualization" that are commonly used with rational/analytic methods.

Of all the various intuition-based tools I am aware of, *Mental Time Travel* (Markley, 2007) stands out as the most generally practical way to achieve insight, foresight and wise-choosing of strategic alternatives in "VUCA" environments that are volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. It is a process for experientially *feeling* what it would be like to live in one or another type of scenario (such as Type II scenario themes described in a later section) – often producing very practical insights for improvement of strategies for both short-term success and long-term resilience.

And, yes, it is undoubtedly still expedient to carry the use of such methods underground, unless it is clear that the local socio-political climate would support them being used more openly. The establishment of a "back channel" *visioning community of practice* is a "Type II" approach for developing the operational capacity for intuition-based risk assessment and strategic foresight in conventional institutional settings – and will be one of the recommendations at the end of this article.

*Aspirational futures thinking*

Historically, the word *aspiration* refers to two different things, both of which are fundamental concepts for this article:

1. A hope or ambition of achieving something.

2. The action or process of drawing breath.

The first meaning is clear enough, and applies to the sequence diagrammed in Figure 1. The second and deeper meaning is more esoteric and needs to be understood from both its root meaning (Latin, *aspīrāre*: to breathe upon), and from the idea common to all esoteric systems of thought that subtle energy – prana, chi – enters the body through the breath and is sent to every cell through the circulatory system, as well as to subtle bodily systems involving emotion, cognition, motivation and – especially – intuition. Elsewhere (Markley, 2012a), I show that the folk image of the cornucopia (horn of plenty) symbolizes this same flow of subtle energy, sourcing transcendental intuition and wisdom for insight, foresight and wise choosing, i.e. deep "aspiration[7]".

*Aspirational futures*, the formal process diagrammed in Figure 1, is an especially suitable approach for integrating intuition-based visioning with more rational-analytic methods for the generation of preferred futures.

## Key trends and forces

From this point onward, the article is organized as Figure 1 depicts, the first steps of which are to identify relevant trends and key driving forces as the basis for identifying likely and alternative futures, before going on to planning for action.

Due to the length limitations, and because the whole issue of *Foresight* for which this article was written is replete with trends and driving forces that inform the context in which downward paths seem called for and may unfold, this section only summarizes the gist of emerging trends, driving forces and memes for conceptualizing them that we found most useful from sources such as:

- Homer-Dixon (2006): *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization*.

- Greer (2008): *The Long Descent: A User's Guide to the End of the Industrial Age*.

- Beddoe *et al.* (2009): "Overcoming systemic roadblocks to sustainability: The evolutionary redesign of worldviews, institutions, and technologies".

- Institute for Alternative Futures (2011): *Vulnerability 2030: Scenarios on Vulnerability in the USA*.

- McKibben (2010): *Eaarth: Making Life on a Tough New Planet*.

- Markley (2011b): "Research and action toward the upside of down".

- Markley (2011c): "Manifesting upside recovery instead of downside fear: Five ways megacrisis anticipation can proactively improve futures research and social policy".

- Institute for Alternative Futures (2012): *Scanning for A Brighter Future: Report from the 2012 Searchlight Workshop*.

- Diamondis and Kotler (2012): *Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think*.

- Gore, A. (2013): *The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change*.

- Halal (2013): "Through the megacrisis: The passage to global maturity (especially 'Box 1. Trend analysis of the megacrisis' on pp. 394-395)".

- World Economic Forum (2014), *Global Risks 2014*.

- Glenn *et al.* (2014), *2013-2014 State of the Future*.

In agreement with the old adage that sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, consider the following two maps (Figures 2 and 3), of global risks based a crowd-sourced survey of global thought leaders about global risks based on current trends, driving forces and systemic risks where modest tipping points combine indirectly to produce large failures, even a breakdown in an entire system. Together, they suggest a pattern of risks that some futurists have termed a global megacrisis (Halal and Marien, 2011; Ramos, 2011).

*Global megacrisis as an overarching Type II wild card change driver*

Brown (2011, p. 7), Founder and President of Earth Policy Institute, has said: "It would take 1.5 Earths to sustain our present level of consumption. Environmentally, the world is in an overshoot mode". Thus, it turns out that the global warming/climate change threat noted above as a key Type II wild card is but one of a cluster of change drivers leading to what is arguably the most critical Type II wild card issue of the day: *the prospect and aftermath of a "megacrisis"* that involves global risks such as those diagrammed above; and is likely to lead to a variety of plausible alternative futures involving epochal regime change that reverse the centuries-old civilizational epoch of ever-increasing growth in economic production, consumption, pollution and ecological destruction. An idealized schematic of this sort of epochal change, and of canonical alternative future "descent paths" therefrom, is depicted in Figure 4.

A key subtext of such epochal change is regime change, defined in a pivotal article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, "Overcoming the Systemic Roadblocks to Sustainability" (Beddoe *et al.*, 2009), as a shift in worldviews, institutions and technologies (WIT – aka "cultural paradigm"). From the penetrating grasp of such systems-theoretic understandings as Panarchy Theory and its Cycle of Adaption

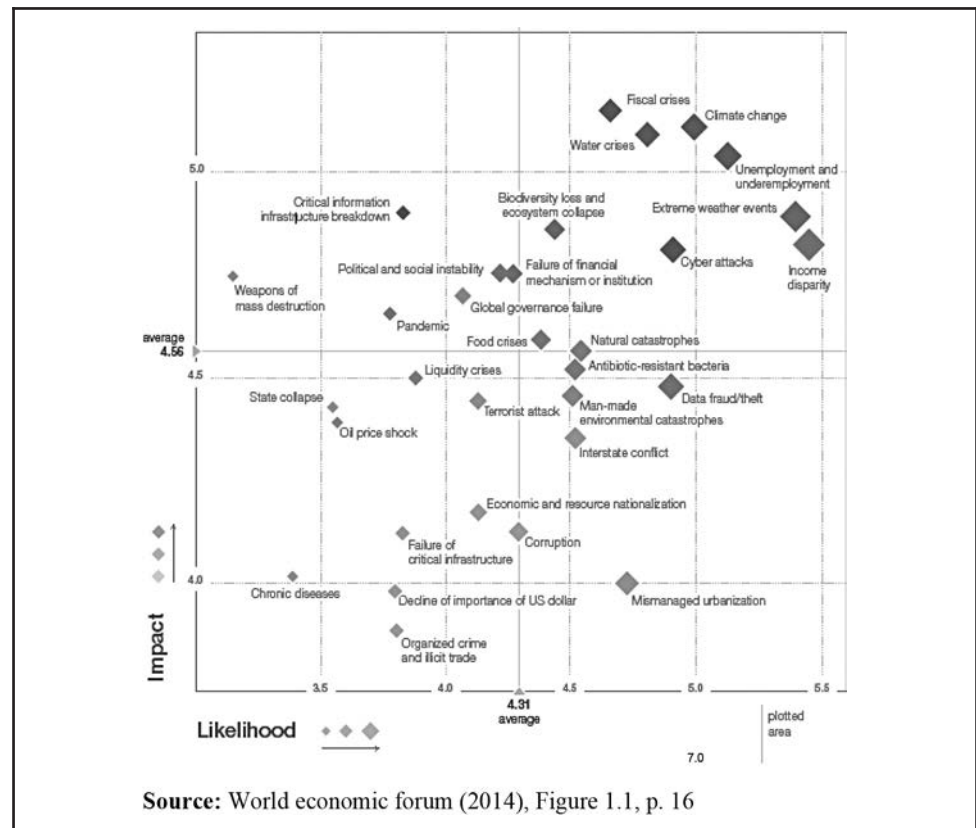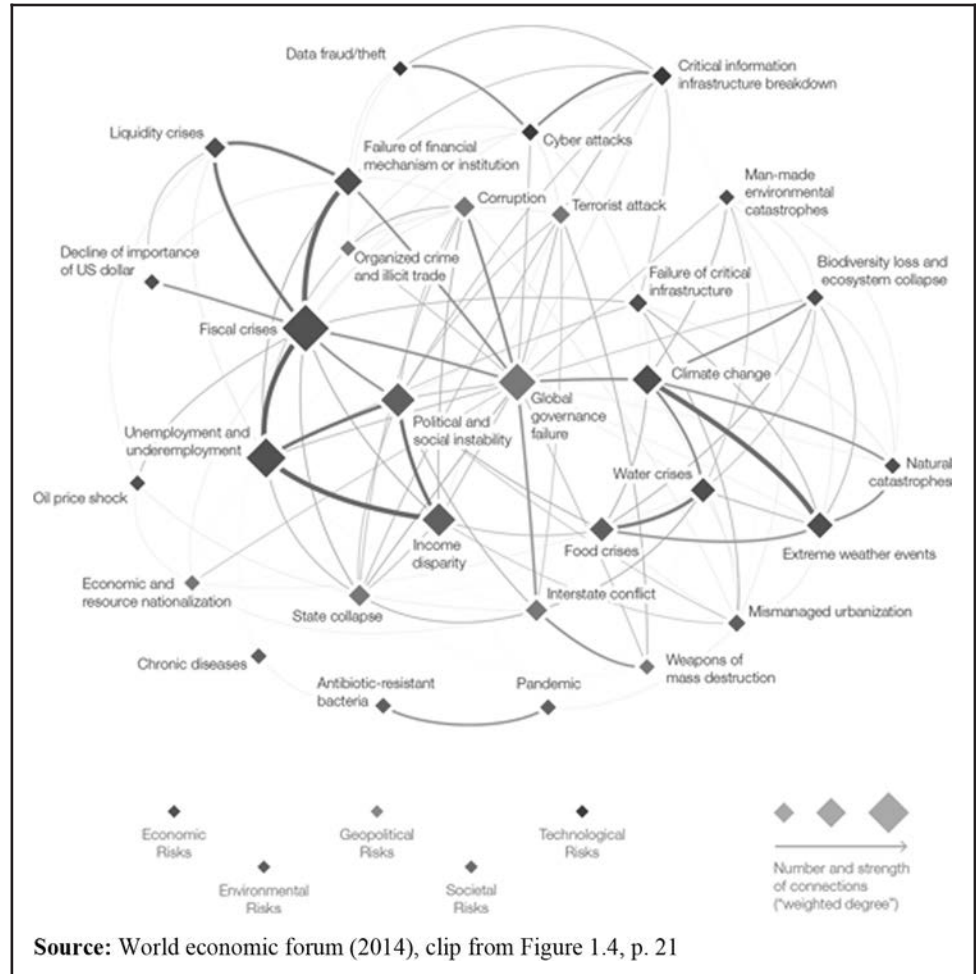| Figure 2 | Ten-year time horizon global risks landscape |
| --- | --- |



Source: World economic forum (2014), Figure 1.1, p. 16

**Figure 3** Key systemically linked risks that could trigger each other in an increasingly multipolar world

Source: World economic forum (2014), clip from Figure 1.4, p. 21

(Gunderson and Holling, 2001), such a systemic shift appears an inevitable outcome of indefinitely following the great ascent of ecologically destructive progress portrayed by the first part of Figure 4. The shift may come about through aspirational cooperation, in which case soft landings can be within reach, or it may be resisted, in which case hard landings seem likely. As noted by Beddoe *et al.* (2009), p. 2,483:
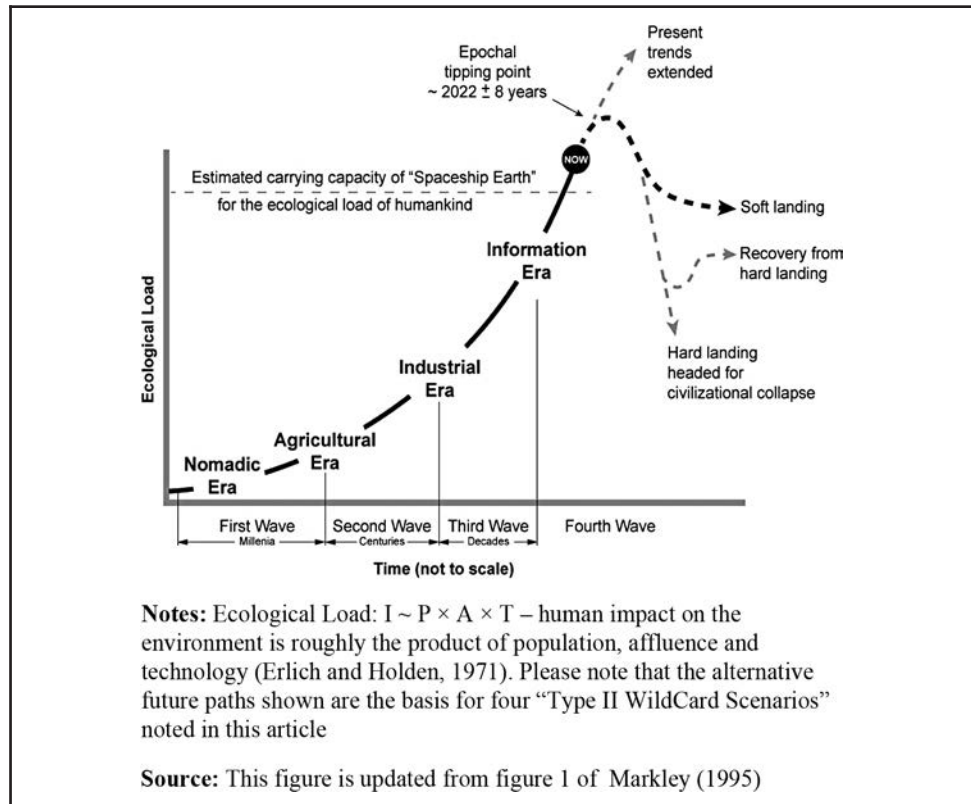
> Although the ability to resist regime change is a form of resilience, this form of resilience can actually get in the way of the more substantial adaptions necessary for longer-term sustainability.

## Ascent rather than descent as a preferred meme for motivating global regime change: a personal case study

Given that several of the descent pathways portrayed in Figure 4 have deeply fearful implications, it is useful to pause and reflect on the appropriateness of using such an image and "descent pathways" for *publically* communicating about the threat of megacrisis unless its presentation is paired with plausible approaches for megacrisis mitigation – as the following research evidence makes clear.

Social psychological research on the communication of scientific findings related to global warming and/or climate change has shown that messaging to the public illuminating high risks for the future tends to be rejected or strongly discounted if either:

**Figure 4** Idealized alternative descent paths following an epochal transition



**Notes:** Ecological Load: I ~ P × A × T – human impact on the environment is roughly the product of population, affluence and technology (Erlich and Holden, 1971). Please note that the alternative future paths shown are the basis for four "Type II WildCard Scenarios" noted in this article

**Source:** This figure is updated from figure 1 of Markley (1995)

■ it communicates about threatening problems without also describing plausible approaches for problem resolution (Feinberg and Willer, 2011); or

■ it communicates in such a way as to call into question the integrity, willingness or ability of established systems and/or leaders to consider the problems (Feygina et al., 2010a, 2010b).

These findings are clearly applicable to the problem of publically communicating about the risk of "megacrisis", and perhaps to the motivational implications of descent pathway imagery as well.

Thus, at this stage in the writing of this article, when considering how best to frame my treatment of wild-card futures involving the possibility of megacrisis and need for descent pathways, I consulted with several trusted colleagues about this problem[8]. Most agreed that the possibility of megacrisis was real and needed to be seriously considered, but not communicated to the lay public about in threatening ways (such as Figures 4), that may lead to feelings of powerlessness and discouragement. Negative terms such as "descent" were also commented on as being a source of discouragement regarding the aspirations that most ordinary people have for increased affluence and a better life; and not, in general, a good way to motivate people to make the sorts of proactive responses toward ecological sustainability that are intended[9].

At this point in the research and writing for this article – while also searching for leading practices to include in the Strategies and Prioritized Action Plans sections that will end this article – I took a bit of time to search for a *positive* meme that would be of greater effectiveness for purposes of motivating people who are not particularly technical in orientation, while also recognizing that there are other valid ideological positions about this complex issue – one of which led to the descent pathways focus for this special issue of the journal *Foresight*.
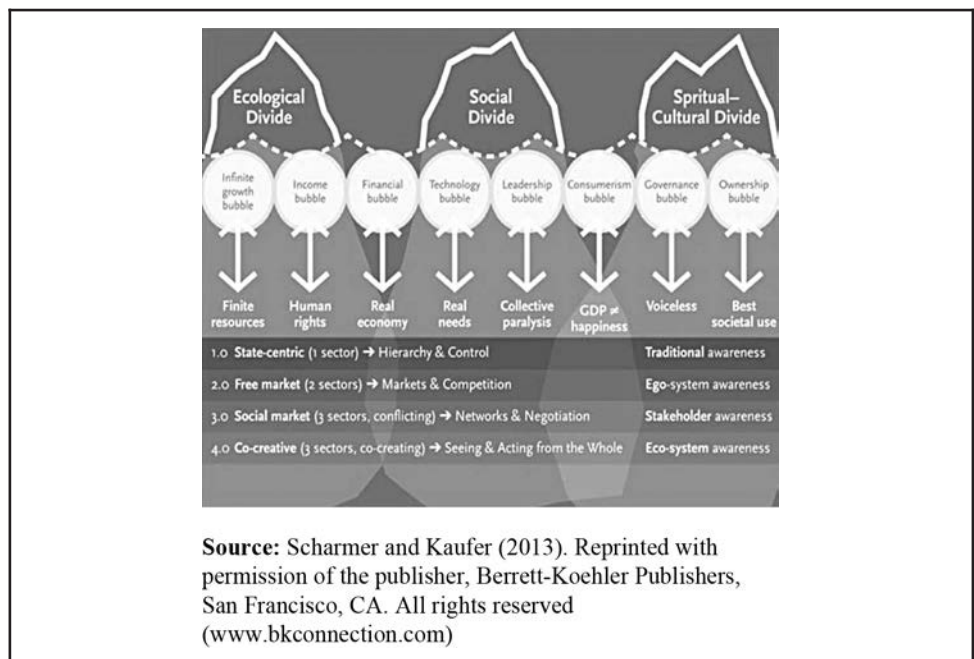
*Paths of ascent*

Synchronistically, my search coincided with the public release of a new book – *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies* by Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) – that not only puts forward a promising approach for achieving a "soft landing" descent path, it offers up imagery, such as in Figure 5, of *ascending* upwards from Civilization 1.0 in the distant past to Civilization 4.0 in the (hopefully) now emerging future, an upward path that, to be sure, also needs to involve what we could call "descent paths" that move away from being hammered by the collapse of the eight unsustainable "bubble challenges" across three sectoral divides also depicted in Figure 5.

Other ascent-oriented imagery came via "co-presencing[10]" of R. Buckminster ("Bucky") Fuller's imperative that a sustainable future could only be reached via what he called "ephemeralization" (Luke, 2010). This, in turn, led to the visioning of a guiding image of ascending:

■ From gross technologies to subtle ones – both physical and social – written about by authors such as Diamondis and Kotler (2012), Drexler (2013), Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) and Laszlo and Dennis (2013a, 2013b).

■ From less to more holistically mature and globally compassionate – as signified by the "second tier" of the model of human development put forth by Wilber (2001, 2007)[11], and related guiding images put forward by Hubbard (2001), Korten (2006) and Miller (2011).

■ From *extensive* to *intensive* sociocultural evolution (Laszlo, 2001).

Almost a year later, while preparing to revise this article in response to peer-review mandated suggestions, the astonishing work of Robert Steele came to my attention (Ahmed, 2014). His open-source approach, described in the next section below, puts forward what I would call a "Positive Type II Wild-Card" proposal for global regime change that definitely fits the ascent-oriented thrust of this section, and also represents an integrity-oriented approach to civilizational dialogue complementing what authors such as Dallmayr (2010) suggest is so urgently needed at this time in history.

| **Figure 5** | The iceberg model: symptoms, structures, thought and sources |



Source: Scharmer and Kaufer (2013). Reprinted with permission of the publisher, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA. All rights reserved (www.bkconnection.com)

*The open-source manifesto*

Robert David Steele (Vivas) is an American activist and a former Central Intelligence Agency clandestine services case officer known for his promotion of open source intelligence (OSINT). Steele is a prolific reader and writer of reviews (the number 1 Amazon reviewer for non-fiction, with over 1,800 books and some DVDs reviewed since 2000; and the author of 12 self-published books and numerous conference appearances and speeches[12]. Definitely an "outsider" *vis-à-vis* the currently dominant paradigmatic regime of civilizational governance, Steele recently told an audience at the Libtech conference in New York (Steele, 2014), "that all of the major preconditions for revolution – set out in his 1976 graduate thesis – are now present in the USA and Britain" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 3).

Steele's (2012, p. 52) principal book, *The Open-Source Manifesto: Transparency, Truth and Trust*, openly details the basis for anticipating a systemic regime change in the relatively near-term, and advocates:

> Collective intelligence – multinational, multiagency, multidisciplinary, multidomain information-sharing and sense-making – [as] the only means of obtaining near-real-time understanding of complex systems sufficient to achieve resilience in the face of [such disruptive] changes.

In this regard, he says that "we must learn to share information among [. . .] the eight communities of intelligence", each with its own sources and methods, none with the "whole picture". The eight communities of intelligence are listed below:

1. *Academic*: All those engaged in formalized educational activities from Head Start to post-doctoral research.

2. *Civil society*: All forms of citizen advocacy groups, including labor unions and religions.

3. *Commercial*: All forms of business, not only legal, but also System D (the informal or underground economy) and organized crime.

4. *Government*: All forms of structured government from local to national.

5. *Law enforcement*: All forms of law enforcement including multinational organizations such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). Does not include contractors.

6. *Media*: All media published or purveyed in any form, from bloggers to the "mainstream" media, that are co-opted by the commercial world.

7. *Military*: All forms of military including multinational organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

8. *Non-government/non-profit*: All forms of non-profit activity registered with a government. Anything not registered falls under Civil Society. This new meme unifies the knowledge and grassroots experience of the eight communities of intelligence so the human collective becomes the "one body, onemind" implied by the term "noosphere" – a psychic collectivity (Steele, 2012, pp. 72-73).

Steele's work also features a number of holistic graphical conceptions, such as Figures 6-8.

Steele's vision, in intellectual width, depth and geographical scale, is enormous – as is demonstrated in a 2007 proprietary lecture to professional staff at Amazon.com, released to the public in 2013 as an hour-long online video[13]. In it he ends by quoting R. Buckminster Fuller as saying:

> Don't waste your time trying to fix the old system. Invent a New One.

This "Type II admonition" might be considered a guiding image for the creative aspirational processes leading to the scenarios written for this article, and strategies that end it.

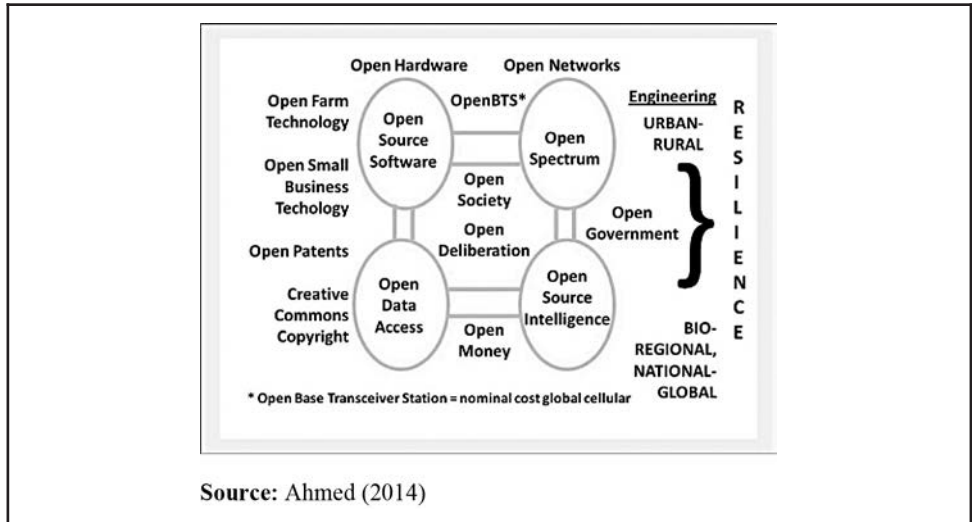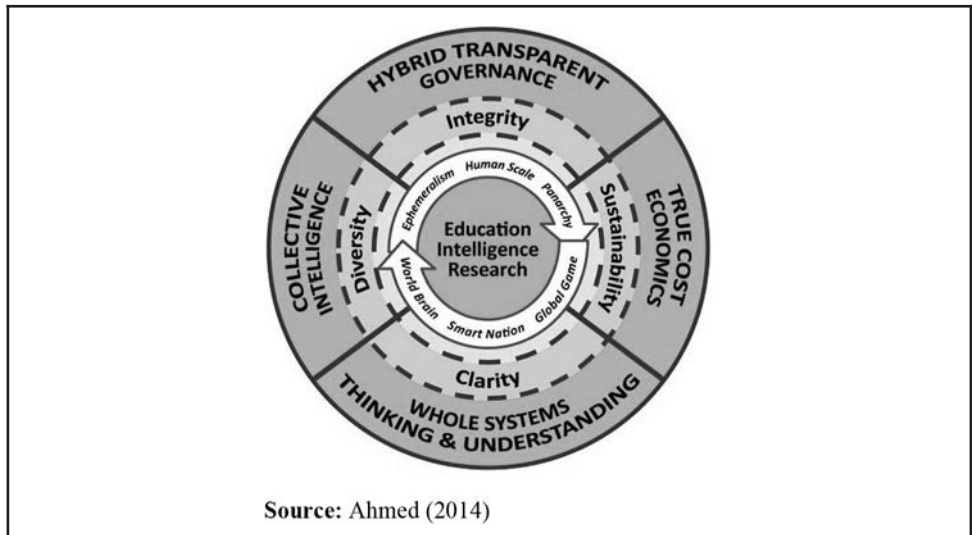**Figure 6** Robert Steele's vision for open-source systems



Source: Ahmed (2014)

**Figure 7** Robert Steele's graphic on open-source systems thinking



Source: Ahmed (2014)

### Type II aspirational scenarios

The next phase of the aspirational futures process anchoring the outline of this article (schematically diagrammed by Figure 1) is *Scenarios*. Bezold (2009), the author of this process, advocates that such scenarios use an "archetypal" set of themes such as:

- expected (present trends extended – PTE);

- challenging (fearful, sometimes called "worst case");

- aspirational (hopeful, could be called "realistic best case"); and

- audaciously aspirational (visionary, could be called "wild card best case").

As global megacrisis is itself what we have defined as a Type II wild card, it follows that we should next consider Type II aspirational scenarios mapping the fringes of plausibility on how it might unfold.

**Figure 8** Citizens analytic model simplified

Source: Figure 29, p. 129 of *open-source everything* (Steele, 2012)
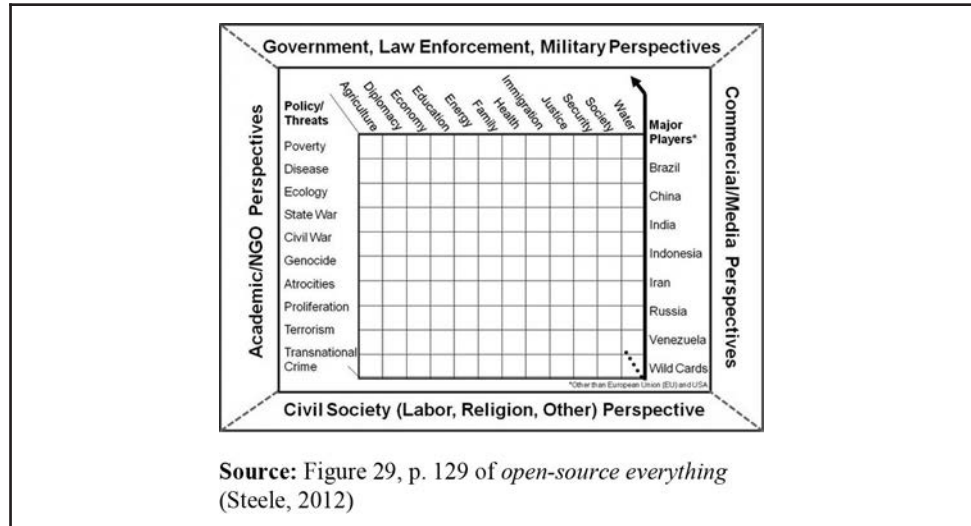
The themes for such a set of scenarios – which more or less follow the alternative future paths mapped in Figure 4 – are as follows:

■ *VUCA*: A present trends extended (PTE) future[14] involving continued technological progress and economic inequity but not regime change.

■ *STEEP Disintegration*: A worst-case future beyond hard landing in which "ego-centric" protectionism prevents systemic recovery before civilizational collapse.

■ *Reformative Recovery*: Aspirational open-source "eco-centric" rebuilding from a hard landing future in which a critical mass of open-source thought-leaders facilitate a crowd-sourced "regime reformation" leading toward eco-centrically sustainable human communities soon enough to prevent civilizational collapse.

■ *Proactive Transformation*: A best-case, audaciously aspirational soft landing future involving pre-megacrisis emergence of open-sourced regimes based on eco-centric worldviews, institutions and technologies, leading toward further evolution of socio-spiritual maturity.

The full text of these scenarios is carried in both the Appendix to this article and in an online expanded preprint, where their embedded hyperlinks are active[15].

Following consideration of these scenarios, we proceed directly on to the *Preferred Future* sections of the aspirational futures process (depicted on the right hand and bottom of Figure 1).

### Preferred future

Two bottom-line questions anchor the movement of this article from consideration of scenarios to the aspirational visioning of a preferred future:

1. What research and action agenda are now needed to seed an integrity-based reformation that would enable the growth of economic prosperity, social justice and ecological sustainability whether or not a megacrisis/tipping point to rapidly descending pathways occurs?

2. What protections now need to be put in place to ensure the freedom of expression of responsible citizen activists who call for integrity-based regime change if and when a megacrisis tipping point toward disintegration does begin to unfold?

By way of outlining what is to come, a set of answers to these questions is put forward in the next sections (following the right hand column of the Aspirational Futures Method depicted in Figure 1):

■ vision;

■ values;

■ mission; and

■ goals.

Following these, an outline of illustrative *strategies* and *action plans* will then complete this demonstration of the aspirational futures method for times of epochal transition – especially if ascent-oriented imagery is used. For these purposes, however, it is necessary to first posit a target audience.

*Target audience*

Following the progression of thought in my recent journal articles (Markley, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c and 2012a), especially as represented in Figures 9 and 10, the following are seen as comprising mission-critical "gate keepers" whose evolving views are pivotal for public recognition and acceptance of future Type II ("elephant in the room") threats and opportunities:

■ Professional futurists and their non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – particularly those who promulgate their views in ways that are highly visible and relatively credible to both establishment opinion leaders and citizen activists.

■ Forward-looking citizen activists and NGOs – particularly authors, bloggers and other opinion leaders.

■ Forward-looking foundations and "establishment" opinion leaders – pundits, c-level media executives, institutional "gate keepers", such as journal editors, program funding executives, etc.

*Vision*

Emerging open-source regimes having ever-increasing capability for shared meaning, resilient sustainability, abundant well-being and psychosocial maturation (personal, institutional, and global), in which 'many flowers bloom' and are cross-pollinated by inspiring memes of proactive cultural wisdom and compassionate maturity, symbolized by the imagery of Figure 11.

*Values*

■ Survivability, including adaptability, resilience, self-healing and learning.

■ Civilizational maturation, including ecological sustainability, socioeconomic justice, and ideological co-evolution toward global peace, prosperity, and spiritual fulfillment.

■ Whatever can be discovered about the fundamental nature of consciousness, causality, time and reality.

This terse listing of values is nicely supplemented by *The Earth Charter: Values and Principles for a Sustainable Future* (Earth Charter Initiative, 2000), "Creativity, Wisdom, and our Evolutionary Future" (Lombardo, 2011), the non-sectarian *13 Principles of Spiritual Activism* (Satyana, undated) and *Business-Sattva: The Business Bodhisattva* (Kafman, undated) – all of which are highly recommended and freely available online.
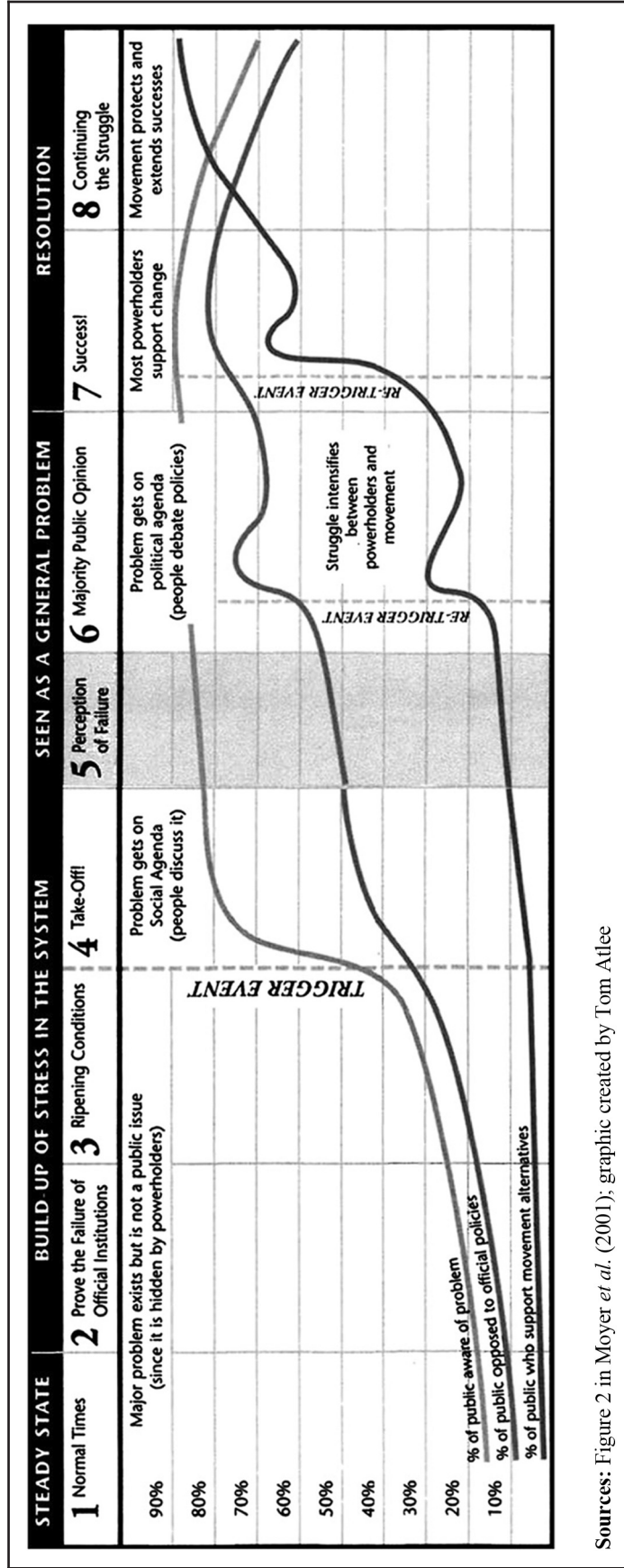
**Sources:** Figure 2 in Moyer *et al.* (2001); graphic created by Tom Atlee

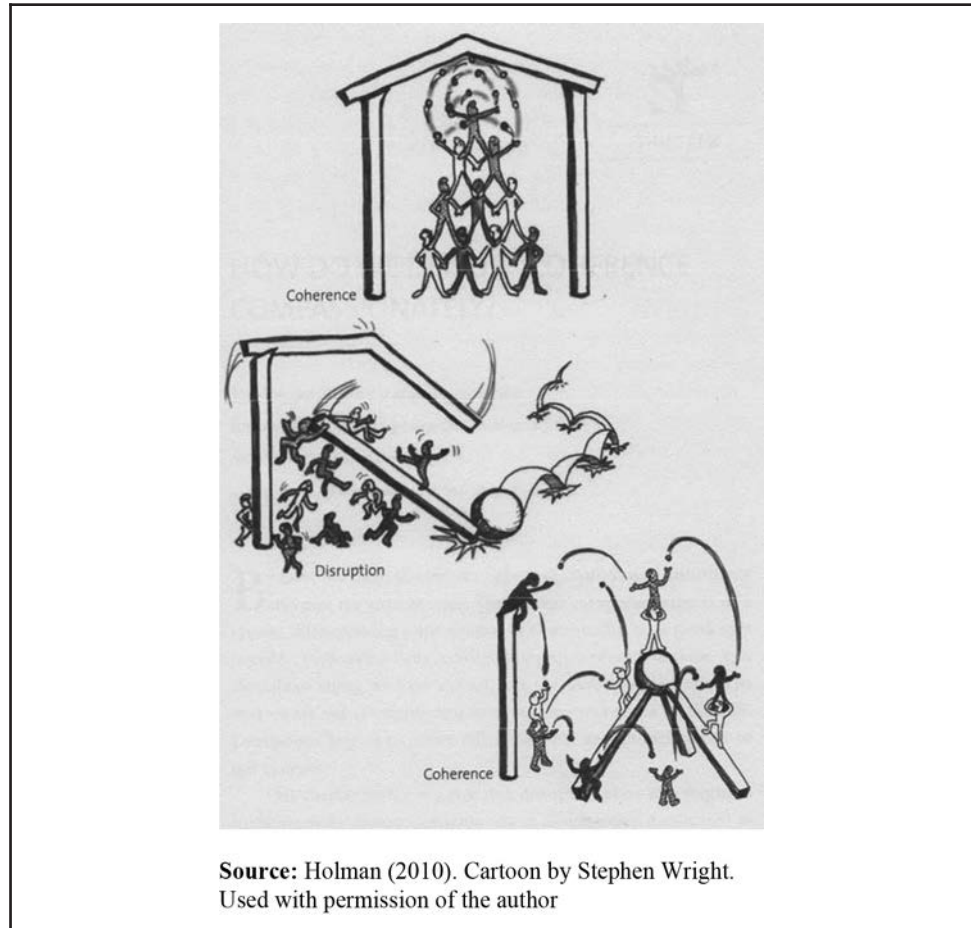**Figure 10** The four roles in relation to the eight stages
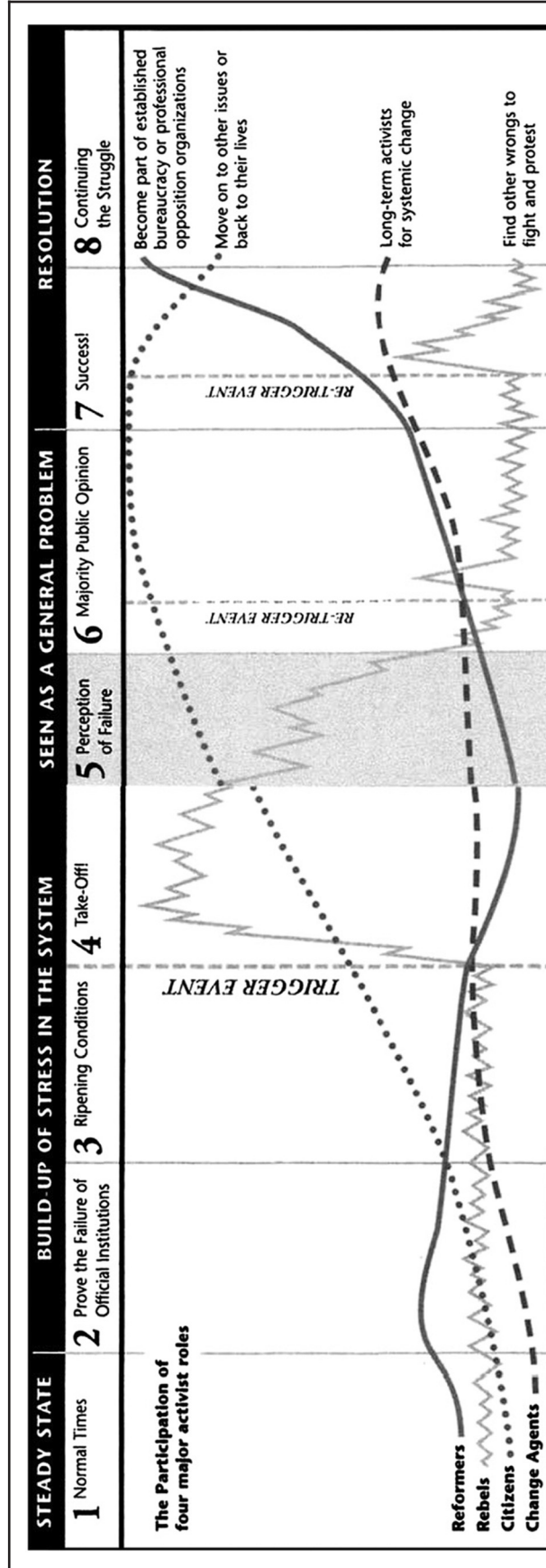


**Sources:** Figure 3 in Moyer *et al.* (2001); graphic created by Tom Atlee. Please note that the "citizens" curve should be continuous

**Source:** Holman (2010). Cartoon by Stephen Wright. Used with permission of the author

*Mission*

The use of intuition-based visioning and other aspirational methods to help facilitate ascent from ego-centric to open-sourced eco-centric economies and wiser, more compassionately loving life styles that protect vulnerable populations during epochal transition.

*Goals*

- Wide recognition of the unique value-add brought by "Type II" futures research in which fringe ideas are associated with individuals having knowledgeable expertise about them and shift in public credibility is an important type of lead indicator of preferred future plausibility.

- Aspirational visioning and intuition-based futures research tools widely used as a complement to rational/analytic methods for achieving desired futures.

- An inventory of promising new "Type II Wild Card" possibilities for preventive and/or restorative mitigation of megacrisis challenges.

- An inventory of successful crowdsourcing initiatives for positive social change.

- Social technology initiatives to translate inventories such as the above into practical entrepreneurial startups.

- An "Invisible College" of thought leaders dedicated to promoting collective intelligence and the peaceful emergence of "soft landing" socioeconomic concepts and initiatives[16].

**Table I** Promising possibilities for research and action

| New strategies | Prioritized action plan | Sources |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pursue transition from ego-system to eco-system economies and open-source collective intelligence with integrative "whole system" approaches for engaging emergence | Vett the Theory U-based *Leading from the Emerging Future* and *Open-Source Manifesto* approaches, both by experiential exploration and via professional review channels. Support as appropriate, together with other promising approaches | The Open-Source Manifesto: Steele (2012) Leading from the emerging future: Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) Deep Democracy: Wilson (2004). Mindell (2000) www.processwork.org Engaging Emergence: Holman (2010) The MIT Center for Collective Intelligence (http://cci.mit.edu). Wikipedia on collective intelligence (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_intelligence) |
| Use transcendental intuition for innovation and guiding wisdom as advocated by aspirational approaches such as Theory U, Imaginal Visioning, Emergence and Deep Democracy via co-creative partnerships that are: *Personal* (between ego-self and "Higher Self") *Interpersonal* (between individuals so connected) *Transpersonal* (between such individuals, teams and the Akashic Field that sources "the future that is wanting to emerge") | Become part of an intentional visioning community of practice (VCoP) in which a small group of like-minded seekers support each other in experientially mastering abilities for creative intuition and aspirational alignment. Network with other VCoPs as appropriate, perhaps leading to a global capacity for co-presencing the emerging future as this term is used in Theory U, via the three levels of co-creative partnership | Theory U: Scharmer (2009) Imaginal visioning for prophetic foresight: Markley (2012a) Emergence: Hubbard (2001) Deep Democracy: Mindell (2000), Wilson (2004) Akashic Field: Laszlo (2004, 2009), Laszlo and Dennis (2013a, 2013b) Transcendental networking for planetary management: Rafael (2007) |
| Encourage collaboration of thought leaders in all sectors (both people and institutions) for sewing seeds of proactive change, resiliency and mitigation of a possible megacrisis-tipping point toward disruptive societal descent | Stimulate multi-institutional co-sponsorship of selected projects, public events and crowd-sourced entrepreneurship to encourage a safe societal transition and regime change For example: Do snowball surveys of proven innovators and networkers to identify "new blood" and promising new ideas for betterment Followed by "Open Space Technology" workshops to generate entirely novel innovations And Teach-Ins on "Collective Intelligence", "Ascent from Ego-System to Eco-System Economies" and/or similar themes–both as one-off events and as MOOC (massive open online course) offerings | *Futurists*: Association of Professional Futurists, World Futures Studies Federation, World Future Society, etc. *Activists*: Bioneers, Caring Economy Campaign, Common Cause, Pachamama Alliance, Public Citizen, Rebuild the Dream, Transition Network, WiserEarth, etc. *Foundations*: Ashoka, Echoing Green, Kauffman, McArthur, Omidyar, Robert Wood Johnson, Rockefeller, Schwab, Skoll, etc http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowball_sampling www.openspaceworld.com http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teach-in http://focusthenation.org www.globalteachin.com |
| Enlarge the base of positive Type II "fringe" ideas, proposals, people having great promise but little current credibility Sponsor "Teach-Ins" such as were done successfully to protest the Vietnam war in the 1960s and more recently the "Focus the Nation" teach-in to generate public support for mitigating global warming and climate change, and the currently active "Global Teach-In" movement supporting a mission like the one stated above Encourage awareness of the Movement Action Plan (MAP) model for organizing social movements | Promote this model in workshops and "Teach-Ins", and apply it in activist settings | Doing Democracy, Moyer et al. (2001) |
| Assess the probable cross-impacts and side effects of mitigating megacrisis and promoting sustainability via open-sourced regime change versus not doing so | Do "Brief" Technology Assessment (TA) and Impact Analysis and/or simpler "Futures Wheel" exercises | TA: www.iaia.org/iaiawiki/techassess.ashx Brief TA: Markley and Hurley (1983) Futures wheel: Glenn and Gordon (2009, Chap. 6) |

**Note:** This table may be considered an extension to suggestions for further work made in "Research and Action Toward the Upside of Down" (Markley, 2011b)

- Successful vetting and application of *The Open-Source Everything Manifesto: Transparency, Truth and Trust* (Steele, 2012); and *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies* (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013)[17].

- Global policies protecting the freedom of peaceful citizen activists in times of "megacrisis".

### New strategies and action plan(s)

Due to length limitations, it is feasible to present only a succinct outline of proposed approaches to fulfill the above ideals, as in Table I.

### Aspirational conclusion

The intended thrust of this article is to demonstrate both the emerging credibility and the potential benefit of selected "Type II" aspirational approaches having high validity for knowledgeable experts but generally low credibility within the currently dominant socioeconomic paradigm of Western culture – especially as regards the emergence of appropriate reform movements and protection of vulnerable populations in times of epochal transition involving "megacrisis".

It is hoped that this article will be influential to thought-leading "gate keepers" in all sectors of civic life, and may be particularly useful in the justification for funding and/or co-sponsorship of proposed projects – both things listed in Table I and what may be suggested in feedback comments yet to be received – that otherwise might have a hard time getting the reception they deserve.

Ideas such as these illustrate a new direction that urgently needs support for a safe transition from an epoch characterized by ever-increasing growth in economic production, consumption, pollution and ecological destruction, to one of ever-increasing capability for shared meaning, resilient sustainability, abundant well-being and psychosocial evolution, in which "many flowers bloom" and are cross-pollinated by inspiring memes of proactive cultural wisdom and compassionate maturity:

> It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most responsive to change[19].

### Notes

1. This special issue was published as *Foresight*, volume 6, issue 6 (2014), available at www.emeraldinsight.com/toc/fs/16/6 and was not able to include this article due to editorial over-run.

2. *Changing Images of Man* is available at www.imaginalvisioning.com/changing-images-of-man/ (accessed 25 October 2013). "Changing Images 2000: Integral Approaches to Re-Imagining and Re-Making Ourselves and the World" is available at: www.inwardboundvisioning.com/Docs/Changing%20Images%202000.pdf (accessed 16 July 2014).

3. The "Expanded preprint of Aspirational Guidance for Wiser Futures" is available at: www.olivermarkley.com/expandedaspirationalguidance/

4. STEEP is an acronym frequently used by futurists denoting Social, Technological, Economic, Ecological and Political policy domains of change. The term STEEP surprise was used rather than "wild card" for a variety of reasons described in the original journal article introducing the concept, not least of which is understandability to a lay audience. "STEEP surprise" as a replacement for "wild card", however, turns out to have not received much support from other professional futurists. Hence, the more traditional term, "wild card", is used in the current article for professionals.

5. Recently it was discovered that a similar approach was described by Van der Helm (2006), cited by Ehsan (2014).

6. Cf., the "Positivist Paradigm" page in "Paradigms and Communication Theory", available at: http://dcarballo0.tripod.com/commtheory/nm/positivist.htm (accessed 7 July 2014).

7. Why the cornucopia (horn of plenty) is an appropriate symbol for the core of transcendental intuition is also explained in a 15-minute video introducing the method of imaginal visioning: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNquUDqXWdg

8. Specific colleagues consulted were Mark Bailey, James Lee, Paul Saffo, Peter Schwartz, Lloyd Walker and Katya Walter.

9. This expectation was later fulfilled when feedback on an early draft of this article suggested that the security elite of a well-known nation in southeast Asia felt that risk assessment of descent pathways such as those shown in Figure 4 should not be actively pursued there, even in secret, due to the risk that doing so might somehow contribute to a "self-fulfilling prophecy" endangering market forces supporting continued economic growth.

10. Co-presencing is the term used by Scharmer's (2009) *Theory U* for aspirational intuition-based discovery via transpersonal channels such as I explore in "Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight" (Markley, 2012a), the theory-rich expanded preprint of which is available at: www. imaginalvisioning.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Imaginal-Visioning-for-Prophetic-Foresight-P reprint.pdf (accessed 4 July 2014).

11. In this theory built upon the *Spiral Dynamics* writing of Beck and Cohan (1996/2002), *First Tier* core value systems are more self-oriented with a focus on subsistence-level concerns, while those of the *Second Tier* are more globally oriented with a focus on societal well-being, and for ecological sustainability with a compassionate appreciation of the beliefs and ideologies of others. One of the tightest and most practical summaries of Integral Theory and its relevance for understanding the global megacrisis currently available is put forth by Slaughter (2010, pp. 77-71) in a chapter of his book, *The Biggest Wakeup Call in History*, entitled "Aspects of the Integral Method". In an earlier chapter, "Confronting the collective shadow" (pp. 61-74), Slaughter also takes on both personal and societal "elephants in the room" that are uncomfortable to deal with, but which are significant obstacles to constructively transformative regime change.

12. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_David_Steele (accessed 30 June 2014); www.amazon.com/Robert-David-Steele/e/B001K873R4 (accessed 30 June 2014).

13. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9eaAYvDiXo (accessed 6 July 2014).

14. VUCA is an acronym for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

15. www.olivermarkley.com/expandedaspirationalguidance/

16. The term "Invisible college" (Price, 1963, 1971) is sometimes used to describe non-obvious ways in which networks of thought-leading gatekeepers of information shape the future.

17. Illustrative that this goal is being fulfilled, Otto Scharmer has recently begun an experiential, free massive open online course (MOOC) on "Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies" that drew an enrollment of 25,000 students from 192 countries on its opening day. It is available at: www.edx.org/course/u-lab-transforming-business-society-self-mitx-15-s23x#.VLU9u2TF9rj

19. As found on the Internet, this often repeated quotation was attributed to Darwin in an early draft of this article. Proof checking, however, indicates that it originated instead from a management professor, Leon C. Megginson, in a 1962 paraphrase of Darwin. Source available at: www. darwinproject.ac.uk/six-things-darwin-never-said (accessed 27 July 2014).

20. VUCA is an acronym for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

21. The quotation is from "Through the megacrisis: the passage to global maturity" (Halal, 2013, p. 393).

22. For purposes of this scenario, it is sufficient to assume only that such an event happens, with the assumption that it would fall in the 2022 ± 8-year time horizon as shown in Figure 4. If desired, readers can fill in a specific date for more detailed contingent analysis.

23. A Type II wildcard prophecy for deep civilizational collapse and reformative recovery such as this is detailed by Rafael (2007), Rachele (2008) and Kelly (2009). These prophecies were received from transcendental sources that are unique to and described by each author in the works cited.

24. A brief biography of Dr Shiva is available at: www.southendpress.org/authors/17 (accessed 10 July, 2014). Speeches online include "TEDxMasala - Dr Vandana Shiva - Solutions to the food and ecological crisis facing us today", available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ER5ZZk5atlE (accessed 10 July 2014); and "Festival of Dangerous Ideas 2013: Vandana Shiva - Growth = Poverty", available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=7M3WJQbnHKc (accessed 10 July 2014).

25. A brief biography of social justice and green energy activist and civil rights lawyer Anthony Kapel "Van" Jones is available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Jones (accessed 20 July 2014). His "Rebuild the Dream" speech is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSENOmMCKYw (accessed 20 July 2014).

26. The story of Lee Kuan Yew and the Peoples Action Party he led in Singapore is a real-world example of how a skillful champion of transparency, truth and trust (as well as what some have called "authoritarian democracy") could lead the small island-nation of Singapore to transition from third-world to first-world status in less than 40 years – about a generation and a half – from 1965 to 2000 (Lee, 2000; Lysa, 2002. For a futures-oriented picture of Singapopore, please see the 30-minute video "Gov 2.0 Summit 2010" – Peter Ho and Peter Schwartz: "The Singapore Miracle and Gov 2.0", available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmeFi5J2iZE (accessed 21 July 2014). Because Singapore's prevailing "regime" is already evolving and arguably lies midway between that of leading Western nations (such as the USA and UK) and China, this nation's emerging ideology might prove to be a pace-setter for post-megacrisis recovery.

27. "Why Did The Media Keep The Recent Peaceful Icelandic Revolution Quiet?" is available at: www.collective-evolution.com/2013/01/11/why-did-media-keep-the-recent-peaceful-icelandic-revolution-quiet/ (accessed 23 July 2014); and a 9.5-minute video, "How to Start a Revolution – Learn From Iceland!", is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-SiYQ8s_6I&feature=youtu.be (accessed 23 July 2014).

28. The "teach in" is an activist tactic used successfully in the 1969s to protest the USA's engagement in Vietnam (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teach-in); and more recently by the "Focus the Nation" teach-in to generate public support for mitigating global warming and climate change (http://focusthenation.org); and the currently active "Global Teach-In" movement for a new economy (www.globalteachin.com); all sites accessed 6 July 2014.

29. Local exchange trading systems (LETS) is a concept originated by Michael Linton in 1983 and operationalized by him and by others thereafter. LETS networks use interest-free vendable credit so direct swaps do not need to be made. The concept is often erroneously associated with BitCoin. A first industrial cloud-based LETS type system was announced on 19 December 2013 by *IBM* and *Eurobank* as the first cloud-based digital platform for online international commercial trading. Announcement available at: www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/42792.wss (accessed 4 July 2014).

30. This statement and much more, including the Auroville Charter, is available at: www.auroville.org (accessed 7 July 2014).

31. "Deep-see diving" is a term introduced by Walter (2006) that I have found useful to describe akashic-level visioning methods and experiences. Professionally credible explorers of this zone of consciousness tell their stories in *The Akashic Experience: Science and the Cosmic Memory Field* (Laszlo, 2009). In this book I describe an abridged version of "The Omniverse Center for Cultural Development" (Markley, 1994) – an experience that, in part, inspired the writing of the "Civilization 5.0" part of this scenario. For more, please see the expanded preprint version of the methodological white paper, "Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight" (Markley, 2012a), available at: www.imaginalvisioning.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Imaginal-Visioning-for-Prophetic-Foresight-Preprint.pdf

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## Appendix

This appendix features the full next of Type II wild card scenarios whose hyperlinks are available at www.olivermarkley.com/expandedaspirationalguidance/. Reference citations supporting the credibility each are embedded therein.

The themes of the Type II wild card scenarios – each of which more or less follows one of the alternative future paths mapped in Figure 4 – are as follows:

■ *STEEP Disintegration*: A worst-case future beyond hard landing in which "ego-centric" protectionism prevents systemic recovery before civilizational collapse occurs.

■ *Reformative Recovery*: Aspirational open-source eco-centric rebuilding from a hard landing future in which a critical mass of open-source thought-leaders facilitate a crowd-sourced "regime reformation" leading toward eco-centrically sustainable human communities soon enough to prevent civilizational collapse.

■ *Proactive Transformation*: A best-case, audaciously aspirational soft landing future involving pre-megacrisis emergence of open-sourced regimes based on eco-centric worldviews, institutions and technologies, leading toward further evolution of socio-spiritual maturity.

*A: VUCA – A present trends extended (PTE) future*

Intensifying *volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity* (VUCA) about social conditions and the future to some extent characterized the years following the 2008 economic meltdown, with increasingly disruptive "STEEP" perturbations as the future unfolded beyond 2014. Both the public media and most political leaders seemed to ignore prophetic warnings about the danger of unbroken continuation of unsustainable economics, consumption and pollution trends and the need for regime-transforming reforms with short-term thinking frequently trumping serious attempts to mitigate systemic problems. Throughout the 2015-2030 time horizon, increasingly variable/extreme weather events, increasing food costs and repeated economic crises brought greatly increased suffering for many vulnerable segments of the population. Many regional governments, globally, became increasingly authoritarian as a way to maintain order and prevent public protests. However, the pace of technological innovation continued to be strong bringing whole new applications for abundantly providing the necessities of life for all who could afford them, and quite possibly signaling the emergence of a "technology revolution [that] is driving an evolutionary shift to a high-tech, advanced stage of civilization with its own logic, much as the Industrial Age replaced the feudal system of the Medieval Ages[21]" Nevertheless, root problems such as the lack of systemic/motivational integrity intrinsic to "ego-centric" governance regimes have not generally been addressed. Thus, ongoing civilizational sustainability is increasingly vulnerable because the basic challenge of epochal regime transformation has still not yet been taken on.

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*B: STEEP disintegration – a worst-case future beyond hard landing*

Possibly as early as 2015, quite likely by 2020 and almost certainly by 2030, if proactive policies for anticipatory megacrisis mitigation did not happen in time, a tipping point (such as diagrammed on Figure 4) toward systemic disintegration occurred, caused by a cascading confluence of STEEPly[22] disruptive triggering events (climate change-related ecological disasters, both public and private bankruptcies and loan defaults, governance failures, societal rioting and massive immigration pressures, etc.). The most decisive trigger was a much larger scale analog to the sub-prime loan crisis in the USA that in 2008 had threatened to kill systemic fiscal liquidity: the speculative bubble of unsustainable investment banking practices – that had been warned about by a variety of authors cited below – finally popped in the "Great Economic Meltdown of 20##[22]". This time, however, global fiscal liquidity did, in fact, dry up – leading to a tsunami-like series of rapidly expanding disruptive impacts, citizen protests and subsequent governance failures throughout the global socio-economic system, much as was graphically warned of in the "Key Systemically Linked Risks" diagram (Figure 3).

As things began spinning out of control – rapidly some places, slowly in others – many suggestions and attempts were made to move toward recovery. But in spite of warnings about the threat of deep civilizational meltdown (depicted in the lower "hard landing" path diagrammed in Figure 4), calls for appropriate types of regime change were uniformly trumped by political leaders who stuck to policies protecting their vested interests – a direct extension of "The Gated Globe" danger written about in *The Economist* (2013) – with some nations becoming essentially garrison states, in which citizen activists who dared to call for

regime change were often imprisoned, sometimes indefinitely, while other nations held on to traditional civil liberties as attempts were made to forge relevant new social policies for coping with truly hard times.

Pervasive hunger, fear for personal/familial safety and discouragement about being able to live successfully brought a virtual pandemic of widespread psychological depression, frequently bringing a subsequent failure of bodily immune systems, such that huge increases in conventional diseases brought a deep reduction in world population before new, regionally specific civilizational systems and lifestyles emerged, many involving tribal-like clusters of residential, commercial and governance cooperatives[23].

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### *C: Reformative recovery – aspirational rebuilding from a hard landing future*

Well before 2030, the series of STEEPly disruptive triggering events leading to "The Great Meltdown of 20XX" and following from it with increasingly drastic consequences (described at the beginning of Scenario B), led a wide variety of proactive activists – some of whom had for years been anticipating the likelihood of just such a catastrophic event – to begin an emergency open-sourced online cross-civilizational dialogue, to mobilize viable strategies open-source reformative transformation that could prevent a hard landing from disintegrating into an even further descent toward civilizational collapse.

Typical of the values and unique skills exemplified by this emergent group of activists are those possessed by the following "dream team" of transformational thought-leaders:

- Lester Brown, Al Gore (ecological futurists).

- Vandana Shiva, Hazel Henderson, Otto Scharmer, David Korten (ecologically and culturally ethical economics activists).

- Joanna Macy, Riane Eisler. Lynne Twist, Paul Hawkin (deep ecology, feminist and indigenous rights activists).

- Barbara Marx Hubbard, Ervin Laszlo, Ken Wilber (evolution of consciousness theorists).

- Thomas Malone, Tom Atlee, Robert David Steele (collective consciousness and open-source activism theorists).

- Fred Burks, Matt Taibbi (open-source media activists about censored information).

- Van Jones, Peggy Holman, Peter Block (emergence-oriented organizational facilitators).

- Peter Schwartz, Noah Raford, Chandran Nair (cross-cultural policy futurists).

- Lee Kuan Yew and Vaclav Havel (integrity-based revolutionary nation builders).

- George Soros, Pierre Omidyar (angel philanthropists for selective open-source activism).

Due to the urgency of finding a peaceful way to quickly heal the disruptive societal descent outlined in Scenario B, the group organized themselves into an aspirationally global open-source "People's Integrity Party" of "proactivists" (proactive open-source activists) that was initially headed up by a genius-level "activist triumvirate" of managing co-directors having requisite background knowledge, skills and charisma like those of Vandana Shiva[24], Van Jones[25] and Robert Steele. The P-I-P, as it came to be called, was a whole new type of socio-political undertaking that aimed to achieve a global equivalent to:

- the transformation Singapore accomplished under Lee Kuan Yew's integrity-based leadership of its People's Action Party, although with a much less hierarchically authoritarian discipline than what emerged in Singapore[26]; and

- the peacefully revolutionary regime change and writing of an open-source constitution, brought about by crowd-sourced political pressure in Iceland, following the 2008 global economic meltdown[27].

Early on, the P-I-P established an open-source, globally cross-cultural "New Regimes Project" (NRP) for discovering and executing practical strategies through which:

- Open-source networks of ordinary citizens were able to peacefully work together for the reformative emergence in their home countries of new regimes that are open, truthful and integritous to replace ones that were not.

- All manner of "Type II positive Wildcard" solution strategies for such global challenges as are diagrammed in Figures 5 and 8 – both those already held by thought leaders in the group, and new ideas brought in via crowd-sourcing – were actualized in regional and global confabs using processes such as "Open Space Technology" (Owen, 2008).

Additionally, the P-I-P drew from hundreds of activist initiatives (e.g. those active in the WiserEarth and Evolver networks), as well as strategies put forward by the authors cited at the end of this scenario, and those detailed in the "Preferred Future" section of this article. The branding symbolism chosen by the party was modeled on the proactive emergence cartoon shown as Figure 11.

Key to this entire effort, though, was the rise of "proactive journalism", modeled by the *First Look Media* project founded in 2013 by Pierre Omidyar, and a series of free massive online (MOOC) courses that used the historically successful "teach-in" model[28] to mobilize the citizenry of all major cultural groups of the world on behalf of co-creating integrity-based open-source regime reformation symbolized by Figure 11. But all of this could not have been successful without the extensive use of "Despair to Empowerment/Great Turning" workshops based on the decades of work of Joanna Macy, and similar approaches to inner transformation.

As but one illustration of successful new regime-oriented innovation was the development of open-source, cloud-based "local exchange trading systems" (LETS)[29], that were

quickly pilot-tested, and put into practice to handle the overarching lack of fiscal liquidity that was preventing the global economic depression from lifting, and enable multi-national supply channels of goods and services between all types of individuals, residential cooperatives, businesses and other "hybrid" non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to become more viable than they ever had before.

To ensure that this new LETS enterprise avoided even the appearance of the Western capitalist banking hegemony, the administrative hub of these new cloud-based LETS systems was placed in Auroville, the south Indian city originally formed "to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities[30]".

Although the P-I-P was a globally co-creative undertaking, many different regionally appropriate versions emerged of the party emerged; and although it was some years before all of their reformative open-source ideas, strategies and actions came to full fruition, by 2030, it had become clear that civilizational collapse had been averted and humanity was well on its way to sustainable well-being.

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■ Collective intelligence: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_intelligence

■ The collective intelligence convergence: www.co-intelligence.org/CI_Convergence.html

■ Handbook on collective intelligence: http://scripts.mit.edu/~cci/HCI/index.php?title=Main_Page

■ Public Education and Empowerment Resource Service (PEERS) Web sites documenting major "cover-ups" and offering online courses for cultivating community and transformation: www.peerservice.org

*D: Proactive transformation – a best-case audaciously aspirational soft landing future involving pre-megacrisis emergence of open-source eco-centric regimes*

Well before 2030, foresight about the plausibility of a megacrisis-generated series of STEEPly disruptive triggering events and drastic consequences (described at the beginning of Scenario B) was envisioned by futurists and communicated to proactive thought leaders in all cultures of the world. Many of them came to recognize that (as depicted in Figure 4), "Spaceship Earth" is in ecological overshoot, and that at root, the economic well-spring that brought us to this point is cancer-like in its need for unlimited growth and the effects therefrom; and as with the successful treatment of any life-threatening cancer, it must either be removed or transformatively healed into a benign form if the host entity is to flourish resiliently.

As attempted removal (as with violent political revolution) would be unacceptably disruptive and perhaps even civilizationally fatal, it seemed obvious to try for a peaceful transformation from "ego-centric" regimes of exploitation to emergence *open-source eco-centric* regimes of compassionate caring – although deliberate regime transformation is quite risky in light of human history. Thus, a wide variety of proactivist thought leaders (such as those listed in Scenario C above) networked across various cultures of the world, working together to plant seeds for deep transformation of worldviews, institutions, technologies and economies ("regimes"), such as was in different ways called for over the years in:

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- "Vision of world leaders" (Henderson, 2010).
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- *The Open-Source Manifesto: Transparency, Truth, and Trust* (Steele, 2012).
- *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy* (Macy and Johnstone, 2012).
- *The Future* (Gore, 2013).
- *Rethinking Money: How New Currencies Turn Scarcity Into Prosperity* (Leitar and Dunne, 2013).
- *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies* (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013).
- *Dawn of the Akashic Age: New Consciousness, Quantum Resonance, and the Future of the World* (Laszlo and Dennis, 2013b).
- "New beginnings within a new normal for the four futures" (Dator, 2014).
- "The love economy" (Henderson, undated).

Although it did take a series of major crises to provoke creation of a "New Regimes Project" (NRP) think-tank undertaking with successful outcomes such as are described in the

previous scenario above, a peaceful and not-overly disruptive approach to continuously evolving transformative emergence proved feasible due to a global upwelling of wisdom essentially inspired by works such as the above and in many ways coordinated an open-source movement called "Open-Source Collective Intelligence", whose essential thrust was to transform "regimes" of thought and action from an orientation of *command and control* to *coordinate and cultivate* as put forward in Ervin Laszlo's brief, but exceptionally learned essay, "Human Evolution in the Third Millennium" (2001), in which he contrasted:

■   *Extensive* sociocultural evolution marked by *conquest, colonization* and *consumption*;

with:

■   *Intensive* sociocultural evolution marked by *connection, communication and consciousness*;

noting that:

■   Whereas the first set of "3 C's" have characterized the 10,000-year historical ascent (portrayed by the left hand side of Figure 4).

■   The second set is clearly needed if humanity is to achieve sustainably wise futures (such as are schematically diagrammed by the "Soft Landing" path on the right side of Figure 4).

Essential in this global emergence was the use of advanced online social networking technologies, including both online and face-to-face "Teach-Ins" and inspiring "TED talks", many of which went viral, thereby making universal the perceived need for global reform that is:

■   *Radical* (as in "getting to the root causes" of the megacrisis); and

■   *Conservative* (as in conserving the highest values from human history).

But the well-spring of the new emergence was the way that forward-looking thought leaders of many different aspirational ideologies – intellectual, political, religious, each of which had traditionally attempted to cultivate its own particular brand of reform in ways that were paradigmatically opposed to each other – were helped to see the possibility that participating in the new integrity-oriented open-source "Collective Intelligence" movement could make it possible to co-creatively presence the emergence of networks of residential and commercial cooperatives, and other systemic designs that would protect vulnerable populations – both human and non-human – in the ecology of the planet, thereby providing a "soft landing" from the many bumps on the path of epochal transition, and peacefully harnessing revolutionary pressures in most cultures.

Of particular significance in overcoming resistance from powerful political establishments were aspirationally activist methodologies for anticipatory democracy, such as the "Movement Action Plan Model", schematically described by Figures 9 and 10, that responsible citizen activists used to proactively leverage the impact of triggering events for the whole host of initiatives guiding activist work that emerged in the open-source "Collective Intelligence" movement.

Thus, in spite of attempts by ultraconservative citizen groups and reactionary factions in central governments at all levels to maintain their privileged power and resist broad-based demands for integrity-based regime change, a tumultuous, but essentially peaceful series of forward-looking transitionary reforms are visibly leading toward "Stage 4.0 Societies" – such as visionary authors Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer envisioned in 2013 – characterized by ecological sustainability, socioeconomic justice and continuing evolutionary progress that together reflect the paradoxical set of twin mottoes: *"less is more"* and *"descent is ascent"*.

Looking ahead still further, some futurists are envisioning what could be called a "Stage 5.0 civilization" involving continuously evolving maturational ascension of collective consciousness as earlier envisioned in such works as:

■   *Cosmic Journeys: My Out-of-Body Explorations with Robert A. Monroe* (McKnight, 1990).

■   *Conscious Evolution: Awakening Our Social Potential* (Hubbard, 1998).

■   *Dawn of the Akashic Age: New Consciousness, Quantum Resonance, and the Future of the World* (Laszlo and Dennis, 2013a).

- "Mindapps and The Neurosingularity Project" (Roberts, 2014).

The use of intuition-based "deep-see diving" tools[31] that build upon works such as these is enabling the co-presencing of an emergent evolutionary culture in which:

- Advanced AI-based "intelligent biofeedback" and brain wave entrainment (BWE) algorithms and emerging "mindapps" support a variety of subtle human capacities providing access to expanded, non-ordinary states of consciouness (NOSC).

- NOSC phenonomena described by investigators such as Robert Monroe, Ervin Laszlo, Thomas Roberts and Kurt Leland, as well as science fiction authors such as Olaf Stapledon, Arthur Clarke and Clifford Simak, inspire many "intranaut" explorers to make psychospiritual "inner plane" contact with representatives of other advanced civilizations, bringing forth a singificant source of subtle technological advancement and wisdom for humanity.

- Recognition of the over-arching ecology of consciousness, including the earth and the universe as multidimensionally intelligent living systems with which to align ourselves, is becoming recognized as a master guiding image that both secular and religious peoples can embrace.

Now in 2030, we recognize that the famous statement of British geneticist and evolutionary biologist Haldane (1927/2001, p. 286) seems even more prescient than it did back in 2015 when this Type II wildcard scenario was published:

> I have no doubt that in reality the future will be vastly more surprising than anything I can imagine. Now my own suspicion is that the Universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we *can* suppose.

## Additional sources for the proactive transformation future not listed above (including those for Scenario C)

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- Collective intelligence: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_intelligence
- The collective intelligence convergence: www.co-intelligence.org/CI_Convergence. html
- Handbook on collective intelligence: http://scripts.mit.edu/~cci/HCI/index. php?title=Main_Page

## About the author

Oliver Markley, MS, PE (design engineering), PhD (social psychology), is Professor Emeritus and formerly Chair of the graduate program in Studies of the Future at the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL), and Principal of Inward Bound and ImaginalVisioning.com. His career began as a design engineer, but thinking to become a humanistic social engineer, shifted to social psychology and policy research on possible/ probable/preferable alternative futures, specializing on intuition-based visioning methods for insight, foresight and wise choosing. Before UHCL, he was a Principal Investigator and Consultant with the Management and Social Systems Group at Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International). Having co-authored four books and scores of articles, Dr Markley currently maintains a part-time research and consulting practice, writing about the global emergency in articles such as Research and Action toward the Upside of Down (awarded the Jan Lee Martin Foundation prize for Best Futures Essay of 2011), and most recently, Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight. He is a Member of the Association of Professional Futurists, a Fellow of the World Futures Studies Federation and in the spring of 2014, was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre of Excellence for National Security (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore), where he taught a graduate course on strategic foresight and risk assessment. He is a resident member of the Sasona Cooperative in Austin, Texas. Oliver Markley can be contacted at: oliver@olivermarkley.com