



BREAK-OUT SESSION: DEVELOPING FORESIGHT AND ANTICIPATING STRATEGIC CHANGE

Richard Lum, CEO
Vision Foresight Strategy

Learning Objectives:

1. Become familiar with the practice of strategic foresight and the field of futures studies.
2. Review the Four Steps model for developing foresight.
3. Gain some experience using foresight tools.

4 Steps to the Future

A framework for developing foresight

Richard Lum, PhD

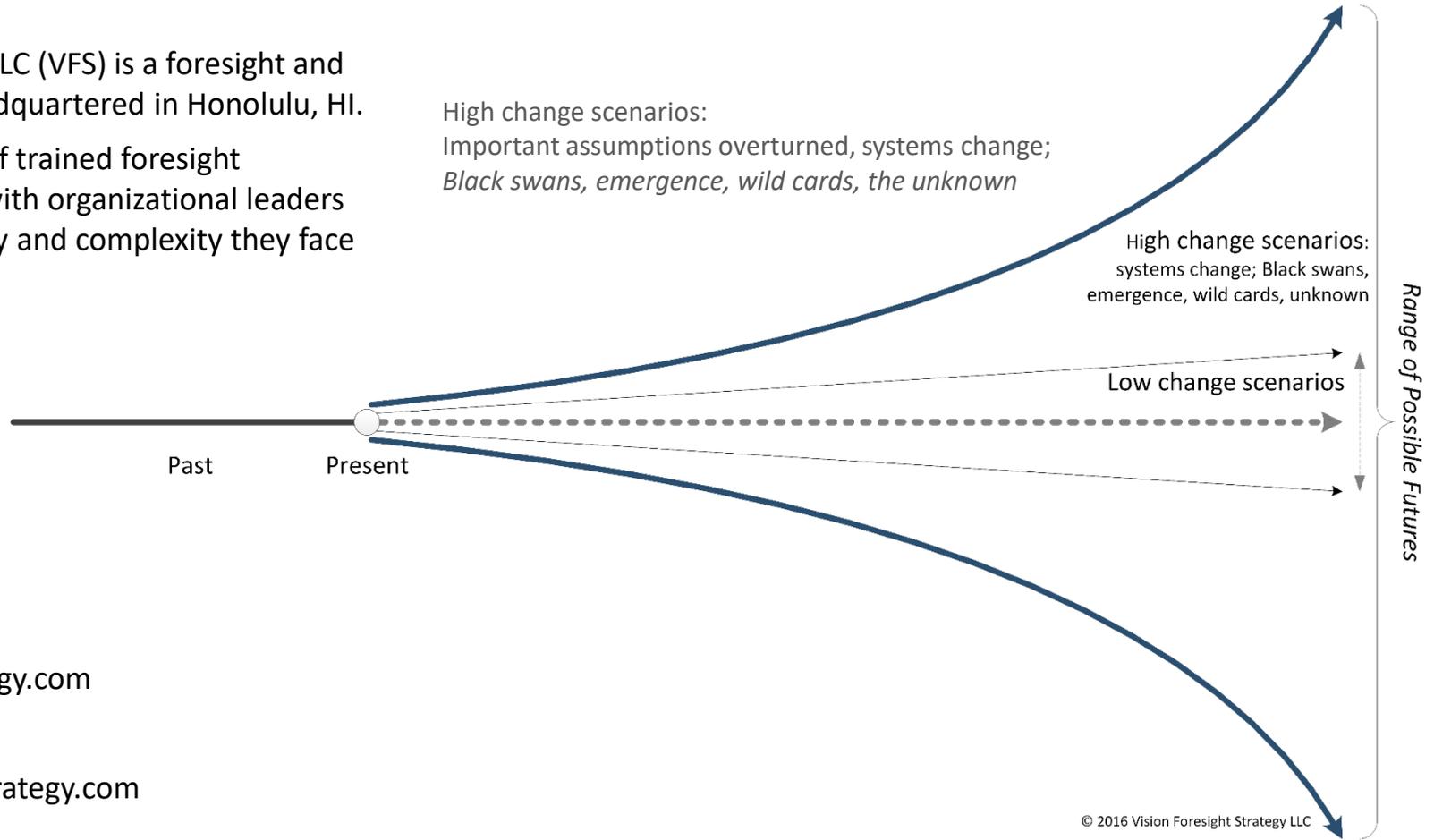
29 January 2020



Vision Foresight Strategy LLC

Vision Foresight Strategy LLC (VFS) is a foresight and strategic analysis firm headquartered in Honolulu, HI.

We are a global network of trained foresight professionals that works with organizational leaders to navigate the uncertainty and complexity they face in the world today.



“Reframing the future.”

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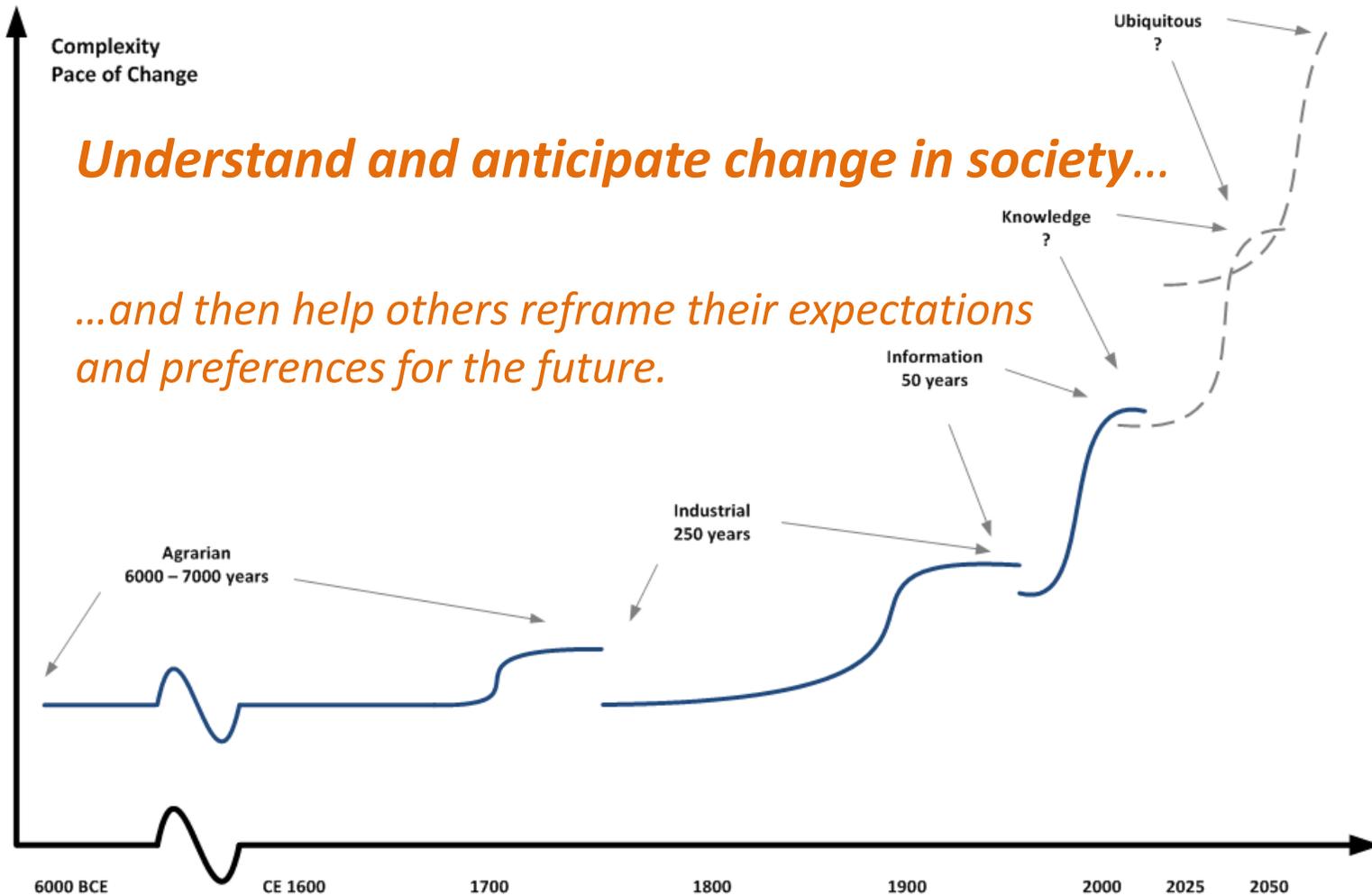
richard@visionforesightstrategy.com



No, they didn't give me a crystal ball...

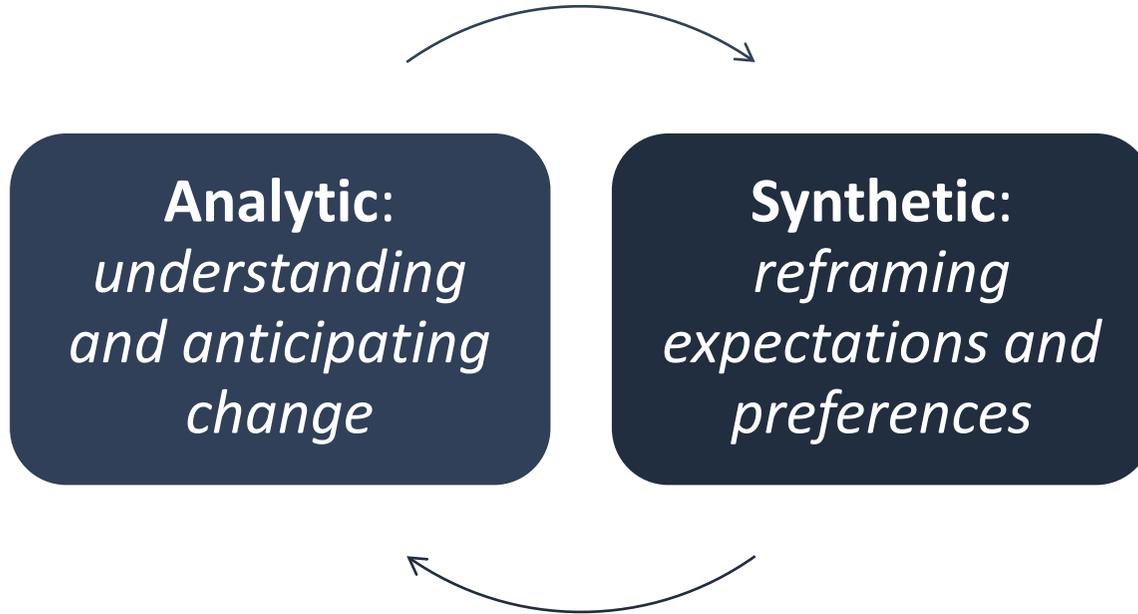
FUTURES STUDIES AND FORESIGHT





Adapted from A. Tuominen and T. Ahlqvist, 2010

Two Complementary Aspects

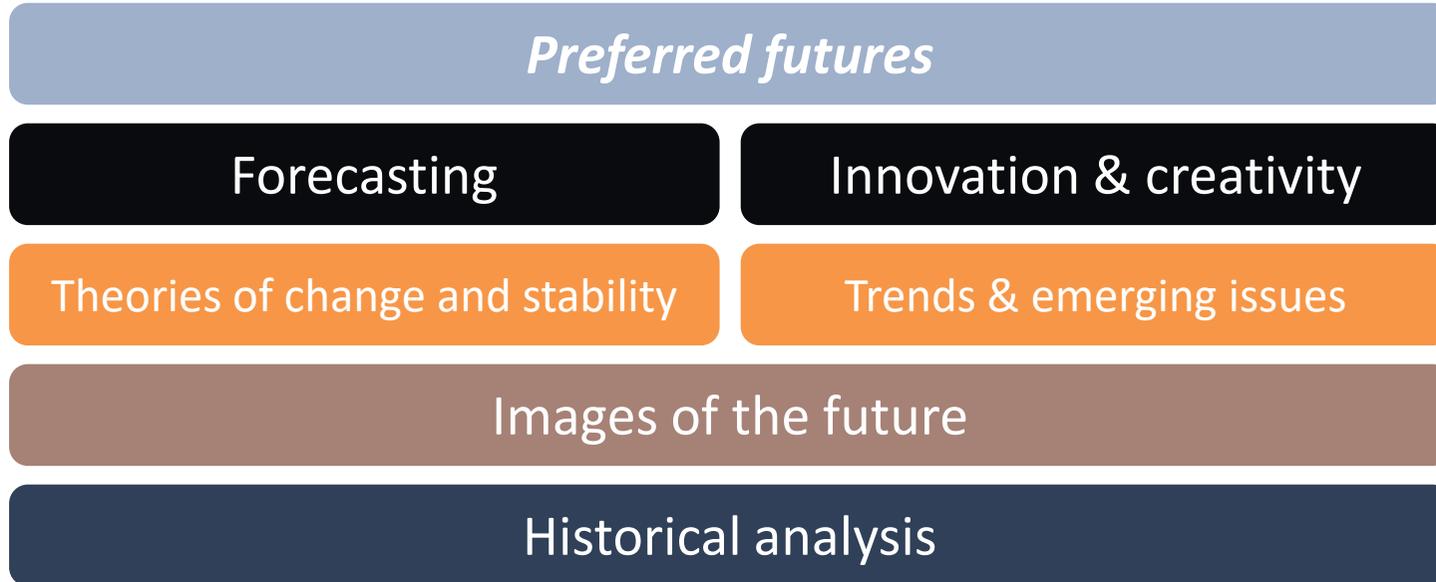


Foresight:

*Insight into how and why the future
could be different from the present.*



Elements of Futures Work



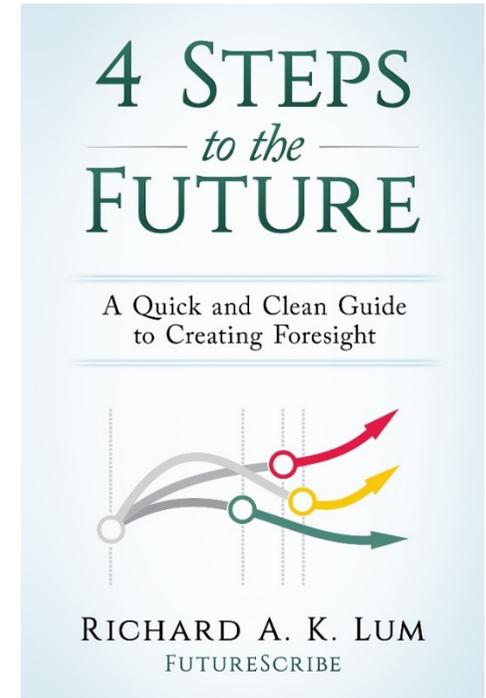
Critical thinking about the future, both in terms of what could be and what we want it to be

- **Challenging assumptions** (about how and why change could happen)
- **Exposing us** (to more of the landscape of change)
- **Broadening our understanding** (of what could happen)
- **Rethinking our goals**



A quick and clean guide to creating foresight

4 STEPS TO THE FUTURE



The 4 Steps Process

Past

Present

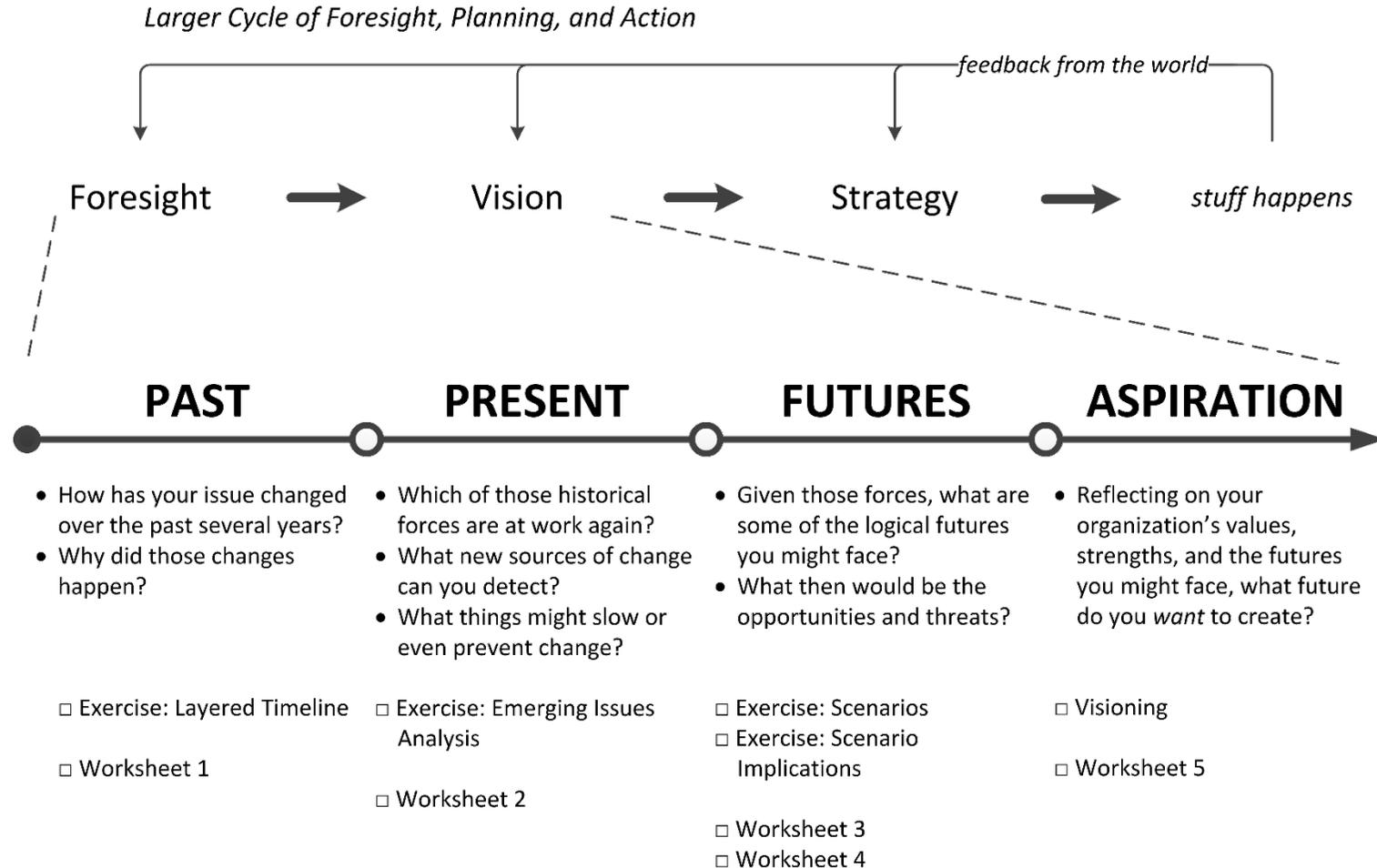
Futures

Aspiration

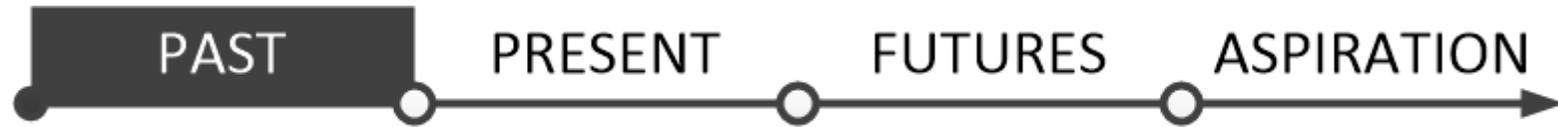


The 4 Steps to the Future Process

The *4 Steps to the Future* model addresses the first two steps in the larger foresight and planning process that organizations follow.



Step 1: Past

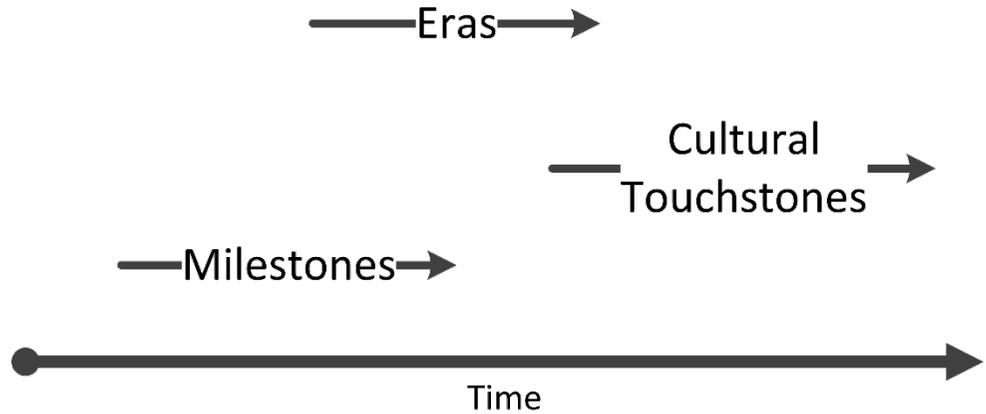


Recognizing patterns, cycles, and chance in your history.

□ Layered Timeline

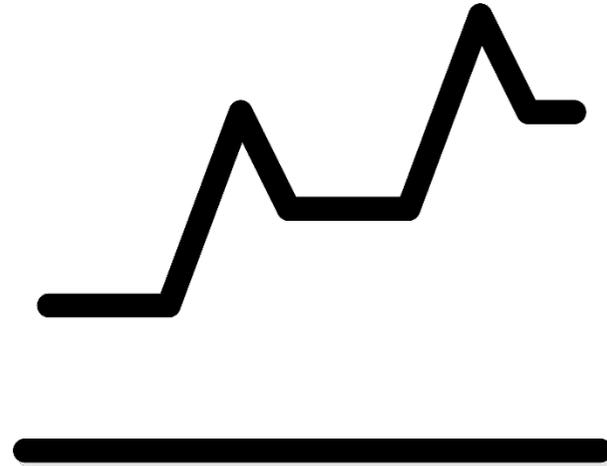
1a. How Has [your issue] Changed?

#1 How Has [your issue] Changed?



1b. Why Did Those Changes Happen?

- Advancements in science or technology
- Conflict or competition
- New ideas and values
- Chance



Tool for the Past: Layered Timeline

1. Identify key historical events
2. Identify what *changed*
3. Determine what caused those changes

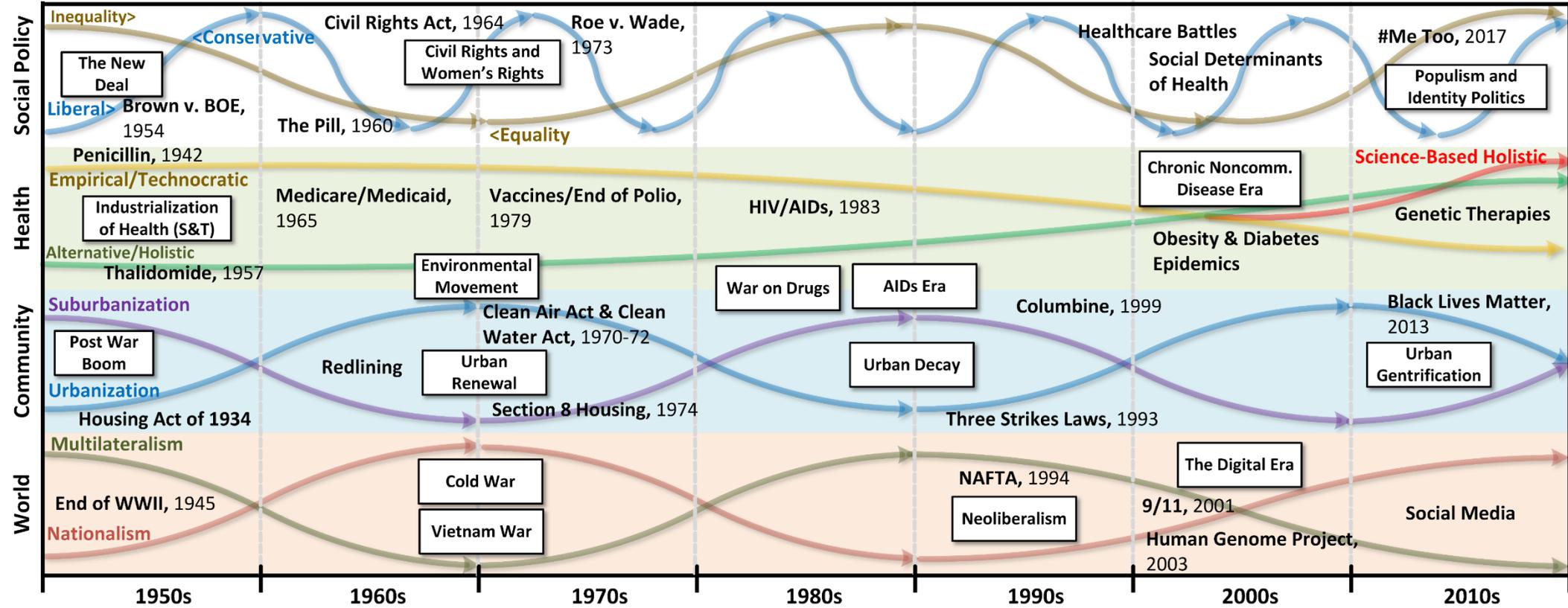
Daily Life *Daily practices, experiences, and expectations*

Systems *Infrastructure, Institutions, and Rules*

Values *Values, Narratives, and Deep Assumptions*



Historical Timeline: Example



HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

This is the first of five worksheets in the 4 Steps model. What happened in the past? What drove change?

1

What Happened?

What were the noteworthy events and headlines in this history?

50 years ago

25 years ago

5 years ago

2

What Changed?

DAILY LIFE

Daily practices, experiences, and expectations

SYSTEMS

Infrastructure, Institutions, and Rules

VALUES

Values, Narratives, and Deep Assumptions

3 Why Did Those Changes Happen?

New Science and Tech

Conflict & Competition

New Ideas and Values

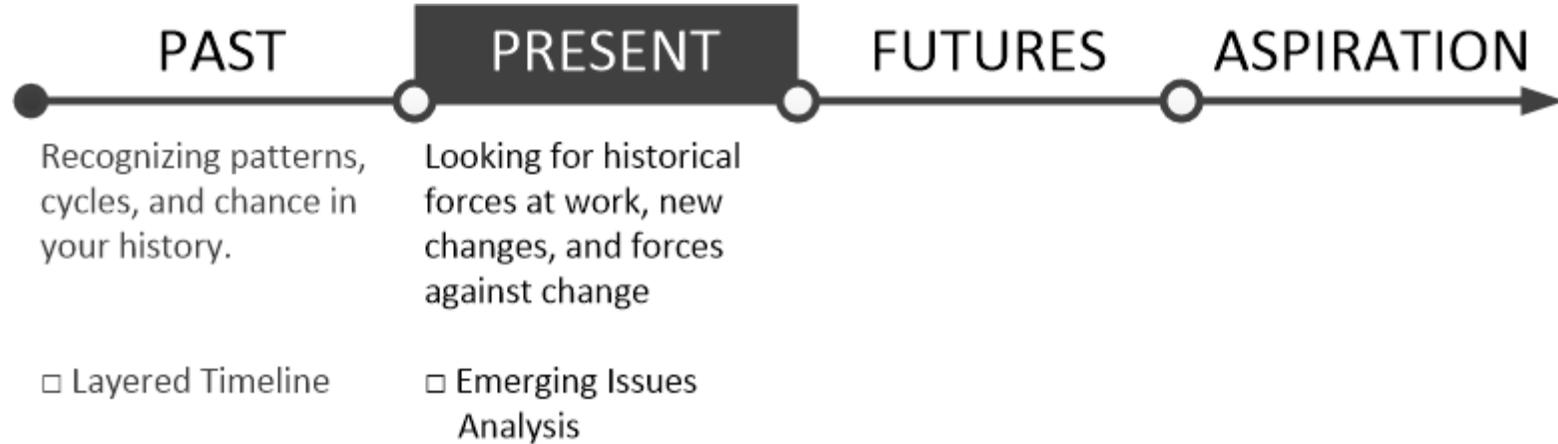
Chance

Other



We'll call these causes our **Historical Drivers** of change.

Step 2: Present

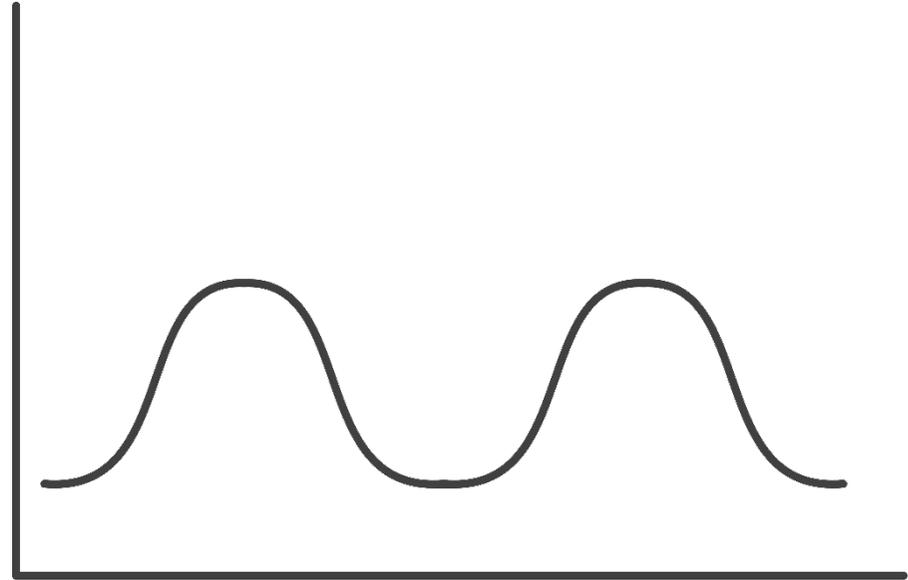


2a. Which of Those Historical Forces are at Work Again?

Same trends at play?

Historical patterns recurring?

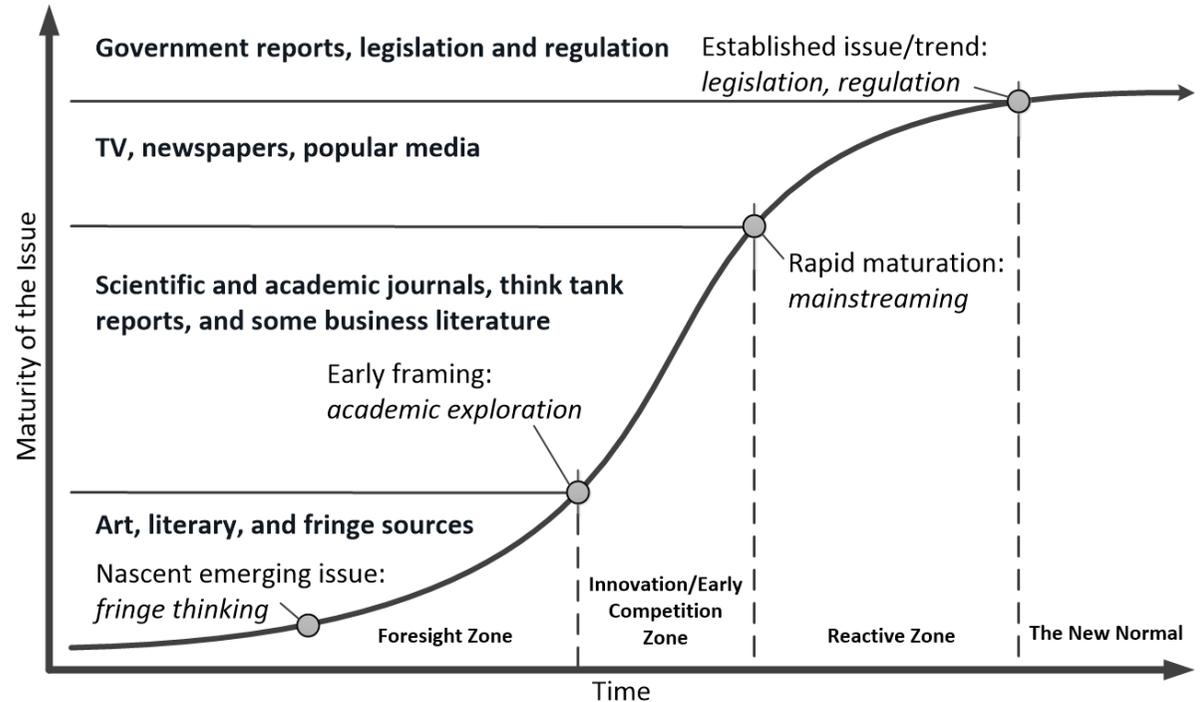
Other prominent dynamics?



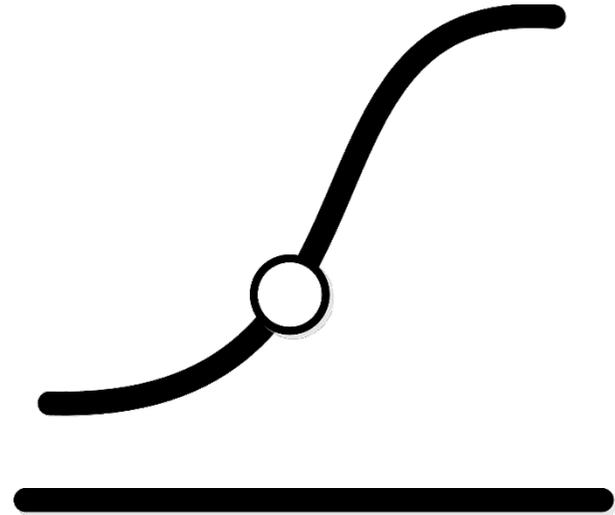
2b. What New Sources of Change?

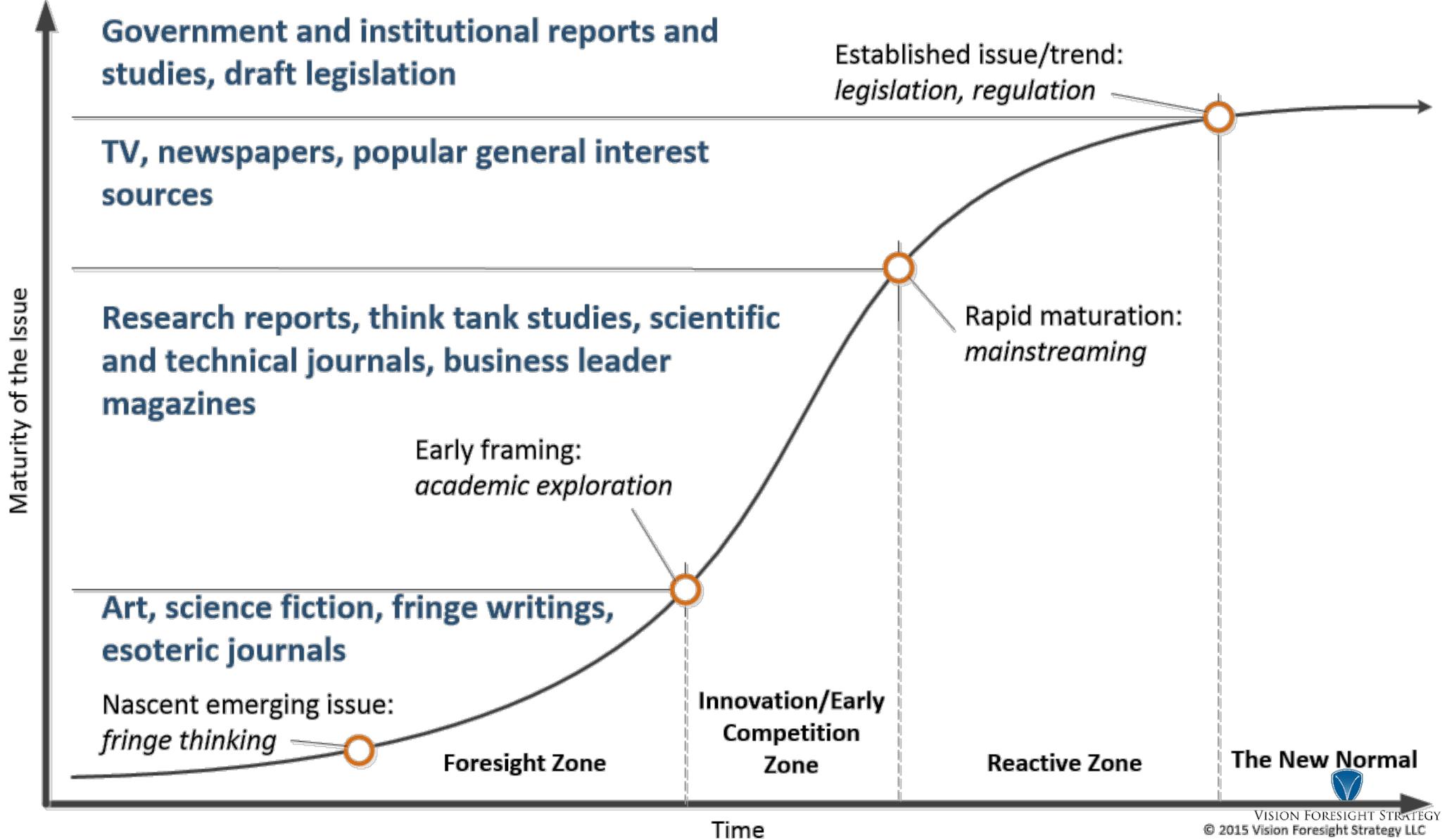
Trends: historical changes over time

Emerging Issues: potential future technology, policy issues, and ideas



Trends and Emerging Issues





Ethical Treatment of Machines

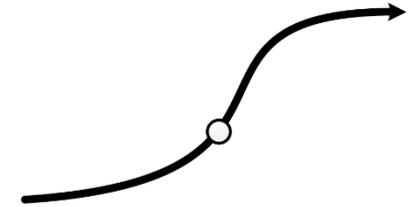
The evolution of machines into more human-like agents and their proliferation into all aspects of daily life will lead to the development of social mores and regulation regarding their status and rights.



Zone: Innovation

Type: Strengthening Signal

Upstream TEI: Automation and Autonomy



Today researchers are already posing questions about the appropriateness of things like designing machines to feel “pain” and whether or not machines should have the ability to say “no” to human owners. In other areas, lawyers are suggesting the need to rethink a widening number of laws and legal assumptions as semi-autonomous and autonomous machines become more prevalent and integral to daily life.

How much will this evolving debate resemble the long history of granting rights to all humans, regardless of heritage or social class? How will society likely discriminate between machines that deserve ethical treatment and those that don’t? How will an emergent civil rights framework for machines impact the design, development, and deployment of machines in human-driven conflict?



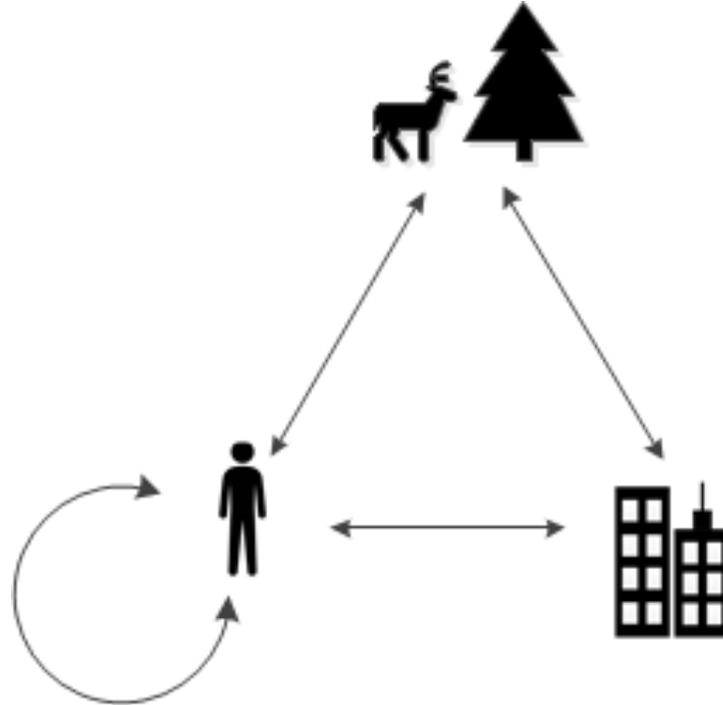
2c. What Things Might Slow or Prevent Change?

Rules, customs, and traditions

Physical or logistical constraints

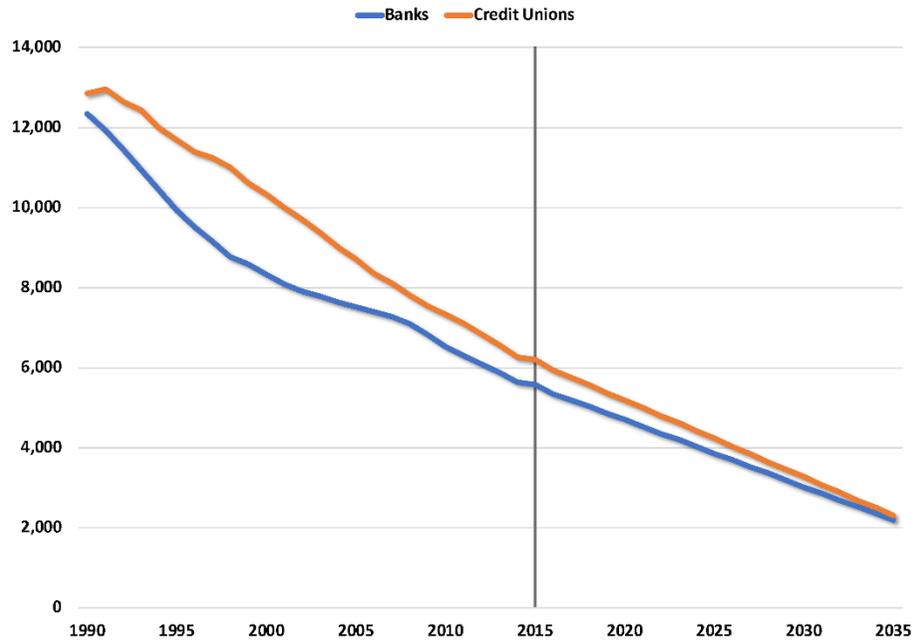
Patterns of behavior

Powerful stakeholders or incumbents

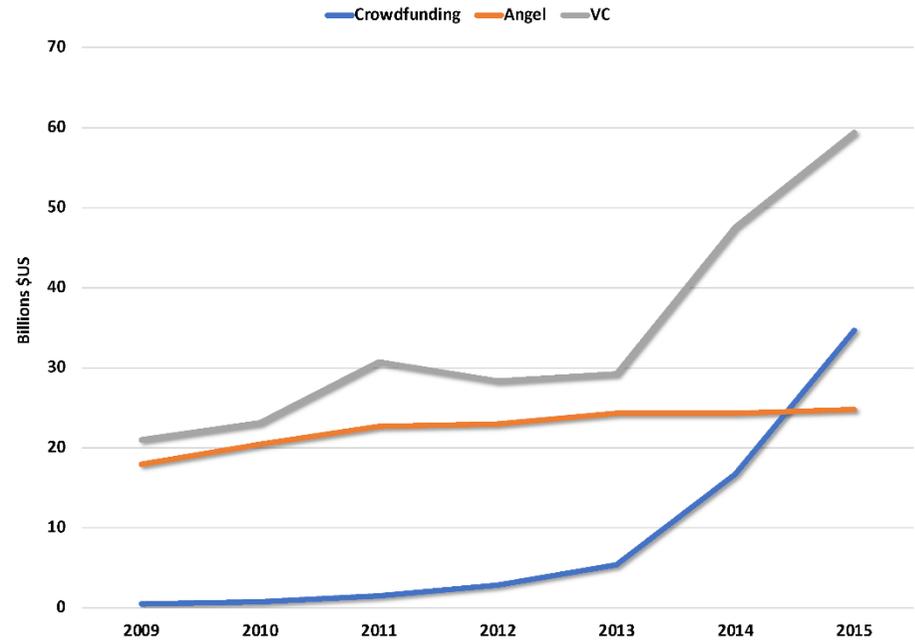


Trends and Emerging Issues: Examples

Number of Insured Commercial Banks versus Credit Unions



Global Annual Funding Raised by Type



TRENDS, EMERGING ISSUES, AND STABILITIES

Together our Trends and Emerging issues are what we'll call our **New Drivers** of change.

1 Trends

What are some of the trends that are currently driving change? Identify both trends that are going up as well as those that are headed down.

Increasing Trends



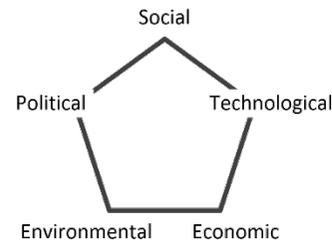
Think about *counter* trends that are being provoked as a result of these initial trends.

Decreasing Trends



Driving Change

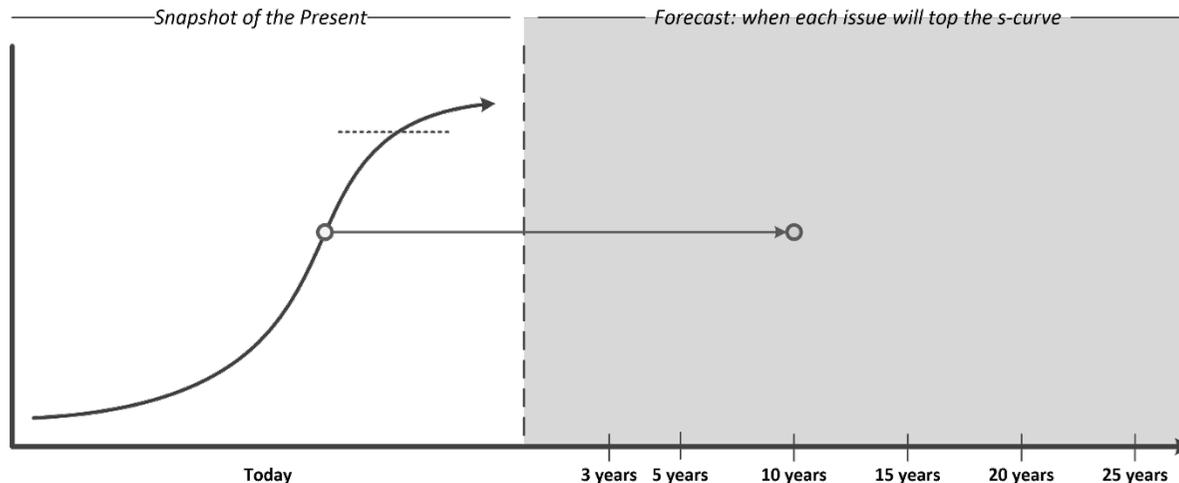
2 Counter Trends



The STEEP framework.

3 Emerging Issues

What new ideas, issues, or technologies are below the radar now, but might mature into important drivers of change?

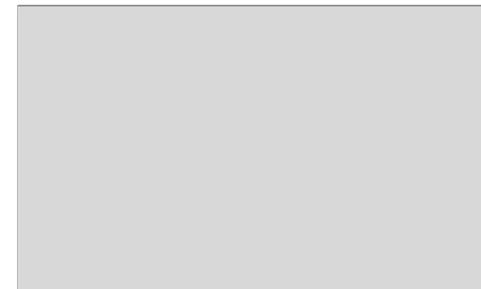


4 Stabilities

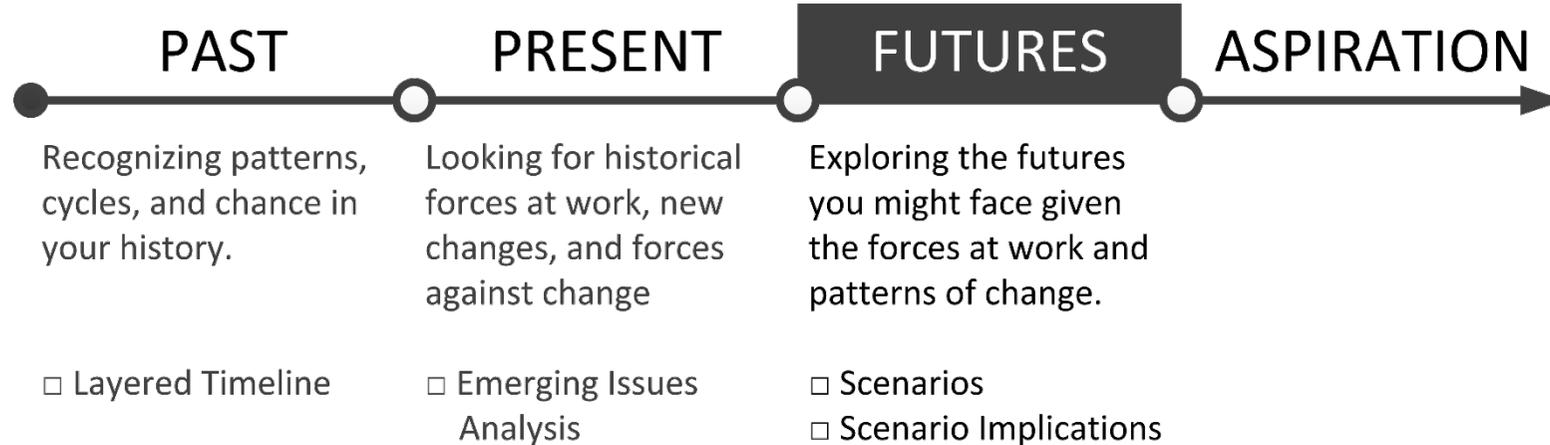
What things will slow or prevent change? We'll call these our **Stabilities**.

Common types of stability-enforcing things:

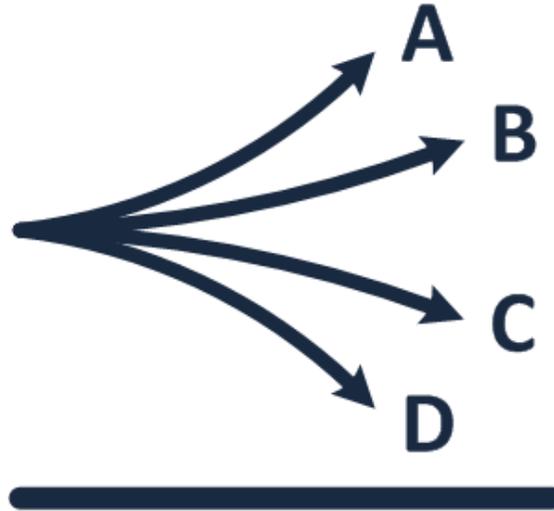
- Rules, customs, and traditions
- Physical or logistical constraints
- Patterns of behavior
- Powerful stakeholders or incumbents



Step 3: Futures



Scenarios: *Possible Futures*



Descriptions of alternative possible futures.

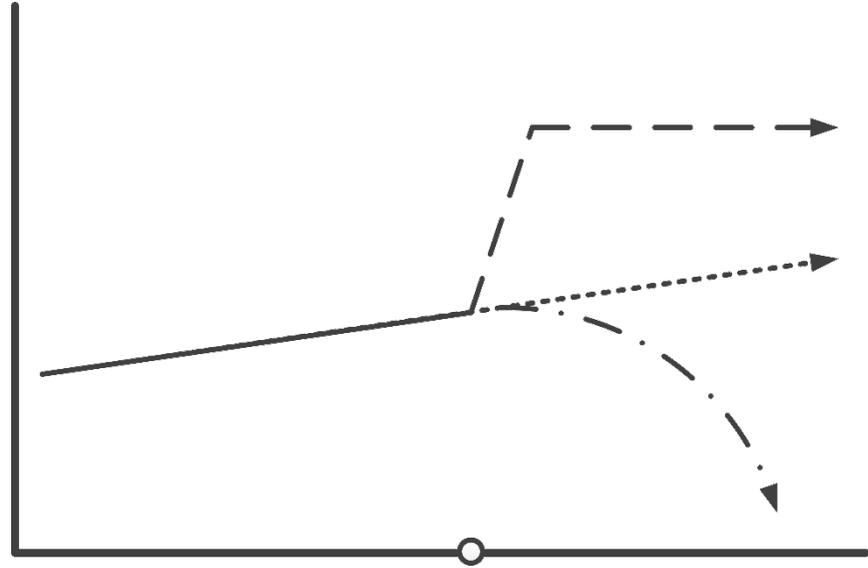


Types of Change

Continuity

Incremental Change

Abrupt Change



Scenarios

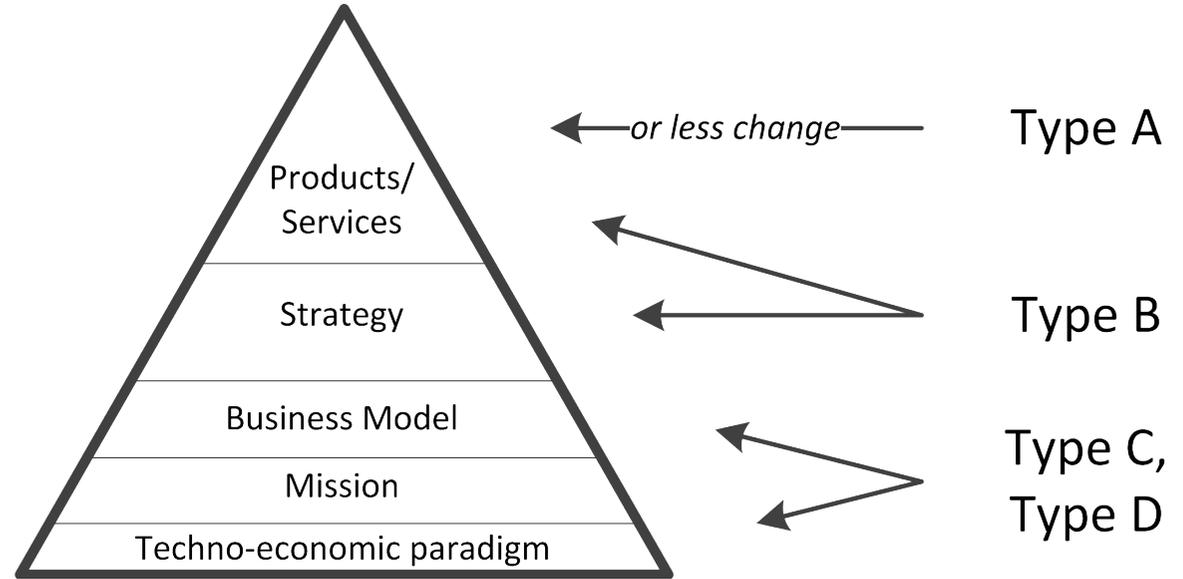
Type A: continuity

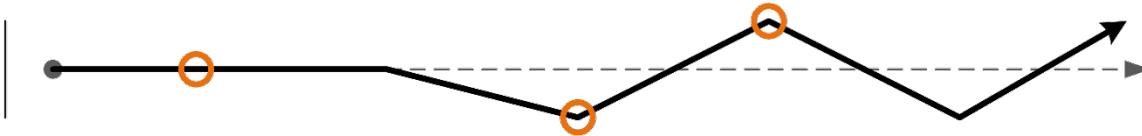
Type B: incremental change, low disruption

Type C: incremental change, high disruption

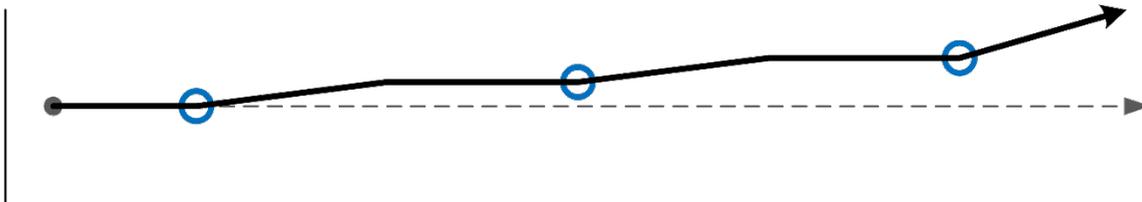
Type D: abrupt, disruptive change

Combinations of Historical Drivers, New Sources of Change, and Stabilities



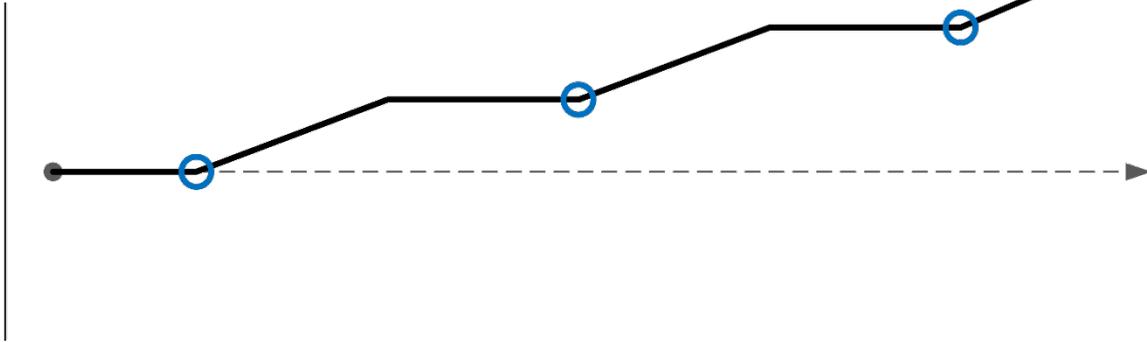


The central story within an **A-type** scenario is how and why powerful forces for change are effectively countered. Within Scenario A, the Stabilities play the starring role. In A-type scenarios Stabilities play more of a role *preventing* and *dampening* change, rather than simply slowing it, as one might find in a Scenario B .

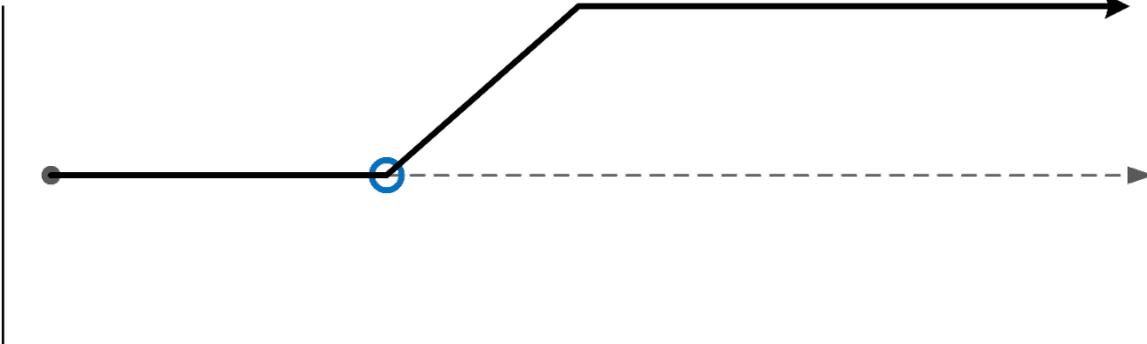


Change occurs in **B-type** scenarios; it just doesn't amount to much divergence from today's rules of the game. The motto of Scenario B is slow and easy. Stabilities can also play an important role in B-type scenarios. In these scenarios, when Stabilities do play an important role, it is more of a *deflecting* and *slowing* effect, rather than stopping change outright.





C-type scenarios are similar to B-types in that they are characterized by incremental changes. The end result of all those changes, however, is much more dramatic and transformative (in either a positive or negative direction). Consider what series of moderate changes would in fact take the world to a very different place.



D-type scenarios are the classic sexy type: sudden, dramatic change that transforms our world. D-types can be either positive (phase changes to a better existence) or negative (a systems collapse). The chief challenge with Scenario D normally is avoiding the use of wild card events and instead drawing on logical, grounded dynamics to explain sudden transformative shifts.

Scenario Examples: Education

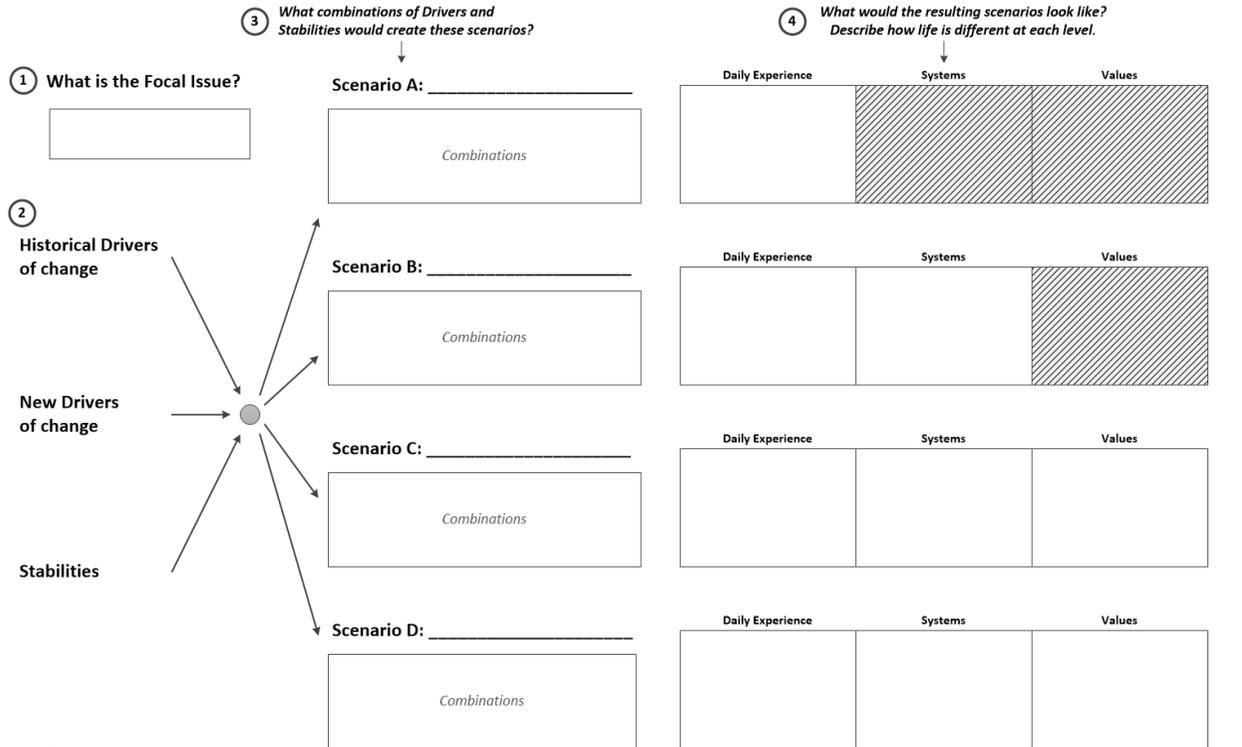
A (continuity)	“Students and Scores” defined by institutional inertia
B (incremental, low)	“Return to Fundamentals” shaped by growing economic pressures
C (incremental, high)	“Increasing Competition” saw multiple innovations finally produce institutional changes
D (abrupt, disruptive)	“Break Out Successes” defined by the introduction and rapid diffusion of a few new key innovations



Tool for the Future: Scenarios

1. Define your focal issue
2. Assemble the Historical Drivers, New Sources of Change, and Stabilities
3. Assign these to each scenario
4. Outline the scenarios
5. Name the scenarios

SCENARIOS



SCENARIO A: CONTINUITY

What is the Focal Issue?

What combinations of Drivers and Stabilities would create your scenario?

Describe what happens to make this unique possible future

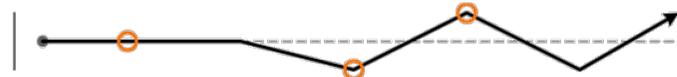
Beginning	Middle	End

Important patterns, cycles, and dynamics 

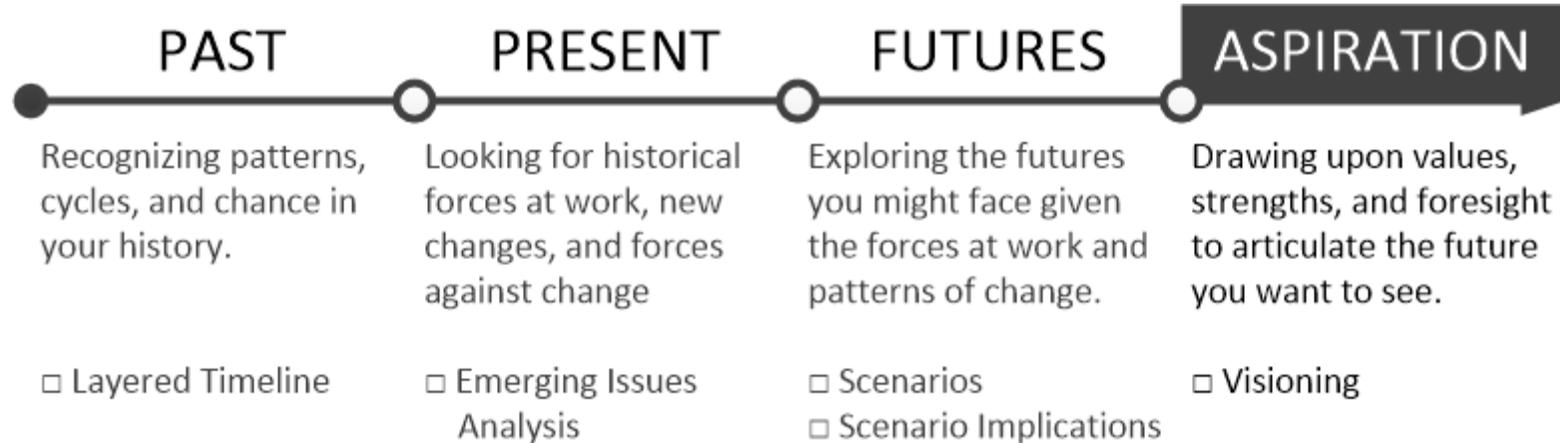
If you have...

Scenario A, Continuity:

The central story within an **A-type** scenario is how and why powerful forces for change are countered. Within Scenario A, the Stabilities play the starring role. In A-type scenarios Stabilities play more of a role *preventing* and *dampening* change, rather than simply slowing it, as one might find in a Scenario B.



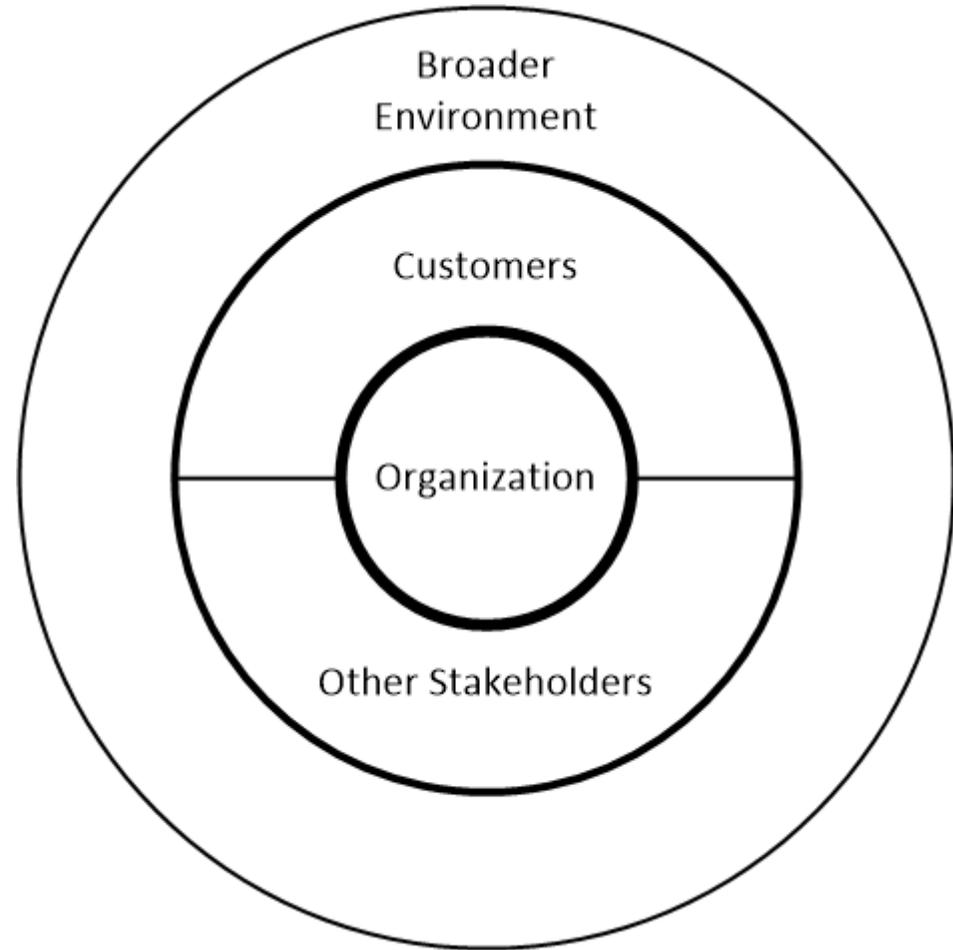
Step 4: Aspiration



Vision: a Preferred Future

“An articulation of the organization’s preferred future, informed by purpose, foresight, and aspiration.”

Given everything we’ve gone through, all of the current pressures, and the emerging opportunities and threats, what future do we want to create?



Tool for Aspiration: Visioning

1. List strengths and successes
2. List 5 most important characteristics of the present
3. List insights from WSs 1-4
4. Visualize the present passing through the foresight layer

VISIONING

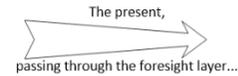
Vision: "An articulation of the organization's preferred future, informed by purpose, foresight, and aspiration."

4 Steps to the Future Worksheet 5

2 The Present:

List the five most important characteristics of the present.

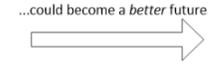
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



3 Foresight:

Write down some of the insights captured in Worksheets 1 – 4.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



4 Your Preferred Future:

List five of the most important characteristics of a better future.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1 Strengths & Successes:

List the five most important strengths from your organization's history to carry into the future.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Visualizing Your Preferred Futures

Use this space to draw your preferred future. Stick figures, icons, diagrams, pasted magazine clippings, or panoramic drawings!

