Vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2009)

Third Transcultural Thematic Issue

"Transcultural Impacts and Perspectives on the Future"

Perspectives from Finland, France, India, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the United States of America, and Venezuela.

How will YOU live and work tomorrow?

Transnational Roundtable: Perspectives on the Future From Across the Globe

Contributors: Elina Hiltunen (Finland), José Cordeiro (Venezuela), Eleonora Masini (Italy), Louis Tuvée (France), Mohan Tikku (India), Bengt-Arne Vedin (Sweden), and Sungjoo K. Ogino (Japan)

What will your lifestyle and value system be in 2025? What culture-based hidden assumptions limit your thinking and your notion of personal identity? What can you learn from other peoples and cultures that can help humankind meet the challenges of the future? And what is the future of cultural diversity itself?

To gain insight on these issues, FUTURE*takes* formed our first-ever Transnational Roundtable of experts from around the world.

1. Which lifestyles and cultural values will survive in 2025, and which ones will be marginalized or extinct?

Elina:

In the future, the lifestyles and attitudes will be more fragmented, meaning that at the same time there will be all kinds of attitudes and lifestyles co-existing. One consideration is that via the Internet and other tools that facilitate globalization, these attitudes and lifestyles have increased visibility and opportunities to spread, possibly with increased unification across the world.

Some lifestyle possibilities that come to mind:

- Increased respect for the environment (out of necessity)
- Decreasing family centrism; increased individual centrism and social networking with peers
- More "mix and match" values and cultures, something from there, another thing from somewhere else, etc.
- Increased individual transparency (fewer "skeletons in the closet")

José:

Strong family ties and close personal relationships will continue during the next two decades.

"Siesta" time will disappear completely during workdays. It will just become a curiosity in history books, a relic for vacation days.

Louis:

In the absence of a true systemic crisis, I do not see present life-styles disappearing and noticeable changes in values occurring. Certainly people concerned by a specific life-style will change, and the *expression of values* can mutate from one field to the other as from consumption to election, social trends to political decisions, or behaviours to laws.

However, extremisms and extremists are facing extinction. Examples include the Right /Left Political arena, workaholics, and sex addiction. This is a result of two trends: consciousness of the limit of the "off-limits" and tolerance for difference. Behind the sometimes partisan and individualist daily struggle for life, the majority is looking for an "appeased" society.

If we refer to the FUTURE*takes* cultural descriptors, my first reaction is to propose substitution of "and" for "or," as things are not black or white and lifestyles are more a grey monochrome according to context and personal resources. The search is for balance, to reach a form – even temporary – of symbiosis. For example, a major challenge will be to preserve a simple life in a complex society. Diversity of values will still exist, translating into lifestyles at individual level, a mosaic for society, and an archipelago in geopolitics. In addition, there is a definitive trend to balance work, family, and leisure as well as a quest for non-material and inner happiness.

Mohan:

While seeking to look at the world of 2025, we must bear in mind a couple of fault lines that hide beneath the surface. Even while looking at the big picture, we should keep observing the behaviour of smaller segments. We cannot but bear in mind that it may not be enough to predict the future for the whole of humanity as a disaggregated lump. We must consider the scenario in three broad segments.

- According to present indications, there will be a whole lot of countries that will be the principal beneficiaries of the process of globalisation. They will be in the vanguard of technological (and therefore) cultural change, that is, technology induced cultural change.

- A sizeable segment of the global population still remains untouched by the benefits and other spinoffs of the globalisation process (despite all the talk about the United Nations Millennium Development Goals). They will simply be left behind – too far behind for any meaningful catching up to occur.

- Then there will peoples, nations, or population segments within the same nation or continent who will be striving to catch up with what goes on in the developed part of the world. Some of them at least will evince the dynamism to catch up with the developed countries, and even leave them behind.

We must therefore accept that there won't be one but several worlds within the one world we know. So, our tendency to universalise our conclusions must remain a guarded one – since the future or futures of the three broad segments will not be identical. They will be operating at different planes, sometimes in cooperation with one another; at other times, in mutual conflict. It is against the backdrop of these realities that one may visualise the world of 2025.

It will be difficult to pinpoint a particular cultural value or practice that will survive something like the humans have, or disappear like the dinosaurs did. More important, many of the cultural values will survive but with altered meanings and significance. For example, the progress in the direction of a networked global community will be a major factor. It will be easier for people to connect across nations and continents. But, at the same time, inter-personal communication will be more superficial. It may be easier to know the world or to know what happens around the world and react to it, but it will be harder to know your neighbour. This will impact a wide range of cultural concepts and practices. People will be feeling more insular in spite of the ease with which they can connect across continents.

Bengt-Arne:

One definition of culture (e.g., in Malinowski's work) would be linked to notions such as beliefs, customs, institutions, religion, ritual, ceremonies, and taboos. Taking instead a leaf from Geert Hofstede's seminal studies of corporate culture, there would be power distance; individualism vs. collectivism; masculinity vs. femininity; uncertainty acceptance; and, a latecomer added after studies in East Asia and not just in the West, long-term vs. short-term orientation.

The FUTURE*takes* list of cultural descriptors offers something like 27 different pairs of opposites, so, if independent, they would make for a 27-dimensional space. Lifestyles clearly constitute (timely) expressions of culture. However, there are other descriptor frameworks, too.

Arnold Mitchell of SRI International pioneered the VALS TM system (values, attitudes, lifestyles) to describe the evolution of lifestyles (he had a corresponding notion of life ways: branching points where traumatic incidents made for decisive bifurcations in a person's or a group's life). VALS was initially essentially a 2x2 matrix, but has now evolved to motivation on one axis, ideals vs. achievement vs. self-expression, and resources, low or high, on the other. Innovators are seen as integrating the various motivations (and they are resource-rich), while survivors just fight to survive, thus generating a scheme of eight different groups.

Since a paper or a screen is two-dimensional, there is a strong tendency to map the world in 2x2 matrices. Another student of value change who offers intriguing examples of this is Bernard Cathelat in France. On the other hand, at one stage the Prizm segmentation system for the demographics and lifestyles in the US featured no fewer than forty different categories.

My suggestion would be that the concept, and the reality, of culture be deconstructed, but not in some fancy neo-modernist enthusiasm but rather to have it reconstructed and then in a balanced logically coherent multidimensional space. Why so? Can it be done? Because I believe that we are in for more of cultural change and cultural clashes than previously, basically because of new means for much faster communication.

Sungjoo:

A belief has long been shared in East Asia that human lives should be HAPPY (very simple!). And there is a famous expression very much loved by Japanese people, "Our happiness or unhappiness in this world starts at the moment when we meet other people. Have a nice encounter!" (written by Mitsuo, a Japanese poet). As we know, the lifestyle that makes people happy through giving them more opportunities to relate to one another, such as the Asian one, will survive. It is true that in the 19th and 20th centuries, the peoples of the world had sought to learn and follow the competitive and sometimes even aggressive behavior against their neighbors to gain physical and material happiness. However, in the coming century, we increasingly get to seek the harmony among people; we had very well been taught the past that was scarred with people's sorrow.

2. What culture-based hidden assumptions tend to limit futurist thinking and/or notions of identity?

Elina:

The role of man and woman in the family (woman as caretaker, man as provider) is still seen as it has been before. These attitudes and social acceptance of nontraditional roles (working mom, housekeeper dad) take time to change.

Many still see the purpose of business as making money for shareholders, but more people are questioning this.

José:

Very local- and individual-based thinking tends to limit very forward-looking ideas.

Extreme emphasis on the past hinders futuristic visions and long-term dreams.

Sungjoo:

The idea of "country," and expressions such as "developing country" and "developed country," will be marginalized. In the future, societies with good development in science, technology, and the human mind will be connected each other in the unity of "individual" enjoying the other diverse characteristics. This will supersede the notions of "developing people" or "developed people" regardless of nations or races.

Government-administered education has brainwashed and limited an individual's consciousness for so long. Much hatred and hostility has been taught in the name of patriotism. I expect many kinds of education by various people who teach respect and gratitude toward other individuals. The future depends on each individual's own exertions to merge into the universe, the world.

Mohan:

The idea of identity as we understand it will be at a discount. But that does not mean the concept of identity will be passé. People will fabricate new identities and different ideas of identity.

Louis:

Culture-based hidden assumptionshave pervasive impact from business to the military, geopolitics and terrorism. For a time we thought that globalization and communications would lead to more uniformity, shared values, and even standardisation, but we discovered that the so called global village was inhabited by very strange tribes speaking, thinking, valuing so differently from us that we start to speak of Civilisation Choc (Huntington) and develop the "Fear of Barbarians" (Tzvetan Todorov).

9/11 and its consequences increased the trauma, and we discovered that *tofight – as to collaborate –* we need to transcend ethnocentrism and first improve our knowledge to, in a second step, better understand "those guys" and their "funny" cultures.

From the futurist viewpoint, the main dangerous hidden assumption is precisely the very notion of "future"! At the national level and still more at the individual level, the future will be linked to the past. For us and our foreigners, the future is linked with what we or our ancestors lived, human or natural events we suffered, and trust we have in self, others or God (s) to change for the better. The same is true of hindsight – useful in future studies – but reference to the past can introduce hidden assumptions. The future will also be inferred from supreme goals: the big V values and also the way we choose to reach them is present in experience built cultural hidden routines.

3. What wisdom from your part of the world would be helpful in meeting the challenges of the future?

José:

Friendliness and happiness, which are very representative of Latin America, will become more important in an increasingly globalized world. More tolerance will also be fundamental in the future.

Mohan:

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The earth has enough for everyone's need; but not enough for everyone's greed." If peoples (read, governments) of the world were to accept and internalise the truth of that statement, it could become the mantra for a new global philosophy. It could show us the way to meet a whole range of challenges from climate change to world poverty without incurring unacceptable costs.

Eleonora:

I will consider Europe as a whole.

One kind of wisdom useful for meeting future challenges is the one that comes from the experience of the European Union within Europe as a whole, in relation to its members that are very different. The members are not only states coming together and trying to work out economic, political, social, and environmental futures (although these are important issues); they are a cluster of different cultures. The cultural issues are not sufficiently taken into account, especially their future developments. The many projects of the Commission on Future Indications are developed through many projects in different countries as members of the Union. These projects are in various areas, from science and technology developments to the related social and ethical issues, and are quite impressive even if, sometimes, they cannot be described as future oriented in themselves. Nevertheless, there is growing awareness of future-related issues at the European level, even if it rarely manifests in political choices in the various countries.

At the same time, many individual countries have good experiences in thinking and choosing in regard to the future within a European and world context. One such country is Finland, which addresses future related issues at the policy making level, and its Parliament has a Committee for the Future. Sweden and Norway, as well as the Netherlands and United Kingdom, also have good experiences in future perspectives, but it manifests differently according to different political situations. France of course has much to teach in conceptual terms and in education towards the future.

The other crucial wisdom is that of living and experiencing issues related to migration within the various countries and across the countries. Europe and its various countries, as well as their citizens, are very much aware that in the future, immigration and migration in general to Europe and within Europe's countries is bound to grow, as differences exist within Europe itself as a whole. There is also a great awareness that immigration from Africa and all of Asia, including China, will grow. With this immigration will come Chinese enterprises, perhaps becoming more established in Italy as they have in France.

Louis:

Nobody has to give lessons but local examples can increase global creativity. I think that for France we may retain:

Our social system

The need to mix economy with solidarity, experience for us, is becoming a top new objective not only for developed nations. Even if realization of devoted programs is difficult to implement, we fight to maintain them in spite of present crises which, at the same time, increase people needs and decrease state resources. Increased length of life and deep mutations in the economy and in industry add structural issues to (we hope temporary) financial chaos.

Our fundamental principle of secularity

Separation of State and Religion cost us in history, but we are attached to what is a fundamental principle of our Republic. Theocracies show their danger and we think that faith must stay in private life. Secularity is not against religions but is a respect of differences and peaceful ways of living together.

Our European journey

To overcome problems and difficulties, Europeans had to come a long way. The new relations with Germany, a historical enemy of France, laid the foundations and still constitute the strongest cornerstone of contemporary Europe.

Not only a money but also a symbol, the Euro was difficult to only imagine few decades ago. Today, the voice of Europe can be heard in the world under the noise of internal disputes.

I will add that for France the new real concern for ecology, with implications both to individual people and to government action.

Elina:

Being a good leader does not depend on one's gender, skin color, religion, etc.

The importance of being honest, doing what one says that he/she will do, and standing behind one's words.

Helping the people who need help. Specifically, taxes are good way to help poor people (the welfare state). Everyone should have access to healthcare, housing, and education and should be able to meet his/her basic needs.

Sungjoo:

"People themselves around you are gods." In our part of the world, we know well that we can not live without others' understanding and help – as illustrated by a Chinese character that means 'human.' We have met many people among neighbors as good as gods who help us to survive and to be happy. These gods near us will keep helping to address the next challenges.

4. What is the future of cultural diversity itself? Will cultural plurality be maintained, or is a monolithic "one-size-fits-all" world more likely to emerge?

Bengt-Arne:

Part of intercultural communication is physical. We certainly experience migrations, which is nothing new. But we also experience travelling, for business and for pleasure, of a much more extensive and rapid nature than ever before. In addition, migrations are associated with instantaneous communication between those moving and those 'left behind,' through e-mail, cell phone, SMS or what not, affecting the next stage of migratory movements. This, then, is part of non-physical communication which also features the sharing widely, sometimes globally, of movies, of political campaigns, of religious sermons, of advertisements, thus of impressions of lifestyles – on a TV screen or on an Internet-connected computer screen.

Language may not in itself be culture but its practical application serves as an important, a key carrier of culture. Stories, proverbs, historical statements, novels all embody basic elements of culture. With this or that screen, visual language is added to verbal language messages. Thus the very fact that more foreign cultures, and several of them, will be present wherever, perhaps badly translated with key cultural signifiers kept though more or less distorted, will have important repercussions for the development of culture – everywhere. This is not at all to say that there will be any general convergence. Some cultures, like the Japanese one, have displayed an amazing faculty for syncretism, for accepting several layers of different cultural influences in parallel: Confucian, Buddhist, Christian; others stand as solid blocks against change.

Elina:

As the world gets more diversified, polarisation may increase; specifically, nationalistic movements may rise. In this sense the cultural roots are evaluated even more that they are today. However, cultures are mixed and people may "mix and match" one aspect of some culture, another aspect of another culture, etc. Whatever happens, people will recognize that "one size does not fit all"; they want to somehow belong to some groups.

José:

Latin America is culturally very mixed, perhaps the second largest melting pot in the world, just behind North America. Latin America has three major cultures: local indigenous, Black African, and Mediterranean European, which were much later joined by some Asians including Chinese and Japanese people. This trend will continue with globalization and continued migrations.

Eleonora:

I am focusing on Europe; however, the issue is as serious one in other parts of the world in which there is negligible possibility of a monolithic "one-size-fits-all" world. As too many cultures around the world are becoming more aware of their differences in confronting other cultures, especially western ones, unless a great effort is made also by the western cultures themselves, we can envisage mainly conflicts at various levels.

In Europe, the future of cultural diversity is crucial. The outlook is that multi-centrality will grow. At the same time, the need to move towards inter-culturality – where each culture keeps its identity but also respects and interacts with other cultures – is not so strongly felt. Yet, important efforts are being made, from many sides, in hopes of moving towards inter-culturality, at least slowly. In some countries, efforts in this direction are at the public (governmental) level, whereas in other countries, it is primarily NGOs that are engaged in such efforts.

The awareness that the issue of immigration (from different parts of the world to Europe) is unavoidable is strong because of the change of Europe's demographic structure toward an aging population – that is, fewer younger people relative to the number of older people. This is due to low total fertility rate in all countries at different levels and as well as in Europe as a whole. The total fertility rate is at 1.5, which is well below replacement level. Hence Europe will have an increasing need for working age immigrants. As a consequence, the multicultural issue and the related assimilation issue will increase in importance, and the time to reach some kind of inter-culturality and more so, inter-centrality will be very long.

Mohan:

That cultural diversity will be eroded as part of the process of globalisation is beyond doubt. I prefer to call it the Global Village Syndrome. Already we can witness that the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world is getting reduced almost on a daily basis. The UNESCO has collected some data on how many languages and dialects disappear every month, every year. The same goes for local cultures. And ditto for the traditional knowledge resources.

However, that does not mean that one size will fit all. It never has. The process of cultural homogenisation may seem to succeed, but only up to point. It can't be a cake walk. That is because even within a process of cultural homogenisation brought by the impact of technologies, different societies and cultures will respond to it in their own ways. So, there will be a diversity of responses to a technology induced mono-cultural onslaught.

Secondly, beyond a point, people feel more secure in local cultural environments. Like one's home, these impart a sense of security and meaning to one's endeavours. So, even as the traditional cultures may be swept under by the wave of globalisation, new 'local' cultures will emerge as an expression of new cultural identities.

Louis:

At the global level, cultural plurality will be maintained up to 2025 and beyond, as years are nothing compared to centuries of differences more exacerbated than eased in the recent past. The future of humanity is not identity but search for "common grounds" and respect for differences. President Obama in his Cairo speech was showing the path. Even basic human values polarize in different behaviors through the filters of culture. It may be that "borderless issues" such as pollution, atomic energy risks, or terrorism will help to develop dissuasion of individualism and ethnocentrism and contribute to a type of *global consciousness*.

But for the time being, if "The world is flat" for high tech, flatteners for high touch are still to invent and promote. Universalism must not be confused with trendy global brands!

5. What long-term issues that are important to your nation or region are not being addressed in international mainstream dialog?

Louis:

No major issue is more important than others. We have not only to think global but also to act global. The last months' mobilization of nations to avoid a world-wide systemic crisis was a good illustration and, even in a limited sense, a demonstration of union strength. The Chinese say that "all big human adventures start with a first step." However, even if addressed, some issues with differences in magnitude and urgency among various countries or continents will never be overemphasised – for example, poverty, social exclusion, violence, or ecology.

At the global level, some of the issues must be framed in the delicate context of the right to interfere and the duty of protecting democracies and the free world.

Elina:

The challenges of raising multicultural children, especially the mixing of cultural habits and their impact to peoples' lives.

Whether western-style prosperity, including capitalism, is the best socioeconomic framework for all peoples, in the present era of increasing globalization and multicultural contact.

José:

Pervasive poverty and large disparities in wealth.

Good governance and better political systems.

Sungjoo:

The anxiety about the dwindling birthrate. To say nothing of Japan or Korea, every developed country is seeking ways to address this issue, but only within its own borders and generally not in a global context.

Mohan:

The destruction and decimation of local / indigenous languages, cultures, ways of life, and the traditional knowledge systems are not adequately addressed by the international community except in cases where it

becomes necessary for their self-interest. Thus a number of best and better practices are allowed to pass into oblivion under the impact of forces generated by the process of globalisation and the market forces.

Eleonora:

Many issues that are important for my country (Italy) and my region are being addressed in the international mainstream dialogue, including economic issues that are very important at all levels, national, regional, or global. This is also the case for environmental issues, even if the discussion is mainly at the academic and NGO level, as in Italy. In contrast, environmental issues are fully discussed at the political level in all Nordic countries, the Netherlands, as well as in many other countries in Europe.

The issue of migration and the need for the coexistence of different cultures is crucial. Even if such issues are discussed at the international level, they are not discussed in depth commensurate with the importance that the issue has in Europe. This is also due to Europe's growing need for immigration. Of course this issue may lead also to very tense situations as the incoming population increases at a pace that renders adaptation difficult. At the same time, political choices in many European countries are not sufficiently rapid in facing the issue of immigration, especially the human rights aspects.

6. What types of new countercultures will arise in your part of the world or elsewhere?

Sungjoo:

A counterculture of indifference to other people appears to be emerging here. Our society was generally more compassionate in the past and is less so now.

For many generations, the people in Asia were an agrarian society, and many hands were needed to harvest the rice and other crops. So the people gathered in villages to help one another. We had learned how to be compassionate toward other people, the neighbors, as if we believed that human compassion could solve all human problems.

However, the last 2 centuries' industrial development and mass production made people more and more arrogant and able to live independently without regard and compassion for others, even their neighbors. People seem to have lost their ability to work with their neighbors to solve problems.

On the other hand, among some people in Japan and other parts of Asia there is a tranquil and steady stream of compassion. Indeed, some people are proud of the compassion that we had in the old days and feel confident that it will return.

Elina:

Something that we will see in the future will probably be anti-technology culture, where people refuse to use of many technological devices like mobile telephones.

José:

Latin America has a relative young population, much younger than in Europe and other advanced countries. The youth tend to be rebellious everywhere, and this will mark some of the developments in Latin America, while the local demographics slowly change.

Mohan:

The global cultural homogenisation will provoke the local cultural responses, which should manifest themselves in local cultural terms. Thus we may have more of 'popular' cultural manifestations at the local level which will be able to resist the onslaught of globalisation. A kind of cultural resistance movement in response to the homogenising impact of globalisation.

Louis:

In the past, countercultures have been progressively tolerated, incorporated, absorbed, and even dissolved in society. This process can be described in a pessimistic way but conforms to a reality view as the Canadians Joseph and Andrew Potter in *The Rebel Sell: Why the Culture Can't Be Jammed* (U.S. version: *Nation of Rebels: Why Counterculture Became Consumer Culture*) translated in self explanatory *Revolte Consommée* (*Consumer Revolt*) in the French edition, where they consider that countercultures are hijacked by business and marketing and that the concept of countercultures is itself a myth.

But we can adopt a more positive attitude. As in Tao, Ying coexists with Yang and "Cultural Creatives" are also pathfinders and are welcome to help the world to improve.

The most difficult challenge is not to think outside-the-box but to first recognize that we think in boxes and that weird ideas are useful to help us wake up. Ecology, sustainability and governance are major conceptual platforms that will develop in various forms of opposition to excesses in action and myopia in vision that mortgage our future. Maybe long-term thinking will become a core counterculture!

7. What are your nation's or region's general perspectives on the future?

Elina:

A highly discussed topic is the economic depression and when it will end.

José:

Latin America will be celebrating its first 200 years of independence during the coming two decades. Such anniversaries are many times completely centered on history instead of the future. Thus, a major opportunity is being missed to really think about the coming decades and centuries by concentrating too much on the past and too little on the far-away future.

Louis:

The "fog of future," akin to the "fog of war," makes it difficult to detect any consensus on the future or at least a Megatrend in French or European opinions. The reality of French posture and potential is distorted according to optimistic or pessimistic lenses for which the media play a big part.

Europe, France included, is confronted with conflicting imperatives: to maintain its historical values and principles of governance and to develop national competencies and competitiveness in collaboration in a multipolar world.

Opinion swings between trust and distrust in tight correlation with age, generations, occupations, and level of education. The latest difficulties experienced by children, parents, relatives, friends, and colleagues impacts the opinions substantially.

Both parents and children feel it will be difficult not only to improve but also to maintain the standard of living known in recent periods, from housing estates to retirement. The concept of progress was already weakening for some years, but crises shuffled the cards and introduced doubt on everything from politicians' or traditional unions' competencies to business ethics, from capitalism to the market economy, from dividends to consumption up to modernity and civilization. The main question is "When the crisis will end?" but above all "what next?"

Mohan:

The south Asia region's future is bound to be impacted by a number of factors, resulting in a future that cannot be said to be too bright. At best, it will be a very mixed baggage. In some form or the other, it shall continue to be one of the hotspots of the world. It is home to nearly half of the world's poorest people (half a billion). It has high population growth rates. Additionally, it is prone to conflict because of post-colonial factors. It has been the breeding ground of extremist formations and ideologies. Pakistan has its Al Qaeda, Taliban and the Mujahideen. The Indian government has to deal with a variety of insurgent movements in different parts of the country. Nepal has its Maoists. Bangladesh has its share of Muslim fundamentalists. Sri Lanka has its separatists. Against this backdrop, it does not matter if the Tamil Tigers, most virulent of the Tamil militant groups, has just been defeated.

In view of these facts, South Asia's development will continue to be uneven. And the unevenness will further exacerbate conflict. The challenge for the countries of the region is to break out of this mutually reinforcing relationship.

Other thoughts and observations

Louis:

Mindset is certainly the name of the game for this time of deep transition. Experts such as John Naisbitt and Carol S. Dweck emphasize the need and give some interesting "directions for use." But, in this perspective we must take into account the "Fact-Value Distinction" concept to distinguish between one possible future (*what ought to be*), characterized by holistic thinking, a long term horizon, the right brain, needed synergy between the creative energy of the youths and the wisdom of older people, and *what is:* a real but slow progress coupled with reductionism and conservatism.

There is also a generation gap to overcome: the young fear the future and are reluctant to enter active life and the older people hesitate to leave power positions to "enjoy" retirement. This situation does not give the needed space for new ideas and dynamic actions. Present crisis have raised the question of legitimacy of both means and goals, given top priority to crisis management and short term, reinforced security appeal, and exacerbated corporatisms.

It is true that the pending question is the choice that will be made at national and international levels between change type I or change type II in the Palo Alto sense. The tendency of societies and mindsets to homeostasis may make us fear a relapse. Weak signals of the worst kind are the present behaviour of the finance world and management of companies exploiting the shadow of crisis to take – under the pressure of governments – actions postponed for years, including massive layoffs and delocalization.

We can feel the dramatic future potential impact of treating a crisis as a godsend! President Sarkozy, who fought with dynamism and courage against corporate inertia, tried in his recent historical address to the French Parliament to mobilize and rebuild trust in the "Next"!

NEXT STEPS

We invite you to participate in our next Transnational Roundtable. Details will be posted at
www.futuretakes.org