

# Shifting values: hope and concern for “waking up”

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Andy Hines

Andy Hines is a Lecturer/  
Executive-in-Residence at  
the Department of Human  
Development and  
Consumer Sciences,  
University of Houston,  
Houston, Texas, USA.

## Abstract

**Purpose** – *The purpose of this paper is to take up the challenge of Slaughter’s Biggest Wake-up Call in History to look for solution in the interior aspects of the Integral perspective by focusing on long-term patterns of changing values in individual interior (the upper-left “intentional” quadrant of the Integral matrix).*

**Design/methodology/approach** – *The paper applies the author’s research on long-term patterns in individual values changes. It takes a developmental perspective, suggesting a consistent direction of change in individual values, drawing on an analysis of 20 values systems described in the literature.*

**Findings** – *The findings suggest that the long-term values changes offer both hope and concern for addressing the global emergency. The hope comes from development in postmodern and integral values, suggesting that the rise of postmodern values could lead to greater awareness of the global emergency and that the rise of integral values in particular could lead to greater action in addressing it. A concern is that modern values suggest priorities reinforcing the trends and developments, such as a massive rise in consumption, driving the global emergency and that these values are increasingly prevalent in the emerging markets that make up the largest share of the global population.*

**Research limitations/implications** – *The most important area for further research would be to develop an accurate measure of the prevalence of the types of values present in the world today.*

**Social implications** – *The impacts on society suggest important timing questions for addressing the global emergency. The growing presence of modern values reinforces the trends driving the emergency, while the rise of postmodern and integral values suggests potential for moving toward solutions. It is not clear which set of values will end up having the greater impact: modern values could intensify the emergency before postmodern and integral values are sufficiently developed to drive solutions.*

**Originality/value** – *The synthesis of research on long-term pattern in values shifts and its application to global emergency discussion adds an element of richness to the discussion of the role of interior aspects of the integral perspective. Futurists and others concerned with the global emergency will have greater insight into the need to deal with the spread of modern values in the emerging markets, as well as greater insight into the need to cultivate the spread of postmodern and integral values and enlist the support of those having those values in working on solutions to the global emergency.*

**Keywords** *Individual behaviour, Values, Foresight, Modern history, Postmodernism, Integral, Global emergency, Social values, Consumerism*

**Paper type** *Conceptual paper*

**M**y review of Slaughter’s (2010) *Biggest Wake up Call in History* suggests humanity’s current response is “hitting the snooze button” (Hines, 2011a). This article offers a synthesis of research into long-term patterns of values change into a framework that facilitates their application to the discussion about how to address the global emergency necessitating the wakeup call. The values changes and their implications suggest cause for hope as well as concern.

An immediate challenge in search for solutions is pinning down what is meant by problem of “planetary emergency” as well as its projected timeframe. There is not a single event *per se*

– nothing as clean as Y2K where something either happened or it didn't. Rather, it is comprised of multiple issues essentially relating to over-development that is stressing the state of the environment and planetary carrying capacity. Each of these issues is on their own timeframe. And the issues and the systems in which they are embedded operate at different scales and change at different rates (Gunderson and Holling, 2002).

Thus, to set expectations appropriately, the understandable ambiguity in framing the problem suggests similar ambiguity for solutions. This essay does not offer a simple solution. It hopes to provide futurists a perspective and framework on how individual awareness may change in the future, which in turn provides clues that might prove useful for future awareness-raising activities.

### Values change and assumptions behind it

A key insight from the Integral approach that Slaughter uses to analyze the global emergency is that most proposed solutions so far derive from the "right-hand side of Wilber's matrix (see Figure 1). It focuses on exteriors with a particular emphasis on the lower right social quadrant focusing on systems and solutions. He suggests the need to look to the left-hand side that focuses on the interiors of individual (intentional) and groups (cultural).

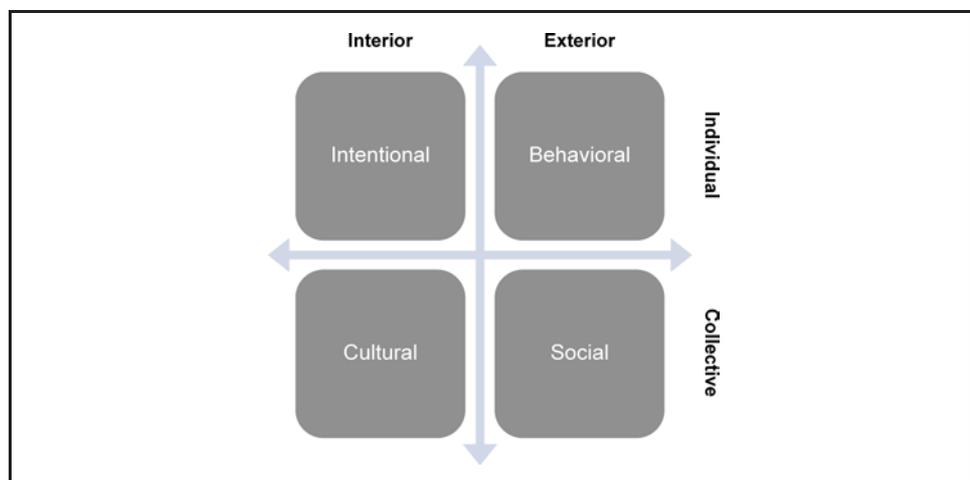
My values research addresses the interior or left-hand side, primarily the upper-left quadrant, which focuses on individual intention or motivation. Values are defined as "an individual view on what is most important in life that in turn guides behavior." They are a useful surrogate or focal point for changes in intention, which relates to individual awareness (Hines, 2011b).

### Four types of values

Two sources of values data, the World Values Survey (see [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org)) led by Ron Inglehart and colleagues and Beck and Cowan's (1996) *Spiral Dynamics* were particularly valuable. Fans of Integral Theory will recognize *Spiral Dynamics* as it has been referred to extensively by Wilber (2000b). I also examined dozens of other systems covering values or worldviews to some degree and reported on 20 of the more useful ones (see Table I). Most values research was not longitudinal, that is, it focused on current snapshots of individual values preferences with no effort to extend how they might change over time.

The World Values Survey and *Spiral Dynamics* are particularly useful for futurists in that they are developmental models that suggest consistent patterns of change over time. Of course, development is but one theory of social change. Bishop and Hines (2012, pp. 112-151), describe ten such theories. Developmental models are also contested, and in the eyes of

**Figure 1** Wilber's four quadrants



**Table I** Systems for exploring values

<i>Name of system</i>	<i>Principal author</i>	<i>What it covers</i>	<i>Year (est.) developed</i>
Hierarchy of Human Needs	Abraham Maslow	Needs	1943
Spiral Dynamics	Don Beck/Clare Graves	Value memes/worldviews	1950s
Values Inventory	Robin Williams	Values	1950s
World Values Survey	Ronald Inglehart	Values	1970s
Cultural Dimensions	Geert Hofstede	Cultural differences	1970s
Rokeach Value Survey	Milton Rokeach	Instrumental and terminal values	1973
Hall-Tonna Inventory	Brian Hall and Benjamin Tonna	Values	1979
LOV (List of Values)	Lynn Kahle	Instrumental values	1983
Human Scale Development Needs	Manfred Max-Neef	Needs and "satisfiers"	1986
VALS	Arnold Mitchell	Psychographics	1987
Mental Modes	Hunter Lewis	Mental modes	1990
Human Values Project	Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential	Values	1991
SVI (Schwartz Value Inventory)	Shalom Schwartz	Individual and cultural values	1992
Cultural Value Dimensions	Fons Trompenaars	Cultural differences	1994
Transnational Consumer Cultures/Social Milieus	Jorg Ueltzhoffer	Segmentation around values/attitudes/behaviors	1998
Theory of 16 Basic Human Desires	Steve Reiss	Motives/desires (needs, purposes)	1998
Cultural Creatives	Paul Ray	Creatives, Moderns, and Traditionals	2000
Deepest Values	Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz	Deepest values	2003
Value Populations	Ken Beller, Louis Patler and Steve Weiss	Values sorted into five generational segments	2005

Source: Hines (2011b)

some postmodernist scholars, discredited. Lyotard (1979, p. xxiv) defines postmodern as "incredulity toward metanarratives." Inglehart (1997, p. 5) concedes that "simplistic versions [of modernization theory] have long been exploded . . . but that some scenarios of social change are far more probable than others." He also responds to frequent criticism that developmental models are Western creations by arguing that "modernization is not westernization" (Inglehart and Welzel, 2009, p. 37). This issue will not be settled here, but the argument that follows assumes a developmental approach is viable and useful.

Rokeach (1973, p. 23), a pioneer in the study of values, observed that "the increased currency of explicit value concepts among psychologists and social scientists has unfortunately not been accompanied by corresponding gains in conceptual clarity or consensus. We talk about altogether too many probably different things under one rubric." A key goal of *ConsumerShift*, some key findings of which are presented here, was to sort through the differences among various values systems and present a consistent approach (Hines, 2011b).

Table I shows 20 of the more useful systems relating to values in the author's view. Eight of the systems had an explicit focus on values. The rest either included values as one of several foci, or values could be inferred from them. For instance, integral values were inferred from the Yellow-Integrative Worldview of the Spiral Dynamics system.

The World Values Survey and Ray's Cultural Creatives were the only explicitly values-based systems with a developmental orientation, although Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Beck's Spiral Dynamics focus on worldviews did as well. The rest are "static in that they are not intended to address changes over time, but their inventory of values did overlap with the developmental schemes and thus were integrated into the four types resulting from the synthesis.

The World Values Survey has a set of longitudinal data, but it is reported in a way that makes it difficult to get a precise grip on how single values have changed as they are typically aggregated as either secular-rational, self-expression, or post-materialist values. Spiral Dynamics' (1996) data were reported with the 1996 publication of the book, but it has not been carried forward longitudinally. Despite the different vantage points between these two

systems, the findings overlay in a strikingly similar way. And when incorporating the others systems, such as Paul Ray's (2000) "Cultural Creatives," the data that is available tells a consistent, albeit imperfect story of a pattern of change.

The values from the various systems are synthesized into four main values types, described below.

### *Traditional*

The focus is on following the rules and fulfilling one's predetermined role, with priorities such as respect for authority, religious faith, national pride, obedience, work ethic, large families with strong family ties, and strict definition of good and evil. Traditional values are generally on the decline as economic development has stimulated a shift to modern and then postmodern and integral values.

### *Modern*

The focus is on achievement, growth and progress, with priorities such as high trust in science and technology (as the engines of progress), faith in the state (bureaucratization), rejection of out-groups, an appreciation of hard work and money, and determination to improve one's social and economic status. Rising levels of economic development are enabling greater consumption and participation in consumer lifestyles. Modern values are on the rise in the emerging markets, and are perhaps the most antithetical to the wakeup call given the emphasis on consumption.

### *Postmodern*

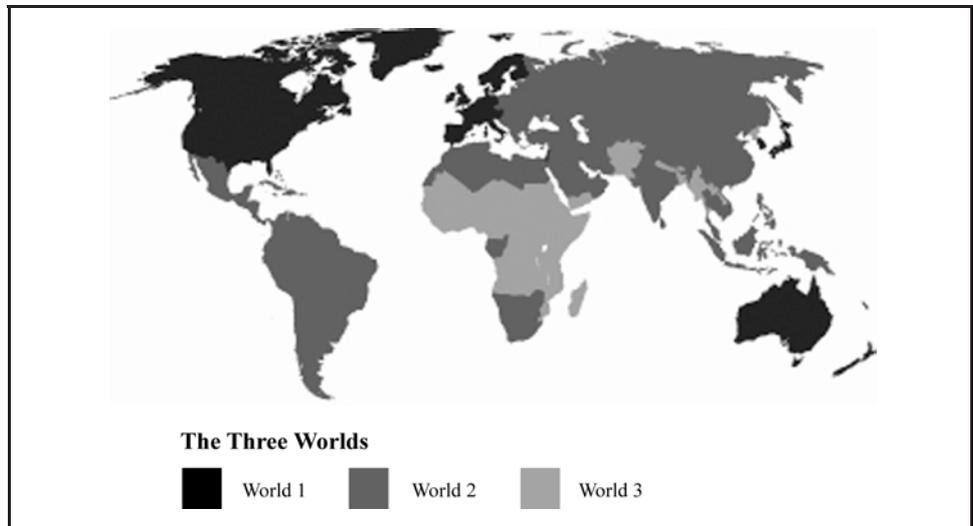
The focus is on the search for meaning in one's life, with priorities such as self-expression, including an emphasis on individual responsibility as well as choice, imagination, tolerance, life balance and satisfaction, environmentalism, wellness, and leisure. This shift in priorities is enabled by higher degrees of economic security. Postmodern values are on the rise on the affluent nations, and include a concern for sustainability. They are held by roughly a quarter of the population within affluent nations. This type is growing, emerging in the late 1960s/early 1970s and slowly growing since then to being an influential group shaping preferences in the affluent nations.

### *Integral*

This leading edge of values change is characterized by a more practical and functional approach to employing values that best fit the particular situation, enabling one to pursue personal growth with an understanding and sensitivity to larger systemic considerations. The first three value types derive from the World Values Survey, but this one is derived from Integral Theory and Spiral Dynamics (and needs to be validated). Integral values are also on the rise, but they start from a much smaller base, with estimates ranging from 1-2 percent to perhaps 4 or 5 percent in affluent nations. A key point here is that the transition from postmodern to integral values is a substantial one, designated as a move from first- to second-tier consciousness, which will be explained more fully below.

The World Values Survey data indicate the prevalence of types by country. A sort of country level data show that N. European countries cluster as the most postmodern, along with the USA, Australia, Japan. China, India, the former Soviet, bloc and most Latin American countries form a second cluster that maps with modern values, and poor countries in Africa and S. Asia also cluster and map onto traditional values (Inglehart, 2006; Inglehart and Welzel, 2010). The data map nicely onto a three-world division of countries into affluent, middle income, and poor countries originally developed by the former Coates and Jarratt, Inc. (Coates, 1997). The overlay of values data on the Three Worlds Map (see Figure 2) indeed shows a strong relationship between traditional values being predominant in the poorer World 3 countries (about 1-2 billion people), modern values in the emerging market World 2 countries (4-5 billion people), and postmodern values most prominent in affluent World 1 countries (< 1 billion people).

**Figure 2** The three worlds



This data distribution fits with the theory that levels of economic development and types of values are related. Of course, this is a large generalization and all types exist everywhere; it's a matter of detecting broad patterns or center of gravity. The data is indicating a long-term shift from traditional to modern to postmodern to integral. The World Values Survey puts the percentage of postmodern values at around 25 percent of affluent W1 countries. Spiral Dynamics had suggested integral at 1-2 percent of the population. That suggests that the remaining 73-74 percent are distributed among traditional and modern values.

The pace of change has been very slow, although there is some evidence that it is speeding up, as each new type appears to be emerging more quickly. Traditional values were dominant for centuries. Modern values emerged and gained in numbers with the advent of industrial revolution. Postmodern values emerged with the information and service society just forty years ago, and Integral values, the newest on the scene emerged perhaps a decade or two ago (Hines, 2011b).

A key point is that values changes are accompanied by changes in economics, politics, and technology. While it is a point of debate on which drives which, Inglehart's (1997) theory of intergenerational value change suggests that one's level of "existential security" is the key factor. It's not necessarily how much money one has, but how secure one feels. It is fair to suggest that political change follows rather than leads, and technology is perhaps equal parts driver and driven. This essay won't settle this question since it focuses on the values component.

### Key questions from the changing distribution of values

Three questions seem particularly relevant to the wakeup call.

1. What can be done about the huge number of W2 emerging market consumers moving to modern values and entering their high-growth and consumption phase, which is likely to create further pressure on the issues relating to the wakeup call?

Tens to hundreds of millions of people in the emerging markets are just entering the consumer society – they are poised to consume, and are not likely to be easily persuaded away from the "good life" by appealing to sustainability or environmental footprint issues. The emerging markets may rightly feel it is "their turn" (Hines, 2011c). A Pew Research Center (2012, p. 18) study noted that India, for example is "in the grip of rapid economic and social transformation," and that the "the young, people who live in cities, the better-educated, the wealthier" are more receptive to the up-tempo pace of life brought

on by modernization. “ Many W2 countries are achieving levels of economic development such that literally hundreds of millions of their citizens are just beginning to participate in the consumer economy. Unchecked, they will put tremendous pressure on the planet’s carrying capacity. They are unlikely to be sympathetic to affluent nation appeals that they need to curb their growth in order to protect the environment. They’ll see it as hypocritical.

Affluent countries have largely passed through their modern, high growth consumption phases. This phase is characterized by extraordinary growth and high degrees of innovation and reliance on technology as the engine of growth. The downside is that environment consequences are viewed as a secondary concern. Dealing with those issues is trumped by growth. It is not suggested that W2 is following an identical path previously trodden by W1. Indeed, Inglehart and Baker (2000, p. 19) observed the persistence of “distinctive cultural traditions” amidst massive cultural change. The values changes are structurally similar, but their specific interpretation or expression is influenced by local culture.

This suggests that if affluent nations want to do something about the potential huge rise in W2 consumption, it will have to be in the form of taking concrete actions rather than appeals to values or “reason.” In simple terms, rather than preaching sustainability, provide green technologies. Admittedly, green technologies may not be enough, but the point is that it will need to be a cooperative effort that will likely involve a great deal of sharing and collaboration.

2. Will affluent W1 postmoderns be capable of driving effective action in addressing the global emergency?

While some have pinned high hopes pinned on the postmoderns to lead a transformation in society, it is not clear if this group is equipped to do it (Greer, 2008; Hines, 2011d). It is also not clear if there is a threshold or critical mass at which postmodern values – or any type of values – becomes the strong enough to drive change. Those forecasting a values transformation a generation put a heavy burden on a relatively small group at the time – less. It may be different now that postmoderns are 25-30 percent of the population. In *ConsumerShift* (Hines, 2011b) I summed key social changes resulting from postmodern values being moves toward concern with quality of life and a search for meaning. Indeed postmoderns place priority on sustainability, community, and quality-of-life. The modern focus on material goods accumulation gives ways to a desire for meaningful experience. Ironically, in a book with “consumer” in the title, there is a move toward anti-consumerism, a desire to be treated as an individual rather than an economic statistic. As futurist and values researcher Marcus Barber notes[1], there is a sense of “enoughness” among the postmoderns – a desire to get off the hedonistic treadmill and be more mindful about how one spends ones time and resources.

At the same time, this values set is characterized by an emphasis on self-expression – about finding one’s place in the order of things, and it is not clear that it has enough of an activist orientation to it. There is great emphasis placed on participation, and that can sometimes get in the way, or at least slow down, effective action. An argument “for” postmoderns driving the wakeup call might be found in Hawken’s (2008) *Blessed Unrest*, where he cites the amazing growth in social entrepreneurship movements. Tibbs (2011, p. 29) excellent analysis of shifts in cultural values suggested that the growth of postmoderns could be “interpreted simply as implying that the social conditions now exist for conscious voluntary change” or more realistically “marking the start of a process of positive socio-economic adaptation.” But can they catalyze to action? And is it the postmoderns who are driving this, or the integrals? The postmoderns are more established and relatively numerous at about 25 percent of affluent World 1 nations. Tibbs (2011) cited data from Ray (2008) suggesting that the postmoderns (“Cultural Creatives” in Ray terms) could be as high as 44 percent of the population. If they indeed can be the vanguard, things look more hopeful.

3. Will there be enough Integrals “in time,” especially given the significant leap to 2nd-tier consciousness required?

This group seems to have the characteristic values compatible with driving the transformative change suggested by the wakeup call. Each new value set in one respect seeks to correct some of the perceived “faults” of its predecessor, which makes sense in that if the previous value set was up to the task, then there would be no perceived need for a new one. It may be that the introspective and participative ethos of the postmoderns ends up handcuffing them from taking effective action. It may be that they are effective in raising awareness – clearly sustainability is much higher on the social agenda than a generation ago – but that the integrals will catalyze action. Beck and Cowan (1996, p. 275) characterize the Integral worldview as driven by the need to restore viability to a disordered world endangered by the cumulative effect of previous values and worldviews. Markley (2012, p. 11) suggests that “integral thinking and activism” are essential concepts for providing the foresight needed to deal with the global emergency. A promising research project would test for this supposed activist orientation among the integrals.

Assuming they are capable of driving action, another question is whether their numbers can grow fast enough? Values change has historically been slow. At the individual level, values change is typically triggered by a change in life conditions that raises questions about whether one’s current values are providing adequate guidance. An existential crisis of some sort leads to a questioning and a process of seeking new answers. It is typically gradual than dramatic or overnight, but that does not mean it cannot be otherwise. It might be safe to suggest that a more dramatic “crisis” might inspire more value change. As Slaughter (2010) points out, the current lack of social foresight suggests it may be very difficult to inspire change without some sort of catalytic crisis.

A related issue is whether this transition from postmodern to integral will be more difficult than previous ones. Graves (1974) referred to this as a “momentous leap,” where “a chasm of unbelievable depth of meaning is crossed.” In essence, with second-tier consciousness, one can more easily navigate among the values types and apply values appropriate to the situation or context. One can appreciate the value of the different values, rather than arguing for one particular viewpoint as correct for all cases. Debates between levels in the first-tier are often frustrating in that each level holds to its arguments and is unable to transcend to a level of higher understanding. Integrals can access all types of values and will gravitate toward those seen as most appropriate to the situation. The other types each feel the world would be a better place if only everyone would adopt their particular set of values. Wilber (2000a) suggests that each stage in values development “transcends and includes” its predecessors rather than it being a substitution or replace. So each stage is a fundamental ingredient for its successors and can be activated or reactivated as life conditions warrant.

Wilber (2012) suspects that the Integral group may be larger than the 1-2 percent submitted by Beck in his *Spiral Dynamics* work, and is perhaps at 4-5 percent today and on its way to 10 percent, which he believes will “be a tipping point that will have an extraordinary impact on our culture.” He adds that “there is nothing preventing all of those 50 million green americans from transforming to yellow right now. Theoretically, that could happen. More realistically, of course, what we will likely find is this: some percentage of those 50 million – I would say perhaps 10 percent to 20 percent will move to yellow, or move to second tier, starting within a decade. And that means the percentage of the population at second tier will slowly start to rise. That much is certain; it’s only a matter of time” (Wilber, 2003, p. 396). That said, there is no empirical support provided.

## Discussion

Questions and criticisms of the development model presented here, and the general weakness of the supporting data have been noted. The work does provide a sense of where we stand in relation and what needs to be done in terms of Slaughter’s (2010, p. 131) observation that potential responses to the global emergency have overlooked “interior characteristics and potentials.”

Better data on the existence and composition of the four types, the rate they are changing, and their views and behaviors relating to the global emergency would provide those

mobilizing or planning to mobilize with a more informed view of the landscape. It could provide valuable insight into whether a constituency for dealing with the global emergency is already there and simply needs to be mobilized, or whether it needs to be cultivated and developed “from scratch.”

It is very difficult to suggest with any precision how much values change is needed and by when. More and sooner is probably desirable. Crompton (2010) suggests an ethical imperative for conveying some values rather than others provided it is done transparently, in order to address what is described here as the global emergency. There is, however, a lack of precision both on the timing of the problem and the solution. The values framework, however, gives us a starting point to talk about developments on the interior and offers an interpretation for how change is progressing there and suggests there are both challenges and as well positive developments underway from the values shifts.

The big challenge being that large numbers of the world population are entering their high-consumption modern stage that will further exacerbate the global emergency. The good news is that the current “worst offenders,” the affluent nations are passing through this phase and moving into a less damaging postmodern lifestyle. It may be that the postmodern lifestyle’s contribution is to at least not make the problem worse and possibly mitigate it, but it may that the rise of the 2nd tier integral values are the prime candidates to take effective action regarding the emergency. The challenge is they are relatively few in number and will they grow in sufficient numbers and exhibits sufficient desire and effectiveness.

Along those lines, the discussion suggests that there is hope and signs of progress on the internal front. Values are indeed gradually shifting away from the growth and consumption ethos, albeit the next global generation passing through this phase is a large one. But if a cooperative effort between the “worlds” emerges, it may be possible to make it more manageable.

The emphasis on the internal does not in turn suggest that we make the opposite error and put all the emphasis on internal and forget externally-derived solutions. The whole notion of integral is just that – integrated! The internal and external, the interior and exterior, working together in an integrated fashion.

Futurists have been making the case for a wakeup calls to varying degrees for decades. And this should continue. While I suggested earlier that crisis may be necessary, it is not the only source of values changes. Whatever induces the questioning of one’s values is sufficient. And it may be hearing a talk form a futurist that raises new questions for individuals. Or new books, articles, videos, etc. That good work should continue, as well as the work Slaughter suggests in building the capacity for social foresight.

The values framework can also aid the futurist in messaging. Being aware of the different values priorities can help in tailoring a message that speaks to people “where they are,” rather than “where they should be.”

For future research, perhaps the single most useful project would be getting an up-to-date estimate of the percentage of four types, particularly the Integrals, since the current data is weakest in regard to them. A series of follow-up projects could explore appropriate roles for and appeals to the four types:

- What role might traditionals play in addressing the global emergency – is there an appeal to that group that might activate them?
- What can be done to mitigate the effects of the anticipated surge of consumption among the modern values holders in W2?
- Are the postmodern and/or the Integrals show an activist orientation suggesting they are capable of driving the necessary changes for addressing the global emergency?

A more ambitious project might explore what constitutes a critical mass or tipping point in terms of a rough percentage of the presence of value types that move it from the periphery to the center, thus providing a better handle on the likely timing of effective mobilization for dealing with the emergency. For example, if the research suggested that 20 percent is a

rough tipping point and Integrals were at less than 10 percent, it might suggest mobilization is further away than if they were at 15 percent. An important caveat is while having these numbers would be helpful, we wouldn't be able to read too much into them. It certainly shouldn't suggest that once we hit a certain level the problem will be readily solved. At the same time, we have precious little to rely upon in the realm of individual values, and this research could help us better gauge where we stand and where we're likely to be going, and thus provide guidance when in considering strategic approaches to the global emergency in this area.

## Note

1. See [www.lufg.com.au/](http://www.lufg.com.au/) for information on Marcus and see [www.andyauthoright.com/?p=589](http://www.andyauthoright.com/?p=589) for more on "enoughness."

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### Corresponding author

Andy Hines can be contacted at: [ahines@uh.edu](mailto:ahines@uh.edu)

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