

Chapter 3

A Technique for Guiding Images: Imagining the Future After Capitalism



Andy Hines

About 50 years ago, Polak (1973) raised a concern about the lack of positive images of the future. Forty years later, the author took up his own challenge by focusing specifically on identifying images for a successor system to the prevailing neoliberal capitalist one. A key insight from Polak's (1973) work was that working towards an image provides a sense of purpose that inspires the people—absent that image, there is a sense of being lost. The latter is arguably the case today.

But how does one develop such images? Is it simply imagination? People do occasionally simply speculate about their future. Futurists, of course, imagine the future on a regular basis to aid their clients, and have developed a whole discipline of concepts, methods, and tools to do so. There are different type of futures and different timeframes. Sometimes a futurist imagines a particular driving force, say artificial intelligence, in a particular domain, say work. Perhaps the most common type of image that futurists create are scenarios, or stories about a domain or aspect of the future. There are many techniques for creating these images—my colleagues and I identified 23 scenario techniques in previous work (Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007).

The focus of this paper is to imagine Polakian images, referred to as “guiding images.” This type of image provides a positive directional guide for a society to work towards. It creates a conceptual space, set in the future—one that is desirable for a society, thus providing the motivation to develop the knowledge and plans to get there. In effect, it is a map to a virtual geography set in the future. It is interesting to note that despite all the techniques for creating scenario images, I found no clear guidance on how to craft a guiding image.

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In this paper, I will thus describe a technique I developed to create guiding images for the future, in this case focused on the future after capitalism. I first shared these ideas at the 2022 Knowledge and Space Symposium on “Placing the Future” in Heidelberg, Germany. The particular relevance, as one thinks about the role of knowledge in a place, is how to develop useful knowledge about a place that does not yet exist—the future. Of course, ideas about the future are alive in the present, but how might they be developed to provide a guide or map to potential futures?

Some Definitions

There is a definitional distinction worth noting. Some readers may wonder why I do not call these guiding images utopias, or perhaps visions. Dictionary definitions make little distinction between the three, as noted in Table 3.1.

Polak (1973) used “image,” so that was the default. But there is a case to be made for “vision” in the sense suggested by the popular Three Horizons framework (Curry & Hodgson, 2008), which refers to longer-term third horizons concepts as visions. Sharpe (2013) describes the third horizon vision as an ideal to be worked towards, which is quite similar to the guiding image notion. The position here is that vision is most commonly used in reference to organizational futures as an aspirational guide to be achieved.

It is also fair to suggest that guiding images could be referred to as utopias. Polak (1973) himself talked about eschatological and utopic images of the future, the former brought about by God and the latter by humans. Utopias are a useful device for how things could be better in the future. They are typically specific stories of a specific place, which is not my intent here. The other challenge with “utopia” is that it tends to be rejected as unrealistic or foolish—withstanding the excellent work of Wright (2010) and Bregman (2017) in demonstrating utopias’ practical application.

Thus, “guiding image” best captured my intent of developing ideals as positive aspirations. I am using “guiding” as a sense of direction or a fluid target rather than as a grand or detailed plan, or definitive answer.

Table 3.1 Definitional considerations

Image	Vision	Utopia
A mental representation; idea; conception	A vivid, imaginative conception or anticipation	Any visionary system of political or social perfection

Note. Source: Design by author

Framework Foresight Approach

Polak (1973) challenged humanity to develop these guiding images. He provided some general principles, but not a specific method for doing so. I used Framework Foresight as a starting point, and will here show how I adapted it to produce the guiding images.

Most futurists have a particular method that they use as their basic approach, which they then tailor to their respective specific challenge. The University of Houston Foresight program developed such a method—or perhaps meta-method is more accurate—that uses a modular approach for project work (Hines, 2020; Hines & Bishop, 2013). It was developed originally to teach foresight, but the developers found it was useful in sponsored client work as well. Since 2014, the Houston Foresight program has carried out about two dozen client projects using this method, and students and alums have been using it in their practices as well. Evaluating its overall effectiveness is beyond this paper’s scope; for my purposes, it is enough to note its common use. It should also be noted that the approach aligns with the Association of Professional Futurists’ (APF) six foresight competencies—in fact, I have specifically named the six steps of the method in Table 3.2 below for these six competencies (Hines, Gary, Daheim, & van der Laan, 2017a). I use this table to summarize the key steps of the FF method, and highlight in bold the modifications I have made for the development of guiding images. I will describe the steps and modifications in more detail after the table.

Framework Foresight’s developers observed that project work involves two major phases: mapping and influencing the futures. The logic is that with mapping, one lays out the potential landscape of useful and plausible futures. Armed with this map, one then identifies what one can influence or do about it—which future(s) to move toward, and which to avoid. Put more simply, to explore the future, one first draws a map, and then decides which direction to take.

The most significant modification I made to the mapping phase of creating the futures was focusing on “projections” as the key research input. A significant number of books have directly or indirectly related to the *After Capitalism* topic—a book about the future of a topic fits as a “projection.” As a key objective of this work was to synthesize already existing ideas, this became the key input. Projections are the broadest type of input, as they typically include trends, issues, and plans. Accordingly, I reviewed more than a hundred books, analyzing 52 in detail and reviewing 28 with the image analysis template (see [Appendix](#)) I developed for this project.

In general, as my key purpose was to identify the guiding images themselves, I treated the influencing phase much more lightly than in a typical project. I only briefly discuss preliminary implications. Similarly, prescribing “how to” would include designing and adapting, which is a substantial endeavor necessitating a separate undertaking. Practically speaking, if the guiding images prove useful, a follow-on work on “how to” will be worth the effort. Frankly, first things first—I’ll

Table 3.2 Framework Foresight (FF) method

Phase	Activity	Description	Deliverable
Mapping the futures	Framing	Scoping the project, defining the focal question, and mapping the domain	Domain description & domain map
	Scanning	Finding, collecting, and analyzing signals of change Identifying specific types of information about the future (trends issues, plans, projections) Focus on “projections”: Review relevant books/works using a common image analysis template	Scanning library Image analysis templates (developed for this project) Drivers
	Futuring	Information synthesized into a set of key drivers Identifying a baseline and alternative futures using archetypes (Baseline, Collapse, New Equilibrium, and Transformation)	Archetype futures aligned on Three Horizons framework Emphasis was on developing transformation images – ended up with three
Influencing the futures	Visioning (Implications Analysis)	Identifying important and provocative implications of scenarios	Light implications analysis as the “how to” is beyond scope of this work; address some key questions
	Designing & Adapting (Conclusion)	Identifying options for action and implementing a strategic approach and ongoing monitoring	Lighter treatment; evaluate guiding images against key criteria

Note. Source: Design by author

see how our guiding images do. Below is an expanded treatment of the steps I followed in creating the guiding images.

Framing

In my method, I begin by identifying the domain or topic to be explored—in this case, the future after capitalism. I frame capitalism as more than just an economic system, but effectively as an operating one affecting all aspects of civilized life it touches. Figure 3.1 illustrates the timeframe, which I organized using the Three Horizons framework briefly mentioned above (Curry & Hodgson, 2008; Sharpe, 2013).

- Horizon One (H1) is typically the baseline future of continuity, which is most often set as the next 3–5 years but can last longer.

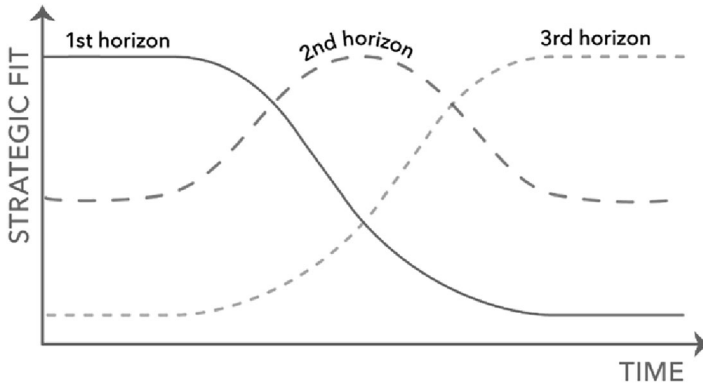


Fig. 3.1 The Three Horizons framework. Source: Design by author

- Horizon Two (H2) is the transition zone of disruptions to the baseline. It is typically set 10 years out, but may be shorter or (more often) longer.
- Horizon Three (H3) is anything beyond H2; it is the realm of the next new system.

I have set the timeframe as 2040–2050. Most projects are set closer to the present. They are typically intended to help clients understand the transitions ahead in H2. Occasionally, the project is set to focus on describing the transformation to a new system of H3. For instance, with our Houston Foresight Program did a project on the *Future of Work* to 2050 for NASA’s Langley Research Center (Hines, Romero, Morgan, Paap, & Palubicki, 2017b). The project team looked out to 2050 because the client wanted to be sure to stretch the organization to think well beyond the baseline. That work, other client work over the years, and the research for this book all influenced my choice to set the H3 transformation at 20–30 years from now.

In Figure 3.2, I show a visual domain map, organizing the categories and sub-categories to guide the exploration of the domain. In this case, I organized the map using the Three Horizons framework. With the “Signals” category, I captured the key signals of change in the first horizon. I further organized it using the STEEP acronym (social, technological, economic, environmental, and political). With the “Transitions” category, I captured changes primarily describing the second horizon. Finally, with the “Images” category I captured signals related to what eventually became the three guiding images. It is important to note that the map shown below is perhaps the 20th iteration. As I learned more during scanning, I updated it continually. The three image sub-categories, for instance, emerged several years after the scanning began. This iteration is not always necessary in typical project work carried out over much shorter times spans, amounting to 3 months on average. But as I carried my work here out over a decade, capturing the iterations seemed useful to accurately convey the learning.

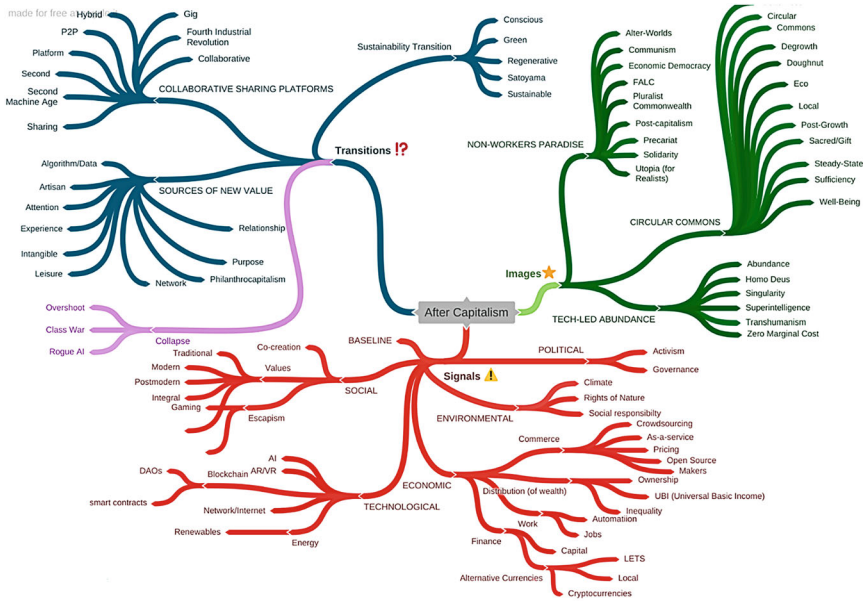


Fig. 3.2 Domain map. Source: Design by author

Scanning

Scanning is the search for signals of change. The search is guided by the domain map, which helps to organize the search for individual scan hits, whether a blog post, online article, journal publication, or video. It is useful to think of the domain map as a jumping off point to search for signals of change. The scan hits are collected in a cloud-based library. As of this writing, there are more than 700 scan hits in the *After Capitalism* scanning library.

As noted above, the other stream of research in the scanning step is the search for specific types of information about the future. In this case, I primarily relied on projections. I reviewed dozens of works—mostly books and some reports—touching on aspects of *After Capitalism*. Ultimately, I selected twenty-eight works for analysis with the image analysis template shown below. This is a template crafted specifically for this project. It was significantly influenced by the ideas and materials from a summer elective class offered by Houston Foresight in 2016 called “Images of the Future,” developed and taught by Dr. Wendy Schultz. Schultz (2016) did a tremendous job in developing this class and presented several analytic frameworks for understanding and evaluating images. In Table 3.3, I show the starter template and the questions it comprises.

In Table 3.4, I show an example of a filled-out template using the Degrowth concept.

Table 3.3 Image analysis template

Category	Description
Author	Who proposed it and why (purpose)
Time horizon	Stated, implied, or unclear
Scope	Global/regional/national or affluent/emerging/poor
Key drivers	<u>Bold relevant ones</u> <u>Other</u> Shifting values, technology acceleration, inequality, automation, stagnation, climate and carrying capacity, ineffective left
Key ideas	The most important ideas put forth by the concept
Ideal or guiding values	Something akin to an organizing principle/motivation, i.e., create a more just or fair society
Emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects	Is it appealing or compelling?
Personal	How are individuals affected by this future? Who’s bearing the most costs, who’s accruing the benefits?
Pathway or plan	Rough sense of steps for achieving

Note. Source: Design by author

Table 3.4 Image analysis template for *degrowth*

Degrowth Kallis, G., Demaria, F., & D’Alisa, G. (2015). Introduction: Degrowth. In D’Alisa, G., Demaria, F., & Kallis, G. (Eds.) <i>Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era</i> , 1st Ed. NY: Routledge	
Author	Giorgos Kallis, Federico Demaria, & Giacomo D’Alisa; Kallis, a professor at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Barcelona; he has written four books on Degrowth, including the 2019 Limits
Time horizon	Unclear
Scope	Talk about the French origins of the concept Notes a frequent criticism of the degrowth is that it is applicable only to the overdeveloped economies of the Global North. The poorer countries of the Global South still need to grow; <i>Degrowth</i> in the North will liberate ecological space for growth in the South.
Key drivers	Shifting values , Technology acceleration, Inequality, Automation, Stagnation, Climate and carrying capacity , Ineffective left
Key ideas	Largely European movement seeking to abolish economic growth as a social objective and favoring grassroots practices such as eco-communities, co-ops, local currencies, barter, commons, etc. A degrowth, or décroissance, movement took off in France in 2002 and has spread to other parts of Europe since. It suggests economic growth will eventually exhaust recourse and calls for abolishing it as a social objective Degrowth ideas new welfare institutions to decouple paid employment from growth, unconditional basic income, and for the State to take back the control of the creation of new of money from private banks (public money). But no consensus on how to do this) Advocates grassroots principles similar to communing: these grassroots practices share five features:

(continued)

Table 3.4 (continued)

Degrowth	
Kallis, G., Demaria, F., & D'Alisa, G. (2015). Introduction: Degrowth. In D'Alisa, G., Demaria, F., & Kallis, G. (Eds.) <i>Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era</i> , 1st Ed. NY: Routledge	
	First, there is a shift from production for exchange to production for use
	Second, there is a substitution of wage labor with voluntary activity, meaning a decommodification and de-professionalization of labor
	Third, they follow a logic whereby the circulation of goods is set in motion, at least partly by an exchange of reciprocal 'gifts' rather than in search of profit (see anti-utilitarianism)
	Fourth, unlike capitalist enterprise, they do not have a built-in dynamic to accumulate and expand
	Fifth, they are outcomes of processes of 'commoning'; they are new forms of commons
Ideal or guiding values	Décroissance (French for degrowth), began as a movement of activists believing sustainable development is an oxymoron Abolishment of economic growth as a social objective
Emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects	The foundational theses of degrowth are that growth is uneconomic and unjust, that it is ecologically unsustainable and that it will never be enough; need to be more radical
Personal	'Sharing', 'simplicity', 'conviviality', 'care' and the 'commons' are primary significations of what this society might look like
Pathway or plan	Very little on this: one could imagine a scenario under which political forces come democratically in power and enforce resource caps and social minima (e.g., job guarantees for the unemployed), restricting the operation of capitalism

Note. Source: Design by author

Observations on Using the Template

It should be noted that the *author* category may not list the original or only author of a concept. In researching the broad *After Capitalism* space, I typically captured the first work on a topic that caught my eye. I did not attempt to definitely identify every relevant work in every topic area. I did note and sometimes review additional works, and added them to an annotated bibliography posted on a website accompanying the forthcoming book on the topic.

The *time horizons* were only specified in a few instances. On the one hand, it is understandable that authors were reluctant to put numbers to a long-term image. So doing can imply precision where none exists and set up a false expectation among readers. On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to provide at least a range—or to acknowledge and discuss the lack of timeframe. Most commonly, this subject was simply not discussed.

The *scope* was similarly vague. This is again understandable, but a deeper discussion of the surrounding uncertainty would have been helpful. The Degrowth example provided here is a good illustration of how I hoped this category would be used—taking the question on directly. Most did not.

I derived the seven *key drivers* from my research and explain them in the section below this one. For the template, I made a judgment about which seemed central to my concept.

The *key ideas* section was a challenging one: How does one boil down very rich works into a handful of bullets and paragraphs? It was helpful to have that brevity and roughly the same size, as it facilitated conceptual comparisons.

In a mild surprise, the *ideal and guiding values* were relatively easy to discern. Most of the authors were very passionate on the topic and tended to be crystal clear on why they were doing the work.

Upon reflection, it is not clear that a separate section was needed for *emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects*, as this could be captured in the values section above.

The *personal* category, similar to time horizon and scope, was often neglected. The authors were typically, and understandably, most often writing from a macro-social perspective, so did not pay as much attention to what it might be like for individuals to live in these futures.

I touched on the *pathway or plan* only lightly, since I have here focused on the images them-selves, rather than how to specifically achieve them. Nonetheless, many of the works' authors did offer very useful advice. It may be that in today's context there is so much emphasis on bottom-line practicality that big picture thinking without a to-do list is ignored or does not get published.

Drivers

I have synthesized the scanning and research into a set of drivers, which are defined as thematic clusters of related scan hits and research inputs that are key influencers of change in the domain. I offer this precise definition because in my experience the foresight field tends to neglect such clarity, and there is a lot of fuzzy thinking about what a driver is. I suggest that drivers are the bridge between scanning and research and the alternative futures to be described below. I subsequently use them as the key ingredients or building blocks for constructing the alternative futures.

I once again used the popular futurist STEEP framework of social, technological, economic, environmental, and political categories, this time to help select and organize the drivers. The purpose is to ensure a balanced consideration of the domain, that is, avoiding either too much or too little focus on a particular category. I list these drivers in Table 3.5, noting the STEEP category they represent.

Futuring

Several years ago, I developed a modified version of Dator's (2009) four futures archetype approach (2020). This is now referred to as the Houston Archetype Technique (HAT). An archetype is a "typical pattern of change." My principal tweak to his approach was to genericize his archetype scenarios of the future of

Table 3.5 Seven drivers

STEEP category	Driver	Description
Social	Shifting values	Values are shifting from traditional (follow the rules) and modern (achieve) to postmodern (search for meaning) and integral (make a difference)
Technology	Technology acceleration	Technological capabilities continue to increase rapidly, often exponentially, in a wide range of sectors
Economic	Inequality	Growing economic inequality is threatening the social order
Economic (work)	Automation	Automation, driven by AI, is increasingly replacing jobs
Economic	Stagnation	Economic growth is slowing in part due to inability to pay
Environmental	Climate and carrying capacity	Climate change and humanity's growing ecological footprint are threatening the ecosystem
Political	Ineffective left	The far left continues to be ineffective in catalyzing change

Note. Source: Design by author

the world by extracting their underlying patterns of change. This way, the archetypes can be applied to explore the future of any domain to outline typical patterns of change.

In Table 3.6, I explain the patterns for each archetype, include their respective *After Capitalism* concepts, and note the archetype's original conception from Dator, who first proposed and developed them. The guiding images developed in this work bear some resemblance to Dator's versions (2009, 2014); he reviewed existing images of the future and found that they sort into one of four generic alternative futures: grow, collapse, discipline, or transformation.

A significant difference is that using the HAT adds the New Equilibrium archetype of challenge-and-response. Dator also specified two types of transformations; although the HAT includes two versions of transformation as well, these do not have to follow a "discipline" or "high-tech" pathway. The fourth column lists the alternative futures developed for *After Capitalism*.





The HAT starts with the set of drivers and projects their outcomes in each of the four archetypes to create the descriptions of the alternative futures.

A second innovation is that the HAT then maps these archetypes onto the Three Horizons framework, as show in Figure 3.3 below. For the HAT, it is assumed that the domain begins in the Baseline in H1, moves through H2 either via Collapse or New Equilibrium, and finally reaches Transformation in H3. Although the technique's typical suggestion is two versions of transformation, that is not a required number, but rather depends on the nature of the data and the project team's judgment.

The logic of the unfolding or development of the domain using Three Horizons is as follows:

- The H1 Baseline eventually begins to decline.
- The domain subsequently moves into H2, either via Collapse or New Equilibrium.

Table 3.6 Describing the archetypes

Houston archetype	Dator’s archetypes	Pattern of change	After capitalism
Baseline	Continued growth	The present trends and forces within the domain continue without any major disruptions or surprises. The domain continues along its current trajectory.	Neoliberal capitalism
			
Collapse	Collapse	The domain “breaks” or falls into a state of dysfunction. The established way of doing things no longer works, and the “health” of the domain declines.	Ecosystem collapse Bad AI Class war
			
New equilibrium		The domain is confronted with a major challenge to how it has been operating and is forced to adapt and comprise in order to “save itself” and keep its basic structure intact.	Sustainability transition Collaborative sharing platforms New sources of value
			
Transformation	Discipline & Tech trans-formation	Entails fundamental change to the domain. The rules of the game are “scrapped” and new ways of doing things emerge.	Circular commons Non-workers paradise Tech-led abundance
			

Note. Source: Design by author

- When the H2 transition is complete, the domain moves into H3 Transformation and is renewed (new system with new rules).

For this project, I created multiple versions for each archetype shown in Figure 3.4 below, with the exception of the Baseline, since it describes the present system. There are three versions each of Collapse, New Equilibrium, and Transformation. The key focus and bulk of my research and analysis lay on the three guiding images in H3. The three guiding images are:

- Circular Commons. Expands the concept of sustainability to embrace circular principles as part of a social, political, and economic commons.
- Non-Worker’s Paradise. A play on the attributed-to-Marxist idea of a worker’s paradise; in the *After Capitalism* world, we are not working in paid jobs as a means of sustenance.

The HAT: Houston Archetype Technique

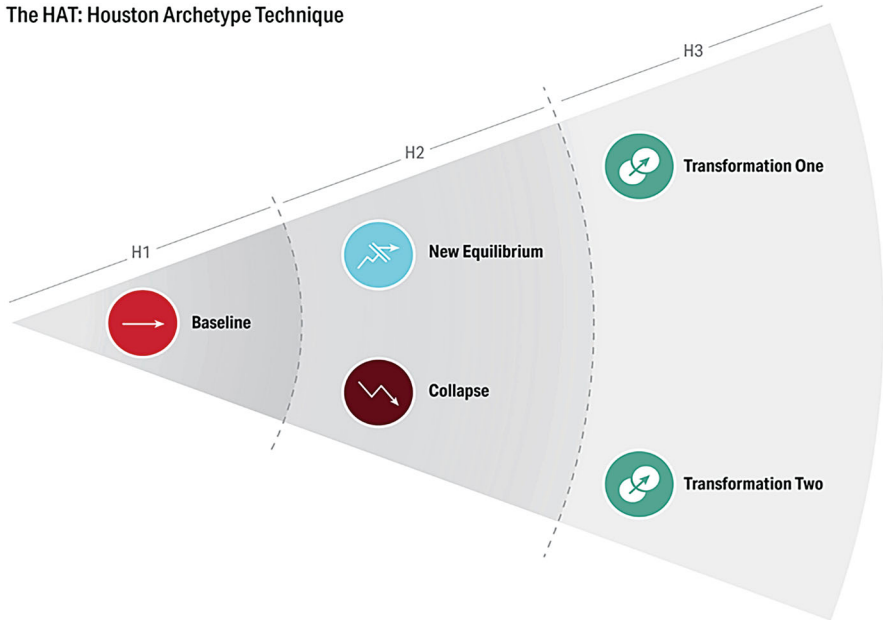


Fig. 3.3 Houston Archetype Technique. Source: Design by author & D. Worrell

- Tech-Led Abundance. Technological progress drives and leads to an abundance of wealth that fixes the core distribution problem of capitalism.

Since my focus here is a methodological one, this brief introduction of the images will have to suffice.

Influencing the Future: Visioning, Designing and Adapting

Visioning is about connecting the futures to the client's needs. In the case of guiding images, this is client is human civilization. Visioning starts by identifying each scenario's implications or impact. Since I have here focused on the identification of the guiding images, I treated the implications differently than in a typical project, more in line with discussion questions typical of an academic research paper:

- What lessons might be learned from the history of capitalism for its future?
- What might be learned by utopias?
- Can the transition to *After Capitalism* happen in just one country, or must it be global?

I concluded this section with some ideas on the timing of the pathway to the guiding images.

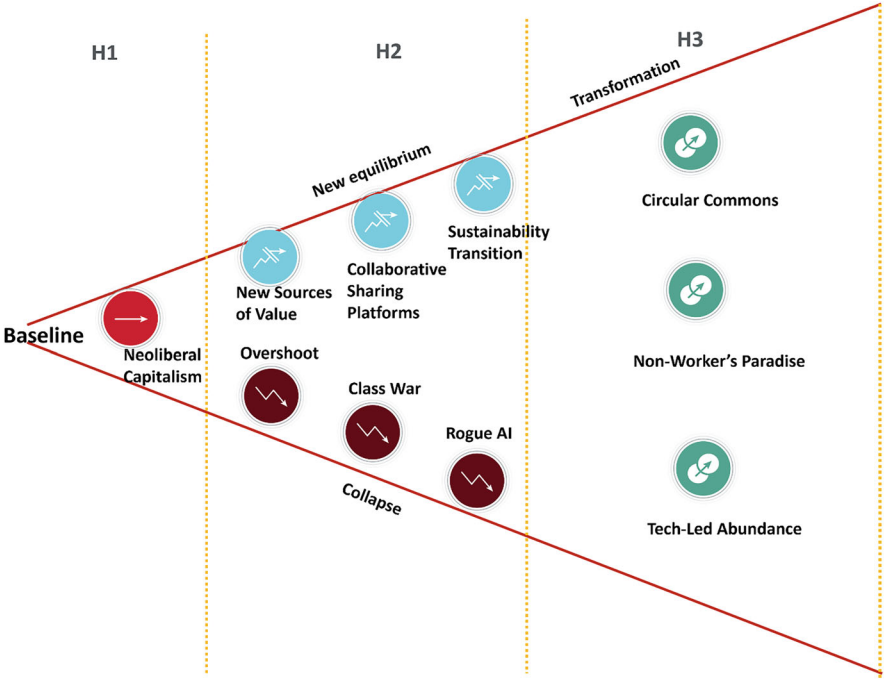


Fig. 3.4 After Capitalism on the HAT. Source: Design by author & D. Worrell

The *Designing* and *Adapting* steps are about taking action based on the implications. They involve designing a proactive approach to the future and identifying actions to take in the short-, medium-, and long-term. I reserve this how-to labor for follow-up work.

One activity of relevance to the focus on method here is the use of an evaluation test for the guiding images. Bregman (2017) identified three typical “attacks” on the credibility of utopias:

- futility (it’s not possible),
- danger (the risks are too great),
- and perversity (it will degenerate into dystopia).

I used these attacks as a way to test the three guiding images’ credibility and provide some insight on how they might be strengthened. In simpler terms, I identified what aspect or aspects critics may be most likely to raise questions about, shown in Table 3.7 below.

Of the three, I judge that the *Circular Commons* image appears the least developed—presented to a representative sample audience, it would probably generate the most skepticism about realizability. The circular aspect has some “brand recognition” in that has been popularized in recent years, but the commons approach to resource management is less well-known and understood. The *Non-Worker’s*

Table 3.7 Testing the images

	Circular commons	Non-worker’s paradise	Tech-led abundance
Futility (it’s not possible)	X		
Danger (the risks are too great)			X
Perversity (it will degenerate into dystopia)		X	

Note. Source: Design by author

Paradise has perhaps outstripped the futility point. UBI trials are increasing and topic discussion has advanced from the fringe to the mainstream. Nonetheless, horizon scanning revealed a fair bit of skepticism that a post-work future would not lead to people becoming lazy if they did not have jobs. It would seem that *Tech-Led Abundance* pretty clearly presents the greatest risks in the form of runaway AI, genetic manipulation, or macro-engineering gone awry.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have illustrated the development of a technique for identifying long-term, positive guiding images of the future and used it to create such images for the future after capitalism. The particular relevance to this volume on *Placing the Future* is to offer a way to think about our place in the future. In particular, how might we craft a desirable or preferable vision of that place? There are ideas in the present about potential futures. There are also techniques for exploring alternative futures. My contribution is describing a technique focused specifically on crafting guiding images that provides a felt sense of what desirable futures might look like.

I have scaffolded this technique on the basic foresight methodology of Framework Foresight. Although any foresight project may involve tweaking or innovating from a core method, in this case, the end goal, guiding images, presented a unique challenge: There existed no clear established precedent for how to develop them, though excellent guidance was provided by Polak (1973) and Schultz (2016).

I laid the groundwork by defining terms and noting the distinctions between images, visions, and utopias. This was followed by noting the particular nature of guiding images.

I then described each step of the Framework Foresight, noting wherever I was introducing innovations or additions. I hope that upon reflection the reader will appreciate the depth and rigor that went into the development of these guiding images. Although I described the images only briefly, I intend the detailed description of their derivation to provide support for their potential utility in offering alternatives to today’s declining capitalist system.

A few words are in order about the After Capitalism future.

I developed the guiding images for those looking for alternatives to the current capitalist system. It has been said that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. Here, I find otherwise: Dozens of ideas exist about the future after capitalism, which I have synthesized into the three images only briefly mentioned here.

Any attempt to change an existing way of doing things will face challenges. As a futurist, I believe transformational change starts with having a sense of where one wants to go. A compelling image of a better future helps to provide the motivation for the difficult work ahead in making it happen.

As the problems of the present intensify, the search for alternatives is likely to gain momentum. The three guiding images lightly introduced here are the result of years of research and are supported by major works and literally hundreds of citations. I produced them based upon a well-respected foresight method that I adapted for the specific purpose of developing guiding images.

The journey is likely to be a long one. Futurists know that change is resisted by default, and the degree of transformational change suggested here is sure to encounter significant resistance. The conservative estimate is 20–30 years into the future, but seen in the large context of the capitalist system that has dominated the last few centuries, this is perhaps a reasonable timespan.

On a final note, a key reason for sharing this technique is to encourage others to create guiding images of their own. I do not intend to suggest that these three images are the right or only ones, but rather offer them as a starting point for discussion. Our collective future may depend on it.

Appendix: The After Capitalism (AC) Transformation Concepts

#	AC concept	Source	Brief description
Transformational A concepts			
<i>Circular commons</i>			
1	Betterness	Haque (2011)	Adopt a positive paradigm that enables human potential by challenging business to do better by focusing beyond the bottom line to considering real human welfare
2	Circular	Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2013)	Today’s goods are tomorrow’s resources, which forms a virtuous cycle of durables designed for re-use, and consumables made of compostable materials that can be returned to the earth
3	Commons 1	Bollier (2014)	Adopt a common approach in which the many manage resources that could in turn be a vehicle for political emancipation and societal transformation

(continued)

#	AC concept	Source	Brief description
4	Commons 2	De Angelis (2017)	A highly local model in which people self-organize socially and politically within communities to pool and govern resources in common
5	Degrowth	Kallis, Demaria, & D'Alisa (2015)	Seeks to eliminate economic growth as a social objective and favors grassroots practices such as eco-communities, co-ops, local currencies, barter, commons, etc
6	Doughnut	Raworth (2017)	Suggests a social foundation of well-being that no one should fall below and an ecological ceiling of planetary pressure that should not be exceeded
7	Eco	Scharmer & Kaufer (2013)	Advocates a switch from current ego-centric approaches leading toward planetary disaster to eco-centric ones that emphasize the well-being of the whole
8	Local	Balle (n.d.)	<i>Business Alliance for Local Living Economies</i> promotes a global system of human-scale, interconnected local living economies
9	Post-growth	Jackson (2009)	Emphasizes strengthening ecologically and socially sustainable practices given the physical limits of the earth
10	Sacred/gift	Eisenstein (2011)	Suggests shrinking the formal economy and shifting money away from being a store of value to primarily a medium of exchange, including the adoption of negative interest to discourage rentier approaches
11	Steady-state	Daly (2010)	An economy characterized by relatively stable size that leaves room for nature and provides high levels of human wellbeing
12	Sufficiency	Alexander (2012)	A degrowth approach that aims for a world in which everyone's basic needs are modestly but sufficiently met, in an ecologically sustainable, highly localized, and socially equitable manner
13	Wellbeing	Fioramonti (2016)	Argues for shifting away from GDP as a performance assessment tool to more holistic measures
<u>Non-worker's paradise</u>			
14	Alter-worlds	Shaw & Waterstone (2020)	Looks to leverage movements springing up outside or on the margins of the system such as temporary and permanent autonomous zones, workers' councils, etc., which offer potential for a post-capitalist politics
15	Communism	Frase (2016)	A vision of communism illustrated by four scenarios based on uncertainties of scarcity/abundance and inequality, with automation as a prerequisite
16	Economic democracy	Schweickart (2011)	A socialist approach with market and democratic features centered on three key concepts of worker self-management, a market for enterprises, and social control of investment

(continued)

#	AC concept	Source	Brief description
17	FALC, fully automated luxury communism	Bastani (2019)	Advocates a shift towards worker-owned production, a state-financed transition to renewable energy, and universal services that is aided by technological progress and placed beyond commodity exchange and profit
18	Pluralist commonwealth	Alperovitz & Dubb (2013)	Advocates an evolutionary reconstruction path based on democratization of wealth, community as a guiding theme, decentralization and substantial democratic planning to achieve economic, democracy-building, and ecological goals.
19	Post-capitalism	Mason (2015) and Srnicek & Williams (2016)	Makes the case for <i>Neoliberal Capitalism</i> declining and the need to design a transition and create a “new hegemony” vision of an abundance future
20	Precariat	Standing (2014)	Describes a “new proletariat” social class as a key element driving change to the future
21	Solidarity	Loh & Jimenez (2017)	Social justice movement among lower-income people of color seeking to go beyond socialism and communism by shifting consciousness, building political power, and creating economic alternatives
22	Utopia (for realists)	Bregman (2017)	Suggests that reduction of work is a political ideal; makes the case for universal basic income and the need for a massive redistribution of wealth
<u><i>Tech-led abundance</i></u>			
23	Abundance	Diamandis & Kotler (2012)	Technological progress is such that within a generation, goods and services once reserved for the wealthy few will be available to any and all who need them
24	Homo Deus	Harari (2017)	Biology and robotics are enabling the upgrading of humans into new species via any of three paths: biological engineering, cyborg engineering, and the engineering of non-organic beings
25	Singularity	Kurzweil (2005)	Exponential technological change leads to machine intelligence surpassing humans and to the eventual eradication of any clear distinction between humans and machines
26	Super-intelligence	Bostrom (2014)	Explores paths to beyond-human superintelligence, the strategic choices available to it, and what can be done to shape the initial conditions
27	Transhumanism	More (2013)	An intellectual and cultural movement seeking to improve the human condition through technological development, including eliminating aging and enhancing human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities
28	Zero marginal cost	Rifkin (2014)	Massive economies of scale provided by digitization push the cost of reproducing information to zero, thus enabling abundance

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