

Alternative Images for The Future of Cities

UH Futures Gathering:
*City Making in the 21st Century –
Designing Urban Futures*
April 13, 2013

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First, a bit of history...

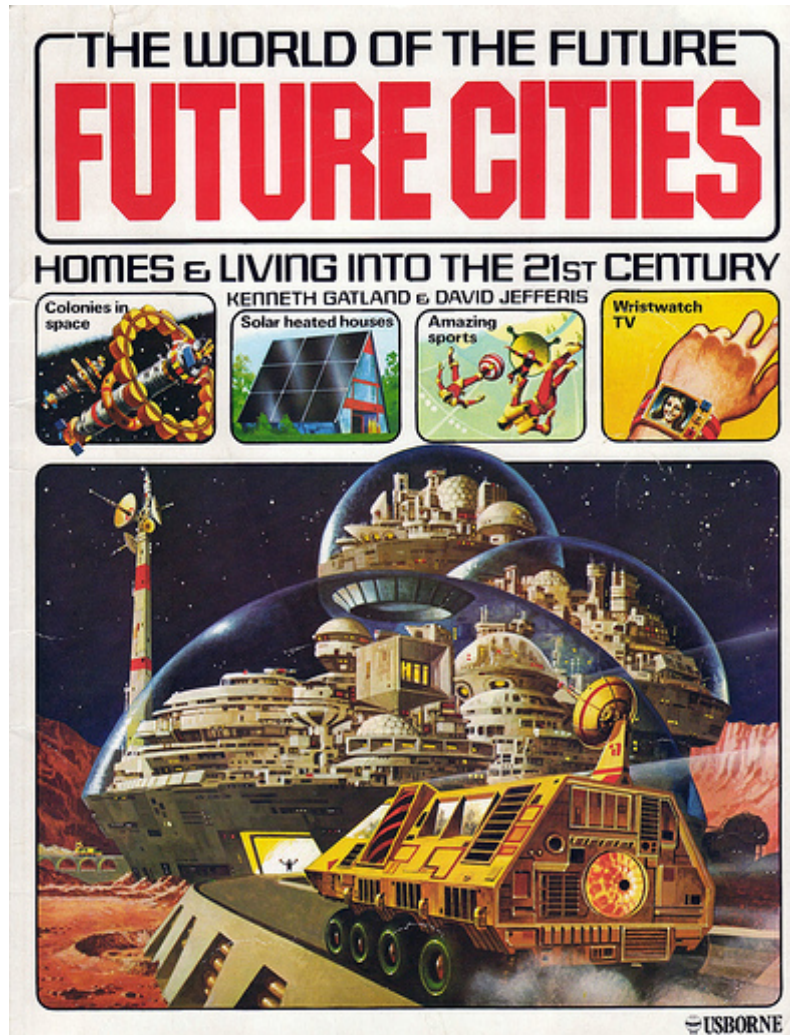
“The Edifice” sequence from Saul Bass’
Oscar-winning short, *Why Man Creates*.

4 min. video at:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nHOWkfGF](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nHOWkfGFsk)
[sk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nHOWkfGFsk)

What type of help
is most needed?

(Obviously) Alternative Futures Research



Christopher Barnatt

www.ExplainingTheFuture.com

on

“Future Cities”

5:18 min. video at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmRoc7_jVdo

A Benchmark Practice for Futures Students?



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Alex Steffen
on 'The Shareable Future of Cities'

10:13 video at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjDjbJlqZ0>

Also see Steffen's 17:31 min. TED talk on
'World Changing' at the lower side of page in
<http://www.alexsteffen.com>

And, if you want to see a real Wild Card development re: The Future of Cities, see:

‘China's Future Cities’
 (“ghost” developments)

a 4:03 min video

at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUHA8dynxJc>

“Archetypal” Scenario Themes and the “Aspirational Futures” Method (Institute for Alternative Futures)

- “Jim Dator's Alternative Futures and the Path to IAF's Aspirational Futures” (Bezold, 2009)
<http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/14-2/E01.pdf>
- “Aspirational Futures” (Bezold, 2009)
<http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/13-4/AE06.pdf>

Sets of Scenario Archetypes

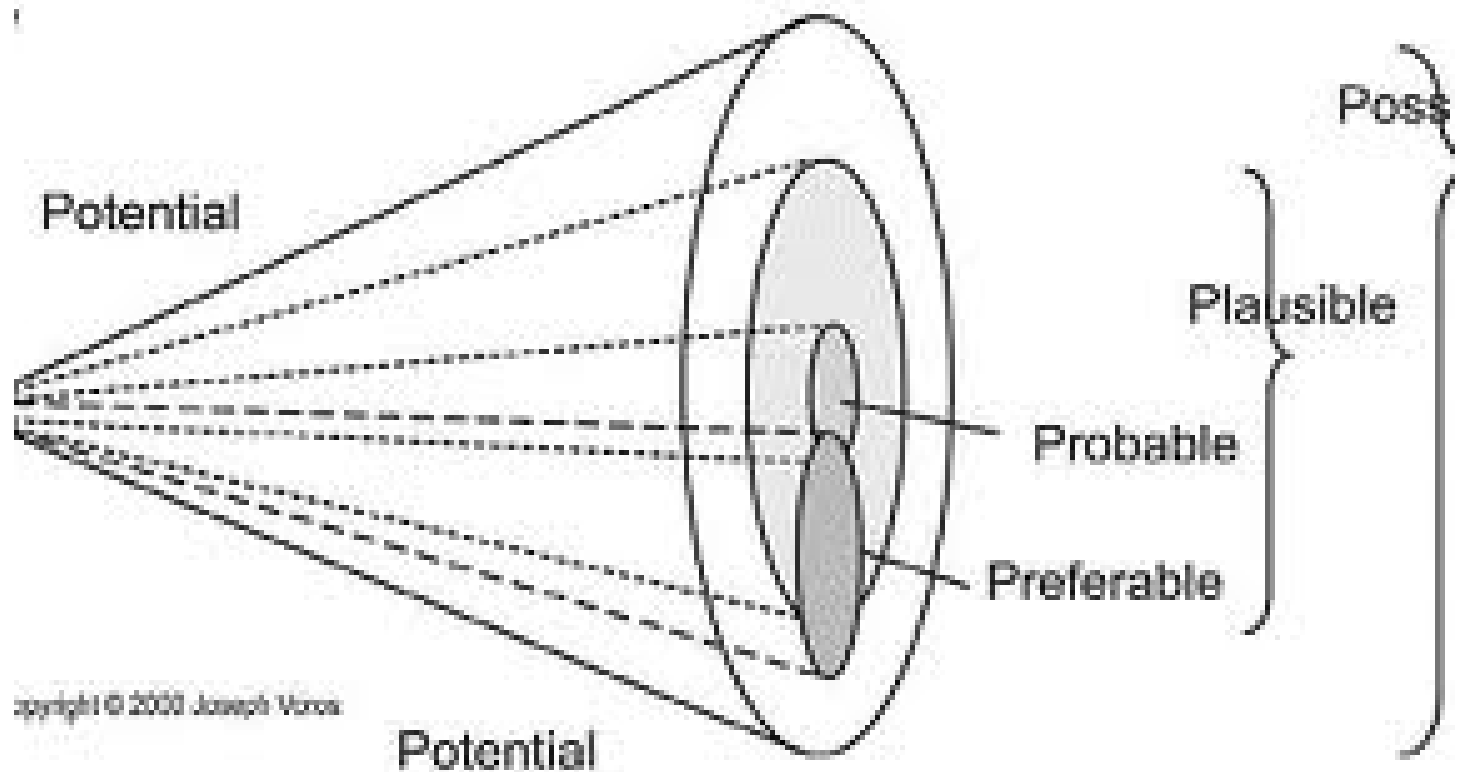
Dator (1977)

1. Continued Growth
2. Collapse
3. A Conserver Society
4. The Transformational Society

Bezold (2009)

1. Expected (PTE)
2. Challenging (fearful)
3. Aspirational (hopeful)
4. Audaciously aspirational (visionary)

Probability Cone of Alternative Futures

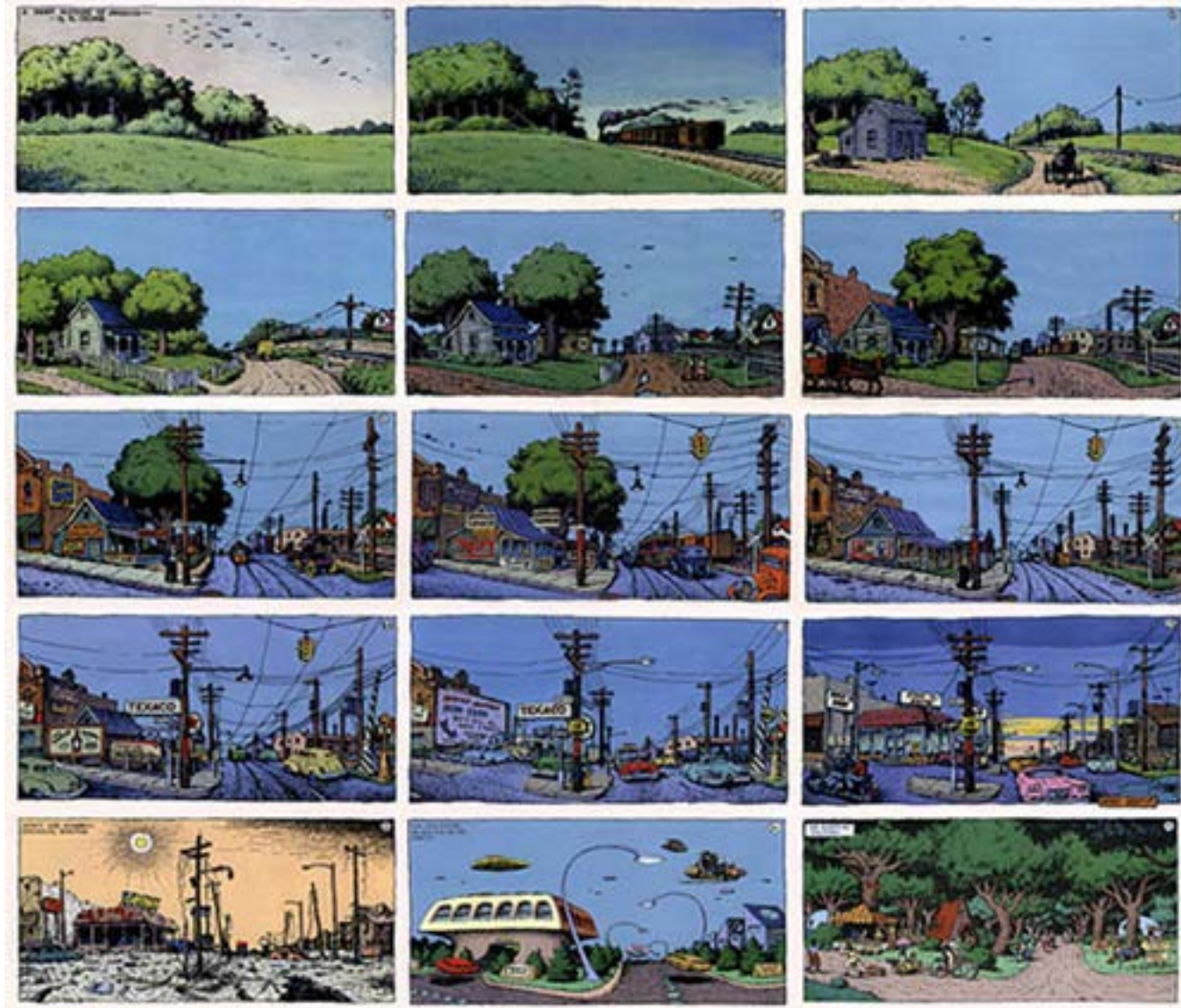


Wild-Card Archetypes

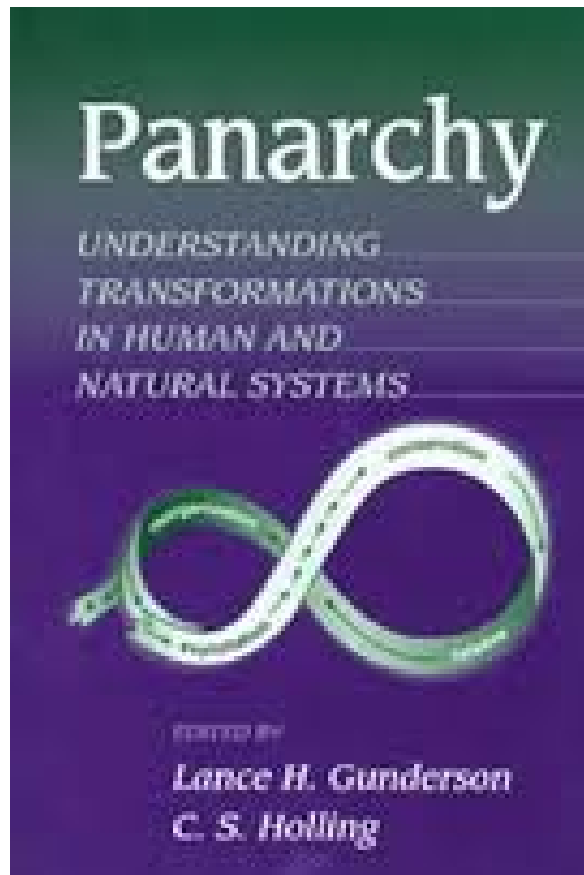
- Type I – Low Probability
High Credibility
- Type II – High Probability
Low Credibility
- Type III – High Probability
Disputed Credibility
- Type IV – High Probability
Agreed Upon Credibility

A good historical example is global warming and systemic climate change.

A Brief History of the America (R. Crumb)

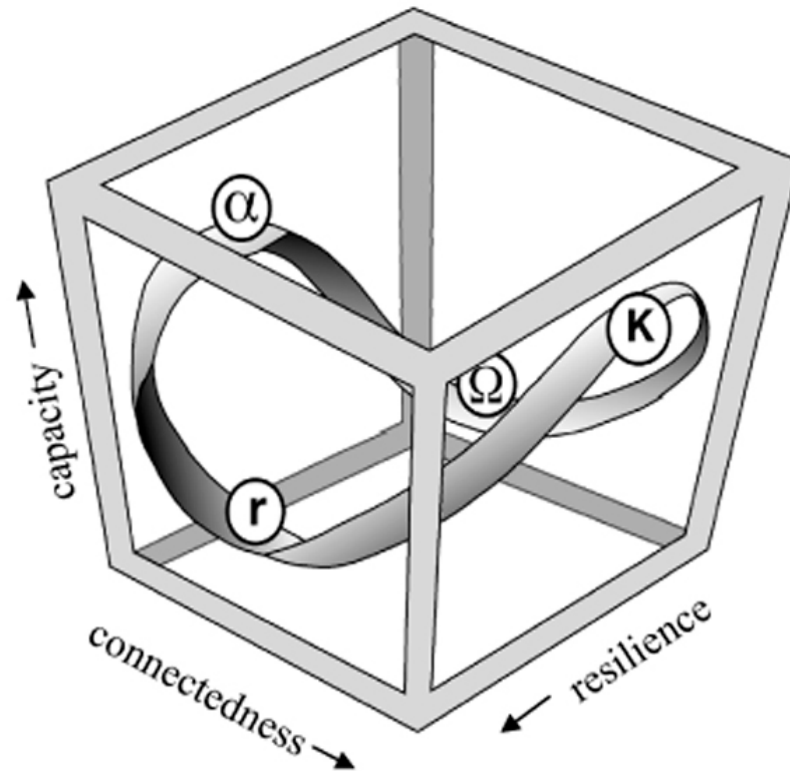


Panarchy & The Cycle of Adaptation: A Type II Wild Card Theory of Overarching Importance



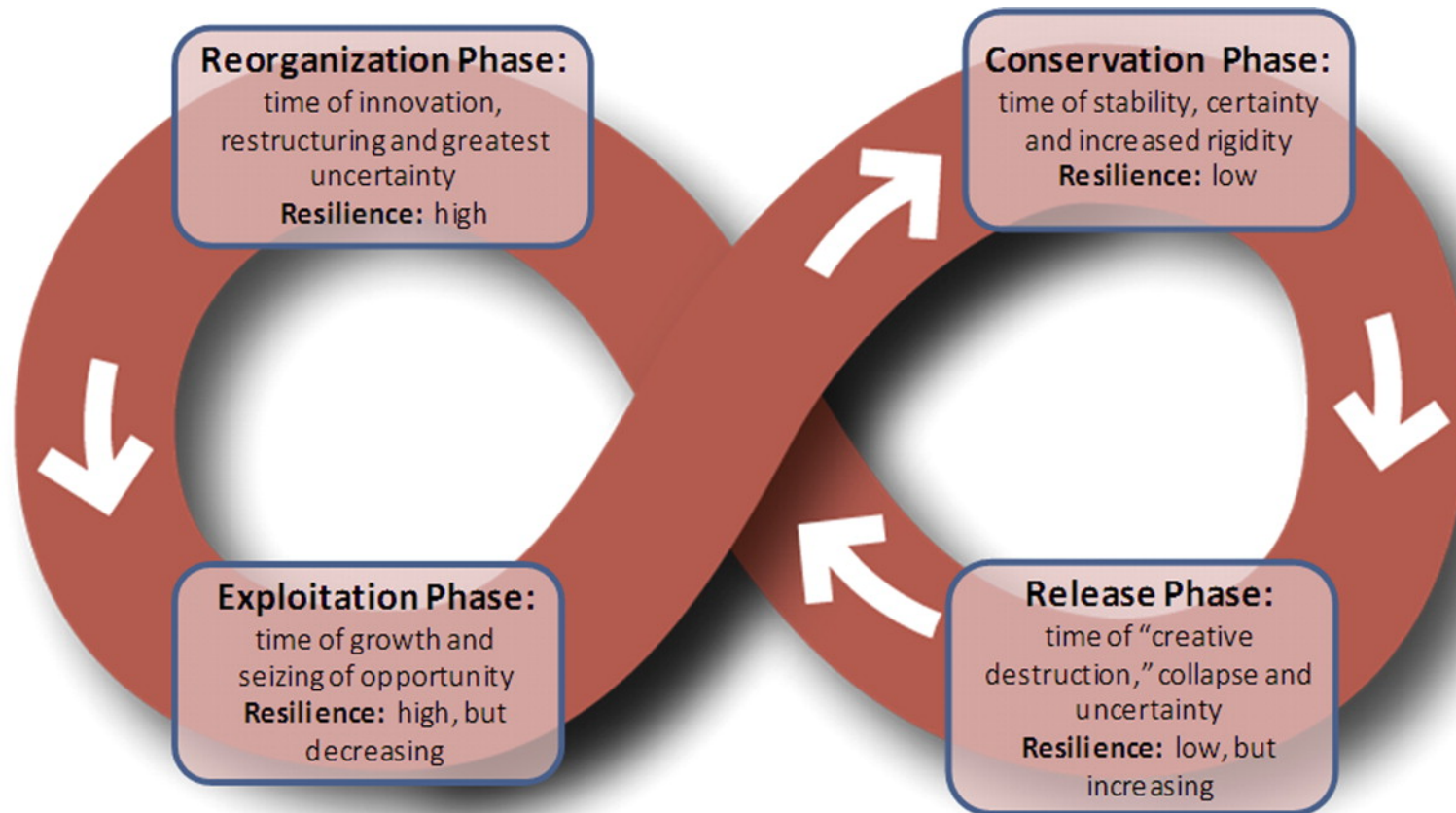
- *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems* (Gunderson & Holling, 2001)
- The Resilience Alliance
www.resalliance.org/

The Cycle of Adaptation from Panarchy Theory

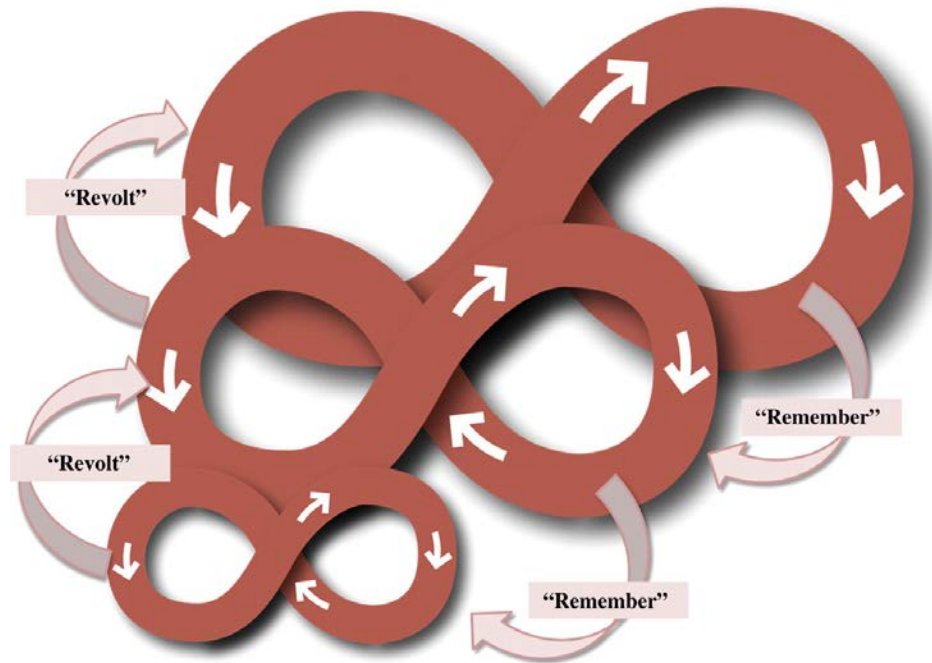


Source: *Panarchy*

Simplified Cycle of Adaptation from Panarchy Theory



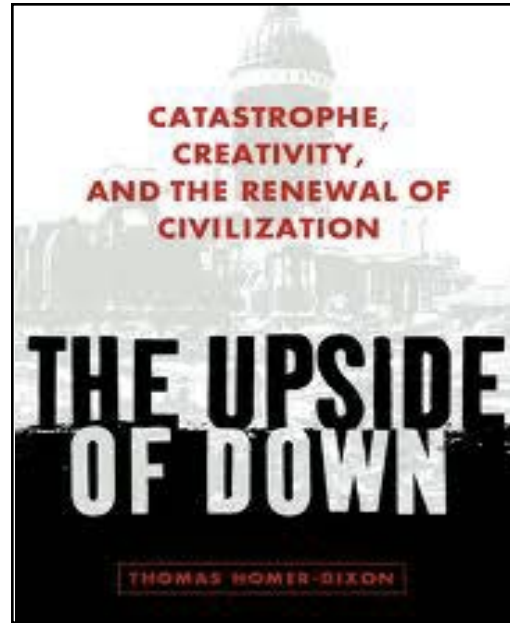
Nested Cross-Scale Interactions



Source: Resilience and regions: building understanding of the metaphor” (Rolf Pendall, et al, *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, (2009)

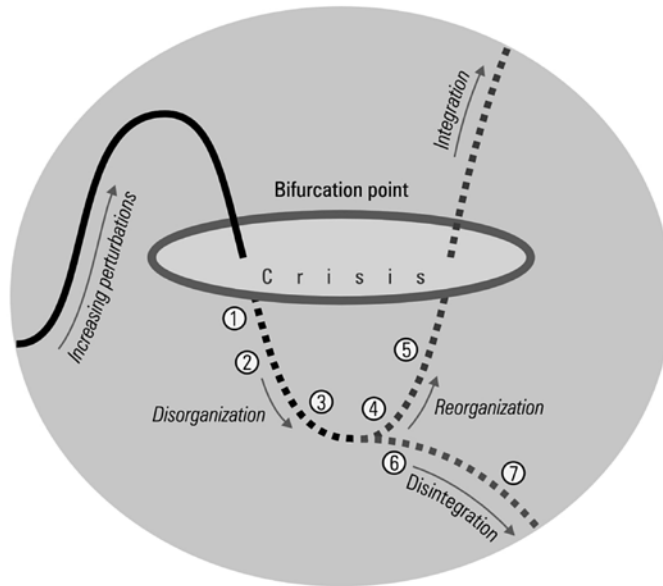
http://www.ipg.vt.edu/resilience/docs/PendallR_ResilienceandRegions_v1.pdf

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



Includes a good summary of Panarchy Theory,
the Cycle of Adaptation, and plausible
civilizational disintegration followed by reformation.

Alternative Mega-Crisis Possibilities



The springboard effect helps systems reorganize

- ① People lose faith in the industrial system as crises worsen
- ② Human and economic resources are released from the system
- ③ Support increases for both inclusive (sustainable) and exclusive (ethnocentric) solutions
- ④ If sustainable solutions are supported, constructive reorganization begins
- ⑤ The reorganization of the global system accelerates
or
- ⑥ If ethnocentric values and structures dominate, conflicts over scarce resources intensify
- ⑦ Global civilization disintegrates

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Source: “The collapse and transformation of our world” (Taylor & Taylor, 2007) <http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/11-3/A02.pdf>

Four “Type II” Archetypal Scenarios + PTE

1. **“VUCA” world** of rapidly increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity—a “Expected” or Present Trends Extended (PTE) future
2. **Civilizational Disintegration**—a “Challenging” or worst case future
3. **Reformative Civilizational Recovery**—an “Aspirational” or “Visionary” future
4. **Civilizational Enlightenment**—an “Adaciously Visionary / Aspirational” or best case future
5. **Singularity**—an alternative “Adaciously Visionary / Aspirational” future

The Four Principal Scenarios from [Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds](#)

- ***Stalled Engines*** (the most plausible worst case where "all boats sink")
- ***Fusion*** (the most plausible best case where "all boats rise substantially")
- ***Gini Out-of-the-Bottle*** (far greater inequality as measured by the Gini Coefficient)
- ***Nonstate World*** (where networks thrive and NGOs, MNCs, individuals, and megacities take the lead in confronting global challenges).

Mental Time Travel

- A method for intuitive “remote viewing” images of plausible alternative futures
- Where you see and *feel* the likely impacts and/or outcomes of choosing one strategy or path of action over another
- Can be used iteratively for impacts on self, team, company, customer, competitor, ecology
- The journal article that tells you how to do it: [Mental time travel: A practical business and personal research tool for looking ahead](#), *Journal of Futures* (2007)

Exploring The Future of Cities With Mental Time Travel

- Choose a scenario you would like to explore
- Choose a “vehicle”
- Open your imaginal senses
- Relax and follow suggestions for exploration

Discussion Questions

Re: What you experienced...

- What was most surprising?
- What was most interesting?
- What are several good “take aways?”