

# **Transcultural Impacts on the Future**

***Dave Stein, Shoji Matarai, Cornelia Daheim,  
Tom Lombardo, Linda Groff***

***presented at***

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# **Transcultural Impacts on the Future**

***Introduction and Summary***

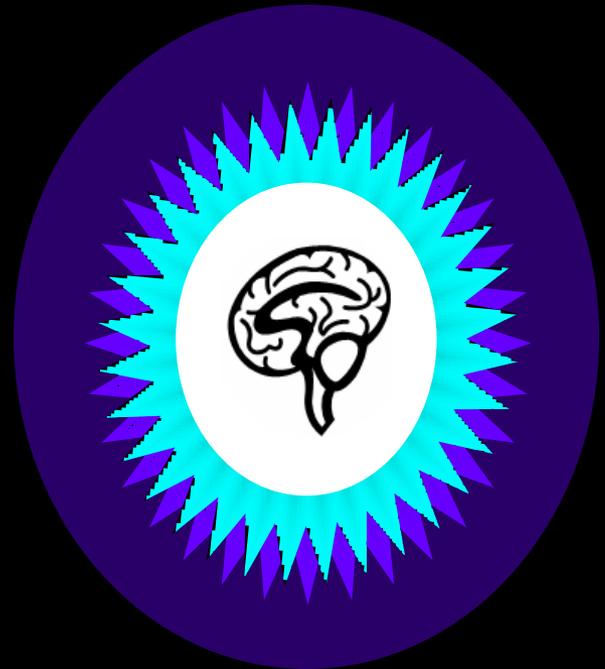
***Dave Stein***

***Center for Transcultural Foresight, Inc.***

## *What will you gain from this panel discussion?*

- Appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives
  - *Personal and career enrichment!*
- Ability to recognize and think beyond cultural “event horizons” that limit foresight thinking
  - *True diversity – the next frontier in education!*

*Cultures of the present and past offer useful counterpoints that can uncover hidden assumptions and overlooked futures!*



## *Introducing the Session*

- Various regions and peoples of the world – e.g., Europe, Asia, North America, South America, and Native peoples – have evolved differing value systems and perspectives that influence nearly all aspects of everyday life:
  - work-leisure balance, disposable time, and leisure activities
  - the social contract
  - relationships with nature
  - the pace of life
  - sources of identity (individual or group)
  - notions of prosperity
  - notions of fulfillment, gratification, and happiness
  - business culture
  - the ways in which leaders emerge
  - *and yes, even planning horizons as well as perspectives on the “future” and approaches to meeting its challenges.*

*What’s different today is the growing pace and extent of cross-cultural interaction and its potential to “export” and “import” value systems and lifestyles, possibly at the expense of others.*

## Cultural “Exports” and “Imports”

- From Asia to US
  - Religion, philosophy – supporting individual enrichment
  - Health and wellness – leading to complementary therapies
- From US to other regions
  - Business culture, in general
  - Diversion and entertainment (e.g., TV game shows)
  - Fast-paced life, with fast food infrastructure to support
  - Capitalistic imprint on yoga
  - Educational practices



*Other factors will also how people will live, work, and think; however, cultural factors can have a substantial impact.*

## *Mandate*

- Increased cross-flow among diverse cultures; “exports” and “imports”
  - *Impacts on how YOU will live, work, think, aspire, and interact!*
- Culture clashes, deculturation, and loss of ways of life
  - *Including contemporary ways of life!*
- The complex challenges presented by “the future”
  - *Challenges requiring answers that are beyond the capability of a single nation, people, or culture to provide*

## *Cultural Contrasts*

- Work, family, leisure balance vs. “not-enough-hours-in-the-day”
  - Is the “chronologically challenged” society being exported?
- Vibrancy, liberty, opportunity, and self-reliance vs. security and the social contract?
  - Underpinning of various work cultures
- Holistic vs. reductionist thinking – healthcare, philosophy, religion, warfare, politics, ...
  - And basis of identity (group vs. individual)
- Time horizon – incremental, and/or quarterly earnings statement vs. long-term
  - Implications to foresight thinking and to education
- Sacrifice and long-range planning vs. instant gratification?
  - Impacts on business and politics

## *Cultural Contrasts (cont'd)*

- Concepts of time – *and of the future!*
  - Linear vs. cyclic or “eternal now”
  - Alarm clock vs. “natural clocks”
- Relationship with nature
  - Dominion over, or co-existence with?
- Pace of life
- Consumerist societies vs. more traditional ones



## *Influences...well, confluences!*

- Technology
  - Alarm clock, throwaway culture, assembly line
  - Social media
- Interplay of national / regional cultures with occupational ones
  - “Neotribes”
- Deculturation – loss of ways of life
  - Native and Aboriginal peoples
  - Occupations – manufacturing, family farming, customer service, etc.
- Recession – slowing the pace of globalization
  - Regional, national, and tribal identities reasserting themselves
- Resurgence of interest in ancient cultures and traditions

## Key Questions

- Which present-day lifestyle options will continue to be possible, and what new ones will emerge?
  - Which lifestyle options will become extinct?
- And, what is the future of cultural diversity itself?
  - Choice of “operating systems” under which to live?
  - OR, monolithic world with “no place to hide” for those who cannot adapt?
- Who will be the “MVPs” – the most valued professions and personality types, in your part of the world?
- What new countercultures may arise in your part of the world, or elsewhere, and what will they value?
- In what ways do different peoples view “the future”?

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## *Pre-Conference Forum Participants*

Art Shostak, USA

Bengt-Arne Vedin, Sweden

José Cordeiro, Venezuela

Jay Herson, USA

Fabienne Goux-Baudiment, France

Stephen Aguilar-Millan, United Kingdom

Mohan K. Tikku, India

Paul J. Werbos, USA

Sari Söderlund, Finland

Steve Steele, USA

Offie C. Wortham, USA

Eleonora Masini, Italy

## *2011 Panelists*

Cornelia Daheim, Germany

Linda Groff, USA

Shoji Mitarai, Japan

Tom Lombardo, USA

Dave Stein, USA

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# panelist presentations

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**WRAPUP**

## Thoughts for 2012

*“Only as futurists soar above artificial “fences” that seem to separate cultures – and instead ... help in the transfer of good ideas across ‘fences’ – will futurists live up to their potential – and meet a profound responsibility to all.”*

– Art Shostak, Professor Emeritus

*“One should challenge present assumptions and ask the questions that no one had thought to ask.”*

– Tim Mack, President, World Future Society

*“To best prepare for the future, we must arm ourselves with the wisdom from diverse nations, peoples, and cultures of the present and past.”*

– FUTURE*takes*

## Resources and Contact Information

- Additional resources:
  - <http://www.futuretakes.org/Transcultural.html> and linked pages
- To be a 2012 panelist or for further information, write to
  - [info@futuretakes.org](mailto:info@futuretakes.org)



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