



How research can drive strategic foresight

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Advancing Research

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Research *is* strategy

In this talk I will...

- * Tell stories of how researchers led others to insight
- * Describe a generic foresight method
- * Give practical tips on how to do foresight

A black and white photograph of a male lion with a large, dark mane, lying on a rocky surface. The lion is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some vegetation. The text "But what I'll *really* do – give you confidence" is overlaid in a white, serif font, centered over the lion's head and chest.

But what I'll *really* do –
give you confidence



Imagine a world...

- * Massive technological change
- * Information explosion
- * Wealth inequality
- * Social upheaval



The Office

Trend hunting in the 1890s



The Modern Office

Typewriters

Filing cabinets

Standard-sized paper



Mega Trend circa 1905: "bureaucracy"

- * Authority is in the Office, not the person
- * Hierarchy
- * Written documents
- * Trained experts
- * Full-time job
- * Stable rules

STEEP

- ✧ Social
- ✧ Technological
- ✧ Economic
- ✧ Environmental
- ✧ Political

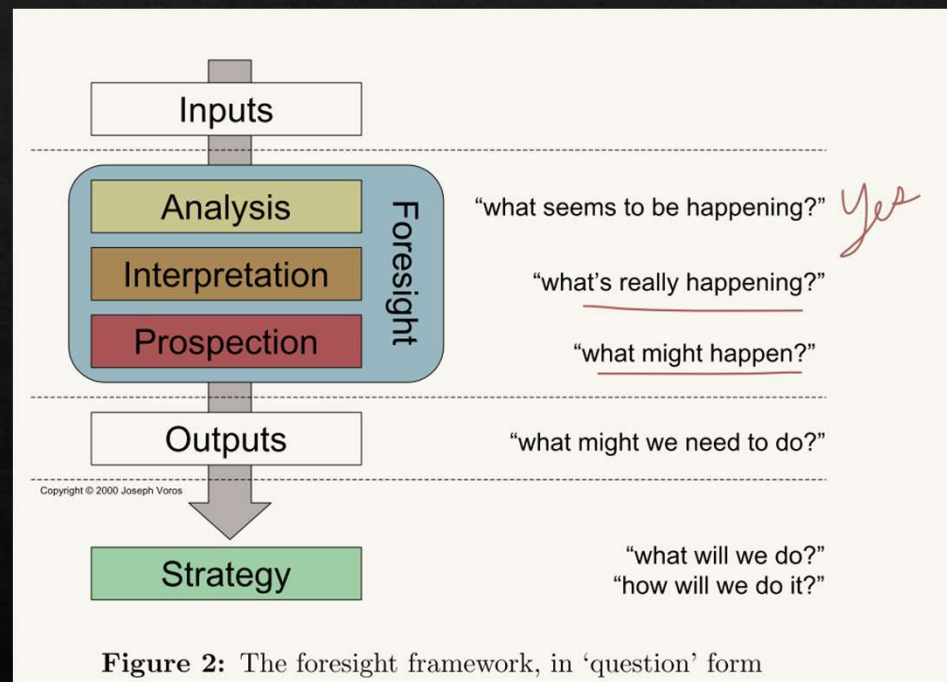


Be careful; it's STEEP

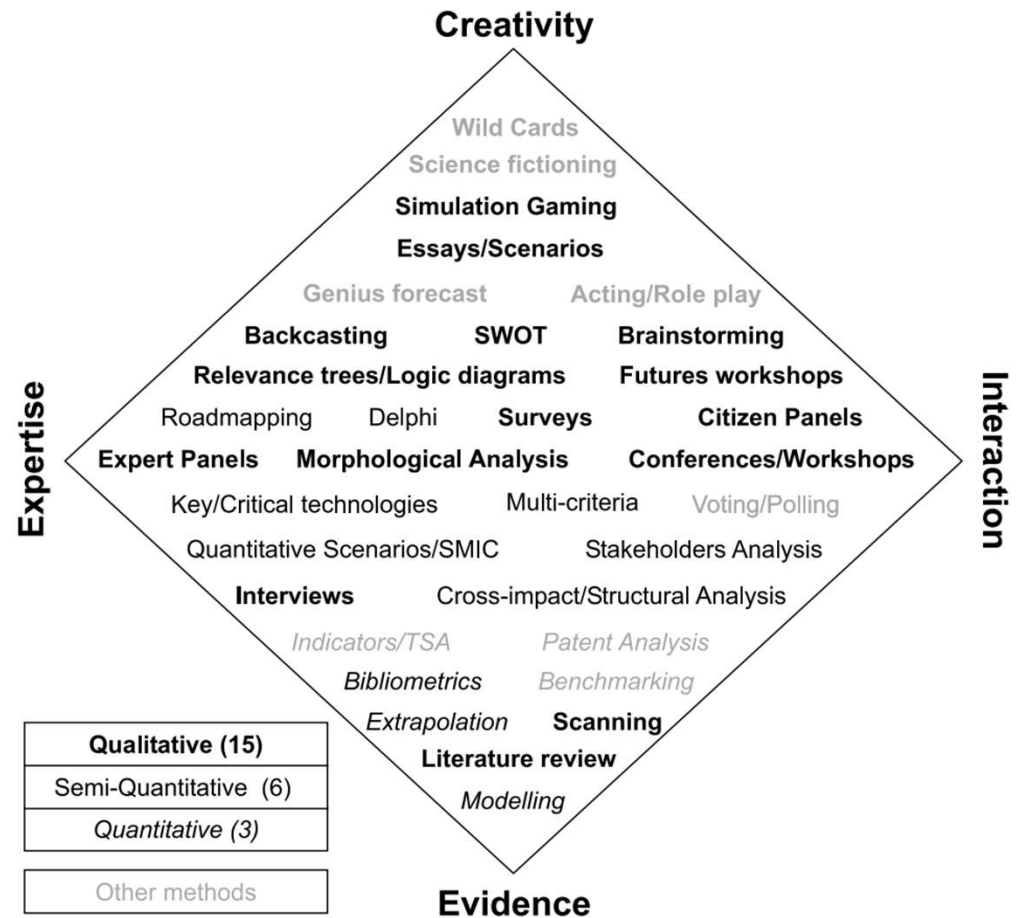
- * WEIRD research: 95% of psychology participants are from Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic countries
- * Forecasting is just as WEIRD as all social science
- * Take extra care to attend to:
 - * Language
 - * Mental models

How to start

- * Scan
- * Analyze
- * Interpret
- * Imagine
- * ---
- * Imagine again
- * ---
- * Strategy



Many methods for analysis and interpretation



Source: Popper, R. (2008), "Foresight methodology", in Georghiou, L., Cassingena, J., Keenan, M., Miles, I. and Popper, R. (Eds), The Handbook of Technology Foresight, Edward Elgar, Aldershot

Mind how you go

"[T]his process has been dominated by the intuition, insight, impulsiveness and – sometimes – inexperience or irresponsibility of practitioners and organisers..."



Early is sometimes too early

- * 2014 was too early for Zoom
- * Keep your (intellectual) powder dry

How I currently do it

- * Scanning, always scanning
- * Sorting and saving
- * "the files" for my own personal commonplace book

Benefit of social science training in forecasting

- * Training in reflexivity
- * Asking about sampling: who is NOT included? (this is also useful for reducing bias)

The Payoff

How do you know when
social, economic, and
technological changes will
come together?

Start today

- * You're already scanning
- * Just add
 - * Keywords
 - * A database
 - * Regular review
- * And wait...

