

Anticipation 2019, 9-11 October 2019, Oslo

Technique Workshop

Special session on Futures Consciousness

by Sanna Ahvenharju & Matti Minkkinen, Finland Futures Research Centre

Advocating for the benefits of widespread human awareness and thinking of the future has been a generally shared commitment among futures researchers. Future consciousness is one of the terms used for this phenomenon, a concept, which refers to a capability of a person – or an organization – to comprehend possible future developments and their impact to our present situation as well as the impacts of our present choices to the future.

The researchers Ahvenharju, Minkkinen and Lalot have developed over the past few years a five-dimensional model of Futures Consciousness. This Technique Workshop aims to share their experiences in developing the model, applying it in different contexts and developing and using a psychometric measurement test scale to study the phenomena empirically.

The five-dimensional Futures Consciousness model integrates theoretical thinking from futures studies with related psychological literature and relevant research-based psychological constructs. The model consists of the following psychological dimensions, namely, a) Time Perspective, b) Agency Beliefs, c) Openness to Alternatives, d) Systems Perception, and e) Concern for Others. The workshop presentations provide the theoretical underpinnings behind each of the dimensions based on futures research literature, and describe the psychological constructs that can be used to depict these dimensions in human behavior. Also, the presentations describe the development and current experiences of using a psychometric test scale to measure Futures Consciousness. The scale has been developed for empirical research to measure and assess the presence and impacts of Future Consciousness, however, until now there is still little research on the practical applicability of the scale. The participants of the session will be able to test themselves with the Futures Consciousness Scale.

The workshop presentations will include the following topics (altogether max. 60 min.):

- The five-dimensional model of Futures Consciousness – theoretical background and potential applications
- The psychometric scale of Futures Consciousness – development and experiences of its use so far
- The use of the five-dimensional model of Futures Consciousness in policy evaluation
- Using Futures Consciousness to study Finnish elite

In addition to the presentations, the workshop will have ca. 30 min. facilitated discussion on the Futures Consciousness model and scale. The discussion will include the following topics:

1. Does the presented model meet your idea of futures consciousness?
2. Are all the necessary aspects of futures consciousness included or should something be added or left out?
3. Strengths and weaknesses of the scale?
4. What could the model and the scale be used for?

The session will be facilitated and the presentations made by Sanna Ahvenharju and Matti Minkkinen from the Finland Futures Research Centre (FFRC).

There are no specific requirements for the workshop facilities, overhead projector and flipcharts should suffice.

Ahvenharju, Minkkinen and Lalot have held a similar workshop in the Futures Conference in Turku in 2017, at an earlier stage of development of the model of Futures Consciousness. Sanna Ahvenharju is an experienced workshop facilitator, who has facilitated dozens of workshops during her career as a practitioner and as an academic.

The model and scale have been / are being published in the following articles:

- Ahvenharju, S., Lalot, F., Minkkinen, M., & Quiamzade, A. (under review). Bringing psychological perspective to the five dimensions of Futures Consciousness.
- Lalot, F., Ahvenharju, S., Minkkinen, M., & Wensing, E. (under review). Aware of the future? Development and validation of the Futures Consciousness Scale.
- Ahvenharju, S., Minkkinen, M., & Lalot, F. (2018). The five dimensions of futures consciousness, *Futures*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2018.06.010>.

Presentations at conferences

- Ahvenharju, Minkkinen & Lalot (2018) The five dimensions of Futures Consciousness. Poster at the Energizing Futures – Sustainable Development and Energy in Transition conference, Tampere, Finland, 13-14 June 2018.
- Ahvenharju, Minkkinen & Lalot (2018) The five dimensions of Futures Consciousness and how to measure it. Poster at the Future-oriented Technology Analysis (FTA 2018) conference, Brussels, Belgium, 4-5 June 2018.
- Ahvenharju, Sanna (2018) Futures consciousness and its impacts on the individual's readiness to make radical policy choices – study on Finnish regime members. Paper in the Future-oriented Technology Analysis (FTA 2018) conference, Brussels, Belgium, 4-5 June 2018.
- Ahvenharju, Minkkinen & Lalot (2017) The five dimensions of futures consciousness and how to measure them. Special session at the 18th International Futures Conference 'Futures of a Complex World', Turku, Finland, 12-13 June 2017.