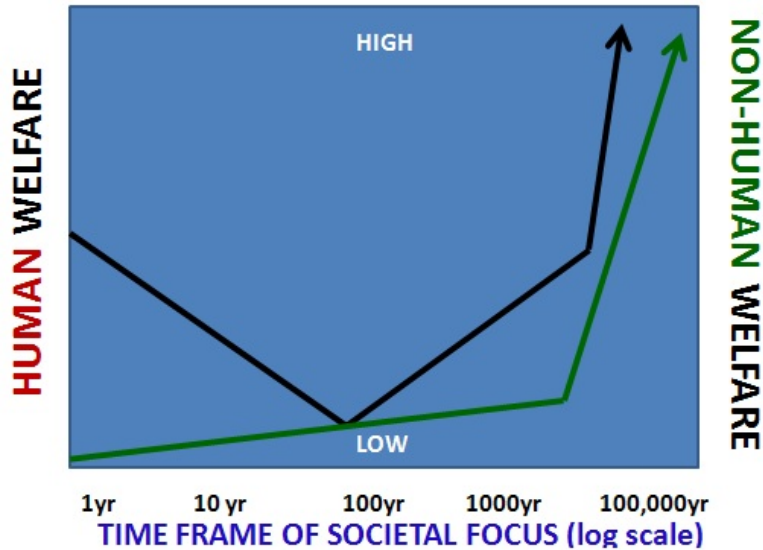


State Farm life insurance - it allows us the *expectation* of a better, smoother, (risk adjusted) future? Or, just like higher returns in the stock market, as a (perceived) indicator of relative fitness vis-a-vis others. (e.g. Bob has 400 lbs more rice and 7 more guns than Bill - we *gotta* be friends with Bob!) Still, on an even deeper level, even though goods accumulation is in preparation for the 'future', it is still a focus on the very near term future, not the time frame needed for long term symbiosis of our species with the rest of the planetary ecology. So hoarding/peak oil prep. may be just another avenue for individual out-performance in a global commons, via competing for real goods instead of financial.



When we think about the future, whose future are we really thinking about? Our own? Our yet-as-unborn grandchildren? Or yet to be speciated future evolutionary organisms, products of hundreds of thousands of years of vibrant/healthy world ecosystems into the future? The above graph is totally hypothetical, but attempts to illustrate that as the focal point of our cultural/global decisions extends outward in time, it will have differing impacts both on future human welfare (black line) and future non-human welfare - biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, etc. (green line). As our focus moves forward in time, the black line suggests that future human welfare will decline until we begin to focus beyond the next 20 or so years. It is unlikely that many organisms, even possessing language and culture, could think/plan much beyond their own lifespans, but until such a point is reached, focusing on the present, especially when using finite extractable resources, borrows from the future, and quite possibly the immediate future. It seems to me that 'hoarding' as individuals is the opposite strategy as 'hoarding' as a species, which would entail consuming anything beyond renewable flows and the barest trickle of non-renewable resources. (The graph could be drawn many different ways depending on ones assumptions about population, resources and impacts)

Biology tells us that organisms arrived at today's present form and number by 'maximizing' 'fitness', or pursuing those behaviours that were most successful in propelling their specific genotypes forward in time. But this is true only looking backwards in time, to all the events/bottlenecks in our ancestry that shaped our physical and mental characteristics before we were born. Once we emerge, bright eyed and naked, we then become adaptation executors, running cultural software cues through fixed hardware. (yes the hardware can 'change', i.e. plasticity, but this trait itself is a fixed property in the wetware). We are descended from the best of the best at surviving, procuring goods, and mating. Most of the planning and decision-making occurring today, even among the depletion cognoscenti, is likely favoring a very short time horizon in the grand scheme. It strikes me that hoarding goods, or scaling renewable infrastructure - wind, solar, nuclear etc. without paying attention to and shifting our demand drivers, is implicitly favoring a certain time period in our future - perhaps 2015-2025. In order to favor 2025 and beyond we need to start making consumption paradigm shifts etc. Still, as events decelerate with energy, the economy and the environment, this will on average increase stress, cognitive load, etc. thus continually shrinking our time horizon of focus.

I have no firm conclusions on these musings, other than by definition those alive and making decisions in 2050 and beyond, will be those (or the descendants of those) who by luck or preparation made it through to that time. I also don't believe that one necessarily needs to be alive or have copies of ones genes extant in that future, to impact it. Finally, I have come to realize that every 'plan' that we individually or as a culture pursue, by definition favors one time

frame in the future over another. I'm not sure what this means, other than the further we look in the future, the less certainty there is - so perhaps all trajectories have to just take it one step at a time...

Campfire questions:

- 1) Regarding 'hoarding', have you been buying things that you fear someday might be unavailable due to breakdown in supply chain, etc? If so, what is your objective by owning such things? Insurance? To make it through a bottleneck? What % advantage might these things offer you vs average human conspecifics?
- 2) Regarding the future, how will decisions optimized for the next 5-20 years adversely affect the next 50-100 years? Is it even possible to care more about 100 years from now than 10 years from now, as an individual? as a society?
- 3) Could we prepare for depletion equally well by giving things up? Instead of amassing 'extra' supply, instead reduce our demand for things at a similar pace? I think this is possible at the margin, but can we really reduce our demand for food, water, energy, and extra 'insurance'?
- 4) ==> anything else related to preparation/paradigm change/timing you think is important..



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