

Paradigms and Normativity: What *Should* FCS Do in Light of 21st Century Change?

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This issue's theme is *shifting paradigms* in family and consumer sciences (FCS) professional practice. This can mean that things in the world are moving around and changing, people are moving from one way of seeing the world to another, or some combination. The question posed for this issue was *What is FCS doing and how is what they are doing changing per these paradigms?* Although answers to the *what* and *how* questions are important, these questions do not push us far enough.

What we are doing is verifiable. How we are doing it differently than before is verifiable. Whether how and what we are doing is what we *should* be doing is another thing all together (Waller, 1986). It is more philosophical in nature. I respectfully pose the normative question, *What should FCS be doing and how should it be changing?* per 21st century challenges to optimal well-being. *Should* is a modal verb conveying obligation (McGregor, 2016). Because their actions intentionally affect the lives of other people, FCS professionals have a moral obligation to pose this prescriptive question (Brown, 1980; Brown & Paolucci, 1979).

The intent here is to explore the nature of this question, not to provide an answer. It is more about

understanding the process of how to approach deciding what should be done rather than specifying what should change, even though both are addressed. To that end, after providing an overview of the main challenges to America's individual and familial well-being (framed as wicked problems), the discussion turns to what constitutes a normative (*should*) perspective (including value judgments and practical reasoning). A discussion of the relationship between ideologies and paradigms follows, including the process of shifting paradigms. This article suggests four different ways FCS professionals should expand their practice so they can better address 21st century wicked problems.

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Challenges Facing and Shaping American Individuals and Families

Things *are* changing. This section provides an overview of both generic and demographic widespread changes faced by American individuals and families. The profession needs to be aware of and track these and other changes to better determine

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what FCS professionals *should* be doing. FCS practitioners in other countries are encouraged to identify, monitor and critique related changes in their context.

Generic Changes

American families live in a time rife with challenges to their standard of living, quality of life, general welfare, and multidimensional well-being. They are experiencing a turbulent national economy, economy-altering trade policies, and economic global expansion (including offshore hiring and local job loss). People are experiencing unsustainable lifestyles, terrorism and violence, poverty and inequality, immigration-related issues, health-care challenges, weather-related disasters (climate change), and political uncertainty. Families are grappling with family stability, children's health and safety (on and offline), abuse and bullying, children's educational achievement and success, sexual permissiveness and orientations, and addictions and substance abuse (Collins, 2017; Karpowitz & Pope, 2017).

They also face economic uncertainties and financial pressures (especially the cost of raising a family), debt and insolvency, work and employment demands and pressures, the digital impact on family time and quality of life, and religious and faith-based issues (Collins, 2017; Karpowitz & Pope, 2017). FCS professionals need to be on top of these changes because they reflect and encompass wider ideological realities; engagement with these issues may necessitate a paradigm shift—that is, rethinking their approaches.

Demographic Changes

Aside from these generic challenges (and there are more), Americans are grappling with powerful demographic changes; although exhibiting generic profiles, these changes will be experienced differently by each family. American citizens are dealing with long-standing and oft-discussed issues of an aging population (with attendant financial and health issues), pending or full-fledged retirement, more intermarriages, fewer marriages, delayed marriages, stabilized divorce rates (about 50%), and more single mothers, cohabitation, unmarried parents, and single-person households. Others have

duly covered these issues (e.g., Brown, 2017; Starbuck & Lundy, 2015; Treas, Scott, & Richards, 2014).

Individuals and families also are experiencing other wide-ranging changes addressed here. These include changing household composition (especially the post-Millennial and Millennial generation phenomena), income levels, labor market participation, immigration and ethnic diversity, fertility and birth rates, and religious landscapes (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2015). These changes push the profession to rethink such things as policy recommendations, curricular content, and strategies for program development and interventions.

Generation Z, post-Millennials. For years, the Millennials hogged the demographic stage but they are being superseded by the generation behind them, currently aged 7–22. They are called by many names, but the Pew Research Center's monikers of *post-Millennial* and *Generation Z* (Dimock, 2019) are used here. Most Gen Zs are still in their tweens or teens with the oldest aged 22. As with other generations, their formative years (i.e., political, social, and economic trends from 1996 onward) will shape their demographic profile appreciating that their final demographic markers are still to be determined. This generation will change the American landscape profoundly (Fry & Parker, 2018) and, by association, FCS practice. The ensuing Gen Z profile stems from two sources, Fry and Parker (2018) and "Generation Z" (2019).

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Gen Zs currently number about 66.5 million. Half (52%) are White; yet, ironically, many are not immigrants—they were born in the United States. Most are attending K-12 with a few entering universities. Overall, Gen Zs are incredibly tech savvy and heavy social media users having been brought up with and totally receptive to ever-changing digital technology. Research suggests that their prolific usage patterns, unless carefully monitored, can

compromise their mental health in the form of loneliness, exclusion, anxiety, and desensitization, not to mention the threat of identity theft.

Born after 1996, they have only known the U.S. to be at war with the forces of global terrorism (a loosely defined term). Domestic terrorism is second hand to them but they are not immune to it. Although characterized as more politically conservative than the Millennials, Gen Zs are rising up against perceived injustice, supporting transgender rights, and gender equality.

Gen Zs tend to live in urban areas in Western states, where there is more of an ethnic balance between White and non-Whites. In nearly half (43%) of their homes, one parent (65% live with two parents) has a university education. Contemporary household incomes (averaging \$63,700) reflect both their parent's education and dual-earner household status (63%). But Gen Zs' parents remain stressed by the 2008 global recession fallout (i.e., economic instability), creating a pervasive sense of unsettlement and insecurity for some Gen Zs. Not surprisingly, Gen Zs are often pessimistic about the American economy.

They are also more risk adverse than previous generations (e.g., lower substance abuse, fewer teenage pregnancies, less truancy, fewer school dropouts). Paradoxically, they characterize themselves (personally) as thoughtful and responsible while saying their peers are competitive and curious. They are used to an on-demand, online economy and consumption model. They have tendencies toward entrepreneurship and are open to new ideas. But they tend not to work part time in high school as did the Millennial generation (19% and 30%, respectively) so they will be entering the labor market less experienced. They envision their future jobs to be exciting and fulfilling and able to facilitate them helping their community and the world. But most Gen Zs will be in school (K–12 and university/college) for the foreseeable future (at least until 2031) and not gainfully employed.

Millennials. The Millennials (73 million aged 23–38) comprise both U.S. and foreign-born (immigrant) citizens. This ethnically and culturally diverse group has paved the way for the generations following them. The Millennials' characteristics continue to change the American demographic

landscape (Fry, 2018). With the oldest Millennial turning 38 this year, the leading edge is well into adulthood (Dimock, 2019).

Compared to previous generations, Millennials are “slow to adopt many of the traditional markers of adulthood” (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017) especially leaving home to live independently. Close to one third (31.6%) live with their parents, which is not alarming as a general statistic (i.e., 68.4% live independently). But the trend takes on more meaning when compared to 20% living at home in 1960 (representing a 60% increase in never launching). Millennials are also less likely to own a home or be married, cohabitating, or parents (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017; Fry, 2018). “Full-time work, median wages, women's poverty, housing costs, owning a home and living in a parent's home all were significantly linked with . . . marriage rates among [Millennial] adults” (Cohn, 2018).

A further complication is that most Millennials entered the work force at the height of the 2008 global recession meaning their “slow start” will be a factor in American society for decades to come (Dimock, 2019). They lived through and in a time when household incomes have stagnated and wealth and income gaps have widened. The U.S. economy is experiencing the long-term effects of globalization and rapid technological workforce changes. With many completing only high school, Millennials are paying a high price in this increasingly knowledge-based economy in terms of low wages and high unemployment. Their unemployment rate is 12.9% compared to a national rate of 4.9%. They are economically (unrealistically) optimistic with more than half (53%) saying they do not earn or have enough *now* but they *will* in the future (Pew Research Center, 2014). The majority (84%) live in metropolitan areas (Fry, Igielnik, & Patten, 2018), which comes with its own challenges, especially poverty, pollution, crime, and crowding (and, paradoxically, isolation).

Fry et al. (2018) and the Pew Research Center (2014) maintained that the Millennials are increasingly detached from major social institutions like political parties, religion, the military, and marriage. Half describe themselves as politically independent. One third are not affiliated with any religion although 86% say they believe in God. Only 4% are veterans. Three quarters (74%) are not married.

And the majority do not have a university education (71% men, 64% women). Of those who have graduated, upwards of two thirds have record levels of student debt. Half (51%) believe there will be no social security system when they retire. The majority (80%) have low levels of social trust, possibly because they feel disadvantaged and vulnerable. Ironically, the same majority uses social media heavily, which is rife with disclosure, privacy, and identity issues. And, close to half (43%) of all Millennials are non-White (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native Indian) making them a very ethnically diverse generation (Fry et al., 2018; Pew Research Center, 2014).

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Household composition. These Millennial trends are changing many American's home life and household composition. Many contemporary homes now comprise the 'family of origin' (i.e., parents and children) rather than the traditional extended family. Adult children are still living at home either unemployed or underemployed, making nominal household fiscal contributions. Instead of boomerang kids, they are *never launchers*. This living arrangement places unprecedented financial stress on households with aging or retired parents. The former are supposedly focused on retirement savings and the latter are living on lower, fixed incomes. Those Boomer parents who are still working often use their retirement money and assets to financially prop up their never-launched children, setting up a domino effect because the latter will not be able to financially support them later (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017, 2018; Fry, 2018).

Although shared living (beyond family of origin) is uncommon in most (80%) American households, the number of homes with more than one generation under the roof is on the rise (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2018). Increased immigration (especially Asian and Hispanic) has led to a rise in multigenerational living in non-White population homes (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017). Extended family households typically

experience unique challenges including intrusion, lack of privacy, generational conflict (values, beliefs, practices) and changes in parenting roles for working parents (Starbuck & Lundy, 2015).

Income levels. Income wise, the share of adults living in middle-income households fell slightly (5%) in the U.S., matching a similar trend in other Western nations. Said another way, about two thirds (59%) of American households are middle income with dollar figures varying by household size (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017). However, they are no longer the majority and are losing ground financially. The share of aggregate national income going to middle-income households (currently 43%) fell by 44% in the past 50 years. Conversely, the lower-income strata received 25% more in the same time frame (20%) but never achieved middle-income status (Pew Research Center, 2015). Loss of disposable income raises the spectre of issues related to increased debt, compromised housing tenure, and decreased access to healthcare, insurance, and education.

Labor market. Regarding labor market participation, there is virtually an even split between men (53.2%) and women (46.8%), deemed to be the future standard. Although the wage gap is narrowing—30% smaller since 1980—women still earn, on average, 17% less than men (\$0.83 for every \$1.00) (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017). The Millennials are the largest cohort (35%) in the American work force, surpassing the retiring Baby Boomers (25%) (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2018). Unemployment rates also vary by ethnicity. Generally speaking, the Millennial unemployment rate is nearly three times that of the national average (12.9% compared to 4.9%). Ethnically speaking, Blacks historically have the highest (5.9%) unemployment rate, followed by Hispanics (4.9%), Whites (3.5%), and Asians (2.1%) (Lockhart, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2014).

Immigration. The U.S. is experiencing growing racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. Immigrants are driving overall workforce growth for the American working-age population (25–64 years of age) (Pew Research Center, 2015). Cilluffo and Cohn (2017, 2018) reported that immigrants work mainly in private households (45%) and in farming (agriculture), fishing, and forestry (46%). In 2016, 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants lived in the U.S. Estimates have them at 5% of the labor force

(8 million) with the declining number of Mexicans being replaced with people from the Middle East and Africa (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017, 2018). The U.S. Black immigration population (from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) has grown five-fold since 1980 (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2018).

Fertility and birth rate. Cilluffo and Cohn (2018) reported that fertility and birth rates are up in the U.S. but they play out along two trajectories. U.S.-born women are having fewer or no children. Younger, foreign-born (immigrant) women have a higher fertility rate and are bearing more children. Motherhood and family size are increasing in the U.S. because of immigration patterns. Although U.S.-born women who give birth are having slightly more children (2.07 up 11% from 1.86), an increasing number (85%) of U.S.-born women at the end of their childbearing years have no children. Another pattern is that more (55%) unmarried women are having children, up 77% from 25 years ago (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2018). These trends are shaping the composition and attendant challenges of many American households.

Religious landscape. The increased birth rate of foreign-born women in the U.S. (especially Muslim women) is also changing the nation's religious landscape. Globally, the projected growth rate of the Christian population is much lower than that of the Islamic faith, 35% versus 73%. (Islam is the religion and its adherents are called Muslim.) If this trend plays out in the U.S., within 30 years most families will be non-Christian (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017, 2018). This trend may be temporarily affected by the increase in Christian refugees and decline in Islam refugees under the current U.S. administration (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2018).

Wicked Problems

The word *cacophony* characterizes this collection of generic and demographic changes. This harsh, discordant mixture of sounds (Anderson, 2014) (i.e., changes and challenges) is a resounding noise that manifests in complexity, complications, messiness, and knottiness. None of these changes are stand-alone issues—they are *all* interconnected in a mesh of networked strands, where each shapes and is affected by others and is experienced differently in different contexts.

To illustrate this network, consider that housing, income, marital status, the economy, politics, ethnicity, and age are all interconnected. Income is both affected by the economy and affects access to housing. This means FCS professionals should not discuss housing access issues without reference to the local and national economy. Ethnicity (and race) is tied to income; together, they affect housing options. This suggests that FCS professionals concerned with housing options cannot ignore the connection between ethnicity and income. Politics affects the economy, which influences income, which in turn affects housing access for the aging. By association, any FCS efforts to redress seniors' local housing issues should embrace the powerful link between politics and the local economy.

These examples confirm that tinkering with each issue to effect incremental change is not sufficient. Treating all of these changes individually (although a possibility) does not respect that their *interface* is where things get messy (i.e., confusing and difficult to deal with). Complexity theorists now call this conflagration of messy issues *wicked* problems—in contrast to *tame* problems. Everyone agrees that there is a solution to a well-structured tame problem. In fact, what solved it before should solve it again with predictable consequences. Not so for wicked problems, which are critical, aggressive, and vicious by nature (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Examples include income disparity, hunger, poverty, healthcare, social inequality, crime, loss of biodiversity, climate change, and terrorism. What worked before may not work again because the context is different. And attempts to address them often spawn new wicked problems with the original issue actually changing because people tried to fix it. Often, people themselves change, further complicating the dynamics (McGregor, 2012; Rittel & Webber, 1973).

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difficult to define and harder to address. It is very challenging to respectfully integrate stakeholders' disparate positions, interests, values, and beliefs. In effect, wicked problems are *systems* problems and, in all likelihood, are never completely solved. Their solutions involve multiple interventions by many people over a long time and necessitate sustained changes in behavior. Attempts to address the problems ramify throughout the system with no one or thing immune to the backlash. In fact, there is no guarantee or even assumption that a solution is even possible or recognizable but *something* has to be done (McGregor, 2012; Rittel & Webber, 1973).

Taking a linear, de-contextualized, quick-fix approach to these seemingly independent issues (such as hunger, poverty, and unsustainability) is not enough, nor was it ever. But such an approach is seductive to FCS practitioners who want to alleviate or mitigate an individual or family's stress and pressure.

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vides morally accountable approaches to dealing with them.

Normative Perspective

To reiterate, *should* is a modal verb conveying a morally or legally bound course of action (McGregor, 2016). The bottom line: people will be harmed if the wrong decision or a bad one is taken and acted upon. What are FCS professionals obligated to do in the face of the 21st century changes affecting well-being and quality of life? A fellow home economist, Marjorie Brown (1993), advised that this *should* question requires home economics practitioners to assume a normative perspective—a focus on *norms* (Latin *norma*, "rules, patterns," Harper, 2019). These are standards of proper or expected behavior that guide professional conduct. Norm-respective behavior is more assured if people ask what *should* be done (i.e., What are my obligations, given the circumstances?).

Value Judgments

Ideally, answering a *should* question involves passing *value judgments* in addition to drawing on facts and information. Value judgments (opinions or conclusions about) pertain to the rightness or usefulness of an action *based* on things that people hold to be important to them; that is, their values or value set (a system of consistent values). The final judgment comprises an opinion of what *should* be done based on values, beliefs, and principles rather than just facts, which can be checked, verified, and proven (Anderson, 2014). Philosophically, normative refers to a standard for making value judgments about pending behavior or outcomes (Bicchieri, 2017; Jarvis, 2008).

A 'judgment based on values' requires FCS practitioners to consider both their own and other people's values, beliefs, principles, and opinions regarding the desired end result or outcome, called a *valued end* (i.e., the end is acceptable, or of value, to everyone) (McGregor & Gentzler, 2009). Together, they need to judge what *should* be done given the current state of affairs and circumstances. This approach holds that positions on an issue are not universal but context dependent, which includes the value sets of people involved with or affected by a morally grounded judgment and subsequent (in)action.

Normative Versus Informative

A useful approach for better understanding the idea of normativity is to distinguish *normative* from *informative*. Normative is prescriptive (i.e., imposition of a rule or standard) and is concerned with what *ought* to be done to minimize or negate negative consequences. *Ought* (like should) is a modal verb indicating duty and responsibility (McGregor, 2016). Despite also being related to norms and standards, information is descriptive. This involves giving a detailed accounting *without* expressing judgment. So, although information helps with conceptual understanding, it does not compel what *ought* to be—it only describes what *is* (Brown, 1993; “Normative,” 2019). The statement “Teenage girls *should* be able to get an abortion” is normative. The statement “Abortion rates *are* increasing among teenage girls” is informative (descriptive).

Also, from a normative perspective, FCS professionals would *interpret* the current state of affairs rather than just *describe* it factually with information. Respecting the wicked nature of many 21st-century problems, the normative interpretation would be based on such universal concepts as justice, equity, fairness, freedom, human rights, human security, resiliency, participation, power, responsibility, and interests (Brown, 1993; McGregor, 2010b). The results should compel FCS practitioners to act in a certain way, different from what they would have done had they not interpreted the situation and acted only on the information and facts. This action requires reasoning and involves emotions.

Practical Reasoning Stance

FCS professionals need to be aware of both the practical and emotive positions about whether normative statements, which are deeply prescriptive (*ought* to) and based in values, *can* be examined using reason and logic. Some people think that normative statements can be discussed rationally using practical reasoning because the latter takes a normative question as its very starting point: “What *should* we do?” (Wallace, 2014). Those in FCS have long been familiar with practical reasoning. It is part of the profession’s mission articulated by Brown and Paolucci (1979) at the behest of the American Home Economics Association (AHEA),

now the American Association for Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS).

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Instead of the word *practical* meaning how to, feasible, or realistic (Anderson, 2014), practical reasoning entails the Aristotelian notion of *practical*, which means *thinking* before acting by accessing and weighing one’s *reasons for* action (Brown, 1993). It refers to “the ability to see, on each occasion, which course of action is best supported by reasons” (Kraut, 2018, p.1). Said another way, “What is the best course of action given the circumstances?” This action is determined by reasoning (i.e., thinking, understanding, and then forming a judgment).

Carrying out practical reasoning gives rise to a form of attitude; that is, an intentional action. This type of action is done *with intent* (on purpose) after ruminating and reflecting on the reasons behind acting. Practical reasoning modifies *intentions* (no action has been taken yet) rather than beliefs. A *belief* is a feeling that something is true, changed by *theoretical* reasoning, which treats issues impersonally using principles and laws that are available to everyone instead of being context specific like practical reasoning (Wallace, 2014).

Atkinson, Bench-Capon, and McBurney (2005) proposed a value-based practical reasoning argumentation scheme to guide practitioners when engaging in practical reasoning *before* they take action (see Figure 1, adapted from Atkinson et al., 2005, pp. 154–155). This approach reflects a normative (*should*) perspective in that it deals with the contemporary state of affairs, values, desired outcomes (goals), and reasoned thought informed by a “What should be done?” mindset. Recognizing that values are always in the background in

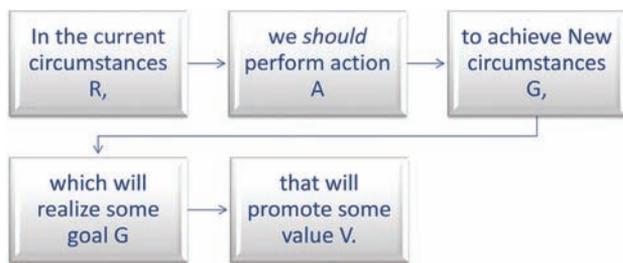


Figure 1. Value-based practical reasoning argumentation scheme (adapted from Atkinson, Bench-Capon, & McBurney, 2005).

practical reasoning, Walton (2007) developed an argumentation scheme for situations that are *not* dependent on values. It goes like this: (a) I have a goal G; (b) Bringing about A (an action) is necessary (or sufficient) for me to bring about G; (c) Therefore, I should (*practically speaking*) bring about A (take a particular action). *If* values were involved, the person, after saying “I have a goal,” would affirm that “G is supported by my set of values, V” (Walton, 2007, p. 234).

Emotive Stance

Instead of using practical reasoning to deal with normative statements, others maintain that normative statements can only be treated from an *emotive* stance. This is because *ought* to statements prompt intense feelings and emotions that cannot be rationally defended or discussed because they have no cognitive content (“Normative,” 2019; Waller, 1986). Emotivism holds that value judgments do not have a truth value (i.e., no speaker’s knowledge); rather they express the speaker’s feelings and emotions or prescriptions of action (i.e., imperatives) (Hurka, 2015). For clarification, value judgments *can* have logical implications, but pure, emotive value judgments (with no facts involved) are noncognitive, meaning they cannot be logically examined using reason (Waller, 1986).

Not surprisingly, normative statements or positions about wicked problems often cause conflict because people hold different ideas about what *ought* to be done (Rittel & Webber, 1973). They draw on their respective value sets and have different (often contradictory) interests (i.e., what is best for them); hence, emotions run high creating havoc for rational discussion—or so the argument goes (Waller, 1986). That being said, normative

statements are a key part of human life and feed into the prioritization of goals, plans, strategies, and subsequent actions (“Normative,” 2019). This means that the FCS profession needs to respect the power of a normative approach to addressing contemporary wicked problems especially when it comes to paradigm shifts. To answer the normative question “What *should* FCS be doing and how *should* it be changing?” it is necessary to understand the concept of paradigms and their genitor, ideologies. Answers to *should* questions will inherently reflect practitioners’ paradigms (i.e., how they make sense of the world).

Ideologies and Paradigms

Although often conflated, and people do not always agree on how they differ, paradigms *do* differ from ideologies. In fact, paradigms (meaning-making systems) arise from ideologies (value and belief systems) (Heath, 2003; McGregor, Pendergast, Seniuk, Eghan, & Engberg, 2008) (see Figure 2). Ideologies are by their nature normative in that they propose what society *should* look like. By association, FCS is again compelled to draw on a normative approach.

Ideologies

Ideology is from the Greek *idea*, “form, the look of a thing” and *logos*, “doctrine, discourse, treatise” (Harper, 2019). It means a systematic set of ideas (i.e., how the world should look), a prescriptive doctrine not supported by rationale argument except for those who adhere to its tenets (Harper, 2019). Ideologies form the basis of social, economic, and political systems. Eight very familiar dominant ideologies include patriarchy, Social

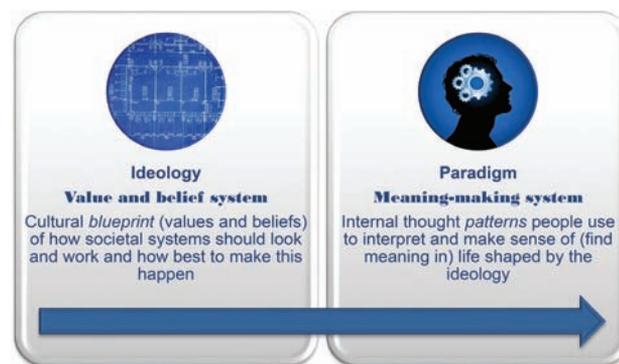


Figure 2. Ideology leads to paradigm.

Darwinism, capitalism, globalization (top down), neoliberalism, consumerism, fundamentalism, and political conservatism (McGregor, 2008; McGregor et al., 2008).

A world shaped by these eight ruling ideas is easily recognizable. Indeed, those in FCS will be familiar with a world dominated by them. In plain language, respectively, this includes ‘by a few men for men’ (patriarchy), a belief in survival of the fittest, the lure of profit, and competition for and control of scarce resources. It includes the corporate-led integration of national economies into one global economy (globalization), deregulation and decentralization, inculcation of the Western consumer lifestyle on a global scale, the rise of strict interpretations of religious doctrines, and maintaining the status quo of the ruling political elite (McGregor et al., 2008).

Any ideology (whether dominant or contending) prescribes the *preferred* way to live as perpetuated by those in power. Ideologies include (a) deeply ingrained ideas about how society should work and for whose benefit and (b) the cultural blueprint (rules) most appropriate for achieving this idealized arrangement. They set out assumptions about what is worthy of belief and attention, accepted as true, and valued (important and worth preserving) (Johnson, 2005). Contending ideologies that are pushing back against the eight dominate ones include, respectively, feminism and humanism, people- and life-centered ideologies, capitalism based on covenants of care, localization and bottom-up globalization, mindful markets, sustainability (global consumer-citizens), interfaith perspectives, and participatory democracy (McGregor, 2008; McGregor et al., 2008).

An especially dominant ideology is scientism, which is an excessive belief in the power of scientific knowledge emanating from using the scientific method. It is especially problematic when the method is applied in unwarranted situations. Scientism stems from the branch of philosophy called logical positivism, which means things are only *meaningful* if they are observable and verifiable and able to be proven true using the scientific method. Anything unverifiable is unscientific and hence *meaningless*. By association, this negates the power of wisdom, spirituality, the

sacred, and practical knowledge and ways of knowing) (Nicolescu, 2014).

Paradigms

Paradigm is from the Latin *paradigma*, “pattern, model, precedent, example.” It is a pattern for how people should think about something (Harper, 2019). People use paradigms, which arise from ideologies, to find *meaning* in life based on ideological tenets (Heath, 2003). They are *internal* thought patterns and habits of reasoning that include rules and assumptions to follow when thinking. People use paradigms to *interpret* (find meaning in) what they see and experience every day. On a personal level, paradigms provide a mental process that people can follow each time they approach a problem. Paradigms even guide them toward *what* to conceive as a problem. They tell people what to expect and help them sort, organize, and classify information and facts. They affect both the type of question asked and answers expected; people are conditioned to give, receive, and accept these answers without questioning (Brill, 1988).

On a larger scale, a paradigm is a generally accepted group of ideas about how something should be thought about. These ideas relate to one another and form a conceptual framework by which people interpret their lived world. In this light, paradigms are considered to be a group commitment to a constellation of beliefs that represent a group-licensed way of viewing the world (Botha, 1989). For example, most quantitative researchers do not value qualitative research because it does not involve the scientific method. The former is *hard science*; the latter is characterized as *soft*. *Basic* research is more valued than *applied*. This groupthink has perpetuated the centuries-long dominance of empirical research.

Another example is five paradigms that arise from the neoliberalism *ideology* predicated on the tenets of individualism, privatization, decentralization, and deregulation (McGregor, 2001). These five paradigms include (a) control and efficiency, (b) scarcity and competition, (c) mastery over resources (natural and human), and (d) narrow, linear (cause and effect) thinking combined with (e) disconnectedness, fragmentation, and specialization. These five paradigms deeply shape

contemporary *thinking* about life lived out according to the tenets of neoliberalism. They inform policy decisions in many nations and institutions (McGregor et al., 2008).

In truth, FCS practitioners have fallen victim to these five neoliberalism-originating paradigms that have shaped thinking about (a) department and faculty closures (decentralization in the name of competition for scarce resources), (b) excessive specialization replacing a generalist (philosophically based) approach to practice (individualism) leading to FCS fragmentation, and (c) the compulsion to legalize and accredit the profession to increase control over its legitimacy (resisting the bandwagon of deregulation) (Pendergast & McGregor, 2007).

Another example that might resonate with readers is three paradigms arising from the consumerism ideology. These include *materialism*, a paradigm by which material gain (accumulation of possessions) is undertaken as a measure of success and social acceptance. Second is *conspicuous consumption*, wherein people spend in such a way that they attract notice (i.e., they *want* people to see their pile of stuff); their decisions are not conscious, meaning they are unaware of or ignore the repercussions. Third is *unsustainability*, a paradigm manifesting in the harm caused by current spending habits and patterns on self, others, other species, and the planet (McGregor et al., 2008). These three ‘high-consumption culture’ paradigms also arise from the scientism ideology that does not value spirituality or the sacred, which refers to an absolute respect for others. The sacred is the root of people’s awareness of being linked by a shared, common life (Nicolescu, 2014).

Ideologies, Then Paradigms

To illustrate the connection between ideologies and paradigms, first imagine ideologies as camps (bound by camp rules—their own logic) and paradigms as watchtowers from which people look down and observe life within these camps (de Bellis, 2002). Paradigms give *meaning* to this life because they provide the lens through which people think about and make sense of the world (Heath, 2003), of what is right, normal, and expected (Dillman, 2000). Paradigms are internal thought patterns that

people use to interpret life lived according to dominant cultural blueprints (i.e., ideologies) (Johnson, 2005).

Now imagine that the people living in the camp are following the ideological cultural blueprint of Darwinism’s survival of the fittest, competition for scarce resources (capitalism) and power extorted by a few men over the many (patriarchy). If the person standing in the watchtower values the same things, life in the camp will make complete *sense* to them. If, however, that person believes in different values, like collaboration, sharing, sustainability, and gendered power, the camp activities they observe will take on totally different meanings. They will *see* exploitation, waste, and oppression and be stymied as to how anyone could willingly live in that camp. They may even be driven to right perceived wrongs that do not resonate with their thought patterns (paradigms).

When ideologies are *deeply* entrenched, people will observe their own life through their attendant watchtower (paradigms) and then interpret what they see playing out in the camp by using reasoning to get the answer they “want to be right” (Klein, 2014). Instead of slowing down to consider and question the evidence displayed in front of them, they tend to suppress any impulse (if there is one) to query what they see and opt instead “to go with what *looks* right” and makes sense to them according to their lens on the world (Klein, 2014).

Even if things do *not* sit right with people and they do *not* outright accept what they see, they may still subliminally resist any disconcerting, observed facts because acknowledging them would threaten both their identity and defining values and those of the tribe (e.g., the camp) (Kahan, Peters, Dawson, & Solvic, 2013). This is how dominant ideologies stay in power. They become invisible (normalized) or too hard to resist or defy (Heath, 2003). Many of the challenges that plague contemporary society exist solely because of the power of ideologies and the paradigms used to interpret and legitimize life shaped by ideologies (i.e., prevailing life blueprints).

Resisting and Shifting Paradigms

Because of the damage fraught by this ideological power, FCS professionals have to assume a normative stance (What *should* be done?); they have

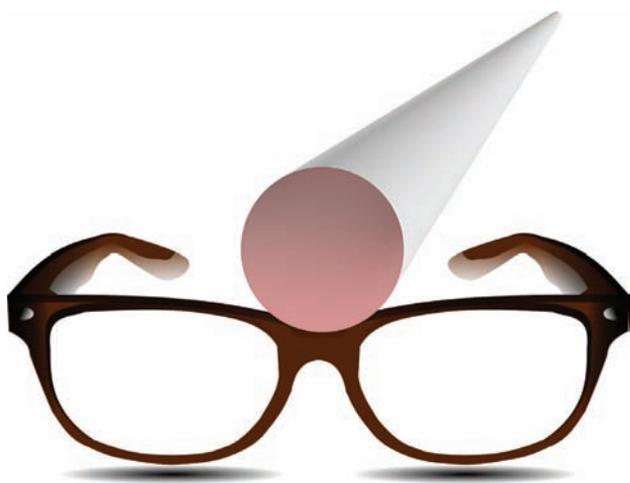


Figure 3. Third lens (paradigms) through which people interpret the ideologically shaped world.

to stop and ponder if they need to change paradigms so they can advocate for different ideologies. Part of that process entails paradigmatic awareness including what is involved in personally changing paradigms. Indeed, many people are not even aware that they see the world through paradigms (mental thought patterns). Imagine a third lens mounted on top of a pair of glasses. People see the world through the glasses but may be unaware of what is being filtered through the third lens—their paradigms (see Figure 3).

Because paradigms are habits of reasoning, it is imperative that people become aware of their presence in their mental schema. Once people gain awareness of any underlying beliefs, values, and premises that are informing their thoughts and actions, they can *choose* to pay attention to them and critically evaluate them. Armed with knowledge of what is influencing them (i.e., their paradigms), they can better decide if this is still working for them and if not, decide to change things up. This is easier said than done (Barker, 1993; McGregor, 2006).

Normally, moving from one way of seeing and interpreting the world to another unfolds in three stages: denial, stretching things to fit, and releasing the old paradigm to make room for the new. To explain, a time will come when people encounter evidence that their world is simply not what they thought it was. When this happens, people are compelled to respond to this evidence. Quite often, the

first stage is denial. Despite that the way they see the world has been rattled, they deny that things need to change. They try to address problems using previous strategies, which works for a while (Tapestry Institute, 2007).

Second, eventually, this strategy no longer works and they shift instead to stretching their existing paradigms to fit the problem. Like wearing a shirt that is too small, this may eventually become so uncomfortable that they have no choice but to (third) let the old worldview lapse and take a leap of faith that the new paradigm will actually work. In other instances, they shed the too-small shirt and replace it with an old comfortable one and remain in total denial, holding onto their old thought patterns (i.e., paradigm) (O'Driscoll, 2017; Tapestry Institute, 2007).

Barker (1993) proposed that when people are beyond denial and ready for change, the adoption of a new paradigm moves through a different three-stage cycle. It begins slowly for most people because it takes time to learn the new group-licensed way of viewing the world. Eventually, uptake of the new paradigm increases because people realize it seems to better and more smoothly handle problems inadequately dealt with using older thought patterns. This momentum holds for a fairly long time (20 years) until, again, people begin to realize that the paradigm (i.e., their reasoning and thought patterns) cannot cope with the nuances of how new problems are presenting themselves and manifesting in people's lives. When this becomes pervasive enough, when times become too turbulent and unstable, people can no longer ignore the pile of unsolvable issues. Society, families, and individuals are falling deeper and deeper into trouble. It is time again for people to examine their go-to paradigms and challenge prevailing ideologies, with the cycle starting again. We are there now.

Resisting Paradigm Shifts

Once paradigms (thought patterns) become embedded they serve to guide practitioners in a particular way that has been sanctioned by the profession (Botha, 1989). People become familiar and then comfortable with them. This means there is a real chance that some FCS professionals will resist the need to shift paradigms, viewing this as a threat

to the order of things. It means they have to change their mental thought processes, patterns, and models even after they have become useless and possibly harmful. They resist changing because using the old paradigms created patterns of success that provided stability and security (Barker, 1993). An unrelenting belief in a paradigm can occur when its assumptions become ingrained, molding beliefs and determining how people see the world. If this “paradigm effect” is strong enough it can lead to “paradigm paralysis” (Twigg, 1992); that is, the “inability or refusal to see beyond current models of thinking” and deeply-entrenched internal thought patterns (O’Driscoll, 2017).

Sensing that giving up a deeply-embedded paradigm may lead to a loss of professional self, identity, and confidence, some people create “cloaking devices” to help hide from the need to change. These devices include (a) aligning with like-minded people and (b) drawing strength from one’s specialization and expertise while (c) avoiding examining one’s values. Another strategy is to (d) claim to be an unbiased, objective observer who is not hampered by value judgments. These cloaking devices create blind spots preventing mental breakthroughs and perspective, paradigm shifts (Breton & Largent as cited in McGregor, 2006, Chapter 1; O’Driscoll, 2017).

Appreciating that navigating a paradigm shift is often fraught with discomfort as people flounder in the initial “trough of disillusionment,” O’Driscoll (2017) said they need to find the courage to endure the initial dip in performance and efficiency, even efficacy, and join with others trying to “stay the course” until a new status quo is established. He said that the longevity of professions depends on practitioners finding and drawing on courage and conviction as they let go of what they know and embrace new ways of thinking; that is, they shift paradigms.

What Should FCS Do in Light of 21st Century Change?

This brings us full circle to “What *should* FCS do in light of 21st-century change?” These changes warrant expanding FCS practice from integration to integral, interdisciplinary to transdisciplinary, systems to complex adaptive systems, and well-

being to the human condition (see McGregor, 2006, 2010a,b, 2012, 2015, 2018), all from a normative (*should*) perspective.

Integration to Integral

Integrated and integral have the same root, *integrare*, “make whole” (Harper, 2019) but they do it very differently. Integration (a noun) means to make whole or intact by bringing or arranging things together in a new way hoping to create synergies such that they are stronger together than when alone. In the process of consolidation and amalgamation, there is no concern for whether things are missing or if one thing is privileged over the other. By comparison, integral (an adjective) means one or two of those things *is* essential (i.e., fundamental and necessary) to the new whole. Without *it*, that particular new arrangement could not be possible. Its absence would be noteworthy and consequential. ‘Necessary for completeness’ is perhaps the defining difference between integrated and integral (McGregor, 2010a, 2011b, 2015).

Integrated strives for balance, certainty, order and sureness; *integral* respects uncertainty, emergence, dynamic evolution, and creative processes (McGregor, 2010a). The intent of the integral approach is to purposively draw on as many perspectives and worldviews as possible so that nothing important is missing. People have to find the patterns that connect these perspectives and resist falling back into their comfort zone. If too much is left out or missed, an incomplete picture of the problem emerges meaning those involved cannot deal with the complexity of the situation—the wickedness (McGregor, 2011b, 2015; Wilber, 2001).

Interdisciplinary to Transdisciplinary

Interdisciplinary means *between* academic disciplines. Interdisciplinary practice involves bringing different disciplines together so that new ideas, solutions, and/or methods can be created. These efforts require coordination and the use of bridges so people can cross back and forth to talk with another. The intent is to draw from the synergy (powerful energy) created through this work to create something new. However, the work involves *only* academics from different disciplines. The academics involved offer parallel analyses of parts

of a problem; they bring their individual disciplinary expertise to the table and share it, anticipating that a new synergy will emerge from the transfer of knowledge among disciplines. Although interdisciplinary work is very powerful, those involved do not intend to change the boundaries around or relations between and among the disciplines (McGregor, 2011a).

Transdisciplinary, on the other hand, means being at once between, among, and beyond disciplines, transcending to an entirely new space (Nicolescu, 2014). Addressing wicked problems requires both disciplinary and nondisciplinary knowledge and ways of seeing the world. People involved include academics, members of civil society, businesses and governments. The mental boundaries between academics and nonacademics are intentionally removed so perspectives, consciousness, ideas, and information can cross and mingle, ultimately meshing into something new (through intellectual fusion). The intent is to create new knowledge emergent from interactions in the rich space where disparate actors and factors interface. Recall the example of the interconnections among housing, the economy, ethnicity, and politics.

This space is full of potential with the creation of new knowledge relevant to the wicked problem being dependent on the temporary reconciliation of contradictory viewpoints, a ‘meeting of the minds.’ This is called *intellectual border work* and involves interchanges in the fecund area where so many different ways of knowing and seeing the world congregate and work together to address wicked problems (McGregor, 2011a; Nicolescu, 2014).

Systems to Complex Adaptive Systems

A *system* is a network of interconnected parts, whether it is an economic, healthcare or political system. Systems thinking is a holistic approach to analyzing problems that focuses on the way system parts interrelate and how systems work over time and within the context of larger systems. System-related concepts include input, throughput, output, feedback, equilibrium, boundaries, and subsystems. The notion of human ecosystems (based in systems thinking) assumes the system is alive. It appreciates that people can interact with others in reciprocal relationships along several

levels of environments, over a span of time, as they access, use and dispose resources to solve problems and achieve goals. These environments include humans, human built, social-cultural, and natural (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993; McGregor, 2010a, 2015).

Complexity thinking pushes this further by assuming that systems can self-organize (i.e., adapt, regroup, redirect, and reorganize their behavior) in the face of chaotic and changing situations. Such systems are called *complex adaptive systems* (CAS). Examples are families, ant hills, the Internet, and stock markets. No one entity is directing what happens. Any period of flux that occurs within the system lasts until a new balance is established, with the readaptive, self-organizing cycle ongoing. CAS do this without being guided by an outside force with everything emergent from inside the system (McGregor, 2010a, 2015, 2018).

Actually, the overall behavior of a CAS (a family or the stock market) is the result of a huge number of decisions made every moment by many, diverse individual agents acting on local information with far-spread (global) impact. Agents themselves change as they accumulate lived experiences. Each CAS has its own dynamics through which patterns emerge or arise out of the energy expended and tension developed and released during the self-organizing processes of adapting, changing, reordering, and reorganizing. FCS can use this approach as a way to think about how patterns emerge (e.g., new problems) from the complex interdependencies shaping the world. It can inform their understanding and actions as they work to identify and then influence compelling system patterns (McGregor, 2010a, 2015, 2018). A key assumption is that family units *can* regroup, adapt, and reorganize when faced with challenges. They do *not* need to rely solely on external expertise to tell them what to do. They are a power unto themselves.

Well-Being to the Human Condition

FCS professionals are further encouraged to augment the long-standing well-being approach with the idea of the human condition. The familiar notion of well-being is too limiting for addressing the complex, messy issues facing humanity

(Brown, 1993; McGregor, 2010b). In the broader literature, *well-being* is used in conjunction with individuals and families and the notion of *condition* is associated with all of humanity. Condition means existing circumstances; the current state of being, fitness, working order, and modes of existing. The *conditions of humanity* (i.e., the totality of actions taken by humans to date on earth) affect the existence of people. The *human condition* refers to the current circumstances of a collective of people not only individuals and families (McGregor, 2010b, 2015, 2018).

The familiar notion of well-being is too limiting for addressing the complex, messy issues facing humanity.

If FCS professionals decide to focus on the conditions of all of humanity, within which individual people and families are embedded and sustained or constrained, the profession will need a normative perspective to help practitioners decide what *should* be done because the latter involves normatively interpreting this condition using concepts such as justice, fairness, sustainability, power, and resiliency (Brown, 1993). Individual and family well-being is intricately connected with the state of humanity; the latter reflects the conditions of the collective of individuals and families around the globe. Using both well-being and the human condition only makes sense if the FCS profession wants to accountably work with the wicked problems shaping the 21st century. Actually, AAFCS (1993) has already acknowledged that the profession needs to take strategic leadership in enhancing the human condition. It has not yet become best practice (McGregor, 2015).

Conclusion

Given the pace and complexity of change (both generic and demographic) faced by American individuals and families, FCS should expand its practice so that it reflects the normative (*should*) perspective rather than just the descriptive (informative) stance. If the profession accepts that the problems and

issues outlined herein are a combination of tame and wicked, the answer to the question What *should* be done? would include the need to shift paradigms, as hard as that might be. This shift involves moving away from paradigms emergent from the dominant ideologies (e.g., neoliberalism, capitalism, and consumerism). Without this shift, the dominant ideologies go unchallenged, and many 21st century problems will go unchecked and worsen.

If this paradigm shift is successful, FCS practice would include integral thinking, transdisciplinarity, a respect for complex adaptive systems, and a focus on humanity within which individuals and families are embedded. These four approaches better reflect the contending ideologies of humanism, life-centeredness, care-based capitalism, and sustainability. Drawing on the four approaches better ensures that FCS can accountably, normatively, deal with both tame and wicked 21st century problems. Standing in their paradigmatic watchtower, they would be drawing on a powerful collection of perspectives to critically interpret life within 21st century ideological camps and change their practice accordingly.

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