

Figure 1. Responsive Systems Comparison (RSC).

A detailed description of RSC as applied to the case study can be found in Ref. 19. The following sections describe the epochs and era under consideration in the SRS case application.

A. Epoch Characterization

The epochs considered for SRS case application were defined using several epoch variables.²⁰ These variables describe the system-exogenous factors that will affect the perceived success of the system over time including both the context in which the system operates, and the stakeholder preferences. The Epoch Vector (EV) is defined in Table 1. The variables in this table were derived through an iterative process identifying key uncertainties in context and expectations, leading to a set of four categories: policy, resources, infrastructure, and end product use. These categories were then used to derive example epoch variables such as available communication infrastructure, available technology levels, national priorities for missions, availability of complementary airborne assets, and the presence of hostile jamming.. Given the large set of possible contexts, the decision was made to reduce the epoch space by grouping some of the epoch variables together to obtain the initial epoch vector. The enumeration levels of the epoch variables in the vector were also chosen in order to keep the computation time to a level reasonable given the constrained computational resources available for this project. However, the coarse sampling was done in a way that still captured the dynamic properties of the system over many diverse context changes. A full enumeration of the EV results in 648 epochs of which 245 were simulated for this study.

Table 1. Epoch Variables for Satellite Radar System Case Application.

Epoch Variable	Levels	Description
National Security Policy	Notional Target Sets	9 scenarios
Technology	User Priority (Image vs. Track)	SAR=GMTI, SAR<GMTI, SAR>GMTI
Infrastructure	Available Technology Levels	High, Low
Systems-of-Systems	Communications Infrastructure	2 Levels
Environment	Airborne ISR Assets	3 Levels
	Communications Jamming	none, 10 dB

Each notional target set consisted of two targets, specified by notional country (quantified by latitude) and target radar cross-section (RCS), described as a “scenario” in the table above. For an evaluated epoch, attributes for a design are computed against the worst case of the two targets. In order to reflect possible shifts in mission priorities, when calculating overall utility for a design, the aggregate of the individual mission utilities are weighted in three different ways, indicating the program manager's preference over the two mission areas. Technology level includes radar and bus technology changes, corresponding to high and low TRLs.¹⁵ “Communications Infrastructure” levels indicate the availability of ground stations and space-based relay options. Level one has no relay but can use

AFSCN stations, and level two has WGS and AFSCN stations. AISR levels indicate the availability or non-availability of airborne assets. "Environment" indicates global communications with jamming or without jamming.

B. Era Construction

Scenario planning was used to construct the eras for the SRS case application. Several epochs were chosen in sequence based on domain expert knowledge. This set of epochs comprises a small number of the calculated epochs, leading to a small set of eras. One era was chosen for demonstration in this case study and is shown in Table 2.²⁰

The era describes a simple scenario in which the system progresses through changes to the stakeholder preferences and target set requirements. This era has five epochs, four of which are unique. Epoch 63 is the first, then progresses to Epoch 171, which has a different target set. The stakeholder preferences remain the same, while the performance of the systems changes slightly. Next in Epoch 193 the same target set exists, but the stakeholder preferences have shifted, causing the utility of the designs to change dramatically. Epoch 202 retains the same stakeholder preferences, but switches the target set. The era concludes with the stakeholder preferences and target set returning to the conditions found in Epoch 171. The progression of these epochs with their corresponding tradespaces is show in Figure 2 below.

Table 2. Description of Epochs in Era 1

Epoch Number	Duration (yrs)	Description	Epoch Vector
63	2	Today	Scenario 60, SAR>GMTI, Low tech level, No backbone, No AISR, No jamming
171	4	Natural advancement in Comm capability	Scenario 60, SAR>GMTI, Low tech level, Backbone, No AISR, No jamming
193	1	New threat- Mobile missile launchers	Scenario 94, SAR<GMTI, Low tech level, Backbone, No AISR, No jamming
202	3	Increased conflict, UAVs deployed, Jamming	Scenario 94, SAR<GMTI, Low tech level, Backbone, AISR, Jamming
171	10	Conflict resolved, back to pre-conflict environment	Scenario 60, SAR>GMTI, Low tech level, Backbone, No AISR, No jamming

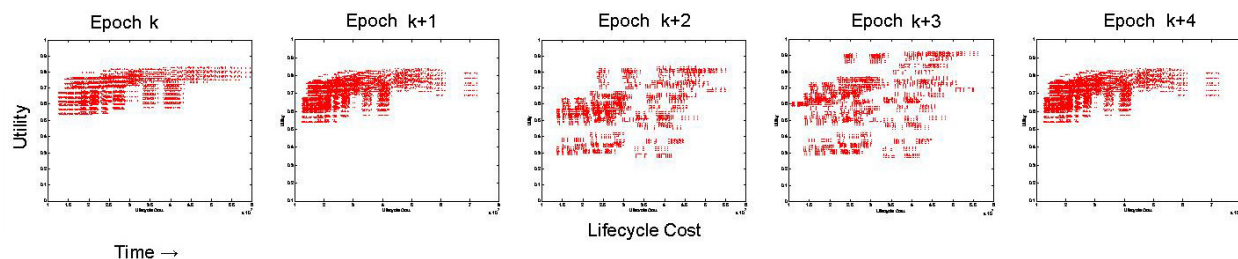


Figure 2. Tradespace storyboard of Era 1.

IV. Value Weighted Filtered Outdegree

Once the era has been identified, VWFO can be applied to the tradespace shifts in the era. The designs that have some useful transitions and relatively high utility are the designs that can be considered valuably flexible. The metric to identify these designs is called *Value Weighted Filtered Outdegree*²¹:

$$VWFO_i^k = \frac{1}{N-1} \sum_{j=1}^{N-1} \left[\text{sign}(u_j^{k+1} - u_i^{k+1}) * \text{Arc}_{i,j}^k \right] \quad (2)$$

where

N is the number of designs considered

k is the current epoch

$k+1$ is the next epoch in the era

i is the design under consideration

j is the destination design

u_i^{k+1} is the utility of design i in the $k+1$ epoch

u_j^{k+1} is the utility of design j in the $k+1$ epoch

$Arc_{i,j}^k$ is the transition matrix with local value indicating an arc from design i to design j in epoch k

VWFO is a metric that captures the utility difference between an originating design and its possible destination designs, is dependent on how many transitions are available, and is defined at the epoch transition boundary between two epochs in an era. Essentially the VWFO of a design i within epoch k reflects the number of net positive utility change transitions to other designs in the next epoch $k+1$. If one were to ignore the utility change part of the metric, it would become the normalized outdegree of a design within an epoch, representing the fraction of accessible designs in a tradespace (counting the number of arcs between two nodes more than once if more than one mechanism is possible). The intent of the metric is to serve as a screening heuristic, and it is left to the decision maker to synthesize the knowledge into selection of a design for further consideration within a larger acquisition strategy.

Table 3 Value Weighted Filtered Outdegree for selected designs

Design Number	Value Weighted Filtered Outdegree			
	63 to 171	171 to 193	193 to 202	202 to 171
1089	0.0044	0.0048	0.0000	0.0000
1101	0.0085	0.0097	0.0021	0.0032
3435	-0.0057	-0.0021	-0.0034	-0.0031
3447	-0.0035	-0.0017	-0.0031	-0.0027
3555	-0.0014	-0.0006	-0.0014	-0.0014
6027	0.0044	0.0054	0.0020	0.0024
6039	0.0027	0.0031	0.0023	0.0027
6147	0.0019	0.0022	0.0014	0.0017
8921	0.0147	0.0187	0.0064	0.0072
16661	0.0176	0.0188	0.0063	0.0076
16701	0.0089	0.0138	0.0043	0.0051

The VWFO for twelve example designs are shown in Table 3. The designs are specified in terms of their design variables in Table 4 below. The VWFO metric has several features that result in one of three types of values: zero, negative, or positive. There are several reasons for a design to have a zero VWFO: the design may have no transitions available, the transitions available result in zero net utility change, or the design may not be available in the $k+1$ epoch. Designs with negative VWFO (e.g. 3435, 3447, and 3555) have transitions available, however in net, these lead to lower utility designs across epoch changes. Designs with positive VWFO (e.g. 1089, 1101, 6027 and 6039) have transitions available to higher utility designs in the epoch changes. A positive VWFO is a strong indication that these designs are valuably flexible (i.e. these designs can change and these changes result in utility gains in the next epoch). As the era progresses across the table, the VWFO for the designs change because the assessed utility of each designs changes across the epochs, therefore the utility differences between designs may be different from epoch to epoch.

One way a decision maker can use this information is to look for designs that appear with high VWFO across several eras. It may be the case that designs with high VWFO share similar design features, allowing for the correlation of design features to valuable flexibility. Additionally, one can look at the mechanisms followed when a design transitions across epochs to gain utility. If particular mechanisms appear often, this would suggest further investment in the mechanism may be warranted. For instance, if designs with high positive VWFO often use the “change orbit” change mechanism in order to change to higher utility states, then carrying extra fuel on board the satellite may be a worthwhile investment.[§]

[§] The tentative nature of this assertion is due to the fact that VWFO only relates to the specific epochs investigated. If in reality the system is confronted with unanticipated and/or uninvestigated epochs, then the highlighted change mechanism may or may not enable valuable flexibility.

Table 4. Design variable values for SRS selected designs

Design Number	Orbit Altitude (km)	Walker ID ^a	Antenna Area (m ²)	Bandwidth (GHz)	Peak Power (kW)	Comm Arch. ^b	Total Utility
1089	800	4	40	0.5	1.5	0	0.6205
1101	800	4	40	0.5	10	0	0.7156
3435	1500	3	40	2.0	10	1	0.7535
3447	1500	3	40	2.0	20	1	0.7580
3555	1500	3	100	2.0	20	1	0.8152
6027	1200	3	40	2.0	10	1	0.7558
6039	1200	3	40	2.0	20	1	0.7642
6147	1200	3	100	2.0	20	1	0.8129
8921	800	4	40	1.0	20	0	0.7703
16661	800	4	40	0.5	20	0	0.7437
16701	800	4	40	1.0	20	0	0.7703

^a Walker ID is a lookup table of characteristics for a Walker constellation, with different possibilities for inclination, number of satellites and the phase (plane orientation).

^b Comm Architecture 0=direct downlink, 1=able to use relay backbone.

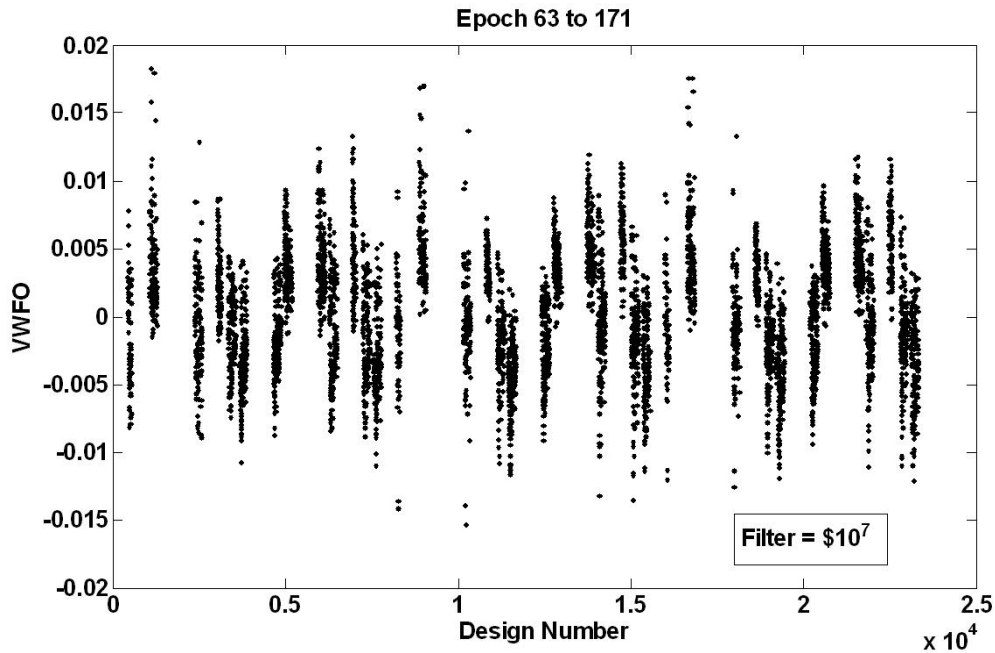


Figure 3. Value Weighted Filtered Outdegree for Epoch 63 to Epoch 171.

In order to quickly identify possibly valuably flexible designs, Figure 3 plots the VWFO for an entire tradespace by design number, considering the shift from one epoch (63) to another epoch (171). The striations in the space are caused by the discrete enumeration of the design space. This type of figure can be generated for each epoch transition in the era (e.g. 63 to 171, 171 to 193, 193 to 202, 202 to 171).

Several checks were conducted in order to make sure that the metric was not biased by any unfavorable relationships with other variables. The first check compared the utility of the origin design (design i) against the resulting VWFO for that design, shown in Figure 4. The designs are fairly evenly distributed against the area, and no correlation is seen. The R^2 value for the correlation of origin utility to VWFO is -0.0428 with a p value of 5×10^{-4} , indicating there is no linear correlation between these two. Due to the design space discrete enumeration, the R^2 between design number and VWFO (Figure 3) is slightly higher at 0.0143 , with a p value of 0.2531 . There is still no significant linear correlation, although the slight increase in p reflects the striations noticed in the figure.

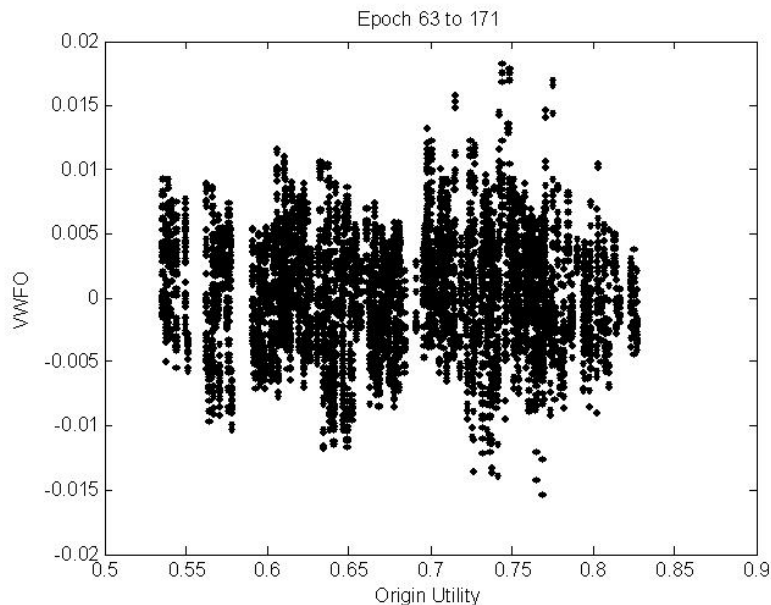


Figure 4. Total utility of origin design vs. VWFO to check for linear correlation.

Table 5. High VWFO design (16661) compared to its baseline equivalent.

Design Number	VWFO	Maneuver Level	Constellation Option	Cost difference [%]
1105	0.0058	Baseline fuel	None	--
16661	0.0176	2 x baseline fuel	On-orbit spares	18%

Design 16661 emerged from the analysis as a design with a high VWFO. Table 5 compares this design to a “baseline” design that is identical, except for its level of path enablers: “maneuver level” and “constellation option.” These two variables increase the cost of the design off of the baseline by 18%, but also dramatically increase the VWFO. Inspecting the design and asking whether the extra cost is “worth” incurring depends on whether a decision maker is willing to pay for the increased flexibility of the system. The analysis shows that the 18% premium for design 16661 over design 1105 does not result in extra utility if a design change is not needed, however, it does result in the ability to change to a higher utility design for the epoch changes in era 1. Generalizing this approach can lead to the explicit characterization and trading of design features that enhance valuable changeability (i.e. the “path enablers”).

V. Summary and Limitations of VWFO

Several designs had high VWFO, and one way for a designer to determine which to analyze further is to use Figure 4, which indicates designs with high VWFO and high origin design utility. By having positive VWFO and high starting utility, these designs have more transitions to other high utility designs.

There are several limitations to VWFO. The first is that the results obtained from any study of this nature will depend on the transition rules chosen. If the designers do not specify transition rules that are useful during context changes, no designs will be identified. In addition, it is also dependent on the order of epochs in the era, which determines which designs are valid for transition. Essentially, if a design is invalid in either epoch, it appears as invalid in both. Another problem with the metric occurs when the VWFO of a design is zero. The designer does not know, without further analysis, if that design has zero VWFO because it is an invalid design in one of the epochs, or because the net utility change is zero. The metric is also dependant on the tradespace sampling strategy used by the designer. If the design space has many designs in one area of the design space, which causes the FOD of those designs to increase, it is likely that the VWFO of the design will increase disproportionately as well.

Value Weighted Filtered Outdegree is able to identify valuably flexible SRS designs. The designs identified tend to have some level of design features that enhance changeability but not the highest levels considered, contrary to what might be expected if one were to pursue the heuristic of ‘more changeability is more valuable’. However the designer needs to be aware that results may be biased, that is, the lower cost designs may appear to have less expensive transitions if the transition cost is assumed to be a percentage of the initial system cost.

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