

Causal Layered Analysis

Causal Layered Analysis is a futures research method concerned with creating transformative spaces for the analysis and creation of alternative/ pluralistic/equitable futures by examining both the evident and hidden roots of a complex, wicked problem. BASED ON THE CLA THEORY DEVELOPED BY SOHAIL INAYATULLAH

THE PROBLEM
IN THE PRESENT

LITANY *evident/accepted/mainstream*

The Litany is the 'official,' accepted description of the problem. It is based upon externalized reality and is informed and articulated/framed by dominant perspective(s). These views are primarily informed by **quantitative** data and disseminated via mainstream media. This view is much like the tip of the iceberg; it states what is apparent but the larger part of the problem remains unseen. On post-its below, write several descriptions that synopsiz/characterize the problem in the present as if they were headlines in mainstram media. In the two columns to the right, do the same exercise, first for a future in which the problem has **not** been resolved and second for a future in which it **has** been resolved.

PRESENT

SYSTEMIC CAUSES *less evident/causes embedded in societal systems*

This level involves a more in-depth look at the problem, but is still a short-term, simplified analysis of its causes. Social, economic, cultural, political and historic factors and **qualitative** data is considered. Interpretation and communication is often undertaken by policy institutes, editorial news articles and non academic journals. At this level technical and academic analysis are offered and the role of the state and other actors and special interests are explored. On post-its below write several descriptions that synopsiz/characterize the problem in the present as it is caused/exacerbated/influenced by social, cultural, political, historical factors. In the two columns to the right, do the same exercise, first for a future in which the problem has **not** been resolved and second for a future in which it **has** been resolved.

WORLDVIEW/DISOURSE *often unexamined/unconscious*

This level of the problem involves the assumptions, discourses and worldviews that contribute to and legitimize it. The objective here is to look for the deeper social, linguistic, economic, cultural, religious structures that inform the discourses we use to **understand and frame the problem** (and that are therefore biased). We look for the worldviews/discourses that are collective in nature ('universal'/actor-invariant). The problem frame that arises out of these worldviews/discourses directs how the problem will be solved and yet they often go unnoticed/unquestioned. On post-its below write several descriptions that synopsiz/characterize the underlying worldviews/discourses that contribute to the problem and that influence the way we frame it. In the two columns to the right, do the same exercise, first for a future in which the problem has **not** been resolved and second for a future in which it **has** been resolved. It may be challenging to articulate beliefs and discourses--remember they are collective in nature and may be broader, and more encompassing than the specific problem you're dealing with.

MYTH/METAPHOR *the unconcious, collective dimension*

This level looks at the deep stories, collective archetypes and unconscious dimensions of the problem. It provides a gut/emotional level experience of the problem being examined. Here, language is less specific and more concerned with evoking visual images and connecting with the heart instead of the mind. On post-its below develop metaphors for the problem that are informed by the worldviews/discourses above. Rembmner that metaphors are archetypes, brief, evocative or perhaps even visual (you may use images in conjunction with verbal metaphors if you wish. Imagine a type of 'short hand' that most people within a collective (society/group/community) would understand immediately. In the two columns to the right, do the same exercise, first for a future in which the problem has **not** been resolved and second for a future in which it **has** been resolved.

THE PROBLEM

TEAM MEMBERS

1 FUTURE WITH THE
PROBLEM UNRESOLVED

2 FUTURE WITH THE
PROBLEM RESOLVED

2 FUTURES