

How late-modern nomads imagine tomorrow? A Causal Layered Analysis practice to explore the images of the future of young adults

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Pre-print version of an article published in *Futures*. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2017.11.004>

ABSTRACT

Images of the future represent fears, hopes and anticipations humans have for the future. Understanding the images of the future of young people provides a beneficial source of information not only about their probable future actions but also about their current motivations, decisions and choices. This article describes the procedure of exploring the images of the future of a group of young adults from different cultural backgrounds who are Bachelor and Master's degree students in Finland. Due to the intricate nature of the images of the future and also the existent complexity within the current societal context, this study proposes that investigation of the images of the future demands a refined, subtle selection of methods. During this study, a combination of several interview techniques is employed to collect the qualitative research material. Then Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) is utilized as a multi-layered theoretical framework for qualitative content analysis of the material. The results include four images of the future which reflect on different levels of the young adults' understandings and feelings. The first image, *Living With the Chill*, displays the most pessimistic view of the future and the fourth, *Imagine...!*, is the most optimistic one. Two other images, *Fear and Hope*, and *Life as a Chance for Dedication*, are moderate, not very optimistic, nor very pessimistic. The images of the future of the participants of this study suggest that young adults tend to define the future in terms of presence or absence of the current societal concerns and do not seem to exceed this framework. They also indicate that the studied young adults' radically negative or positive approach toward the future have reduced their perceived locus of control. We conclude that using CLA in the analysis of interview material produces a fruitful, rich, in-depth understanding of the images of the future.

Key words

Young adults; Futures studies; Image of the future; Causal Layered Analysis

1. Introduction

The way young people are experiencing their lives in modern societies has transformed remarkably. This transformation encompasses their lifestyles, patterns of dependency and relationships, education and entering the labor market. Today young people face types of risks and uncertainties which were unfamiliar to their parents and educators (Furlong & Cartmel 2007, 1). The complexity of social reality in the current era has influenced young people's endeavor for creating their identity and images of the future.

This article performs a qualitative account on the process of exploration the collective visions and expectations of a group of young adults. During the study, this group of individuals was motivated to envisage the future in a systematic way and to recollect the images they developed for their personal lives as well as their surrounding environment. The significance of this study pertains to the assumption that young adults' anticipations for the future provide insight into their less tangible expressions of hopes and imaginations, their perceptions of society and their place in the world (Cook 2016). We argue that considering the complex nature of the images of the future and the ambiguity within the late-modern environment, digging the images of the future of the contemporary individuals and collectives demands a deliberate choice and combination of methods. The novelty of this study is that Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) method was used to dig deep into the images of the young adults.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. *Images of the future of young adults*

Images of the future are human beings' instruments for coping with the uncertainties of the future (Polak 1973, 5). People develop images of the future based on their knowledge, values, beliefs and anticipations. The created images of the future represent their holder's hopes and fears and influence their decisions and behaviors consciously and unconsciously (Rubin 2013; Bell 2003, 82). Rubin (2013) argues that when future becomes reality, elements of the previously held future images can be recognized in it. While acknowledging the influence of future images on shaping the future, Bell (2003, 82) remarks that the images of the future are not the only determinants of future events since human actions have several unintended consequences and there are many drivers for change which are out of the control of individuals.

In his seminal work, Polak (1973, 16-17) argued that each image of the future has two main dimensions of *essence* and *influence*. *Essence* indicates the unchangeable course of events while *influence* refers to the power of humans to rule over their own destiny. Polak discussed that images of the future have either optimistic or pessimistic attitudes toward the concepts of *essence* and *influence*. Considering these two dimensions and their possible attitudes, Polak introduced four categories for the images of the future (Table 1).

Table 1 Polak's categorization for the images of the future

		Influence	
		Optimism	Pessimism
Essence	Optimism	<i>Essence optimistic and influence optimistic images of the future:</i> world is a naturally good place. Human beings can improve it to a better place.	<i>Essence optimistic and influence pessimistic images of the future:</i> world is a naturally good place and humans have no control over the course of events.
	Pessimism	<i>Essence pessimistic and influence optimistic images of the future:</i> world tends to decline toward evil, human beings are able to influence and combat this trend.	<i>Essence pessimistic and influence pessimistic images of the future:</i> chaos is unavoidable and humans have no control or ability to affect it.

Even though Polak's classification contains valuable information about the quality of the images of the future, whether the individual images fit in one of these quadrants or not, can be questioned. Images of the future are not necessarily coherent and might contain inconsistent elements (Rubin 2000; 2013; Hicks 1996a; 1996b).

Young adults are closely associated with the new cultural trends. Therefore, changes in social structure affect their endeavor for constructing identity and making their preferable future images reality. This relation has been reported by several scholars who worked on the images of the future of young people. Brown (1984) and Holden (1989) in UK, Johnson (1987) in USA and Hutchinson (ref. Hicks 1996b) in Australia studied the images of the future of children and teenagers. All these studies reported images which were influenced by social and political concerns of their time such as war, violence, poverty and high technology. Hicks (1996a; b) also carried out several studies using surveys and future workshops in order to explore the images of the future of children, teenagers and young adults in UK. He found out the same pattern of influence. His conclusion was that young people had not gained enough skills to think about the future. In 1996, Kasurinen conducted a cross-cultural study including Finnish and Russian children aged 14 to 16 and students of teacher education aged 18 to 20. She found that young people were inclined to follow their parents' lifestyles. She also detected confusion and uncertainty in their views about the future which she attributed to the vastly and rapidly changing societies. The late Anita Rubin (1998; 2000; 2001; 2013) also conducted several researches exploring and analyzing the images of the future of young Finns. In her works, there is a strong emphasis on the influence of the current social reality on young people's perception of identity and future. Rubin (1998; 2000; 2013) argued that the current reality – which she associated to the age of late-modernity – is so complicated, shattered and

turbulent that makes it a demanding job for young people to cope with it and to construct their identity.

Reflecting on the results of previous research, the presupposition of this study is that the images of the future of the contemporary young adults are influenced by the characteristics of the current era which is recognized as the advanced phase of modernity by several scholars (Giddens 1991, 3; Beck 2000, 18; Bauman 2000, 1-15; Rubin 2013). The social reality and the images of the future reinforce each other through a feedback loop depicted in Figure 1.

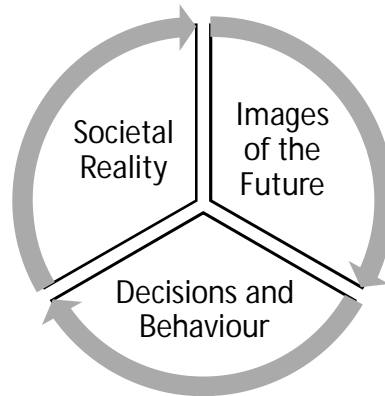


Figure 1 Feedback loop between societal reality, images of the future and decisions and behavior

An original aspect of this paper which distinguishes it from previous research on the images of the future is its specific attention to the data gathering methods and also its use of Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) as the framework for analyzing the images of the future. Considering the nature of the image of the future as the product of individuals' values, expectations and experiences which is generated both consciously and unconsciously, utilizing a critical layered framework like CLA allows it to create more elaborate, in-depth future images which reflect on the different levels of the participants' understandings. The cultural emphasis is also present in the choice of the research subjects, who are a multi-cultural group of academic young adults, even though the resulted images of the future present collective visions of the participants and do not reflect on their specific cultures.

2.2. Living in the age of late modernity

In contrast with the postmodernists' viewpoint that we have passed modernity and entered a new era, there are a group of scholars who declare that we are still in the advanced phase of modernity. The advocates of the second line of thought argue that despite the radical nature of the current social changes, they are not signifying passage into a whole new epoch (Rubin 2000, 56; Furlong & Cartmel 2007, 2). They contend that differentiation, plurality of lives, a sense of uncertainty and several other traits which are attributed to the postmodern time, are

actually inherent characteristics of modernity (Furlong & Cartmel 2007, 1-2). Giddens (1991, 3) ascribes the title of 'late modernity' to the current age. Beck (2000, 18) also maintains that the time of modernity has not come to its end. He argues that while the beginning phase of modernity was characterized by collective lifestyle, full employment, welfare and reckless exploitation of nature, the second modernity represents individualization, gender revolution, environmental crises and decline of paid employment. Bauman (2000, 1-15) calls the current era the 'liquid modernity' and contends that in the contemporary world with deregulation, individualization and weakness of human bonds as its main characteristics, mobility is more valuable than what is fixed and being a 'nomad' is best suited to this era.

An incontestable aspect of human's life in late modern time is the risk which overshadows everyday lives and choices. Rubin (2000) argues that even though each generation goes through crucial changes compared to the previous generations, the pace and dimension of changes in the current time are incomparable to any other historical epoch. She finds the explanation of this situation in the imminence of the limits to growth of material consumption. Societies are moving from industrial rationality based on mass production and consumption toward a new social rationality based on service and information. This transformation will remove the current limitations and create new opportunities and also challenges in economic, cultural and social realms (Rubin 1998, 40-41). While Furlong and Cartmel (2007, 52) do not reject the uncertainty inherent to the late-modern time, they argue that on an objective level, risks are not distributed equally throughout the societies and are more inclined toward disadvantaged groups.

In the late modern time, work-life is also different from before. The job-for-life concept has disappeared. Labor market has become more flexible which means that on the one hand, employers are facing less limitations to expel employees and on the other hand, due to the constant changes in the labor market's need, the employees have to upgrade their knowledge and skills continuously to maintain their employability. Beck calls the new state of working 'working *à la bresilienne*' which implies people's dependence on precarious careers and 'nomadic multi-activity' (Beck 2000, 2-3).

Beck (2000, 131) discusses that the individualization in the time of high modernity increases individual's obligations to choose between several lifestyles and identities. In traditional societies, people did not need to analyze or think so much about their individual actions. Traditions directly influenced people's choices and people followed the precedents. In contrast, in post-traditional societies (modern societies) people can create their paths by making choices more freely to the extent that the law and public opinion allow. This is an integral

aspect of modern societies which makes them more reflexive. Giddens contends that this reflexivity can be observed in all aspects of modern societies, from governments to the most intimate aspects of human lives. He suggests: ‘We have no choice but to choose how to be and how to act’ (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994, 56-109). Campbell (1988, 4) explains the transition from traditional to modern societies through the fading role of myths and rituals. He believes that the society is changing so fast that we will not have a myth for a long time: ‘Things are changing too fast to become mythologized.’ He analogizes myths to guide signs, and writes that in the absence of myths people must work it out by themselves to find their ways (Campbell 1988, 31).

Due to the close association between young people’s lives and visions with the current social reality and circumstances, it was presupposed that the images of the future of the participants of this study would manifest the quality of late modern time: multiple opportunities and augmented uncertainty and risk in all aspects of life. Nomadity would also be manifested due to the late-modern career and identity, but here also geographically, because most of the participants of the study were immigrants or from immigrant backgrounds.

3. Research Material and Methods

The objective of this study was to investigate and depict the images of the future shared among a group of young adults from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, research methods were selected in a way to result in more meaningful images of the future. For collecting research material, a combination of interview methods was selected to optimize the access to profound feelings and understandings of the interviewees. Then for analyzing the research material and distilling the elements of the images of the future, Deductive Qualitative Content Analysis and Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) were implemented.

3.1. *Collecting research material*

The method for collecting data contained a variant of in-depth interviewing (Johnson 2001), enriched by certain features of long interview (McCracken 1988) and a limited model of active imagination process (Romero, Hauser & Archer 1985).

Ten young adults participated in this study. The number of participants was limited due to the practical considerations since the interview method used for this study was time-consuming (some of the interviews took more than two hours) and the in-depth analysis of the detailed material using CLA also required significant work and precision. Therefore, the quality of work was prioritized over the quantity and the participants were added to the study only to the point

when data saturation was achieved and the collected material started to become replicated. No more interview was conducted afterwards.

Several variables were considered in the selection of the interviewees. They were from different nationalities. Except for one person who was a native, single-national Finn, the rest were immigrants or from immigrant backgrounds: one dual-racial African-Finn, one naturalized Finn with Iranian origin, one Korean, one Spanish, two Indians, one Iranian, one Canadian and one Ethiopian. The last seven people had moved to Finland in order to continue their higher education. The interviewees were also from different disciplinary backgrounds (social sciences, natural sciences, arts and computer sciences). Nine of the interviewees were between 21 to 25 years old and were Bachelor's and Master's degree students. One participant was an 18-year-old woman who was at the final year of high school, planning for university's entrance exam. The similarity of the life concerns of this person and the proximity of her experiences to the other interviewees qualified her to be a subject of the study. The number of male and female respondents was equal in order to achieve results with balanced viewpoints. All the interviewees were also students without a stable career.

While the above-mentioned variables were defined for selection of the participants to increase the diversity of the images of the future, none of the created images of the future represents a specific nation, gender or discipline. Rather, they illustrate the alternative collective future visions of the interviewees.

Ten interviews were conducted, out of which nine were done in person and one via Skype (video chat). A certain advantage of face to face interviewing is that it enables the interviewer to observe the body expressions of the interviewees which is appreciated when the research benefits from non-verbal information. It also makes it easier for the interviewer to create a friendly environment.

The interview questions were formulated according to the characteristics of grand tour question as is described by McCracken (1988, 34-35). They were designed in a nondirective manner, the perspectives of the answers were not specified in the questions and they did not include the terms of the answers they might solicit. The objective of this type of question is to motivate the interviewees to tell their own stories using their own words. The time span of the questions was ten years in the future. This timescale was considered far enough for the interviewees to envision the possible establishment of their careers and family life and close enough for the images being relatively realistic. Since the interviews were conducted in the year 2014, the images of the future were explored for the year 2024.

The location of the interview is evaluated as a remarkable factor by several scholars. While Martin (2010) indicates the significance of interview location for providing the opportunity to gather 'the most relevant data', Herzog (2012) considers the location of the interview 'as an element of the broader socio-political context and as a site of crossing boundaries'. Herzog argues that the verbal or symbolic dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee happens within the meaning of the location. He suggests that the interviewer should investigate what takes place around the setting of the interview and consider it as a substantial finding about the social structuring of reality. For the current study, the interviewees were asked to determine the location of the interviews. It was assumed that being interviewed in their favorable places could help them to feel more comfortable during the interviews. Most of the participants chose to be interviewed at the campus. Their choice of location was appreciated by the researchers since all the interviewees were students and it was supposed that being in the academic environment could help them to relate with their future plans. Few participants, who expressed indifference toward the location of the interview, welcomed researchers' suggestion to be interviewed in some of the University buildings.

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer attempted to create a friendly atmosphere as Johnson (2001, 111) suggests that developing an intimate environment can increase the effectiveness of an in-depth interview. To create the intimacy, the interviewer introduced herself and explained the purpose of the research. Then the interviewee was asked if she/he had any questions regarding the interview and was given a standard consent form to sign. At the next step, the participant was asked to introduce her/himself and to give an introduction of her/ his family background. Then the main questions were asked to apprehend the general attitude of the interviewees toward the future, their visions and plans.

A limited model of active imagination, developed by Jung, was implemented as part of the interview in order to get deeper responses. Romero et al. (1985) describe active imagination as a 'process by way of which fantasies are produced and their elements treated as psychic reality'. They assert that active imagination can be used to approach the unconscious especially the collective one and the archetypes. There are two main rules defined for conducting a process of active imagination: the imaginal episode must be treated by the ego as a real situation and the images must be given the freedom to develop themselves (Romero et al. 1985). In order to activate the imagination of the participants, the interviews were conducted in quiet places, the interviewees were requested to close their eyes and to take several deep breathes. After this, they were asked to imagine they went to sleep and woke up ten years later. Then, they were asked to explain about their living situation and surrounding environment, means of

transportation, daily news and global situation. The reactions of the interviewees to this stage of the interview were different. Some of them followed the interviewer's lead comfortably but in some cases, there was resistance and they were asked for several times to close their eyes.

The interviews were tape-recorded. The noticeable non-recordable details like meaningful pauses and important facial expressions were also written down to be used as complementary information during the interpretation of the collected material. After completing the interviews, material was transcribed. Then, the process of qualitative content analysis started in order to extract the constituent elements of the images of the future.

3.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

Elo and Kyngäs (2007) describe content analysis as a method which can be used for analysis of both qualitative and quantitative materials. The approach of this study to the content analysis, is deductive. Deductive Content Analysis is based on the earlier theory and model and is recommended when the analysis and categorization will be implemented utilizing previous knowledge. Using this method, the initial codes for analysis of research materials are derived from the existing theories. Deductive Content Analysis is comparable to 'Directed Content Analysis' as Hsieh and Shannon (2005) propose.

For this study, the initial codes of analysis were defined based on the framework of Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) and its four layers of litany, social causes, worldview and myth/metaphor. Also, knowledge of previous structure of images of the future and the theory of late modernity was used in the deductive approach.

3.3. Causal Layered Analysis

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), developed by Sohail Inayatullah, belongs to the realm of critical futures studies. CLA provides the tool to look beneath the surface of social reality to realize the full potential of futures work (Slaughter 1996). The main task of CLA is not to predict the future but to unfold past and present in order to create alternative futures. Through creating distance from the currently defined categories and social practices, it illustrates how non-universal they are. CLA draws several notions from Indian philosophical thought, Jungian psychology, poststructuralism and specifically the works of Foucault. Following its poststructuralist ancestors, CLA's concern is not only other events or trends that could have been presented, but also the reasons why the currently presented issue has been introduced as an event or trend in the first place (Inayatullah 1998). However, according to Inayatullah (2009), CLA is different from poststructuralism in a sense that it can be used to find alternative

futures and to create the desired future while poststructuralism seeks only to problematize the present and past.

The central assumption of CLA is that there are several layers of reality and ways of knowing under the prevalent perception of an issue (Riedy 2008). CLA views the world through four vertical levels of litany, system/social causes, discourse/worldview and myth/metaphor. By taking vertical view of reality, CLA has separated its path from postmodernist relativism. While both CLA and postmodernists' viewpoints believe in plural perspectives, postmodernists consider all these perspectives equally valuable, but CLA regards the deeper levels more relevant (Riedy 2008).

The first level of CLA is called litany. This level includes the conventional perception of reality. It is visible, and seems obvious (Slaughter 2008). At this level, the focus is often on the aspects of the issues which stimulate the feeling of helplessness and apathy (Riedy 2008). Litany is usually presented by the mass media and is often used for political purposes (Inayatullah 1998).

The second level of CLA is concerned with the system of social causes. It investigates social, political, historical, economic, technological and environmental interpretation of the factors represented in litany. At this level, the roles of various actors and processes which lead to an issue are explored. Even though at this level the assumptions may be questioned, the framing paradigm still remains unquestioned (Riedy 2008).

At the third level, the worldviews/discourses which constitute the issue are investigated. According to Slaughter (2008), this level includes 'values, assumptions and meanings that legitimate and sustain social relationships, expressions of power and preferred modes of knowing and being'.

Myths and metaphors constitute the deepest level of CLA pyramid: 'deep stories and collective archetypes that can be deeply felt but are not necessarily available to conscious understanding or control' (Slaughter 2008). Campbell (1988, 40, 51) also compares myths to Jungian archetype and call them 'public dreams'. Jungian archetypes indicate the existence of definite forms in the psyche which do not owe their presence to personal experiences (Jung 1971). Perception of the archetypes as the products of humans' biology – which is essentially the same in all human beings- is adopted as the foundation to justify the similarity of myths around the world (Campbell 1988, 51; Jung 1971). Campbell (1988, 31, 71) refers to myths as invisible planes supporting the visible ones and describes their functions to be supporting and validating certain social order and teaching humans how to live under certain circumstances.

In order to reach the two deepest levels of CLA (worldview/discourse and myth/metaphor) a particular level of consciousness is required (Riedy 2008) which in the case of this study was sought especially through Active Imagination. Although CLA places a higher value on the deeper layers compared to the upper layers, it is necessary to move up and down the layers in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue (Wildman & Inayatullah 1996).

Inayatullah (2004, 544) uses the metaphor of iceberg to illustrate CLA. He analogizes litany to the tip of an iceberg -visible above the waterline- and myth/ metaphor to the massive bottom part -floating in the deep dark water (Figure 2).

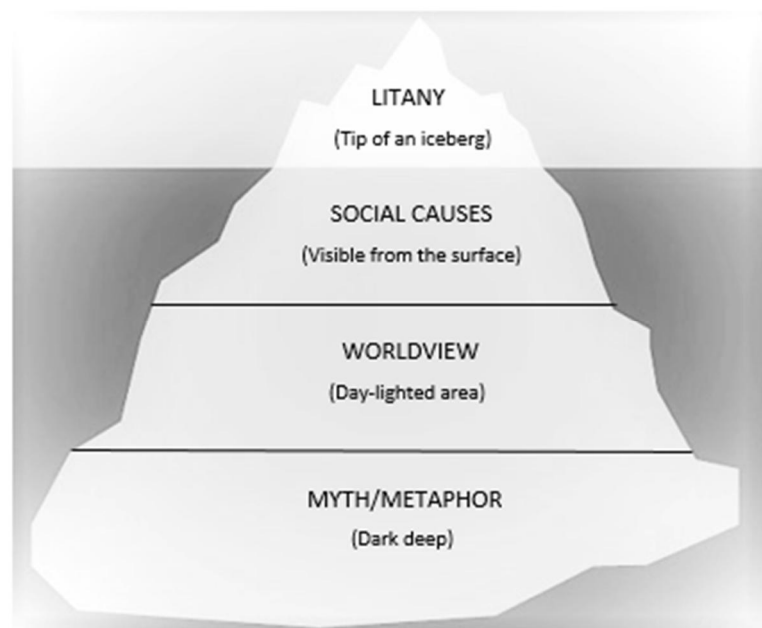


Figure 2 Iceberg as a metaphor for CLA

It is assumed that applying the framework of CLA for exploring the images of the future was a proper methodological choice due to its consistency with the quality of the images of the future as the phenomena which reflect on different levels of their holder's understandings.

3.4. Analysis of the research material

As mentioned in section 3.2, Deductive Qualitative Content Analysis was employed to analyze the collected research material of this study. The framework of analysis was determined through Causal Layered Analysis (CLA). The procedure began with defining the categories and subcategories for the initial codes of analysis. Four layers of CLA (litany, social causes, worldview and myth/metaphor) constituted the categories. For defining the subcategories, previous practices with CLA (see e.g., Hurley 2008; De Simone 2004) and the constructing

factors and elements of the images of the future were inspected. Using the acquired data, a matrix was developed including the codes of analysis for the research material (Table 2).

Table 2 Codes for analysis of research material

Categories	Subcategories
Litany	Codes which have been used in futuristic movies and stories to associate the audience to the future, overdramatized remarks, unquestioned assumptions, disconnected images, groundless extrapolations, helplessness
Social causes	Short term history of the issue, those involved in the issue, sources of the litany, series of linked events and actions, a strong problem/solution orientation
Worldview	Those who would benefit from the issue, values, compliance with the dominant discourses, emotional obligations, strongly held opinions, attitude toward essence and influence (Polak's characterization of the images of the future, section 2.1)
Myth/ metaphor	The representative image, works of poetry or sci-fi movies that evoke the image, myths that define the issue, metaphors from the popular culture

Before starting the coding procedure, the transcribed research material was studied thoroughly for several times. Three general themes emerged out of this stage which could be related to the litany levels of the images of the future: dark and deteriorating future, a future where the current societal, global problems are solved, and a future between the two extremes. Then the material was coded based on the themes and important elements were extracted. The allocation of different elements within the material to different themes was done relying on the researchers' judgement.

3.5. *Creating the images of the future*

The elements extracted for litany were classified to three groups based on the three general themes described above. The elements for the social causes level were also classified to three categories and each category was added to the most compatible theme. During the categorization of the elements for the worldview level, it was realized that they could be divided into four categories, two of them compatible with the first theme and its associated litany and social causes. Therefore, the first theme and its litany and social causes were revised and divided into two separate groups and four categories of worldviews were assigned to the compatible themes. Finally, the relevant myths/metaphors were investigated and added to each thematic category. This procedure resulted in ingredients for four images of the future which are presented through Table 3. Figure 3 displays the process of categorization of data in order to create the images of the future.

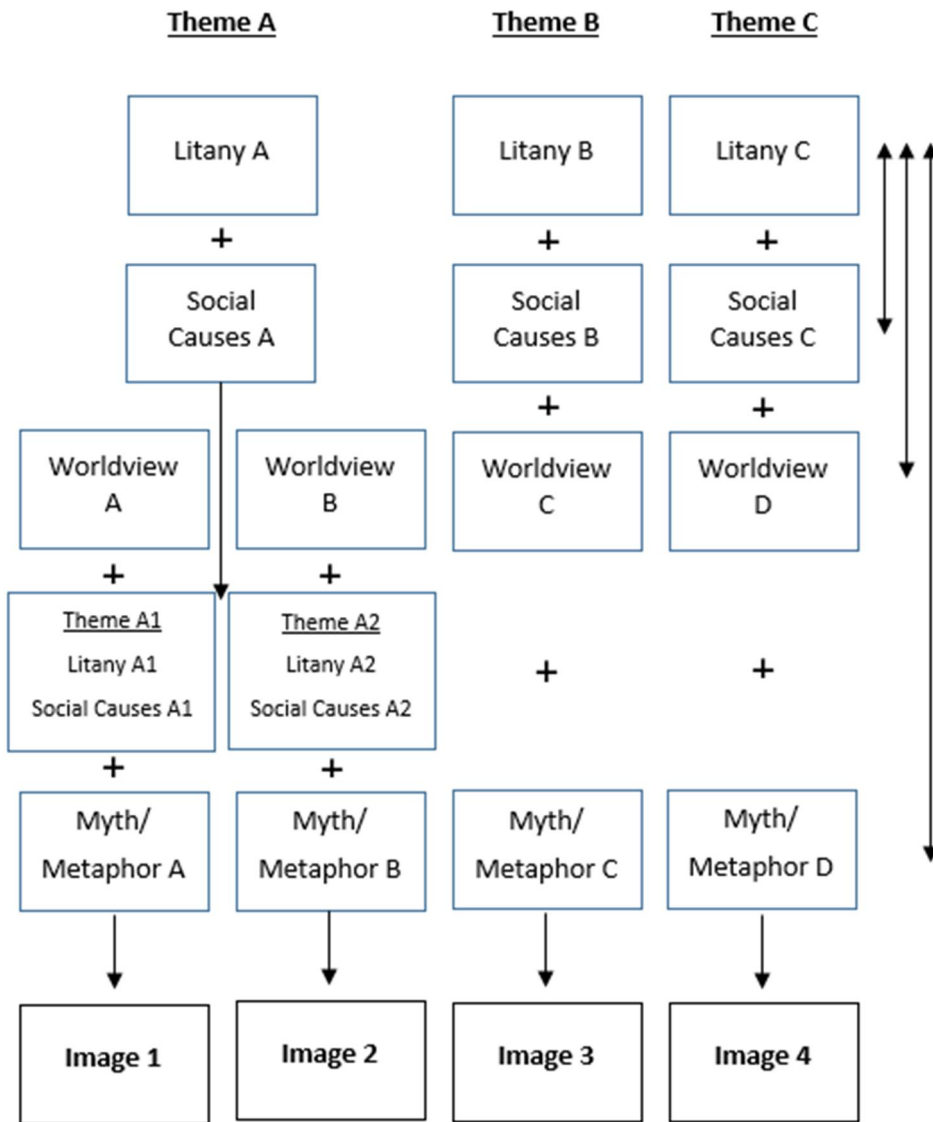


Figure 3 The procedure of implementing CLA to create the images of the future (Two-sided arrows at the right-hand side of the figure indicate moving up and down the layers during the analysis process.)

Finally, the narratives for the images of the future were created. The images of the future do not necessarily require having storylines but in the case of this study, narratives were developed to provide mental visions for the images and to facilitate the apprehension of their mythic layers.

Table 3 Classified elements of the images of the future

Layers of CLA	Content			
	Living with the Chill	Fear and Hope	Life as a Chance for Dedication	Imagine...!
Litany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -War, violence and crime is growing. Fear of terrorism is widespread. -Technology fuels the adversity of human beings. -The environment is degraded. - People are sad and lonely. -X likes her / his job and tries hard to keep it. -X's life situation is not as gloomy as most of other people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -War, violence and crime are widespread specifically in less developed countries. -Technology grows in developed countries. -Environment is degraded. -Cities are full of sky scratchers, massive and very well-equipped shopping centers. High-tech cars ride multi-lane highways. -X is busy with work, family and children. - She/he tries to do her/ his job very well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some countries are in war, some in peace. -Sustainable technology is growing in developed countries. -Environmental situation has been improving during the past years. -X is living and working in a less developed country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Environment is green and there is no pollution. -Peace is running throughout the world and there are no borders between countries. -Advanced sustainable science and technology are serving human beings and the planet. -X has a flexible job and pleasant life with family and children. -Life is full of opportunities. -Public health is in a good situation.
Social Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Crime is growing as a result of highly-competitive world and egoism. -The advanced technology and virtual communication make people lonelier. -The politicians and the capitalists are profiting from the existent situation. -High competition in the labor market makes X insecure about her / his job. - Job is the main aspect of X's life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Crime grows in the competitive world. -Advanced technology of developed countries causes more climate change and also fuels war in less developed countries. -High competition in the labor market makes people insecure about their jobs. -X tries to create balance between her/his profession and family life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Irresponsible use of technology produced social and environmental problems. -Humans are recovering the damages to nature using sustainable technology. -Less developed societies are more close-knit. -X is busy with her/ his responsibility toward the less fortunate people and has not started a family life yet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -People have comfortable lives as the result of global peace and sustainable economy. -People can move between countries easily. -Equality is enhancing because of human beings' awareness. -Due to the convenient life styles, X can make balance between family, job, travel and leisure.
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Essence pessimism: World is inclined toward chaos and evil. -Influence pessimism: Ordinary people cannot improve the situation. -Hegemonic discourse -Egoism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essence pessimism: Without intervention of people, a global disaster can happen. - Influence optimism: People can influence the course of events, -Even small changes matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Influence optimism: Human beings can improve the global and national situation. -Humans have universal responsibility toward other humans and living beings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Essence optimism: The world has the quality to be a good place. -Humans' dignity: All human beings are equal and deserve a good life. -Utopianism: A perfect world is achievable.
Myth/Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In biblical tradition, the life and the world are corrupt: the consequences of human's disobedience and Fall from the Heaven. The theme of fall is also available in Islamic stories of creation. - The dominant theme of the futuristic movies is dystopian, deteriorating future, e.g. Planet of the Apes (1968), Blade Runner (1982), The Hunger Games (2012) ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Light which appears out of the heart of the darkest moment is a universal metaphor for hope. The Finlandia Hymn by the classical music composer Jean Sibelius is a Northern example. -Cultures and nations embrace poems, sayings and stories in praise of solidarity and sense of purpose. There is a couplet from Iranian poet Saadi which says: 'If the ants unify, they can skin a dreadful lion.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religions, cultures and nations have role models for devotion and sacrifice, e.g. Jesus, Husayn (the Third Muslim Shi'a Imam). There are also universal figures like Mother Teresa and Gandhi and worldwide symbols including motherhood and the Earth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matriarchal religions see the world as divine, as the body of the Goddess. - Religions and cultures have utopias and stories of perfect societies: Greek Golden Age, Biblical Garden of Eden, Satya Yuga in Hinduism, Madine-Fazele in Islamic-Iranian culture. - In futures studies literature, Thomas More's Utopia is a classical book of an ideal society without a path from the present to the future. - Relevant metaphors: Carpe diem: seize the day, life is short [so, don't mourn and enjoy].

4. Four Images of the Future

Four images of the future were developed using the information from the table 3. The main character of all images was called X. Since the structure of English language did not allow gender neutrality in the narratives of the images of the future, the images were assigned random genders. However, feminine and masculine characters of the images did not associate with the gender of the interviewees who declared specific views. As a matter of fact, even if it was intended, it was not possible to identify genders of individual images, since each image includes the views of several of the participants, some of them male and some female. Thus, degenderizing the images both stems from the data and was in line with the approach of the article to illustrate the collective images of the future of the young adults of this study.

Image 1. *Living with the Chill:* Violence and crime are growing globally. Many countries are in war. The technological and scientific progress has given rise to the catastrophic wars. Climate change is intensifying and turning into a disaster. People use high-tech communication devices and there is not much non-virtual communication between them. Labor market is filled with competition and it takes lots of efforts to acquire and secure a job.

In such a situation, X is living in the suburb of a big city. The suburb is more tranquil and less crowded compared to the urban areas and still has some [fading] signs of nature. X has a job which he likes, however he undergoes so much stress to retain it. X spends most of time at work. He wishes the world would be a better place to live. He thinks that he cannot do anything to improve the global situation and everything will progress according to the interests of those who are at the helm of power. X says: ‘Sometimes ago, I had ideas to be more active and to contribute [to the progress of my country and the world], but considering the current path of my life it might be idealistic...’ Deep down, he believes that the human being is doomed to live a life of pain. So, what a useless effort it is to make change, it is better to concentrate on his own life and try to survive.

Image 2. *Fear and Hope:* Climate change has left serious effects throughout the world. Degraded environment, air-pollution and water-pollution are some of the environmental issues people experience on a daily basis. In some parts of the world, war is continuing and being fueled by the fast progressing technology.

In the city where X lives, elevated highways are raised above each other. Streets are broad and full of high-tech cars. Colorful neon billboards and enormous shopping centers attract the attention of the passersby. X is working hard and she likes her job. She believes that what she is doing and her lifestyle matter to the society and can make change. Due to the fast-growing

technology and also the competitive job market, she needs to upgrade her skills constantly to retain her professional position. She tries to make a balance between her work and family. She is concerned about the future of her children and their training. She would like to provide them with more opportunities and choices in life. Although she thinks that there is a powerful system which is benefiting from the current chaotic situation, she believes that if those who want change unify and act, they can make it happen. She says: ‘...we’ve seen through the history the actors who produce changes and create influential movements... I can, everyone can.’ To X, hope always defeats darkness and fear.

Image 3. *Life as a Chance for Dedication:* In this image, technology is progressing fast in developed countries. The negative impacts of climate change are being harnessed. People are living their regular daily lives. They have their own happiness and sadness, however, for reasons different from years ago. In less fortunate parts of the world, people face more struggles. War is continuing in several of these regions and the positive effects of technology are less evident.

It’s been a few years since X has moved to a remote area in a developing country. He moved to this place because of his passion for helping people and specifically children who need him and his expertise the most. He has always appreciated great people who have lived a devotional life. He recalls: ‘When I was younger, I believed I would save all helpless children. As I grew up, I realized I couldn’t save everyone, at least not alone, but I could save some of them.’ In the small town where he is living and working, there is no sign of mind-blowing technologic progress. Nature is more intact and the community is close-knit. While X likes to have his own family and children one day, he says: ‘...if I stay single and help poor children, I won’t regret.’

He may not be living a very happy life but he is satisfied with what he is doing. He believes that every single person should feel responsible toward humanity, this is what he has been taught since he was a child.

Image 4. *Imagine...!* Climate change is under control and nature is vivid. The national and international conflicts are settled and people can move easily between the borders. Equality is established to a large extent and most people are enjoying a life with good quality. The progressing sustainable science and technology are contributing to the health and welfare of humans and other living beings. Life is improving toward perfection and there is a harmony between humanity and nature.

X has a pleasant family life with children. She and her family are healthy (physically and mentally). She has an interesting job which she enjoys. Her job is flexible and gives her control

over her timings. She travels to different countries with her family and children to experience living and working in different environments and cultures. She does not take life too seriously. It is short so people should enjoy it and live the present moment. She believes: ‘We should probably think about what we need but not too hard, not every day think about what I have to do.’ As a whole, this image of the future is a reflection of utopian thinking.

5. Discussion

Interpretation of the research material and images of the future provide interesting results that deserve further discussion. The impacts of late-modern quality are explored on the images of the future reflecting on the four levels of Causal Layered Analysis.

On the litany and social causes levels of the images of the future, it is observable how environmental disaster, drastic climate change, war and violence are iterated in the first, second and third images of the future. This prevalence is in line with the presupposition of this study that young people’s images of the future reflect the societal and political concerns of their time. High technology is also predicted in all the images of the future. While, the fourth image of the future, *Imagine...*, does not extrapolate the current concerns and threats but it still defines the future within the same framework, in terms of the absence of those issues (no war, no boundary and no climate change). By adding this observation to the presupposition of the research, following assumption is extracted: Images of the future of young adults of this study tend to picture the future in terms of presence or absence of current sociopolitical concerns and do not seem to exceed this framework.

Regarding the personal life of the main character of the images of the future, the bold aspect of all images is career life. In all the images, X has a job and feels passionate about it. However, in the first and second images, X struggles to keep the job which reflects on the insecure position of the workforce in the fast-changing and highly competitive job market of the late modern-time. Individuals need to upgrade their knowledge and skills all the time in order to retain their work position. In the third image, X is more concerned with the purposefulness of his professional life and securing a job is not the main issue. The person living in the fourth image expects a job to be flexible and enjoyable. The anticipation of a desirable career in all the images was not surprising since all the interviewees were university students (except for one who was planning for the higher education) and their professional life was at the center of their life plans at the time of the interviews.

Starting a family and having children is pictured in second and fourth images of the future. The third image displays a combination of desire and indecision towards having a family. The

first image reflects the views of those participants who did not see family or long-term relationships in their ten-year future.

A noticeable aspect of the first, second and third images of the future was that, their personal perspectives presented higher degree of optimism compared to their societal and global aspects. The dissonance between personal and global facets of the images of the future were reported by several scholars who worked on the images of the future of young people (Toffler 1974; Hicks 1996a; 1996b; Rubin 2000; 2013). Hicks (1996b) associates this conflict and specifically the negative attitude toward the global future to the absence of future dimension and global perspective from the educational system. During this study, it was also observed that the participants' optimism or pessimism about the future had impact on their perceived locus of control and their understanding of humans' influence.

In constructing the worldview levels of the images, Polak's categorization of the images of the future (Table 1) was used widely. Polak considers essence and influence as two important elements of the images of the future which can be adopted with optimism or pessimism. Table 4 presents the attitudes of the described future images based on Polak's framework, which was used in the worldview CLA level. Due to the discussed contradictions between personal and global aspects of the images of the future, these two aspects are presented separately in this table.

Table 4 Approach of the images of the future towards the essence of the future and humans' ability to influence

		Living with the chill	Fear and hope	Life as a chance for dedication	Imagine
Personal Futures	Essence	Combination of optimism and pessimism	Combination of optimism and pessimism, more inclined toward optimism	Combination of optimism and pessimism, more inclined toward optimism	Optimistic
	Influence	Combination of optimism and pessimism	Optimistic	Optimistic	Apathetic
Global Futures	Essence	Pessimistic	Combination of optimism and pessimism, more inclined toward pessimism	Combination of optimism and pessimism, more inclined toward pessimism	Optimistic
	Influence	Pessimistic	Optimistic	Optimistic	Apathetic

The first image of the future is the most pessimistic and also the most conflicting of the four images. In its global aspect, this image presents dark essence of the future world, it is inclined toward evil and corruption. It also does not consider any chance for human beings to

influence the situation and make any change. However, in personal level this image is slightly more optimistic. Regarding human's influence on their own lives, it is also more optimistic than its global stand. As the narrative of this image develops, we see that while X may not live in a desirable setting, he has a good career in a job market characterized by frenzied competition and he is also living in an environment which is not as gloomy and insecure as the rest of the world. He feels some degree of control over his personal life, at least to survive.

The remarkable conflict in this image of the future presumably signifies the confusion of young adults who shared this image. In the rapidly changing world and in the time of liquid modernity, some young adults are floating between what they desire and their fears of the hazardous, more-than-ever-uncertain future. The pessimistic vision within this image of the future can be associated to the feeling of disability in some young adults for taking advantage of the existent opportunities and possibilities. Although the late-modern era has a dual nature characterized by opportunities and risks, as Furlong and Cartmel (2007) discuss, young people from different social classes do not experience these opportunities and insecurities equally. While young people from more advantaged social positions are equipped with more instruments to exploit the opportunities of late-modern time, young people from disadvantaged social backgrounds are more vulnerable to the risks.

The global aspect of the second image of the future illustrates a world which is not mere embodiment of evil, it is also optimistic about the ability of human beings to influence their environment. In personal level, this image also believes in self-influence and is more optimistic than pessimistic: X has a favorable job, a family with children and is hopeful for a better tomorrow.

The third image of the future takes the same stand as the second image of the future considering both personal and global sides. In this image, X's life is in close interaction with the surrounding environment. He has a satisfying life and is living in harmony with his values, even though he may not be happy because of his compassion for people who are in pain.

The last image of the future is the most optimistic one. This image is also the only one which pictures zero conflict between personal and global futures. It holds that the world is inclined toward the better. The global problems are almost solved and X is living a desirable life with her family enjoying a flexible pleasant job. While this image does not deny the influence of human beings, it takes it for granted. It is probably so optimistic about the essence of the life and the world which believes everything will be fine at the end regardless of humans' intervention. The hedonistic attitude present in this image can be the outcome of being

enchanted by the numerous opportunities upraised by late-modernity without regarding their possible negative effects (see Rubin 2013).

Considering the position of the created images of the future about humans' control over the future events, it can be observed that images which are not merely pessimistic or optimistic about the nature of the future (second and third images) believe more in the influence of human beings on their own lives and on their surrounding environment. However, being very negative or very positive (first and fourth images) results in apathy and passivity. The passive attitude of young people can be ascribed to their perceived inability for creating meaningful changes (Connell et al. 1999).

At a deeper level, these images have their roots in universal metaphors and archetypes which have supported humans' lives throughout the history and built civilizations. As Campbell (1988) argues, modern humans have lost their connection with those bits of information which used to be the guide signs along the way. Many myths around the world share similar elements and aspects even though they might have different manifestations within different cultures (Campbell 1988, 51; Jung 1971). They give collective instructions about how to understand the world beyond what is seen, how to deal with deep inner problems and how to make passages from one stage to the other stage of life. Campbell argues that human beings of modern time need to have myths and metaphors which belong to their own time, however, the fast-changing nature of the current era disrupts this procedure of mythologizing. Referring to the myths about the end of time e.g. Armageddon, Campbell (1988, 17) indicates that at the end of an era and the beginning of a new one, humans go through a period of turmoil and extreme pain. This metaphor may provide a clue for the critical situation of the contemporary human being.

6. Conclusions

The significance of the images of the future as tools for futures research makes it necessary to pay specific attention to the methods for investigating and illustrating them. The objective of this study was to portray the alternative images of the future, shared by a group of young adults with multicultural backgrounds. Causal Layered Analysis was employed as the layered framework for investigating the images of the future so more breadth and depth could be achieved. As a result, four images of the future were developed which presented the future anticipations of the participants of the study as a group. Every image includes the viewpoints of several of the interviewees, the images have a collective quality and none of them represent any specific gender or culture. Examining the illustrated images of the future reveals how

young adults are influenced by the universal concerns and threats when they envision the future.

Contemporary young adults are living in a time when foundations of the modern societies are shaking profoundly. They are receiving massive amounts of information and real-time news from numerous channels which make it difficult to distinguish authentic information from false, or biased one. They have to choose between different lifestyles. Making choice has turned to an inseparable aspect of their lives which provides them with opportunities while they need to encounter the consequences of their choices constantly. Investigation and interpretation of the images of the future of the young adults who were subjects of this study showed that their visions of the future were shaped under strong influence of late-modern time. In three of the images they extrapolated the current situation to the future and in one they envisioned the future in terms of the absence of the current threats. It seems that the young adults tend to define the future in terms of the presence or absence of the contemporary sociopolitical concerns and do not exceed this framework.

Threat of environmental disaster, war and violence were pictured in first, second and third images of the future, the fourth one illustrated a green future with no war and boundary. Nomadity as a component of late-modern life was also reflected in the uncertain job situation of first and second images of the future, in the life styles of third and fourth images and also in the selection of the subjects of the study who were mostly immigrants or from immigrant backgrounds.

Moreover, conflict was detected between personal and global aspects of three images of the future which presumably signifies the confusion of young adults in the rapidly changing world characterized by uncertainty and doubt and their vulnerability to the negative effects of late-modernity.

Interpretation of the images of the future also unfolded that those young adults who showed absolute pessimism or optimism toward the future underestimated individuals' influence over the future, however, the images with moderate attitudes acknowledged human beings' capability to influence their own lives and their surrounding environment.

Although due to the limited number of interviewees, the findings of this research are not definitive and generalizable, they do contribute to the existent knowledge about the images of the future of young adults and their systematic investigation.

7. Limitations of this study, opportunities for further research

The number of participants of this study was limited due to practical considerations. Even though the material was saturated, for the further research, including more participants can make the results more definitive and the images of the future more diverse. Combining surveys with qualitative methods could also enhance the strength of the results.

During this study, Polak's framework of essence and influence was combined with Causal Layered Analysis to evaluate the effect of interviewees' underlying assumptions on their optimism and pessimism toward the future and on their perceived locus of control. However, in further research, using a more inductive approach to CLA without applying any other confining concept may result in more unexpected and surprising images of the future.

Involving visualization techniques in the procedure of exploring and portraying the images of the future can also lead to interesting results. It would also be interesting to dig deeper to the immigrant viewpoint and do interviews with their own mother tongue, for example in a focus group or futures workshop setting.

Acknowledgments

This article is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Anita Rubin who gave help in the beginning of the research process before passing away. Her deep devotion in performing studies on images of the future, ethical awareness and kind collegial support is gratefully acknowledged. We feel honored to continue and elaborate the path that she cleared for scholars interested in images of future of young people. The study was partly carried out in the FutWend project (number 297742). Academy of Finland is gratefully acknowledged for funding.

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