



ABSTRACT

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelor's thesis
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Master's thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Licentiate's thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctoral dissertation

Subject	Futures Studies	Date	20.05.2024
Author	Thilini Nathali Seneviratne	Number of pages	88
Title	Futures Images of Good life for Urban Youth in Sri Lanka		
Supervisor	Liisa Haapanen		
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The societal emphasis on pursuing a good life through materialistic values has resulted in complex challenges for humanity. Therefore, looking for alternative ways of living the good life which embrace the human and planetary well-being is a growing research topic in diverse disciplines. Contrary to the growing research interest, the youth futures and particularly the futures of youth in developing economies, has been given less attention in academia. This study actively inquiries into the larger question “ What are the alternative ways of living a good life that embrace both human and planetary wellbeing in ten years?”. To respond to this primary goal of the study, the research aimed to create images of future of good life that empower youth futures in developing economies, focusing on Sri Lanka, while implicitly explore how the application of envisioning contributes to shape the youth futures. In addition, the study takes a particular interest in exploring the preferred lifestyle choices of Urban Youth in their future good life.</p> <p>The inquiry positioned within social constructionist and critical futures paradigms. The theoretical framework for the study was derived from combining the perspectives of the Global North and Global South on the good life. The study adapts envisioning approach, combining the mindful meditations and mental time travel exercise followed by a semi structured interview. The method was designed to facilitate young people to envision their preferred futures. Further, Causal Layered Analysis is utilised as the analysis method to deepen the futures and to explore the framing issues, in creating alternative ways of living the good life.</p> <p>The research produced several key findings. The study created four images of the preferred futures. First, <i>'Back to Nature'</i>, which illustrated a life that youth is having a reciprocal relationship with nature. Second, <i>Shangri-la</i>, in this image , the good life is centered around the development of spirituality and equality. Third, <i>'Wanderlust'</i>, the good life built around personal growth, adventure, and openness to diversity. Finally, the <i>Minimalistic Urban Heaven</i> illustrated good life, that embraces minimalism, simplicity, balance and harmonious integration of technology into daily life. Furthermore, the envisioning process enabled participants to reach beyond the everyday cognition and create images of futures which are radical and novel.</p> <p>The main conclusion is divided in to three critical aspects. Upon reflecting on futures images, the study suggests, future of good life among urban youth in Sri Lanka, is intrinsically linked building resilience as the images illustrate how young people prefer to cope with the foreseen future challenges and creatively tackle prevailing issues in their own envisioned futures. From a theoretical stand point, the study draws the connection to the concept of good life by considering both Global North and Global South perspectives and further recommends need for integration of diverse disciplinary perspectives to understand future of good life holistically. From the methodological standpoint, the study provided space to explore future possibilities the urban youth aspire to have in future.</p>			
Key Words	Good life, young people, images of future, preferred futures, envisioning, Causal Layered Analysis.		



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Turku School of
Economics

FUTURES IMAGES OF GOOD LIFE FOR URBAN YOUTH IN SRI LANKA

Futures Studies

Master's thesis

Author:

Thilini Nathali Seneviratne

Supervisor:

Liisa Haapanen

30.05.2024

Turku

The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

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1 INTRODUCTION

*“Well, I think it's fine, building Jumbo planes
 Or taking a ride on a cosmic train
 Switch on summer from a slot machine
 Get what you want to if you want, 'cause you can get anything
 I know we've come a long way
 We're changing day to day
 But tell me, where do the children play?”*
 (Cat Stevens, 1970)

The lyrics to “Where Do the Children Play” by Cat Stevens resonate with my thoughts, reminding me of the significant economic and technological progress we have made at the expense of our environment. The lyrics delve into a deep exploration of collective consciousness and a subtle yet pervasive sense of guilt, as a society, ‘whether we left a safe place for our future generation to live?’ We need 1.7 earths to fulfil our human demands when we have only one earth (National Footprints and Bio Capacity Accounts, 2022). To address these pressing concerns, it is important to re-evaluate our current lifestyles fuelled by dominant capitalistic views.

Given the need for alternative ways of living, the study attempts to create future images of good life among urban youth. By adopting a critical and constructivist approach, it explores alternative ways of living that foster both human well-being and environmental sustainability. The focus of the study is on the youth futures in developing economies, with Sri Lanka being the specific context of the study.

The need to imagine alternative ways of living a good life is highly relevant in this anthropocentric era. The evidence suggests that despite an increasing trend towards pro-environment consumption choices, it still failed to reduce the overall environmental impacts. (Bhar 2023, 1). This suggests that the ongoing behavioural transformation is inadequate. Many empirical studies encourage individuals to embrace sustainable consumption but focus on policy-induced behavioural changes (Jackson 2005, 3-7). Therefore, it can be argued that focusing on policy-driven behaviour might not have led individuals and society to act consciously. This calls for more intrinsically motivated behaviour towards achieving a good life.

Further, the dominant narratives about the good life are grounded on growth. It forces individuals to perpetually engage in the cycle of earning, buying, accumulating, consuming and discarding (Kaza 2000, 27). Therefore, this vicious cycle does not only result ecological instability and inequality but also personal dissatisfaction (Kothari 2014, 363). Loy (1997, 275) asserts the continuity of the argument, with the acknowledgement that “the market is not just an economic

system but a new world religion — yet not a very good one’’. In his analogy, the dominant economic principles are illustrated as the theology of the religion, and the market is considered God. Market offers a form of salvation by promising growth, prosperity, and development that results from continuous production and consumption. However, Loy critiques salvation as ‘secular’ and ‘illusionary’ since it led to a vicious cycle of consumerist culture.

Given the dominance of market centric view, it is essential to envision alternative paradigms to define good life. Therefore, the study adopts a creative approach by encouraging young people to envision their preferred future of good life in ten years from now aiming to foster intricate motivation towards living a sustainable life. The youth between the age of 24-35 living in urban provinces are interviewed. The interview consists with a mindful meditation and a guided mental time travel to the year 2035. The futures images of good life constructed based on the data gathered and further the preferred lifestyle choices are explored.

In addition, the study implicitly aims to explore how does the envisioning enable the young people to connect with their hopes and dreams that have been paralysed due to socio-economic challenges. Jungk and Mullert (1987, 18) emphasised the importance of providing the space and opportunities for individuals to open their dreams or desires because they pointed out ‘‘peoples’ dreams are often deeply buried because they were trampled on in childhood’’. The youth in developing economies, are persistently pressured due to the societal expectations. The common question that everyone encounters at early age, ‘Whom do you want to be when you grow up’ leaves a little room for other ways of engaging in temporality (Thorne, 2004). Instead of encouraging their creativity, they were pushed to train their brains to think linearly. Since not all the dreams youth hold can fit into the socially accepted framework, their creativity, hopes, desires, and imageries start to shake when they face social realities.

Youth was particularly selected for the study since they can be the catalysts of change (Shah & Khan 2023, 1). The passion and drive of young people to make the world a better place and to be the catalysts for change can be identified in the powerful words of Greta Thunberg, a sixteen-year-old climate change activist from Sweden. In her speech at the United Nations in 2019, she criticised and challenged the current generation stating that, ‘‘You are failing us. But young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you.’’ (Rana et al. 2020, 341).

Future represents anticipations that are intricately intertwined with individual’s hopes and fears for the future. Because, Polak (1961, 5) argued the interplay between current actions, experiences and future aspirations collectively shape social change. Similarly, Bell & Mau (1971, 13) argues that our understanding about the past and the actions we take in present can be influence to our future. Therefore, based on the connections drawn by the scholars related to past, present and future, it shows that future of the youth is not an empty space.

1.1 Research Problem and Research Questions

Good life is a complex and subjective concept. It has been studied in different disciplines including indigenous studies, philosophy, psychology, sustainability, and more. Good life that embraces the sustainable living also been discussed adequately in the academic literature. Contrary to the growing research interest, the youth futures and particularly the futures of youth in developing economies, in relation to preferred futures and good life has been given less attention in academia.

Psychologists discuss subjective and objective theories about living a good life. Among many theories, PERMA model (Seligman 2012, 2018) explains the elements that help individuals to lead a flourishing life. Psychological Well-Being theory (Ryff & Singer 2008) proposes six elements to lead a better life. From Western philosophy, the eudaimonic and hedonic well-being philosophies share perspectives on living a good life (Ryan & Deci 2001, 148). The theories borrowed from Global North contribute to the study to understand the aspects that consist in good life. But these theories focus excessively on the individual character. Therefore, it invites a broader perspective that encompasses emotional and relational dimensions.

There are various world views and paradigms emerged from Global South to understand good life that focus on human relationships, spirituality, family well-being and community. The world views from Buen Vivir (Villalba, 2013, 1431), Ahimsa (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), Ecological Swaraj (Kothari et al. 2015, 368), Haura among Māori people (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), moderate living (Dayaratne, 2018,338) and sufficiency economy philosophy (Mongsawad, 2010). The Global North aspects rely on individual self, but Global South focus on communal well-being. Therefore, there is a greater demand to integrate both perspectives together to understand good life holistically. Thus, the study can be considered as an attempt to create a more holistic view about good life by combining various aspects together by taking and interdisciplinary approach.

Polak (1973, 17) emphasises the need for having a positive view for the future. In his writings he stated that when humans foresee their future from a pessimistic perspective, it leaves them with hopelessness. He emphasised the importance of hope and positivity for a society to flourish. The study delves deeper into the preferable or desired images. The transformation towards hope occurs only if individuals act upon their imagined futures. If the young people are going to be the change catalysts of the transformation we expect, they are expected to be equipped with hope and positivity. Therefore, new narratives about good life which consists of hope, positivity, confidence, and that prioritise human and planetary well-being are highly crucial for equip the youth.

There are studies about the envisioned futures of youth related to nature, people and communities. Jansen et al. (2022), studied Imagined futures of sustainable consumption and

society, Rana et al. (2020) investigated positive futures for nature and people envisioned by youth, Kuhmonen et al. (2016), explored how Finnish youth dream about futures of rural areas. Various practices that could contribute to envisioning sustainable consumption behaviours have also been studied adequately. For an example, Kaza (2000) discusses how to overcome the grip of consumerism by following Buddhism as a philosophy. Sheth et al. (2011) explains about the implication of mindfulness to make conscious consumption decisions. However, the future of good life of youth in developing context, has been given less attention. In Sri Lanka, there has not been any study conducted about envisioned futures of good life among youth. The question remains unanswered: What are the alternative ways of living the good life among youth in developing economies prioritising long-term human and ecological well-being.

Aims

Therefore, the aims of the study are twofold; First, envisioning alternative ways of living a good life that safeguard the well-being of both current and future humans and non-humans. Second, enable youth to connect their hopes by envisioning the desired good life that has been paralysed by the economic and political crisis. Aligning with the research aims, the following research questions are developed for the study.

Research Questions

1. What are the future images of the good life among urban youth in Sri Lanka in ten years?
 - a) Exploring the preferred lifestyle choices of Urban Youth in preferred future good life.
2. How envisioning be used to empower individuals in shaping their future?

Research question 02 is explored implicitly in the study. Envisioning the future is a subjective experience that involves imagination, aspirations, and mental stimulation. Since the envisioning cannot be directly quantifiable or observed, I will report the observations and suggest further improvements to the currently designed method.

Answering these two research questions the study adapts a critical futures and constructive approach. It recognises that the future is not pre-determined but constructed by human beliefs, values, actions, and interactions. Therefore, constructionism as a research paradigm enables to considering participants' values, beliefs, mental models, and worldviews while allowing them to interact with the researcher's values and beliefs throughout the research process.

The study borrowed both Global North and Global South perspectives to conceptualise the good life and to define the boundaries of the study. The connections are drawn derived from the Eudaimonic Well-being Theory (Ryan & Deci 2001, 148; Grénman et al. 2023, 3; Waterman 2008, 236), Psychological Well-Being Theory (Ryff & Singer 2008, 20.), PERMA (Seligman 2018, 2.), Hedonist Well-Being Theory (Waterman 2008, 244). In addition to these theories, further perspectives and world views has been integrated from Buen Vivir (Villalba, 2013, 1431), Ahimsa (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), Ecological Swaraj (Kothari et al. 2015, 368), Haura among Māori people (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), moderate living (Dayaratne 2018,338) mindfulness (Sheth et al., 2011) and Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (Mongsawad, 2010).

1.2 Background on Sri Lanka

This chapter section, provides an overview of Sri Lanka’s economic and socio-cultural landscape. Since Sri Lanka has been considered for the study, the following section discusses the economic and socio-cultural background, population composition, and cultural diversity. It is brief about the different consumption styles between urban and rural consumers. Further, it provides some insights about the sustainable initiative currently implemented in the country.

Sri Lanka is located in the Indian Ocean. It is called the ‘pearl of the Indian Ocean’ due to its unique shape. The island’s total population is 22.1 million. The country’s cultural heritage root back to over 2500 years (Dayaratne 2017, 335). The cultural composition of the country accommodates 69.3% of Buddhists, 15.4% of Hindus, 7.6 % of Roman Catholics and 7.6% of Islam and 0.1% others (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022). There is nineteen per cent of the total population lives in urban areas while eighty-one per cent of the population lives in rural areas. Even though Sri Lanka used to be an agricultural economy, it has gradually transformed into a service dominant economy after the trade liberalisation. Currently the service (60.5%) and manufacturing sectors (27.5%) make an increasingly larger contributed to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Central Bank Report 2022, 62).

Even though Sri Lanka has been undergone many mutations under Western colonisation, the Sinhalese culture is still preserved in villages (Wickramasinghe 1992, 13). Most of the population of the country, understand the life based on Buddhist teachings. Therefore, majority of the people follow ‘‘middle path’’. This led the Sri Lankans to live a life which content while accept life as given and following a soft consumption style (Wickramasinghe, 1992). However, the consumption levels in urban areas are significantly higher than rural areas due to income, wealth, and skill inequality (Chandrasiri & Shantha 2021,65). The total expenditure on all items

in the urban sector is more than the rural sector. More infrastructure and other services are provided to the urban community than to the rural population because of urbanization.

In 1977 Sri Lanka adapted trade liberalization policies with the main objective of expansion of exports. Foreign investments, particularly export-oriented manufacturing investments, have been promoted (Hettiarachchi, 2018). The trade liberalisation brought opportunities and challenges to the economy. The trade liberalization policies mostly focused on investment attraction, employment generation, resource employment that finally generated towards the industrial growth. Therefore, past economic activities are mostly geared towards resource efficiency rather than effectiveness. Sustainability was not on the mainstream policy discussions, but in 2023 Climate Prosperity Plan (CPP) was launched by the state at the U.N. Climate Change Conference. It presents the national strategy for Sri Lanka to be a low carbon hub. The report presents strategies to accelerate the adaptation to climate risk for the most impacted sectors. The country targets to increase renewable energy from 35% to 70% by 2030 (CPP, 2023).

Sri Lanka was selected for the study due to the paradoxical relationship between the HDI and GDP. The Sri Lankan economy contracted by 7.8 per cent and recorded the worst economic crisis experience throughout the history of the post-independence economy (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022, 62). However, Sri Lanka continuously maintains the highest Human Development Index (HDI), 0.780, in the South Asia (Human Development Reports, 2022). Exploring the envisioned futures of urban youth in Sri Lanka could offer valuable insights into the interplay between economic, social, and individual aspirations.

1.3 Boundaries of the study

The complexity of defining a good life is a daunting task, which demands an understanding of the context from various disciplines. The study conceptualised the good life borrowing the aspects from both Global North and the Global South. The perspectives related to good life, emerging in global south considered to be numerous, which is beyond the capacity of the study. Therefore, the study borrowed perspectives from India, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, New Zealand and Thailand while keeping other paradigms out of the focus. It is essential to mention that more disciplines, such as sociology, marketing, environment studies, and many others, could contribute to a deeper understanding of the concept of good life but the study does not focus on them.

The study's respondents were carefully selected due to the nature of the topic. The study was necessary to select respondents interested in sustainable living, currently practising sustainable living, or planning to change themselves to be sustainable or mindful individuals. Therefore, the future images of good life do not represent the images of general youth. However,

they apply to youth who desire to dream of a flourishing future while considering the account nature.

It is important to mention that the participants of the study do not represent the general youth living in urban areas. Some are interested in living a sustainable life. Therefore, it is difficult to generalise the findings of the study among the youth living in Sri Lanka, as the findings will only apply to a niche segment of the youth in the country.

1.4 Ethical Considerations

Poli (2012) discussed how ethics interacts with future studies. He mentioned about the values that are inherently integrated into foresight work. He suggested that the nature of the inquiry is directly influenced by the values presented by the future researcher. In that case, maintaining professional conduct is essential. As a futures researcher, I attempted to maintain ethical practices throughout conducting the study. Mainly when working with the participants. Since the participants are expected to be involved in meditation and an envisioning process, I have emailed them about the interview process. I have obtained the consent from the participants.

Further, I informed them of the possibility of withdrawing at any point during the envisioning process. Since the study topic, “preferred good life,” was considered a personal topic for the participants, I distanced myself from further questioning some aspects. I listened to the information that the participants voluntarily shared and clarified doubts about what they discussed.

Even though my research approaches for the study were considered normative, I still tried to situate the analysis within the theoretical framework and follow a methodological approach for the analysis process. The participants’ anonymity was maintained during the study’s data analysis and presentation.

1.5 Chapter Summary

The first chapter of the thesis presents the background related to the problem under investigation, including the purpose and research questions of the study. The chapter introduces the theoretical frameworks that are utilised in the study. Chapter two discusses the guiding principles of the study: constructionism and critical futures paradigms. Then, elaborate on the applicability of these paradigms to the study. In addition, the role of future images and envisioning in developing the conceptual framework is discussed. Further, the chapter reviews the frameworks and paradigms that contributed to conceptualising the good life. The similarities and distinctions between these paradigms, frameworks and concepts have been discussed.

Chapter three examines the methodological approach of the study. The data collection method, interview process, and mental time travel exercise are being discussed using five stages suggested by Gillham (2005). Chapter four presents the findings of the study and the research questions. Four future images are presented and discussed. Furthermore, the contribution of the envisioning process to empowering youth's futures is discussed. Chapter five presents the significant findings related to what constitutes the preferred good life of youth. The future research areas are identified with the concluding remarks.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS

This chapter reviews the theoretical knowledge to provide a context for the study while establishing the conceptual framework. It defines and discusses the theoretical framework, concepts and relationships. In the first section of the chapter, the study is situated within the constructionist and critical paradigms within future studies while discussing the relevance of exploring the future of a good life. Then, it delves into the central concepts of the study, the images of the futures, envisioning, and good life. The final section of the chapter explores the concept of the good life, borrowing theories from the Global North and world-views and perspectives from the Global South.

2.1 Constructionism and Critical Futures

The study is situated within the paradigm of the critical futures. Because it allows explore how young people interpret their preferred futures within their inner world and how this shapes their perception of the external world. Slaughter (2002, 28) discussed the complex and dynamic relationship between the human-constructed world and the natural world in his work. He referred to the human-constructed world as the internal world we individually create within our minds based on our values, knowledge systems and assumptions.

Ahlqvist and Rhisiart (2015, 91) suggested that the demand for interconnecting the ecological, social and economic domains and emergence of new socio-economic models, require more critical approach to the futures studies. Similarly, Slaughter argued the need for critical futures to understand social phenomena at a deeper level (Slaughter 2002, 358). To explore alternative and novel futures, it is essential to understand the cultural differences, individual mental models, world views, societal influence. Therefore, the critical approach enables the study to critique the existing narratives about good life

The study employs the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) (Inayatullah, 1998) as an analysis method to further explore the deeper levels of constructing reality. CLA explores the assumptions, values, and beliefs we hold within ourselves by delving deeper into the litany, systematic causes, worldview and myth layers. It enables the study to deeply explore the diverse dimensions and the complex and subjective nature of the future good life by questioning the existing assumptions.

The primary aim of the study is to reimagine alternative ways of living the good life that prioritise human and non-human well-being over immediate gratification or wealth. Therefore, it is critical to understand how and what could shape the interpretation of the envisioned good life. Hence, within this framework, constructionism as a research paradigm helps to comprehend knowledge as a creative social process. Constructionist approach emphasises that future is shaped

by the knowledge created how this knowledge influences our daily decisions. (Fuller & Loogma, 2009, p. 78.)

Consistent with the above findings, Berger and Luckmann (1967, 15) argue that “any action people undertake is shaped by different types of knowledge; not only scientific knowledge but cultural and experiential knowledge including common sense and the knowledge people use in their everyday activities”. The authors further suggested that “knowledge, action, and reality, in a pragmatic sense, are not separate and, they claim, can be combined in a comprehensive theory of social action” (ibid., 207). Slaughter (2004, 110) argued that social constructionism redirects the focus towards understanding social realities, leading individuals to understand themselves, their identities, and the process of negotiating power and meaning with others- instead- leans on simple, immediate, and externally focused possibilities.

To explore the good life phenomena, it is doubtful to look for objective truth to answer the question of “what is the future of good life or what will constitute the future of good life” due to its subjective and complex nature; instead, it is essential to inquire how this phenomenon has been constructed individually, acknowledging the subjective nature of the phenomena

Erciyes (2020, 184), discusses the distinction between two types of constructivism: strong and weak. The weak constructionism focuses on political values and ideologies. The strong constructionism emphasises the interaction between the researcher and respondents to create knowledge. Furthermore, the reality is shaped by interpretations and meanings created within a cultural context. In the context of the study, it is essential to acknowledge that my values and beliefs inherently shape the lens through which I interpret the phenomena. In order to create the knowledge, the interaction between my interpretations and respondents is essential. This demonstrates a strong constructionist approach to the study. In addition, the realities constructed are strongly influenced by the Sri Lankan cultural context.

Tapio and Hietanen (2002, 606) exhibit that subjective nature of knowledge is inherent in epistemological approaches used in the field of futures studies. Fuller and Loogma (2009, 73) stated in futures literature, social constructionism finds limited application, but it was employed in foresight work to some extent. Therefore, it is evident that social constructionist principles have influenced the approaches and epistemologies of futures research.

When comparing constructionism to other paradigms, scholars suggest that the knowledge generated in constructionism is a product of the mind, and the knowledge claims are based on mental constructs rather than direct observation of reality itself (Voros 2007, 10; Erciyes 2020, 184). Constructionism is grounded in “inter-subjective world of shared experience” (Voros 2007, 10). Therefore, in that context, constructionism employs dialectical and hermeneutical methods to interpret and understand the shared experiences rather depending on empirical data or observation (ibid, 10).

Drawing upon the insights discussed above, the inquiry takes a constructionist critical approach. Understanding and reimagining the good life is a complex phenomenon shaped and greatly influenced by human values, beliefs and cultural context. Constructionism as a research paradigm helps to understand this complex phenomenon in the cultural and social context, while acknowledging the subjective nature of the knowledge. Furthermore, the research background and experience of the researcher also influence the study. (Erciyes 2020, 184).

2.2 Images of Future

The study is closely linked with the thought process of Fedrick Polak (1973), reflecting a profound alignment with the study's conceptual framework. Deriving from the Polak's thoughts, in this chapter section, I attempt to argue that future images open horizons to think about the future from a multifaced approach, blending rationality with faith, creativity and emotions. Furthermore, I argue that Polak's thoughts support the idea that individuals play a critical role in shaping his or her destinies. Positive futures images have a strong potential to influence the futures constructed by young people and at a broader level to the society. The hope for the future and individual agency has significant capability in shaping the destinies of humans.

First, it is essential to clarify the theoretical ambiguity surrounding the terms, 'vision', 'envisioning' and 'futures images', since these concepts are contributing to the development of theoretical framework of the study. The image of the future is broadly defined as an "expectation about the state of things to come at some future time." (Bell & Mau, 1971, 23). Envisioning is a "collaborated process of community members to identify shared values, describe the future they seek, and develop a plan to achieve common goals" (Meadows, 1996). van de Helm (2009, 96) defines vision as the tangible result derived from the envisioning process. Hicks (1996, 742) defined visioning as imagining, then concentrate or narrow down to what we really want, instead referring to what we have taught or learnt. Therefore, the term envisioning will be used in the study for clarity and ease of understanding.

By looking at the definitions, it can be argued that these concepts share the same idea since futures images, envisioning and vision involve conceptual potential future states. However, the concepts have distinctive differences because images of futures are broader and could encompass a broader range of speculative futures, including both desirable and undesirable. Visions are considered as specific goals, values, or aspirations that are resulted from the envisioning process. Envisioning represents an active and dynamic process.

The images of futures can be short-term or long-term, individual or shared, simple or complex, desirable or undesirable, consciously or unconsciously created (Bell & Mau, 1971, 23-24). Furthermore, Polak mentioned that images are at work everywhere. We hold images,

individually or collectively, for us or others and our nation, profession and ideologies. For the study, the images of the future of good life are considered long-term, complex, desirable and consciously created collectively.

While trying to understand the future, Polak (1961, 5) discusses the interplay between current actions, past experiences and future aspirations and argues that these collectively shape societal change. Bell & Mau (1971, 13) argue that the emerging futures shape the past meanings attached to them, and past and present help mould the future. These arguments are developed based on Polak's assumption in his work that humans exist in three temporal realms simultaneously: the present, past and future.

Therefore, the present acts as the catalyst for shaping the future and the past. Understanding the interconnectedness between time enables us to make decisions by being aware that we have the potential to change the future while at the same time redefining our understanding of the past. This argument is highly relevant for the study since the images the youth imagine for their future allow them to interpret the past differently while emphasising the importance of making conscious decisions since they can shape their own future.

Therefore, the images of the future provide a solid conceptual foundation for the development of the study. Bell and Mau (1971, 14) further reflect on Polak's threat to act now or suffer the consequences, suggesting it is a "call to arms" to intellectuals to make an effort to reduce the undesirable course of actions. However, Polak presents both hope and fear as motivation.

Polak's approach to creating future images has been criticised by Boulding (1962, 193). He argues that Polak ignores the latent process that operates beneath the surface of conscious awareness and focused only on the explicit images of the future. The explicit images could guide human actions and aspirations but represent only one aspect of the socio-cultural landscape. However, it is essential to acknowledge the difficulties in understanding or identifying the latent processes. Therefore, more conceptual development is required to incorporate these aspects into future images.

2.3 Envisioning Transformative Futures

This chapter section discusses the envisioning as a futures method and as a creative way to engage with future. The chapter introduces the envisioning as the first step towards creating a shared understanding to make a transformative change since it facilitates the imagination of alternative futures. Further it reviews the findings related to envisioning.

It was suggested that in the last decade of 20th century (from 1980-1990) vision and envisioning emerge as popular approaches to make claims about future (van der Helm 2009, 96; Ziegler 1991, 519). Instead employing the technical and quantifiable planning methods, more

open and human centered methods were emerged. These methods were focused on envisioning, hoping, dreaming and imagining new and alternative futures (Ziegler 1991, 519). Helm (2009, 96) stated that “beyond doubt, the turn of the century and the promise of a ‘new beginning’ will have triggered our interest in ‘envisioning another world’”. Furthermore, van der Helm suggested in his work that envisioning is needed to fulfil the human quest to look for visions beyond the current realities (ibid, 96).

According to Inayatullah (2013, 57) transformed futures is one of the six pillars he proposed in his conceptual framework. Visioning is introduced as a method to creatively visualise transformed futures (ibid, 58) . According to Ziegler (1991, 521) envisioning demands inner work, deep imagination questioning ourself and listening and learning. It is not about making a wish list. The study aims to create futures images of preferred good life among young adults, instead of creating a wish list for future. To achieve this, it demands mental clarity, deeper imagination, ability to listen to the self while questioning the self and learn. Therefore, envisioning process holds many attributes that could contribute to create novel and alternative images of good life.

Zigler (1991) and van der Helm (2009) studied envisioning from different angles, but most of their findings are consistent. Both Scholars acknowledged that envisioning assumes transformational change, and change was considered as an integral part of the ideation. van der Helm (2009) emphasised the need of a strong theoretical background for envisioning since it was mostly considered as a phenomenon. Conversely, Ziegler (1991) considered envisioning as a complex phenomenon, and further argued that it is not a concept developed recently, but coming from ancient origins of humans, cultures and civilisations. In addition, both scholars emphasised that envisioning is deeply connected to inherent capacities of humans.

Numerous normative scholars have contributed to the development of the envisioning process. In 1960, Robert Junk worked with grassroots groups to envision various aspects of societal change. During the 1970s, Ziegler conducted workshops with citizens and business groups. In collaboration with Boulding in 1980, Ziegler introduced a workshop format for peace activists named “Imaging a world without weapon”(Ziegler, 1983). Later, envisioning rooted in organizations and communities in developing leadership skills, problem-solving, and building shared visions. (Hicks 1996, 743.)

Van der Helm (2009) stated that envisioning has the capability to help individuals to change their perceptions and expectations they have about the world. In the era of Anthropocene, it is critical to find new myths that facilitate for transformation , renewal and restoration that have the capacity to lead youth or humanity towards a better sustainable future. We need to imagine the future to build a better future. Our capacity to create collectively transformed futures relies on our individual capacity to visualise and then create narratives that can be simply told.

2.4 Good life

The continuation of this chapter delves into the exploration of relationships or intersections between the various philosophies, concepts, and theories related to the good life. The main challenge in developing the conceptual framework for the concept of good life is maintaining conceptual focus while acknowledging pluralism. Even though each theory is directed towards the good life, the theoretical approaches are varied. Therefore, developing a conceptual understanding of how each aspect can be linked to another was a daunting task. While I do not claim to possess an answer to this intricate question of “what is a good life”, I made an effort to acknowledge the multitude of perspectives that shape this discourse. I am not presenting an exhaustive list of perspectives on the attributes of a good life but rather analysing diverse approaches, understanding how they complement or contradict each other.

I developed the conceptual framework focusing on the aim of the study: to explore future images of the good life among urban youth. Therefore, I first outlined the perspective of the good life borrowing the Global North perspectives and the Global South perspectives. From the Global North perspectives, the Eudaimonic Well-Being theory, Psychological Well-Being Theory, PERM, Hedonist Well-being Theory and Sustainable Hedonism have been employed in the study to develop the conceptual framework. Then, from the Global South paradigms, I employed Buen Vivir, Ecological Swaraj, Ahimsa, Maori world views, Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and Moderation and mindfulness.

2.4.1 Global North Perspectives on the Good Life

This section of the chapter serves as an introduction to the good life from the Global North perspectives.

The concept of well-being has evolved from eudaimonic and hedonic perspectives in Western philosophy (Ryan & Deci 2001, 148). Eudaimonism posits that pursuing a good life requires virtuous living and experiencing a sense of fulfilment (Ryan & Deci 2001, 148; Grénman et al. 2023, 3; Waterman 2008, 236). Eudaimonia means human well-being or flourishing (Waterman 2008, 236). Furthermore, it captures the perspectives of optimal living (Grénman et al., 2023, 3). The eudaimonic perspective does not call for consumption as a path to have a good life. Instead, it invites us to build and work upon the intrinsic values of individuals to flourish.

The hedonist approach holds that “one should get important things he wants” (Waterman 2008, 235). Hedonism constructs the idea of well-being around seeking enjoyment and evade suffering (ibid, 244). Hedonism suggested that the life satisfaction, the positive vibe and bypass negative emotions considered as happiness (Grénman et al. 2023, 3). I do not intend to ultimately cast aside hedonism because it prioritises immediate gratification over long-term sustainability. Instead, I consider the possibility of the hedonism approach to understand good life, because it

could allow individuals to enjoy simple pleasures and reduce over-dependence on material consumption. I based my arguments that hedonism does not mention consumption and materialism as pleasure. The pleasure could emerge not by consuming but by connecting with nature. However, hedonism neglects social relationships in defining well-being.

The formulation of psychological well-being (PWB) consists various well-being dimensions, including autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Singer 2008,14). PWB sheds light on a broader understanding of well-being but is also grounded on the individualistic notion of well-being (ibid, 20). It recognises the complexity and richness of human experience and seeks to promote a more holistic understanding of psychological well-being (ibid ,14). PWB is considered an eudaimonic theory (ibid, 20).

PERMA framework was introduced in 2011 by Seligman, the founder of positive psychology. According to the framework, flourishing consists of five equally weighted domains: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The domains are not isolated from each other; instead, they are interconnected. The interconnectedness enables a deeper understanding of human well-being (Seligman 2018, 2).

The PERMA framework is highly used model in psychology due to its simplicity and comprehensivity. The framework enables one to dive deep into understanding one's emotional states. It provides a better understanding of different psychological domains of an individual's life, including relationships, meaningfulness and achievement (Butler & Kern, 2016,179; Seligman 2018, 2). Figure 1 illustrates how PERMA framework integrates the hedonic and eudaimonic well-being theories.

The Global North perspectives set a strong foundation for the understanding the concept of good life, placing a significant weight on individual character. While intellectual growth and ethical behaviour are essential, a well-rounded understanding of the good life would also acknowledge the role of emotional well-being and the quality of relationships in our overall happiness and fulfilment. The Global North perspectives focus excessively on the individual character and overlook the aspects that are relevant for social structures. It is important to note that this potential oversight does not diminish the value of their contributions but rather invites a broader perspective that encompasses emotional and relational dimensions

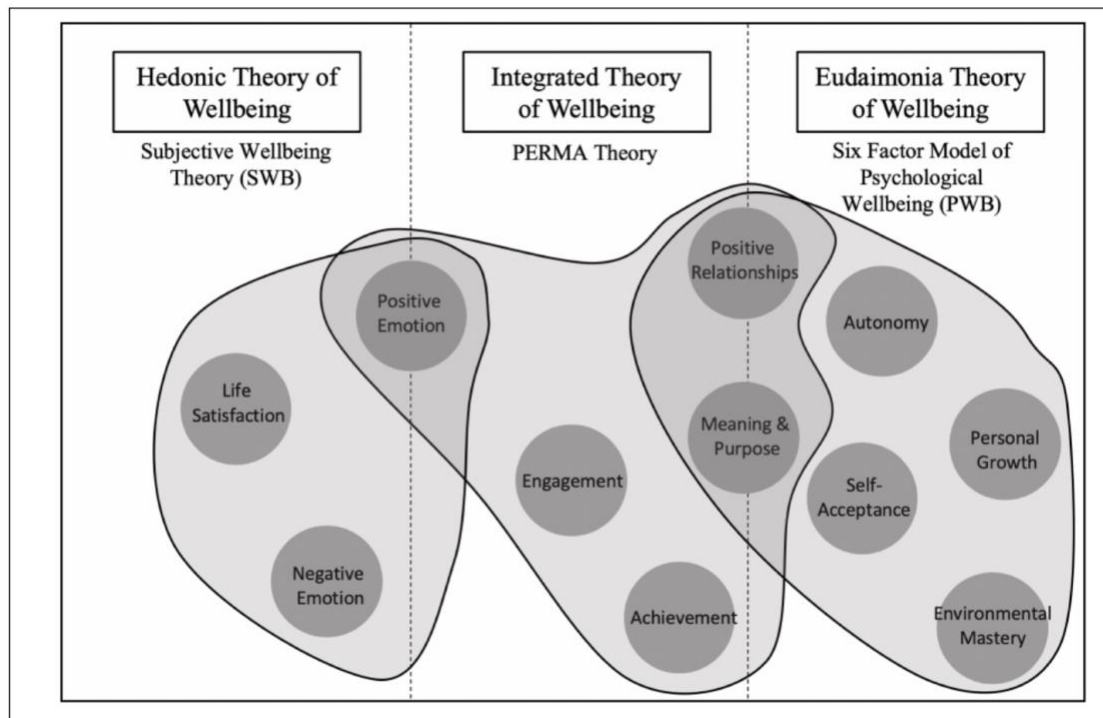


Figure 1: Factors of Well-Being According to Hedonic (Subject Well-Being Theory), Eudaimonic (Six factor model of Psychological Well-Being) and Integrated Approaches (PERMA Theory) derived from Tulip et al. 2020,3.

2.4.2 Global South Perspectives on the Good Life

In this chapter, I discuss the paradigms about the good life borrowed from the Global South. The worldviews and paradigms that are drawn from the indigenous communities of Latin America, India, and New Zealand. Furthermore, borrowing from Buddhist philosophy, the middle path, Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) and mindfulness are also considered for the conceptual development. The chapter introduces specific aspects of each paradigm that are considered included in the good life while identifying the commonalities and distinctions between them at general level. It is important to acknowledge that the chapter examines the worldviews and paradigms at a general level, rather than exploring them in depth, to enable a holistic understanding of diverse aspects of the good life.

Drawing from Latin America, Buen Vivir is a concept that prioritises harmony with nature, social equity, cultural diversity and spiritual fulfilment as the approach for a good life (Villalba 2013, 1431). Buen Vivir is a constantly evolving concept that maintains a robust link to the natural world. Similarly, Sumak Kawsay or well-living, is rooted in the indigenous Ecuadorian communities that value the spiritual energy of the natural world (amazing), the energy of cultivated gardens and handicrafts (nunghui) and the source of life (sunghui) (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113).

Ahimsa emerged in India from Gandhi's philosophy. It advocates for the ethical treatment of all animals. Ahimsa, which means nonviolence, could foster a kind and cooperative society. Further, it is suggested that individuals can develop themselves to live sustainably when practising Ahimsa through yoga. Yoga promotes a healthy, peaceful, and mindful way of living. (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113.)

Kothari et al. (2014, 369) discuss the concept of Ecological Swaraj, which is based on self-sufficiency and self-governance. The Māori, Whanau Ora, and Hauora concepts in New Zealand and Pacific communities share interconnected values of well-being. Whanau Ora's (Family Well-being) worldview focuses on the well-being of the family unit rather than the individual. It emphasises the importance of dependency among the family members for their well-being. Hauora (Health and Well-being) worldview offers a holistic approach integrating family, spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical health to living a good life. (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113.)

Similarly, Vai Niu, which does not derive directly from the Māori tradition but from the Pacific islanders, symbolises the life-sustaining elements. According to the Vai Niu view, individuals represent themselves as an integral part of the cosmos. They share divinity with their ancestors while sharing the land, the sea, the skies, and inheritance with the family, village, and nation. (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113.)

The Global South worldviews broadly explore the notion that humans are social beings, and the need for connectedness is built into their biology. In addition, these philosophies prioritise communal solidarity over individual goals. Further, nature has been considered as the main power source. Instead of following the dominant sustainable and growth-based ideologies, considering the collective values among the communities, could offer insights to discover alternative ways of living the good life.

Borrowing from Buddhist Philosophy, the idea of living a moderate life (alpechcha) contributes to the conceptual framework. The metaphysics and worldview of Buddhism offer a solid foundation for a better understanding of well-being and the fundamental sources of sustainability problems (Daniels, 2011). Kittirapas (2015) mentioned that Buddhist happiness focuses on inner happiness, which can be sustained with less suffering. Inner happiness can be achieved through a calm mind, natural appreciation, positive thinking, generosity, compassion and kindness towards others, detachment from oneself, working with good aspirations, and having good qualities (Kaza, 2000, 31; Daniels, 2007, 162).

However, the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy incorporates moderation into the SEP framework, which is discussed below. Originating from Thailand, the SEP was also integrated to develop the study's conceptual framework. The SEP was initiated to “establish a foundation of self-reliance to achieve sustainable living and economic development in Thai society” (Mongswad, 2010). SEP interconnects principles including moderation, reasonableness, self-

immunity, knowledge, and morality for achieving a harmonious existence as illustrated in Figure 2.

The middle path is the overriding principle of the SEP (Mongsawad, 2010). It is considered the intersection of moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity. Moderation encourages living a well-rounded life, avoiding extremes, and overindulgence (Thongpakde, 2005). The SEP framework was developed based on the idea that morality and knowledge are critical requirements to make the SEP work in an economy. This approach to living does not imply self-sufficiency but self-reliance, the ability to withstand and manage the adverse effects of globalisation. (Mongsawad, 2010.)

Reasonableness emphasises the idea that individuals should understand the impact of their actions on themselves and others. Mongsawad (2010) stated that knowledge, experience, analytical capabilities, self-awareness, compassion, and empathy are essential qualities to develop in a reasonable mindset. Reasonableness can be linked with the definition of sustainability as defined by the Brundtland Report (1987). Sustainable development was defined as “meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, which is based on three key elements: achieving stable economic growth, safeguarding the environment, and respecting and improving social and human rights” (Brundtland Report, 1987). Being reasonable is in line with sustainable thinking because it focuses on the impact of our decisions on the environment, society, self and future generations.

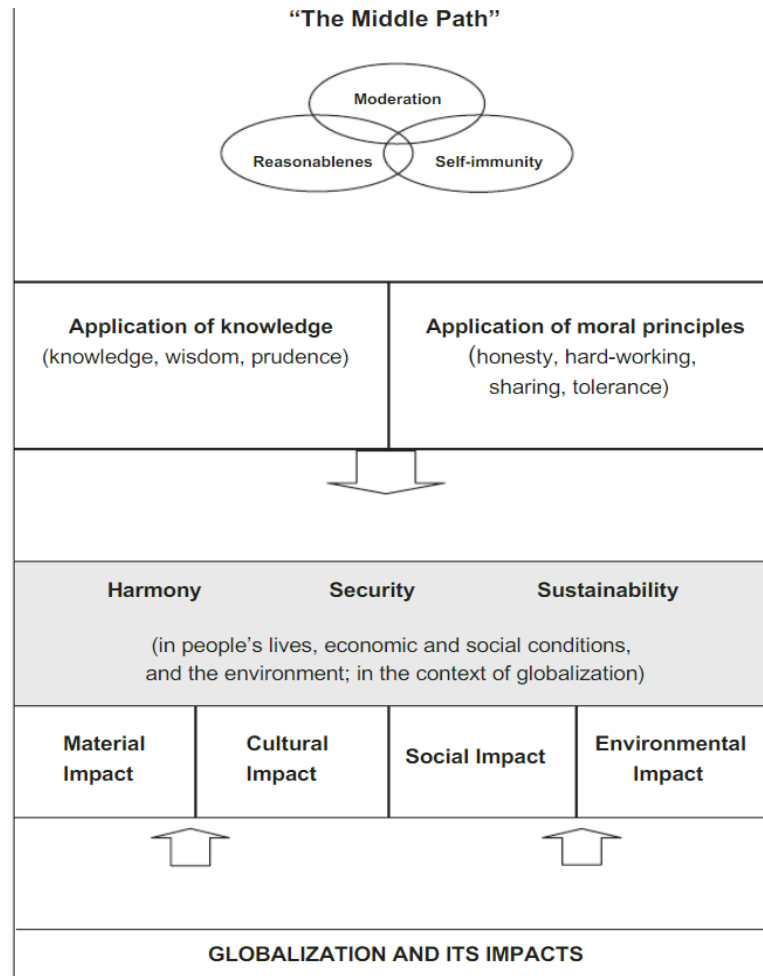


Figure 2 : Sufficiency economy philosophy framework, derived from Thongpakde, 2005

Mindful Living is another perspective to understand the good life which was borrowed from the Eastern Buddhist philosophies. Kaza (2000, 35) suggests morality and meditation offer liberation from the suffering of consumerism. Similarly, Milne et al. (2020, 4) state that mindful practices help individuals regulate their minds better to respond to internal and external stimuli. Sheth et al. (2011, 23) deploy mindful consumption to address the challenging transformative consumer issues.

The Figure 3, illustrates the model developed by Sheth et al. (2011) to illustrate the how the mindfulness transforms the behaviour and mindset of individuals. The tangible aspects and intangible aspects are represented by behaviour and mindset respectively. The values, attitudes, and desires related to consumption are considered mindsets. Temperance was identified as the core attribute of behaviour and care as the core attribute of mindset. The mindful mindset reflects a conscious caring towards self, community and nature. An individual can achieve their well-being, which aligns with their values, when intentions are guided by the mindset. (Sheth 2011, 24.)

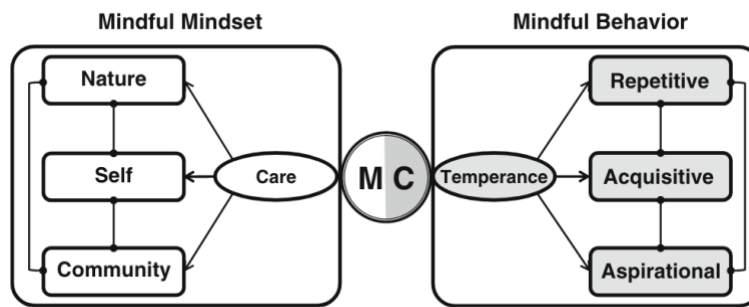


Figure 3: Mindful consumption derived from Sheth et al. 2011, 27.

Instead of seeking happiness through material possessions, Buddhism suggests individuals and society to find happiness by developing minds (Kaza, 2000; Daniels, 2011; Kittirapas, 2015). Mind development is a process that can be trained through meditation or mindfulness (Kittirapas, 2015).

When engaging in a deeper reflection on the philosophies, perspectives and worldviews mentioned above, interconnectedness and interdependence emerge as a significant aspect to understanding the good life. These give rise to the idea that if humans, nature, and community are interconnected, every action we take has consequences to the other connected elements. Understanding these complexities that exist among these entities enables us to foster a good life that embraces the human and planetary well-being.

2.5 Application of Global North and Global South paradigms and theories in the study

The main aim of the study is to construct the future images of good life among urban youth. The Global North and Global South perspectives contributed to developing the theoretical framework for the study. Acknowledging that the theoretical framework was developed for the purpose of the study rather a universally applicable framework is essential. Integrating Global South and North perspectives offered a diverse, robust framework representing holistic well-being, cultural diversity, sustainability and inclusivity and equality

While developing the theoretical framework, a few observations have been made and these observations laid the foundation for the theoretical framework. First, the good life was found to be at the intersection of nature, community and self. Second, the outcome of the good life is not merely happiness but a holistic sense of fulfilment. Third, several elements emerge as repetitive among the theories and perspectives: environment stewardship, non-violence and

kindness, self-sufficiency, self-governance, living a moderation life, a sense of purpose in life and positive emotions.

These concepts and the aspects discussed in the chapter provide a foundation for the analysis of the study. The elements discussed in the study were used to provide a loose framework for the analysis while keeping the emergence of additional insights beyond the theoretical framework open.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter describes the operationalisation of the approaches discussed in the previous chapters. It details the process of the study to gather materials and how it has been utilised to answer research questions. The first section of the chapter delves into the methodological approach of the study, which is qualitative. The chapter sections are organised as follows. First, it introduces the qualitative research method, and how it relates to the study. Then, data collection process is discussed, including the mental time travel and semi-interview process. The interview process is elaborated on using the five stages recommended by Gillham (2005, 76). Finally, it explains the application of CLA as the analysis method for the study.

3.1 Construction of research design.

Popper (2008, 64) suggested that future research methods can be characterised as qualitative, quantitative and semi-quantitative based on the nature of the methods. The study adopts qualitative methods for the study. Popper suggested that qualitative methods help to understand subjective and interpretive aspects of how individuals foresee the future (ibid, 65). And further stated that methods rely on creativity and subjective insights; therefore, it would be challenging to validate the objective measures, but it helps to explore the complexities of human experiences and alternative futures.

The study employed interview as the data collection method, which considered to be qualitative in Popper's framework. However, to imagine the futures images of good life among young urban people, the study demanded more creative approach. Creativity referred as the capacity for imaginary thinking. Therefore, I had to design the research method that enable the participants to be creative, novel and look for alternative futures. To inspire and encourage participants in long-term thinking envisioning was employed in the data gathering process.

The steps of the envisioning process include, first a mindful meditation and next, a guided mental time travel exercise. Then followed by a semi structured interview. Envisioning future images of alternative ways of living the good life beyond growth and wealth demands creative and experiential approaches. At the same time, the desired good life is personal and unique to each individual. Therefore, I opt for semi-structured interviews as the data collection method for the study since they can provide the participants with the privacy, space, time, and comfort to imagine their desired good life.

As suggested by Jungk and Mullert in the previous paragraph (1987,18), the dreams of the individuals are deeply buried. Therefore, the time each individual takes to connect back to them and their buried dreams might take longer compared to another. Again, participants have different spaces or speeds when imagining their good lives. Notably, the imagined futures images

after being involved in a mental time travel exercise might be personal for themselves. Therefore, the one-to-one approach offers the participants comfort and privacy so they can share their dreams instead of sharing them with a group. From the study's point of view, semi-structured interviews offer the opportunity to attain an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' beliefs and perspectives while adhering to the framework within the study.

According to Gilham (2005, 70), the semi-structured interview technique is crucial when conducting research interviews as it provides the interviewer with flexibility while maintaining structure. However, I acknowledge that due to the extensive preparation required and the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of the interview data, the time, effort and costs for conducting semi-structured interviews are typically high.

The time span of the study was set at ten years. According to Wheelwright (2011, 185), ten years is considered the starting period of the long-term future and continues for 25 years. Therefore, the images of the futures created in the study are for the year 2033 since the envisioning and interviews were conducted in 2023.

Furthermore, intersubjectivity is an unavoidable aspect of interviews since both the interviewee and interviewer actively shape the conversation by constructing their identities during the interview. (Grilham 2005, 70.) The interview follows the five stages recommended by Gillham (2005, 76), which include preparation, initial contact, orientation, substantive, and closure. However, in this study, the data collection method incorporates meditation and mental time travel to aid in conducting the interview.

3.2 Mental Time Travelling as a Guided Imaginary Method

The future images of the good life among urban youth were created by carrying out a mental time travel to 2035, to their best-desired life. Mental time travel is considered the "theatre of the mind" since it is a futures research method that utilises focused imagination to imagine contingent future patterns (Markley 2008, 17).

In 1970, futurist Markley Oliver first developed guided imaginary methods for future research, including mental time travel. Markley (2008, 17) argued the need for a multifaced approach to understanding societal transformation and paradigm shift. Further, he emphasised that rational and analytical thinking alone is inadequate for comprehensively exploring alternative futures. He suggests that the "guided visualisation" method is an "appropriate technology" due to the creative and imaginative capacities in exploring alternative futures (ibid,17).

Similarly, Cuhls (2017, 119) considered mental time travelling a method that facilitates participants' picturing a series of future pictures. According to Cuhls, the method guides the

participants to see the future as a “movie rather than a static image”. Cuhls (2017) and Markley (2008) acknowledged that mental time travel as a novel method employed in futures domain.

Individuals travel in their imagination. Mental Time travelling is considered a linear time concept, personal and individual. It provides the ability for participants to visit anywhere they prefer. It can be considered a ‘fantasy trip’ that will take us by intuition and imagination and driven by facts stored in our minds. (Cuhls 2017, 119.) Scholars discuss this distinct human ability to plan the future and reconstruct the past (Suddendorf & Busby, 2005.112).

Together, this ability to revisit the past and to imagine potential futures comprised the method of Time travel. (Suddendorf & Busby 2005, 113). Suddendorf & Corballis (1997) suggested that the evolution of the human capacity to both revisit the past and imagine the potential future might explain the human ability on how and why we are distinctive from other beings living on earth.

Scholars mentioned that most of the population engaged in time travelling travel to their past (Suddendorf & Busby 2005, 111; Cuhls 2017,119). They suggest that humans prefer to change the past to make it better when they think about past events unconsciously and repeatedly. However, the same people do not apply this action process in the future. Tulving (2002) suggested that individuals use the episodic memory to remember personal memories.

When positioning mental time travelling as a future method, it can serve as a tool to expand the participants’ perspectives and stimulate creative thinking, as Markley (2008) argued earlier. Cuhls (2017,120) suggests that mental time travel enables participants to imagine disruptively new pictures rather than extrapolating from the past. Cuhls (2017,121-123) discussed the possibilities of conducting mental time travel for individuals or a group of people.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that mental time travelling is a cognitively demanding strategy. However, to improve mental time travel, Markley (2008,19) suggested adopting relaxation techniques to help participants free themselves from expectations, beliefs or judgments and then imagine the desired things, processes or events. Acknowledging the cognitive contribution demanded to the conduct of mental time travel, Cuhls (2017,121-123) further discussed the strengths of this method. He argues that ‘mental time travel enables the participants to see, feel and visions of future. The details of the pictures can be vividly seen.

Therefore, Cuhls (2017,121-122) recognised the need for “guidelines, a specific kind of scenario, and instructions for the facilitators of the specific sessions as well as questions or a storyline that resembles the one in scenarios”. Further suggested that special effects such as time machines, mirrors, bells, and alarms can help open the mind. Cuhls further recommended deep relaxation techniques to envision better futures because they support connecting to intuition and the subconscious.

Jensen et al. (2022, 340) assert that cultivating sustainable living practices that honour the Earth’s limitations necessitates exploring novel approaches. To accomplish this, generating

innovative ideas and constructing original narratives is crucial. The authors further propose that unconventional methods can expand our outlooks and enable us to comprehend unimaginable solutions we have not yet identified. Therefore, the study adopted the mental mind travel method due to its capacity to open up human cognitive thinking to imagine creative and novel ways of living that prioritise long-term well-being over growth and wealth.

The study named the mental time travelling exercise “Voyage to the Future Good Life”. It consists of a 5-minute guided meditation and a 20-minute guided time travel exercise, followed by 45 minutes of discussion. The voyage is guided by the researcher (myself) based on a storyline consisting of a set of questions (See Attachment 01) adapted by combining both Jensen et al. (2022, 342-344) and Markley (2008, 22-24). The mindful meditation was adapted from Sools (2020).

Before voyaging to the future, I adopted a mindful meditation following the suggestions of Markley (2008) due to its capabilities discussed above. Markley (2008) suggested relaxation techniques to help participants free themselves from expectations, beliefs, or judgments and then imagine the desired processes or events. Instead of relaxation, I adapted a mindful meditation exercise before the participants voyage into their future. It was from Sools (2020) to stimulate the imagination of the participants. This approach aligns with Jungk and Mullert (1987,18) pointed out: “people’s dreams are often deeply buried because they were trampled on in childhood, so some delicate work may be needed to release them, especially into the public domain”. I suggest that to open up about these suppressed dreams and desires; the participants need to have a great deal of patience and empathy with them. They need to connect to themselves first, which mindfulness meditation might facilitate. The below section of the chapter presents the process of data collection, which I call in my thesis that visualising the future to fit human flourishing.

3.3 Phases of Data Collection method

The interview follows the five stages recommended by Gillham (2005, 76), which include preparation, initial contact, orientation, substantive, and closure. However, in this study, the data collection method incorporates meditation and mental time travel to aid in conducting the interview.

3.3.1 Preparation stage

Before developing the research methodology, I had three telephone discussions with practitioners involved in mindfulness to gain a deeper understanding of suitable mindful practices that can be utilised in the study. They are not experts in the subject, but they have a basic knowledge of mindful practices and practice mindfulness in daily activities. The insights gained

from the discussions helped determine a suitable mindful meditation practice to begin the visioning process.

Therefore, I concluded that the most straightforward and most convenient mindful method that can be applied to train the mind to concentrate on something is by concentrating on breathing. The mindful meditation practiced in Sools (2020) was selected for the study because it guides participants to concentrate on breathing and bodily awareness. The method enables the participants to develop self-awareness, relaxation and connection to their physical being.

The participants were recruited for the study utilising personal contacts. Due to past work experience, I worked with individuals interested in alternative ways of living and doing business (Audiences involved in sustainable living, voluntary simplicity, minimalistic living, moderate living, social entrepreneurship and learning sustainability). The participants are invited for interviews through emails followed up by telephone calls. The email consists of the purpose of the study as well as the expected contribution of the participants. For those who decide to join the interview, a calendar invitation was sent indicating the agreed-upon schedule, the online meeting link, and the researcher's contact details of the researcher (myself).

The consent form was attached to the email to give participants ample time to review and complete it before or during the interview. It was stated in the email that the interview would be recorded, and the participants were expected to be involved in a mental time travel activity and a guided meditation. Further, it was mentioned in the email, and even before beginning the envision, participants could withdraw at any time and avoid or pass questions they do not prefer to answer. The below chart represents the details of the participants.

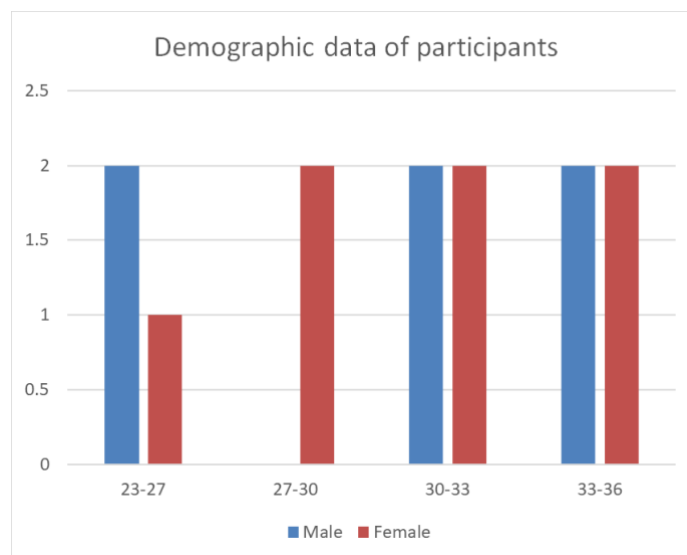


Figure 4: Age and gender distribution among participants of the study

Thirteen interviewees participated in the study, six males and seven females. Participants represented different cultural backgrounds and all nationalities in Sri Lanka. There was more female representation among those below 30 years of age, but overall, in the study, gender is equally distributed. All these participants are interested in living a good life that is planetary friendly. The participants are involved in various activities to promote sustainable living or human and planetary well-being. Some are practising sustainable practices in their day-to-day life, and some are involved in sustainable business activities or professions related to sustainability.

Some of the participants are interested in living a life that is human and planetary-friendly. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that the participants do not represent the general youth segment in the country; instead, they represent a niche segment of urban youth within the general category of the youth population who are interested in a good life that prioritises long term well-being of humans and planet instead wealth, materialism or growth.

3.3.2 Initial contact phase

When planning an interview, I was greatly influenced by Junk and Mullert's (1987) thought line in planning the workshop, mainly related to creating the space for participants to have an environment in which to envision and express their imagination. Junk and Muller wrote in their book (1987,81), "Any attempt to leave the beaten track, even if only in mind, is a gamble since it takes us into the unknown. Our everyday sense of reality has to be suspended, at least for a while. It is a leap that very few are prepared to make at first. They fear disapproval or, even worse, ridicule".

To make the participants more comfortable for the discussion, I introduced myself and provided some background information on my motivation for conducting this study. Similar to the critique phase suggested by Junk and Mullert (1987,12) where all the grievances and negative experiences relating to the chosen topic are brought up, I engaged with the interviewee in a brief discussion about the current socio-economic problems related to everyday life. I have utilized questions like 'How is your day so far?' followed by 'How is the Sri Lankan economy doing right now?'. These questions helped me to develop a rapport with the participants. At the same time, these prompts helped participants to think about the daily problems and issues that they need to go through during the day or living in Sri Lanka.

3.3.3 Orientation stage

Following Gillham's (2005, 77), at the orientation stage, I helped the participants get oriented to the interview process. I explained to them in detail the three phases of the interview, which will be discussed in the next paragraph. I encouraged them to forget the mental blocks they keep in mind during the mental time travel phase. I informed them they could voluntarily withdraw themselves if they felt uncomfortable at any interview stage. When I mentioned the details of the mindful meditation and mental time travel phase, some participants moved to more comfortable places to sit than the initial place they had prepared.

It was observed that most of the participants were excited to go through the phases. However, two participants mentioned at the beginning that they needed to give more thought to imagining their future of a good life, or they avoided thinking about their future of a good life. This was because they were afraid of the possibility that reality might not live up to their expectations. However, they mentioned that after reading the details in the email, they felt supported in imagining a different life.

3.3.4 Substantive stage

The substantive stage consists of four phases. In the first phase, the interviewees were asked to provide their personal information, including their name, education, employment, family background, and current consumption habits. In the second phase of the interview process, a guided meditation, adapted by Sools (2020), is employed. The third phase of the process is a future mind travel exercise inspired by Jensen, Oldrin & Andersen (2022, 341).

This exercise involves a 20-minute guided visualisation of a sustainable future, where the interviewee will be encouraged to reflect on his/her expectations and imagination. I will lead them through this journey by asking a series of thought-provoking questions, which have been adapted from Jensen, Oldrin, and Andersen's work (2022, 341). These questions will revolve around home, food, work, leisure, travel, community and nature. (see the Attachment 01).

Finally, upon completing a mental exercise that involved travelling through time to the future, I will ask about the images that the interviewee visualised during the exercise. The interview questions, (see the Attachment 01) are intended to gather information about the interviewee's envisioned preferred future of a good life, and to address the research questions.

3.3.5 Concluding phase

As Gillham (2005, 78) notes, the concluding phase of an interview is not limited to a simple request for departure. Instead, it is an essential review aspect of semi-structured interviews. During this stage, I discussed with the interviewee his or her requirements related to transcripts,

the preferred mode of identification (or anonymity), and the preference for a summary or a comprehensive report of the study. I asked for their permission to contact them again for further clarification during the research process if it is required.

3.4 Casual Layered Analysis (CLA)

The study adapts CLA as the analysis method. Inayatullah (1998, 815) suggested that CLA enables us to open the past and the present to create alternative futures. The study adapts critical futures as a research paradigm; CLA is a method that is situated within the critical future. As a methodology, it allows to distance current realities and critique fragile social structures.

Inayatullah mentioned that CLA is a methodology that “undefines the future” (*ibid*, 816). I have applied CLA as an analysis tool in the study since it involves challenging the established ideologies that influence our understanding of the world. In order to imagine alternative ways of living the good life, first we must question our current assumptions and ideologies about the dominant existing perspectives. CLA questions the power dynamics (*ibid*,816). It tries to uncover how certain ideologies are dominant or maintained throughout the power relations in order to serve various interests.

In order to imagine novel ways of living the future good life, it is essential to understand the current ideologies that serve for whose interest. In a way, the study critiques the dominant capitalistic definition of good life. By applying CLA as an analysis tool, by moving towards deeper layers, the study aims to uncover the social causes of world views that dominate the current understanding of the participants about their good life and, at the same time, encourage them to question themselves and take another step through the envisioning process to transform or distant the existing ideologies and enter into distant future which they can understand or interpret in a different way.

There are several layers in CLA. Figure 5 illustrates the layers of CLA pyramid; litany, system, discourse, myths and metaphor levels.

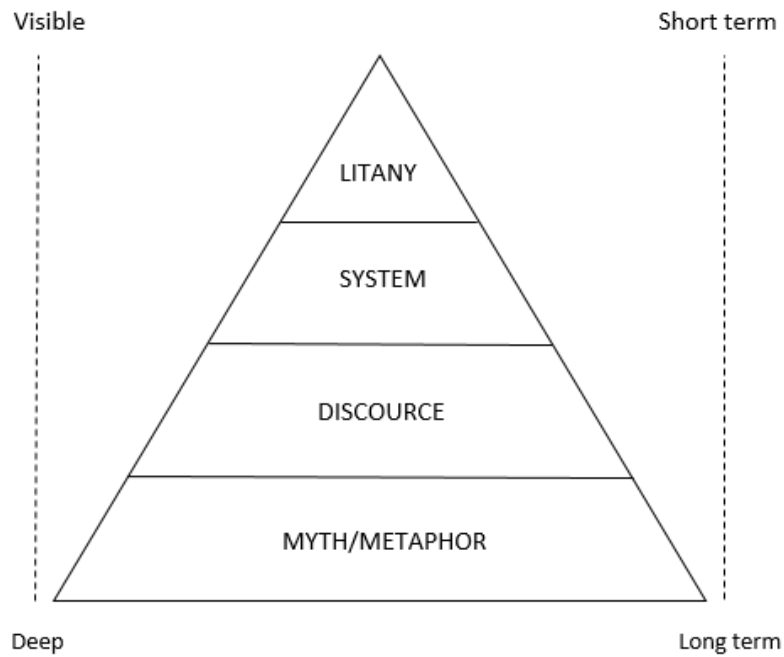


Figure 5. The Causal Layered Analysis pyramid for creating images of the future derived from Inayatullah 2004, 543

The first layer of the CLA is the litany. Slaughter (2008) defines this level as the "conventional perception and understanding of empirical reality, which is visible and obvious and seldom questioned". The litany level represents the surface level of understanding; individuals accept reality without a critical examination at this layer.

The second layer of the CLA pyramid is social causes. At this level, individuals attempt to question the social, political, cultural, technological, and economic aspects integrated within the litany level. The third layer, world views/ discourses, explores the deeply rooted aspects of maintaining social relationships, power hierarchies, and our understanding of acceptance (Slaughter, 2008). At the deepest level, myths and metaphors are "the deep stories and collective archetypes that can be deeply felt but are not necessarily available to conscious understanding or control" (Slaughter, 2008).

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that CLA, as a post-structuralist method, provides a framework for understanding data collected and creating future images. Apart from using CLA for analysis, the preferred future images are constructed using the four layers of CLA.

4 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the interpretations of the themes that emerge from the data analysis. In response to research question 01. *What are the future images of the good life among urban youth in Sri Lanka in ten years?*, the chapter presents the futures images of good life. The first section of the chapter describes the data analysis process in detail, to provide context for the reader to understand the interpretations and to enhance the transparency within the study.

The findings from the qualitative data, including the main themes and subthemes emerged in the study, are organised in the second section of the chapter according the layers of the CLA: Litany, Social Causes, Worldview and Metaphors or Myths. The themes and sub themes identified within the Litany, Social Causes and World views levels are discussed. The third section of the chapter illustrates the futures images of good life among urban youth in Sri Lanka.

Each futures image is narrated by an assumed character whose persona aligns with the youth lifestyle choices created in the study. These depictions do not focus on any particular study participant but rather are narrated from the perspective of a integrated identity that is composed of multiple participants who share similar perspectives.

Based on the data analysis, four futures images of good life have been created; Back to Nature, Shangri-la, Wanderlust and Minimalistic Urban Heaven. Image one, Back to Nature is narrated by Mr. & Mrs Green who are living their dreamlife in countryside. Image two, Shangri-la is narrated by a young Sri Lankan citizen. Image three, Wanderlust is narrated by a youth adventurer and finally, Minimalistic Urban Heaven is narrated by a young working mother living in urban city.

4.1 Process of creating futures Images of good life

The process of creating the futures images of good life consists with five steps. First, the analysis process began by familiarising the interview scripts by reading the scripts repeatedly, listening to the video recordings and making relevant notes based on observations.

Second, the CLA Framework was applied employing the NVivo software to categorise the statements into layers of the framework, including Litany, Social Causes, World views and Metaphors. To categorise the statements between layers, the study followed the criteria offered in the ‘cookbook’ approach to CLA by De Simone (2004, 487-488) which are presented in Table 1. From the overall data (statements), 43% of statements categorised into litany layers, 35% into social causes, worldview consists around 12%, and myths and metaphors consist 10%.

Table 1: CLA layer criteria adapted from De Simone (2004, 487-488).

Layer	Layer criteria
Litany	- “Off the cuff remarks”, “Unquestioned assumption”, “Unthinking mouthing”, “disgruntled complains”, “Overdramatised newspaper headlines” (De Simone 2004,487)
Social causes/ systems	Descriptions of “[...]the relationships involved and how a breakdown in these relationships has caused the issue to arise or worsen [...]” Questions about “[...] the data by possibly looking at multiple variables together and looking for correlation and causation[...].” Description of “[...] how the issue arose as a result of a series of linked recent events and actions” (De Simone, 2004, 488)
World views and discourses	Exposition of “[...] the values and beliefs that go beyond the issue being analysed [...]” Exposition of the assumed homogeneity of one perspective (De Simone 2004, 488.)
Myths and Metaphors	Mythologies Metaphorical expressions Fairy tales (Inayatullah 2004, 17)

To tailor the requirements of the study, the below categorisation matrix was developed adapting the Litany, Social causes, World views and Metaphors from the CLA framework. Then, the litany layer has been further divided into nature, community, work, and lifestyle. Even though participants were not guided to imagine the role of technology, it emerged as a significant topic when reading the scripts. Therefore, technology also added into the topics. To analyse the lifestyle topic, the data was derived from interview questions related to living, travel and commuting, food, and dining. In below, Table 2, presents the categorisation matrix used in the study as discussed above.

Table 2: Categorization Matrix

Layers of CLA		Interview 01	Interview02	Interview	Interview 13
Litany	Nature				
	Technology				
	Community				
	Work				
	Lifestyle				
Social causes					
World Views					
Metaphors					

At the third stage of the analysis process, two coding rounds were carried out. The first coding round was carried with the purpose of capturing diverse aspects and to generate wide range of codes. Then the codes created were further refined and combined to create new codes. The software NVivo was utilised to create the first round of coding, and then the codes were transferred to Miro. Then, the analysis process continued using the Miro board, which allowed graphical identification of the relationships between codes, themes, and sub-themes and facilitated their rapid movement. The next section of the chapter presents the themes that emerge within and among the CLA Layers.

4.2 Thematical Analysis within Layers

4.2.1 Themes in the Litany Level (L)

Sense-making through interaction with nature, diverse community expectations, multifaced relationships between good life and technology and alternative work environments and patterns were identified as the main themes that emerged within the litany layer. These themes presented in every futures image created in the study. However, the subthemes explain the variances within the main themes. Therefore, the subthemes are considered as inputs to create distinct future images of the good life.

Table 3: Themes and Subthemes Emerged in the Litany Level

Main Themes	Topic	Sub Themes
LN: The meaning humans create through the human- nature interaction.	Nature (N)	LN1:Reciprocal relationship with nature.
		LN2:Nature as a space for self-rejuvenate.
		LN3:Spiritual seekers in the nature.
		LN4: Nature for adventure.
LC: Diverse communities are formed with diverse expectations.	Community (C)	LC1:Communities represents only the primary groups.
		LC2:Evolving village communities.
		LC3: Communities based on shared values
LT: The multifaced relationship between human and technology in future imagined good life.	Technology (T)	LT1:Preference for manual technologies.
		LT2:Integrating technology into daily fabrication.
		LT3:Technology as a facilitator.
LW: Re- imagined work environment and work patterns.	Work (W)	LW1:Flexible work environment facilitated by technology.
		LW2: Diverse Career portfolio.
		LW3: Work is reimagined as retirement.
LL: Lifestyles choices based on preferred priorities of future good life.	Life styles (L)	LL1:AI integrated minimal lifestyle.
		LL2: Lifestyles prioritise resource conservation.
		LL3: Lifestyle driven by purpose.
		LL4:Mindful Living.

LN: The meaning humans create through the human- nature interaction

When exploring what constitutes the future good life of urban youth in ten years, the connection to nature is a prominent aspect. The participants did not imagine their relationship with nature at a surface level, instead each participant imagined the how interaction with nature contributes to the sense-making process in their life.

LN1:Reciprocal relationship with nature

Some participants envisioned to have a reciprocal relationship with nature. The concepts of sustainability and stewardship were strongly presented in the statements of these participants. R01 envisioned to preserve a home garden of plants facing extinction for future generations. R01, R02, R03, R04 and R05, envisioned their future of good life ‘out of the city’. They built their future of good life in the countryside, forests, and villages where they grew up. It was observed that by connecting to the land they were grew up, and by giving back to the nature, the participants made an effort to provide a meaning for themselves in their good life. In this scenario, they act as guardians of the nature.

“ trying to preserve some of the trees and plants and things that are gradually disappearing from our surroundings. So, try to maybe collect some of them and give them home in my garden. So maybe future generations will get to see them. If they flourish in my garden, so trying to maybe have a collection of those plants if I can find them and if I can grow them.” (R-01)

“I imagined my house is built in the middle of nowhere and I can’t see anyone, it’s just a place with one single road. I am living in the middle of a forest.(R-02)

“As a citizen of Sri Lanka, I do whatever I can do to protect nature.” (R-05)

LN2:Nature as a space for self-rejuvenate.

Some participants imagined nature as a space to self-reflect and rejuvenate. They acknowledged the power of nature to enhance mental and emotional well-being. The participants aspired to explore natural landscapes and patterns to help them calm themselves. As, Weil stated in Passmore and Krause (2023, 4) stated that recognising the natural patterns created by nature helps us locate ourselves during changes and figure out what is yet to come. For those seeking their ideal life, nature provides an escape from urban living, allowing them to reflect, connect with natural patterns, and prepare themselves for the future.

“I imagined a house next to a lake, where there is lots of greenery. I can then look at nature and walk into nature to have a peaceful mind” (R 10)

“I have a special bond with nature. I love to visit forests. I like animals and my favorite hobby is photography. I love wildlife photography; I love to go to a forest and try to connect with nature and the animals” (R13)

LN3: Seeking spirituality

This theme represents the meaningful relationship between nature and spirituality in the envisioned good life. Some participants envisioned that they connect to their core (to the deeper self) in nature. James, cited in Passmore & Krause (2023, 5), refers to spiritual identity as the connectedness between oneself and the entire universe and further describes how experiencing nature can bridge this connectedness. Further, the study of Passmore & Krause (2023, 5) suggests that intense spiritual experience can be felt by connecting to wild nature

“I wish to spend my time in a beautiful environment and calm myself down so that I can concentrate on my thoughts and my feelings and meditate.” (R-05)

LN4: Seeking purpose in nature

Emerged from the youngest participants (ages between 24 – 26), nature was interpreted as an enabler of experiencing adventures and seeking purpose. They envisioned wondering in the beauty of nature to understand and figure out their dreams and purpose of themselves.

“Yes, when you're told, I was sitting by a bench looking at a beautiful lake in cold weather with a journal. I was writing about my updates, how the day went, and my future plans. (R8)

LC: Diverse communities are formed with diverse values and new societal structures

Humans are social beings. The need to connect to other humans has been considered as an integral part of the imagined good life. Every participant imagined the community they aspired to belong. The ‘belongingness’ and ‘acceptance’ were discussed extensively by the participants in relation to human connection. As suggested by Seligman (2012), human relationships play a crucial role in human well-being.

LC1: Communities with primary groups

Some of the participants (R13, R6, R7, R10 and R11) envisioned communities with few members, but having a deeper connection with each other. They envisioned belongingness, trust, and support as dominant values in their community. The participants mentioned priorities the family and loved ones. Some imagined cooking together, spending their holidays together and making memories with the ones they love.

“I did not imagine a big community around me. I imagined my close friends and family. I saw them around me. I don't want many people in my life to be happy. Just a few with that I can grow old with.” (R13)

“They are more bound to each other. Because they realised that relationships are very important.” (R6)

LC2: Evolving village communities

Some participants preferred to be members of the village community instead of the urban community in their envisioned good life. This materialised from the young professionals currently living in cities and holding senior positions in their fields (ages 30-35). They envisioned their good life in the villages where they grew up, the countryside and the forests. These participants discussed their frustration about living in urban communities and believed the villagers possess warm and welcoming hearts characterised by genuine sincerity and openness. R01 mentioned, *“People in the villages still have those genuine smiles on their faces, unlike city people who do not don't even know who the next-door neighbor is.”* In addition, some R5 mentioned, *“I hope the village I was born in will have more developed infrastructure; I like to go back there and live with my parents.”* The participants imagined a community that collaborated and treated each other with kindness.

“I pictured a lady walking down a hill, greeting people along the way while wearing a trench coat and a warm hat in the cold weather. Children were playing nearby, while their parents were watching, and an older person was observing the scene. Some people were riding their bicycles downhill, while others were going uphill, waving and greeting one another. This is the kind of community interaction that came to my mind.”(R4)

“I wish I could go back to 10 or 15 years like when we were kids that used to be, where we had more trees than buildings and more friends in the village.”(R3)

“.....It would be a small community, but there would be some kind of collaboration among all of them. Everybody knows everybody. If I am a craftsman, community knows me. And take my service when they want. The members of the community have different skills and we collaborate peacefully. Currency is not an important factor here. If someone runs a restaurant, he or she buys ingredients from someone who grows it.....” (R2)

“In my head I thought of a system like what it used to be in the old days, neighbors knowing each other and if you have more of one thing you give it to the person next door

and exchange things so it's on more of a friendly basis rather than for monetary economic purposes or social exchange.” (R1)

LC3:Communities based on shared values

The youngest participants aged between 24-26, envisioned communities that are built on shared interests or values. The community acknowledges the differences between the members but allows them to find out who they want to relate to. The participants imagined the communities they connected all around the world, that is outside their current geographical area. Participants aspired communities that wanted to be connected but, at the same time, preferred to establish a strong sense of independence for themselves. Location was not an essential requirement to build the community, instead shared values and interests drive the community they imagined.

“I imagined a people from different nationalities. They were wearing different clothes and we were having a party.” (R12)

“.....they were minding their own business. They were friendly, a very peaceful community...” (R4)

LT: The multifaced relationship between human and technology in future imagined good life

Connection to technology emerged as a central topic when constructing the concept of good life, even though it was not initially discussed in the theoretical framework. In the mental time travelling exercise, participants were not explicitly guided to imagine the role of technology nor was there an interview question created to understand the role of technology in their good life. However, when participants explained their envisioned future, they integrated technology into their living, dining, work, leisure, and community. Therefore, the connection to technology is considered a critical subtheme in constructing the concept of the good life.

LT1: Preference for manual technologies

Out of 13 participants, 11 had a positive outlook about integrating technology into their future of good life. Two participants (R1 and R6) voluntarily mentioned that they envisioned good life by intentionally avoiding technology. R1 envisioned a self-sufficient, collaborative community that functions by adopting a system similar to barter. When the participant was asked whether there is technology involved in communication or any other aspect of this community, R1 mentioned, *‘No, there were no digital technologies. People in this community have face-to-face interactions;*

the maximum use of technology I imagined was the telephone and manual farming techniques and construction methods our ancestors used. I want to build my house the way my grandparents made it. I will need electricity, but I prefer to limit digital technology in my future personal life, and I did not imagine the community with technology. I like to avoid it in my future of a good life.” Therefore, some participants imagined the preferred good life only utilising the manual technologies. Unfortunately, the reasons to avoid the technology were not brought up in the interview, neither by the participant or the interviewer.

LT2: Integrating technology into daily fabrication

None of the participants envision utopian sci-fi fictional scenarios. Instead, most of them imagined possibilities, situations, and solutions that can be delivered by integrating technology into the future of a good life. Smart homes, automated cooking, self-driven cars, and robots involved in gardening were mentioned.

“I imagined self-driven cars. I was sitting on that. And then it took me wherever the place I want.” (R9)

“I imagined I was managing everything from mobile phone” (R7)

“.....But I do not have to do anything. I just have to provide the input or the raw materials and just say what I need to cook. Inside my house, most of the things are automated.” (R4)

“The house is a very neat, tidy, and clean house with a new look and an open kitchen. Technology has been integrated everywhere.” (R11)

LT3: Technology as a facilitator

In the study, participants viewed technology as a tool that helps everyday convenience and offers flexibility in the job market. Further, it was viewed as a means of providing a convenient life. The images they envisioned reflect a good life facilitated by technology, not driven by technology. The study further shows that technology can act as an enabler to reach goals or achieve dreams.

“I imagined people carrying laptops everywhere and working in open spaces. I imagined I was working next to a beach.” (R12)

LW: The re imagined work environment and work patterns

LW1: Flexible work environment facilitated by technology

The study highlights the importance of work in shaping the participants' desired future lifestyle. Interestingly, the participants did not mention specific job titles wanted, but instead described their ideal work environment and how they would like to work in the future. They imagined a more flexible and independent work setting, with the youngest participants particularly keen on having the ability to make independent decisions within their job. They also believed that technology would play a crucial role in their work environment, making it more integrated and efficient. In fact, except for those who wished to retire early, all the participants envisioned a future work environment that was integrated with technology, as it was seen as a key enabler of flexibility.

“I prefer to work from home and only for a couple of hours a day or maybe a few days a week” (R10)

“I imagined people work with laptops and sitting on open area.” (R13)

LW2: Diverse Career portfolio

Participants imagined work from home, working from different geographical locations, and working on multiple employments and moving towards entrepreneurship and continue the current employment. None of them imagined doing traditional jobs from 8-5. But instead, they preferred multiple incomes and multiple projects that they were a part of. The work contracts involving working hours and work premises were rejected. Instead, hybrid and remote work setups were imagined without hourly work contracts. Several participants (R8, R9; R12, R13) envisioned their current profession after ten years, but with more diverse work tasks.

‘I imagined doing, freelance work to keep my brain active, but I wouldn't worry much about work...’ (R12)

‘I always visualise myself as a teacher in the future. Also, I don't know at which level, but I'll. I'll more or less stay in the same profession.’ (R6)

“I am happy with the work that I do.” (R7)

LW3: Work is reimagined as retirement

It was observed that the professionals between the ages of 30-35 tend to prefer early retirement in order to pursue their passion. Farming (R1, R3), venturing into a workshop that builds things (eg. Robots) (R2), having a universal income and growing essentials (R4) was mentioned. Two participants who considered themselves early retirees further mentioned that they will venture into entrepreneurship 'by opening sustainable retreats in the hillside' (R5) and 'an eco-hotel' (R3).

Work stress was mentioned as the reason to prefer to early retirement. However, among all the participants, the desire to follow the passion was emerged as a strong expectation. The participants who prefer to have an early retirement further highlighted that they prefer to have a slow life and escape from the routine jobs and life they had in the cities.

“I would be retired and enjoying that and not worrying about work at all.” (R1)

“I would use whatever savings that I have accumulated there so far and use it wisely but frugally and even, use some of my other talents inside.” (R3)

“.....some of the income coming from the garden.” (R2)

“I love carpentry, I need to start my own workshop to build things.” (R2)

“I imagined myself as an entrepreneur having a sustainable lifestyle. I prefer to go back to the village I was born. I envisioned a sustainable retreat for tourists and locals that is run by me but operate by the community of my village. I saw the food for the restaurant is grown in the retreat.” (R5)

LL: Lifestyle choices based on preferred priorities of the future good life

LL1:AI integrated minimal lifestyle

Some participants imagined technology as an integral part of their lifestyle. During the analysis process, 'keeping things simple,' 'open to new things,' 'remote work,' and 'robots involved in daily life' were identified as frequent expectations of some participants, which directed the creation of AI integrated minimal lifestyle. The AI-integrated lifestyle is focused on a simple and minimal lifestyle. Minimalism is the foundation of the lifestyle, and it helps to declutter digital and physical space. The participants mentioned that they prefer to have 'smart homes,' 'self-driven cars,' 'Sustainable Technologies,' 'AI technologies,' and 'personal robots' in their preferred good life. The participants preferred to prioritise comfort and tranquility in the living space and preferred to have a contemporary lifestyle with a touch of sophistication and maturity.

LL2: Lifestyles that reflect resource conservation

Certain participants expressed an interest in taking more responsibility regards to their consumption habits that align with their values. They discussed the importance of being intentional and purposeful in relation to consumption. The respondents identified the correlation between their purchasing decisions and the impact on the environment. Consequently, they envisioned a future where resources are conserved for long term instead being wasted for short term convenience.

‘‘We have become a society where we throw things away, and in our grandparent's time, they rarely throw anything out. They serviced it as much as possible.’’(R1)

Some of the participants preferred to build independence and resilience in their consumption. They preferred to grow their food, minimise material possessions and advocate for sustainable consumption. They wanted to reduce their ecological footprint. Instead of making multinational corporations richer, they aspired to develop a collaborative consumption style among the community. They shared their desire to connect with nature at a deeper level.

‘‘Yeah, like I said, I saw in my head this garden and self-sufficiency and simple clothes. Because I'm now a retiree, I don't have a lot of money as my disposable income has gone down. I think my consumption patterns would reflect that. I wouldn't be spending on maybe clothes unnecessarily just when the need arises and if something is not serviceable anymore. Otherwise, it would be simply for food and other necessities and going out to a movie. Meeting up with friends at a cafe I might not by then, but only focusing on the necessities and using money just for, you know, sustaining ourselves, but not basing our lives on money.’’ (R3)

LL3: Lifestyle driven by purpose but embracing the individual satisfaction

Some participants envisioned an intentional lifestyle that embraces individual well-being and satisfaction. During the interview, the environmental impact of consumption was not explicitly presented, but it was implicitly reflected in the desired values that participants prefer to have in their future good life. They were interested in ‘brands that deliver the promise’ and ‘representing their values and aspirations.’ They envisioned a future where they witnessed nature’s beauty by visiting natural scenic places. On the surface, the answers of some of the participants seemed to be superficial and materialistic. However, it can be understood that they need to consume products that align with their interests or wishes. This lifestyle’s dominant values reflect autonomy, flexibility, purpose, and inclusivity.

“I have certain stuff I need in my life. I do not want to get a helicopter because I do not want that. But I love music, music is my passion. I love to have the types of equipment that help me to be a better musician in future. (R12)

“...So, I don't want to spend my money. if the goods that I currently consume satisfy my needs I do not need to consume more new products unnecessarily.” (R13)

LL 04: Mindful Living

Some of the participants, who prioritised the spiritual development in their future good life, aspired to have a conscious and mindful lifestyle. They describe the ‘homogenous homes,’ ‘basic interior and furniture’ and ‘functional clothes. The participants described anti consumerist behaviours in their preferred futures. When reflecting on their statements, the desire to have essential and basic requirements were highlighted instead materialistic things.

“I imagined my wardrobe with few linens and cotton clothes, nothing fancy, just, basic simple clothes and clothes and some outdoor gears” (R10)

“My good life turned to be very simpler, Since I am not worshipping any brands, I would have things I need. I will look for the functionality and the comfort-” (R 02)

“I would think twice, maybe more than twice before I purchase something, whether it's needed and all of the effort that was put into manufacturing it and how long I'm going to use it, if it is just for a short period if I'm going to throw that away that then that doesn't make much sense.” (R03)

4.2.2 Themes of the Social Cause Layer

The Table 5 presents the main themes emerged within the social Cause Layer. The sub themes contributed to construct the main themes are also mentioned and explained below.

Table 4: Themes and Subthemes of the Social Causes Layer

Main Themes	Sub Themes
S1: Change of youth and gender stereotyping	SS1: Immune to social norms
	SS2: Independence
	SS3: Equality
S2: Urban to rural migration	SS4: Preserving and developing the rural areas
	SS5: Building capabilities
	SS6: Individual and community resilience
S3: Egalitarianism	SS7: Driven by current values
	SS8: Human life is the highest value
	SS9: Change in socio structure
S4: Collaboration facilitated by technology	SS10: Flexibility
	SS11: Collaboration
	SS12: Reliability

S1: Change of youth and gender stereotyping

Some of the participants in the study pointed out that a nation's identity depends on the culture that flows within the community. They acknowledged the positive aspects of urban Sri Lankan culture, such as cohesion, extended family systems, and interdependence that should continue to the future. However, simultaneously, they imagined some aspects of the culture would change. Participants imagined more independent, educated, and technology-literate young women, societies that are gender neutral, weakening the traditional values and norms related to marriage, and more independent young people.

However, it was observed that some of the young urban people (the youngest participants of the study) aspire to integrate more to Western values and lifestyles in their preferred future. Based on the observations, there is a degree of uncertainty about whether they prefer to allow Western values to replace traditional values or whether they are trying to follow 'popular trends' presented in the media. The participants identified social media as a strong influence when they envision their future of the good life. However, there is a preference to welcome freedom, independence, fairness and equality into the current social system.

“It feels like I can make decisions on my own now. I am more mature and capable of doing things that I enjoy. I have the confidence to make my own choices and feel good about them. Looking back, I can see that this is exactly how I imagined being.” (R4)

“I watch some YouTube channels and I follow some Instagram pages of UK and Australian mums, how they do things, how they consume, how they look after their kids.” (R7)

S2: Rural to urban migration

Young professional participants envisioned their future good lives in the villages and countryside where they grew up. The discussions revealed that they preferred to return to their communities to empower them by using their skills and knowledge. Contrary to the notion of transforming the rural environment into an urban community, the participants were steadfast in their vision of preserving their rural areas' beauty and social values. This commitment to preserving the rural culture and environment was seen as a way of giving back.

Furthermore, ethical decision-making and kindness was envisioned as substantial values in this community. The community is involved in agriculture initiatives, exchange initiatives (similar to the barter system), and building capacities through sharing skills; however, within this structure, high individual and community resilience was imagined.

“It would be a small community, but there would be collaboration among all of them. Everybody knows everybody. When people know someone who makes things, they go to that person to get that item. This helps to bring together a community of people with different skills in the area while collaborating hopefully with peace. Here currency is also not a huge factor. Everyone is doing their own thing. Someone wants to run a small restaurant. So that person gets food from someone who grows Nothing. Yeah, it is a simpler life.” (R02)

“I thought of a system like what it used to be in the old days, neighbors knowing each other, and if you have more of one thing you give it to the person next door and exchange things, so it's on more of a friendly basis rather than for monetary economic purposes or social exchange.” (R01)

S03. Egalitarianism

During the discussion, some of the participants brought to light the difficulties they face in staying true to their values in the current social structure. They mentioned that factors such as competition, excessive work demands, the pursuit of power, the pressure from the economic system, societal expectations, and the need to keep up with trends often compel them to suppress their innermost beliefs and instead conform to society's demands. Consequently, the participants expressed a longing for a community that fosters and encourages inner values.

They preferred a change in social, political, and economic transformation that would allow their existing values to flourish, further guided by the idea that humans are equal in moral status. In addition, Universal Basic Income, the government or a state government act as the last resort to provide the essentials for the citizens were discussed.

“I wish that I had more free time now being a full-time worker. I have a very tough schedule therefore, I wish if I have more free time without attending a regular job then I could find more time to focus on myself, and my priorities.”
(R03)

“Not necessarily, because I think I would be driven by the current values that I have and that's why I'm there in that kind of future because I was guided by those values that I have. I wouldn't see much of a transformation in terms of the values that I have. It is just that the rush we have in our life does not let us to slow down and reflect, My work responsibilities sometimes made me to make decisions that are expected by the demands of the corporate but not align with my principles”
(R07)

S4: Collaboration facilitated by technology

Some of the participants imagined that their good life is empowered by technology. They assumed that technology integration could enable them to have a balanced life. The study identified several sub themes; flexibility, integration of technology and education, collaboration and reliable information. The participants assumed that technology integration could contribute significantly to improve work life balance, access to information and education, and finally result in flexibility and simplicity

“I imagined technology plays a big role in our life. I imagined my house hold work get done through a robot. Household chores takes more time from me, which I could have spent with the kids. Si in my imagined future, I want

technology to take care of all the tasks that I do not prefer to I do not have time to do.’’ (R06)

‘‘I wish that our kids will grow up in a world, where the competition is replaced by the collaboration. I am frustrated with the current education system in Sri Lanka. Therefore, I imagined my kids learning together, they were guided by the technology in every aspect to find what they prefer to do and study.’’(R13)

4.2.3 The Themes in Worldviews Layer (W)

Table 4 presents the world views emerged within the study in the worldview layer, including the sub themes that contributed to creating the main themes.

Table 5: Themes and Subthemes in the Worldview Layer

Main Themes	Sub Themes
W1: A strong relationship with nature is perceived as the basis of well-being.	WS1: Interconnectedness
	WS2: Dependency and disconnection
	WS3: Intergenerational knowledge
W2: Individualism and autonomy	WS4: Personal fulfilment
	WS5: Integrity
	WS6: Independence
W3: Spiritual Wisdom	WS7: Deeper connection to the mind
	WS8: Spiritual Practices
	WS9: Humans are noble
W4: Close and meaningful relationships are essential for human well being	WS10: Group orientation
	WS11: Relationship orientation
	WS12: Collaboration.

W1: A strong relationship with nature is perceived as the basis of well-being.

Some of the participants perceived a strong relationship with nature as the basis of well-being. When reflecting on the statements that discuss the deeper relationship between nature and humans, it was observed that, participants understood themselves as a part of nature. They aspired their role as stewards for nature instead of masters. The words mentioned during the interview ‘‘we are also nature’’ and ‘‘we are relational beings’’, ‘‘we are part of the web’’ illustrated the

desire of the participants' understanding about the interconnection that created by nature (or universe), while acknowledging that there is greater unknown that is beyond human capacity to understand.

‘I believe we need each other (nature) to understand who we are. As humans we try to take more power, but other living beings in this eco system does not distract the natural cycle. For me, I wish, in my future, if I could connect and understand this natural cycle and consciously respect and align with other living species.’ (R01)

One significant subtheme strongly presented in this worldview is the desire to depend on the natural circle and disconnect from human-caused supply chains. Some participants opened their frustrations related to the existing supply chains and the complexities and chaos it created within their current life. As a result, they had ambitious hopes to disconnect from these dependencies.

‘I would say less reliant on the government. So, I want to be much less reliant on anything.’ (R02)

Furthermore, in this world view, looking the world through the glasses of intergenerational knowledge was considered to be important. It was emphasised that participants are interested in shaping their preferred identities in their future good life, integrating the knowledge of their previous generations. The world view discussed here is mostly similar to the Māori worldviews related to self-identity and intergenerational equity. For Māori people, “the individual self-identity is not distinct from the surrounding world” (Kennedy 2020, 829). In addition, For the Māori, intergenerational equity implies that “all parts of the ecosystem are passed on to the next generation in an as good or better state as found, [meaning that] social and natural environments are protected or improved to provide intergenerational equity at the very least.”

“.....may be during that time, people might not know that they are helping to protect nature, thy did not have complicated needs like us, I have seen how my grandparents consume and how my parents consume. They did not have complicated needs like us, they have their own ways of being frugal and sufficient. The things I have seen in my childhood informed me or rather influences me to define myself as an individual on this world. Therefore, there is a connection between grandparents' consumption to my parents' consumption as well.’ (R1)

W2: Individualism and autonomy

The youngest participants in the study, depicted their desires about their future good life to be fearless, adventurous, and unconventional. These desires are shaped on the understanding that cultural norms and external influences should not be a factor that influence the decisions and choices, instead, young people should have their freedom to decide the criteria for their own happiness. This understanding is similar to the definition of autonomy provided by Ryan and Deci (2006, 157), stating that autonomy as “a sense of initiative and ownership in one’s actions”.

“.....according to the trend that the world is going on, the society is functioning, we would always live with fear, we do not know what could happen in 20 years because generations are changing. The technology is evolving. I did not imagine this fear in my good life, instead I imagine that I live my life the way I like to live, instead trying to make the society happy, it felt good.” (R04)

One significant sub-theme contributing to constructing this worldview is individual satisfaction, which can be gained by staying true to one's standards. Furthermore, the participants exhibited a pragmatic view about the role of marriage and money in the future good life. During the interview, it was observed that younger participants were individually focused on preparing themselves for the future. Unless the expected accomplishments are achieved based on their desired criteria, the long-term commitments tend to be delayed. They consider financial independence essential for their preferred good life, while acknowledging that money act as an enabler for them to explore further their life adventures.

“I think we cannot have a good life without money, money plays a vital role in the future. I think we need to make sure that we are in the right path to earn. And then in the future, you can do whatever you like with the money you earn.” (R05)

W3: Spiritual Wisdom

During the interview, some of the participants showed their interest towards developing inner spirituality in their preferred future life. It has been observed during the interview, to some extent, that the understanding of the spirituality among the participants were influenced by their religion. But at the same time, they aspired to understand or seek something greater in their preferred future good life. It was more about searching for wisdom and understanding on who we are from a human perspective, not just a religious one. Meditation and mindfulness were discussed as methods they prefer to practice spirituality. The value of human life was centered around these discussions.

“I really believe my values can change for the better, but I do not understand how they could be better because I should be able to reflect upon myself properly. I believe that I do not know myself properly yet because I do not have an account of my thoughts every single second of it. Every single fraction of it. I generally have my, values that I am practicing so in the future, what I believe is I can always be a better person. So, with my religious background and the guidance, get to do more meditation, I believe that I will realise myself better and then I will act better.” (R3)

“Be kind and just do the best you can as long as you're not harming anyone or anything. Nature somehow will give you its blessing, so you will always be all right. So just be a good person. That's it.” (R 13)

“They are more bound to each other. Because they understand that the relationships are very important and there was a time now, right now even, , we do talk to each other, but we don't spend time with each other. I wish that if people are more closer to each other and so that they know each other better and they can help each other in a much better way.” (R6)

W4: Close and meaningful relationships are essential for human well being

Some of the participants envisioned prioritising relationships as an integral part of a good life. They envisioned themselves as individuals who belonged to one or more social groups. They envisioned themselves as a part of their family, among the co-workers and community members. The sub-themes that emerged within this worldview include ‘group orientation,’ ‘collaboration,’ and ‘relationship oriented.’ Their beliefs were centered around the responsibilities, norms, and duties towards the other social group members. The human relationships are a significant aspect that shape the worldviews of these participants.

“I imagined stronger relationships, in what I pictures, the people understood that relationships are very important, and they were supporting each other.” (R11)

“For me, spending more time with family, living a healthy life and being a part of community are the most important things in my life.” (R12)

“I imagined a place where I could feel like I was home; that is what matters to me. I imagined a place where I felt welcomed, respected and needed. In that community, I have responsibilities, and I feel that I belong there.” (R13)

4.2.4 Themes of the Myths and Metaphor Layer

The Table 6 presents the main themes emerged within the Myths Layer. The sub themes contributed to construct the main themes are also mentioned and explained below.

Table 6 Themes and Subthemes of the Myths and Metaphors Layer

Metaphors	Subthemes
M1- Matrix	Apple dream
	Connection to technology
M2- Retro lifestyle	Cosy living
	Traditional aesthetic sense
	Nostology sentiment
M3- Colourful Garden	Natural beauty
	Health and wellness
	Tranquillity
M4- An idyllic town	Natural beauty and human infrastructure
	Close knit community
	Harmonious existence

Matrix

A participant (R05) mentioned the Matrix movie during the interview. R05 believed the tech movie matrix influenced to imagine the desired life the way imagined. The participants also mentioned the desire to connect to technology and surround themselves with various technological devices.

“This is the future that I imagined from my childhood. I wanted every aspect of my life to be smart. I bought my first iPhone when I was 15. Now, I am working on turning my home into an Apple ecosystem. Yeah, so it's like a childhood dream, which I am achieving.” (R10)

“I think the tech movies I used to watch are the once influenced me to imagine my good life like this. So if you take all the series of Mission Impossible they have different tech gadgets, right?” (R05)

Retro Lifestyle

Participants mentioned the need to indulge themselves in their childhood memories. Some wanted to collect past memories, while some wanted to connect to their memories again in their preferred future good life, particularly the natural environment they grew up in. In addition, interest towards the traditional contemporary architecture was mentioned. Some participants imagined their cozy lifestyle.

“Grey couch. Inside a lamp, like a beautiful lamp and a TV on the wall, a blanket on top of the couch and a beautiful coffee table. And the wedding albums underneath and the little ones photos underneath” (R 04)

“Kind of a house with a vintage interior and decoration” (R06)

“....that's why I said it looks like an old house, but it's not. So maybe what comes close to it is like a house that you see in one of those Japanese rural places.” (R01)

Colorful Garden

During the beginning of the envisioning process, when participants were asked to go to a place they preferred, one participant imagined standing in his vegetable garden, looking at it. He mentioned that he does not spend much time in nature but imagines himself in the garden as his favourite place. This illustrates the human zest to connect to nature. Participants' statements derived health, well-being, natural beauty, and tranquillity as subheadings.

“ the first thing I noticed was the bowl of bananas when I entered the kitchen.” (R2)

“I do not always spend my time in nature. But I imagined a colourful garden.” (R11)

“Place where there are trees and water and birds.” (R14)

An idyllic town

Participants envisioned various kinds of communities. One significant common aspect among them was peace, nature, unity, some urban elements and harmonious living. Based on the participants' statements, natural beauty with urban infrastructure, close-knit community, and harmonious existence emerged as themes. The natural beauty of urban infrastructure was identified as a theme because most participants envisioned some of the urban elements integrated into village life while preserving nature.

“I pictured a lady walking down a hill, greeting people along the way while wearing a trench coat and a warm hat in the cold weather. Children were playing nearby, while their parents were watching, and an older person was observing the scene. Some people were riding their bicycles downhill, while others were going uphill, waving and greeting one another. This is the kind of community interaction that came to my mind.” (R4)

“Beautiful roads like carpeted roads, and trees beside and benches to see it. And going further inside, there's a town that way.” (R14)

“So you would have that kind of community spirit in the village, but then they too will have some of those urban elements in them by then. And I guess you can't stop progress or at least culture from spreading.” (R02)

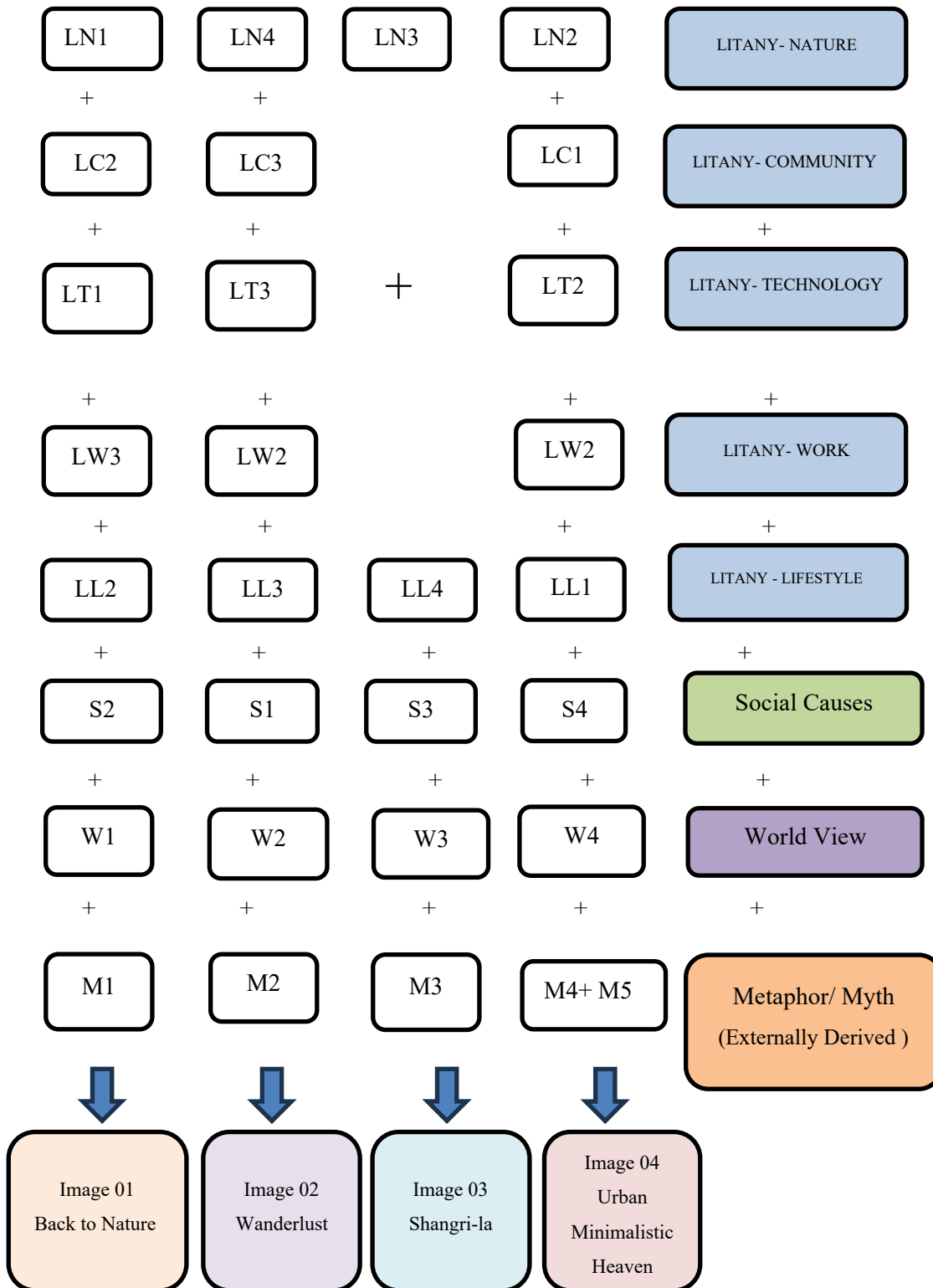
When allocating the metaphors after developing the CLA table for Litany, Social causes, and World views, it was identified that the metaphors derived from the data do not fully capture the litany, social cause and world view levels of each image. Therefore, I employed externally derived metaphors. Solar Perma Punk, Jack Sparrow, Shagri-la, an orchestra and Jetson were derived externally as metaphors to create future images.

4.2.5 Creating futures Images of good life

The fourth stage of the analysis includes the creating futures images of good life among urban youth. Therefore, based on the recurring patterns or themes within the data, themes and subthemes have been identified. The empirical materials about the good life loosely provided a structure during the analysis process, in building codes, themes and subthemes. In Litany Level, the main themes served as overarching aspects that spanned across the four images, however, the subthemes identified within the main themes differentiated each image. By identifying the overarching themes, similarities and consistency between layers, I have created the four futures images of good life. Each image does not represent views of every participant. They had contradictory views which made it challenging to figure out the layers which each statement belonged. However, I tried to make the futures images of good life as coherent as possible, but at the same time, the images can be further questioned or refined. Figure 01. summarizes the main themes and sub themes that contributed to create each futures image. Image 01 is titled "Back to Nature," while image 02 is named "Wanderlust", followed by image 03, which is referred to as "Shagri-la" and lastly, image 04, "Minimal Urban Heaven." The fifth stage of analysis includes

the narration of futures of images of good life utilising assumed characters whose persona aligns with the youth lifestyle choices created in the study.

Figure 6: Elements of creation of futures Images of the good life (cf. Kaboli & Tapio 2018, 39)



4.3 Future images of the good life among urban youth

4.3.1 Image 1: Back to nature

Introduction

The young urban professionals retuning back to the villages they were born. They escape from the urban life and begin the good life in the forest or on the top of the mountains of the hill side. They do not depend on a pay check, stressful career and national policies, instead, they connect with nature and trying to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. The village communities are empowered by the new skills and talents flow in to as a result of urban youth migration. Yet, the natural beauty and community values are preserved. During the day, walking to the top of the hills, harvesting their fruits, and reading a book under a tree are considered to be fulfilling tasks. They are immune to the external shocks happening in the modern world.

Table 7. Distinct elements of the image Back to Nature

Layers of CLA	Back to Nature
Litany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young professionals begin the new chapter of their life in the countryside. - Humans have a reciprocal relationship with nature. - Youth act as activists and take environmental stewardship as a serious responsibility. - Perceive clean and pure food as the building block of health. - Lifestyle is centered around self-sufficiency. - The frugal living and making wise choices with the existing resources reflect a practical moderate approach to financial matters.
Social Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The community will embrace the evolution brought by urbanisation while retaining the rural essence. - Ethical decision-making and kindness are considered to be values that foster the social structure. - Kindness is used as a new community model. - Community-supported agriculture initiatives thrive, enabling direct access to fresh, nutritious ingredients.

Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A strong relationship with nature is perceived as the basis of well-being. - Choices are influenced by intergenerational values. - Personal autonomy overdependency. - Moderate approach in Life.
Myths or Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solar Perma Punk: The Solar Perma Punk presents a way of life that combines both solar punk philosophy with Perma culture. Solar punk contributes by presenting an ecological community practising a local, self-sufficient way of living. Perma culture embraces ways of adapting harmonious integration of human sand land.

The story of Mr. & Mrs. Green

This all started ten years ago when I declared my childhood dream to my partner ‘Can’t we escape this city and live like the 1970s iconic series of Good Life’. Even though we worked hard for our glamorous jobs, financially stable, I did not know whether I found the purpose or happiness I ever wanted in my life. At our dinner table, all we did was complain about our work, work-related politics and how stressful our jobs were. We wanted to find our happiness. We want a life which is in perfect harmony with nature. Somewhere in our thirties, we decided to leave the big city and move to the countryside.

Life now is exciting. We started to grow what we needed. Our garden has all the seasonal fruits. My favourite activities of my sufficient lifestyle are working in the vaggitable garden, taking walks to the top of the hill, and taking care of the hens and bees. I think becoming self-sufficient helps to restore the balance on earth. I grow the food we eat, bake cakes, and stitch the clothes I dress. I believe we all depend on Mother Nature. We have to protect it for our future. In my garden, there are plants I tried to grow that are at risk of extinction.

I do try to protect the soil to make the insects live there. I want my grandchildren and great-grandchildren to see these plants. We embrace the slow food moment, that emphasises the savouring and enjoying the meals which are healthy, sustainable and locally produced.

Our home is a single story and we are located on the top of hills. It is a hybrid construction of timber and clay bricks. We have large windows and solar panels on the roof. We do use rainwater and store it. The whole water self-sufficiency restores water to provide enough water during the dry months. We are drought resilient.

I believe social cohesion is necessary for us and that is the heart of humanity. Our community consists of various professionals who lived in the city and moved back to the village. Our community is not impacted by the shortages, we are out of the modern world, but into the wild. We embrace kindness. We exchange our goods with others, and as a result, we can leverage our existing skills, and resources and create networks to meet the needs of our community and ours. Therefore, money does not play a big role in our community and even in our individual lives. We do have money that we have saved.

But now we prefer to have a frugal life. “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to catch fish and he will eat for the rest of his life”, we take this Chinese proverb to the next level. In our community, developing the skills to be ‘self- resilient’ is critical.

We did not want to spend our best years of life paying the debt to own a luxury house in the suburbs. Instead, we came back to our villages where we grew up as kids and built our own house, grew our food, and engaged with a small community. Now we have more control over our lives.

4.3.2 Image 2: Wanderlust

Introduction

The experiences gathered, memories collected, life lessons learnt and new skills developed during the adventurous journeys equals to the good life aspired by the youth. For them, world is a canvas of possibilities. The personal aspirations guide them to be who they are. The ‘pursuit of happiness’ is defined by individualised criteria. The life philosophy is based on exploring the unknown. In wanderlust, working does not involve physical location or working hour contracts. People are ambitious and driven by purpose, therefore they achieve financial independence at a young age. The decisions are motivated by purpose, personal values, stability and freedom.

Table 8. Distinct elements of the image Wanderlust

CLA Layers	Wanderlust
Litany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring the wonders of nature to connect to the inner soul. - Paid work is not considered a means to earn but an avenue to sustain the passion for exploration. - The willingness to embrace diversity will be integral to daily life.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology enables the youth to see the world as a canvas of possibility. - Consumption is navigated towards purpose of life.
Social Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The social structure is governed by the openness and acceptance of diversity. - The social norms are irrelevant. No one is trying to 'keep up with Joneses'. - Career, marriage, parenting and other life decisions are individual choices. Not influenced by cultural and social norms. - New social bonds are based on shared interests and values. - The gender gaps are closed. - The youth is seeking economic opportunities while collaborating globally. - Financial independence is recognised as a path that enables youth to be open to new opportunities.
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choices are made prioritising personal happiness and fulfilment. - Individualism - The world is a canvas of possibilities where personal aspirations take centre stage.
Myths or Metaphors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jack Sparrow: The movie <i>Pirate of the Caribbean</i> is a fantasy super natural movie series produced by Jerry Bruckheimer. The character of Captain Jack Sparrow, portrayed a legendary pirate, eager to find opportunities to leave a lasting legacy on his high seas. The character quest for true freedom, the freedom from burdens of the past, norms of the society, and fate itself.

Notes from the journal of a youth adventurer

I am grateful for the breath-taking views I witnessed during my last trip to see the northern lights, one of the unforgettable trips of my life. There is no greater feeling than knowing I am living my life to the fullest. The quest I have to explore the beauty of mother nature, experience diverse cultures, building friendships around the world opens up a whole new self of me.

I figured out in my journey that every decision I made so far, aligns with my purpose. I am aware of the social and cultural norms of the society where I was born. I respect them, but they do not directly guide or influence my decisions because I do not believe in understanding life from one perspective.

What will be my next adventure? Is it about finding my true love? Is it time for me to settle down? I am still in the process of opening up myself to understand the world around me. Things will occur eventually, love, marriage, having kids... For now, I will keep on exploring. Travelling helps me to see life as a gift. Also, it made me think that every culture has its way of helping humans to 'be happy' and content. I think I improved my language skills, discipline, well-being, and cultural knowledge while travelling. The recent journeys brought a new perspective to my current work project.

My zero working-hour job contract allows me more opportunities to utilise my time effectively. Work helps me to be financially independent, but mostly it helps me to sustain my passion for exploration. I am turning into a more responsible global citizen. My travelling helped me to understand is our role as humans in living on this earth. The goodness in a good life can be defined in one word; self-growth. I need to grow in every aspect, including physical and mental health. I like to maintain a sense of style. My style defines my story. Every piece of cloth is a reminder of a place visited, a culture experienced, or an achievement made.

It is hard to maintain long-term relationships due to constant travelling. But our community welcomes diversity. Technology facilitates us to work and learn from anywhere. Citizens have the control over their data privacy. Even though twelve years ago, the economic crisis had a significant impact on youth making it challenging for them to reach their dreams, I think we individually figure out paths to reach our dreams. This reminds me to reflect on the wishes I made to future myself ten years ago, during the time of economic crisis.

4.3.3 Image 02: Shangri-la

Introduction

The good life in Shangri-la is defined as a path to self-discovery. The essence of the good life is rooted in the depth of the connection an individual can have with his or her core. The youth try to live according to the rhythms of nature. Nature provides space for them to reflect on themselves. Equality, democracy and respect for each human being are considered to be the dominant values. The central government take care of the basic needs of the citizens, and individuals are involved in helping the community members in need. They contribute to the state duties which provides them a path to connect their spirituality.

Table 9. Distinct elements of the image Shangri-la

Layers of CLA	Shangri-la
Litany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The good life is defined based on the depth of connection to the mind. - Individuals engage in activities which will only align with own values. - Nature serves as the mirror for reflection and mindfulness. - The lifestyle decisions are made being aware of the consequences.
Social Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Society embraces fairness and equality. - There is one last resort for ensuring the well-being of the citizens. (Could be an international organization, government etc.) - The society needs to ensure the safety and admiration of human life. - Reflective communication would be the tool to handle conflicts in the community. - Moral principles will be the core for the operations of the society.
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External achievements or materialistic acquisitions will not define happiness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The human life has to be valued. Protecting the life of own self and others' have to be the purpose of living. - The concept of "power" in the society is absent. - Money does not play a significant role in achieving a good life. - Self-awareness is the goal for ultimate happiness.
Myths or Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shangri-la is considered a mystical utopia, represents a peaceful society. It operates with wisdom, respect and security while free from greed, poverty and struggle. It is a fictional place in the book Lost Horizon written by James Hilton in 1933.

A young citizen in Shangri-la shares his story about living his life in Shangrila.

My day begins with the dawn of the sun. I meditate every morning under a tree. Meditation helps me to be aware of the present moment, rather than the future moment which is yet to come but has not occurred. I believe that happiness lies in the present moment. We will be happier if we are more present in the present moment. My breakfast comes from the nature. A colourful plate of fruits, vegetables and green leaves provides the required nutrients to live a long life. We are depending on nature. Nature provides a rhythm for our life. I try my best to connect to my inner core; to understand who I am and my intentions.

I am aware of the consequences of my actions. I try to connect to my inner wisdom. The good life for me is spiritual enlightenment. I believe I live in the most ideal society, that I can ever imagine. Our society values human dignity and individual rights. For us 'good life' is about living in optimal health, and having deep relationships while maintaining the ideal personal space among each other. We are immune to greed, suffering, sickness and getting old. The dominant values in our community are generosity, kindness and moral virtue. Our community is cohesive. We are connected and understand each other holistically.

We use reflective discussions as a social practice to connect. Equality is celebrated, and we wear similar clothes. The interior and exterior of our homes are similar to each other with very few essential belongings. Each individual has access to fundamental needs abundantly. The universal basic income program empowers us to further explore our passion to contribute to a greater cause. There is no private ownership of property. The community uplift each other. We try to practice spirituality and wisdom to navigate physical reality. We take our duty to serve seriously and do it for the common good. We have a central administration.

Equality is an integral part of our community. In our social structure, the role of money does not play a crucial role. Most of the essential goods are provided by the state and we have our mission to contribute to the development of our community. Humans are spiritual beings. Our spirituality is not defined only by our religion. There are various cultures and religions co-existing in our community. But there is a commonality between all of us living in the community, ‘we respect humans’. We are all equal as humans, irrespective of differences created in past societies. But now we are aware of ourselves and, the importance of the human soul. That is our quest for life. This reminds me the what I envisioned as a good life ten years ago and shared with my colleague.

4.3.4 Image 4: Minimalistic Urban Heaven

Introduction

The meaningful relationships, simplicity, flexibility in life defines the good life of urban youth. They celebrate moments and create memories with their loved ones. They embrace simplicity in every task and is enabled by technology. The happiness is cultivated by the deep and genuine relationships. The less is more is a worldview that revolved around every decision and action

Table 10. Distinct elements of the image Minimalistic Urban Heaven

Layers of CLA	Minimalistic Urban Heaven
Litany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The main ingredient for the good life is deep relationships: the connection to nature, humans and technology. - Minimalism and simplicity are embraced to create a clutter-free lifestyle. - Urban youth jump off the therapy shopping hamster wheel. - Personal robots take care of most of the mundane tasks of people. - The ability to collaborate is considered a must skill in daily life.
Social Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Society is empowered by technology and flexibility - Society solves problems creatively and collaboratively, which is reflected also into the education system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial literacy is taught in the primary education system. - A week's working hours are limited to 15 hours, enabling more time to spend on non-economic purposes.
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preference for hands off approaches in daily life. - The less is more. - Deep and meaningful connections are desirable for human existence. - Money is not the contributor but a facilitator to provide a good life.
Myths or Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An orchestra: Life is like a symphony when every aspect of life is harmoniously integrated. - The American movie, Jetson which was produced by Hannah Barbera Productions presents a futuristic family. They have a robot (Rosie), who is taking care of the household activities.

Story of a young working mom

I live in a high-rise apartment in Colombo. My day begins at 7 a.m. I love slow mornings. My first ritual for the day is enjoying the sight of how morning light gently touches the face of my daughter. It is a sight that always fills my heart with gratitude. During this quiet moment, I appreciate the beauty of love and family. My next priority be conscious about what I eat and drink. Making breakfast is how we spend time as a family in the first hour of the day. I have a digital assistant, who reminds me about my daily to-dos in the morning. My clothes are selected by the digital assistant according to my daily tasks and weather forecast. My wardrobe is arranged in a minimalised manner. Therefore, selecting an outfit not at all time-consuming.

As a family, we value convenience in everything. For me, home is not just a place we live, but it is a sanctuary where we share our love, make memories and grow and get old together. Our apartment has a modern theme and but it is sustainable. We select the white colour for the interior, It represents the minimalism and cleanliness. Every aspect of the home including interior, furniture, lighting, sound, electricity, work and study setups, waste, cleaning and storing is integrated into the smart system. The personal data about health, and lifestyle are also integrated to the system. However, we have the autonomy and independence to decide to what extent we need to collaborate with technology.

I rely on technology everyday to help me in completing tasks, therefore, my productivity is enhanced and helps me complete my daily activities with ease. I love my career. For me, it is not an occupation but a mission that I am a part of. Being an Entrepreneur, allows me to spend time with family, work flexibly and contribute to the development of my society and to be a part of the community. In my close-knit community, collaboration enables the structure of society. Transparency and inclusivity are enabled through technological tools and collaborative platforms. Every voice is heard. We try to create memories, and shared moments with our community. Each member of the community contributes to the development of the community. The financial independence is considered as an integral part. Each member in the society is financially literate. The new technologies offer us new paths for investments.

We prefer convenience. Therefore, the concept applies also to acquiring food. We use technology to aid us in growing food. I have access to healthy, fresh food easily. Since every aspect of life is integrated with the technology, we never run out of things. Everything is taken care of. I just have to relax, enjoy, celebrate, connect and contribute.

4.4 Observations of envisioning process

The second research question of the study implicitly explored how the envisioning process influences youth's future. The findings of the study are based on the observations and the answers provided by the participants for question number 01 in the interview questions (See attachment 01). When the participants returned from the mental time travel phase, they were asked (Q 1), "How do you feel now?". The participants have provided the following answers to this question.

Good, yes. It's relaxing. (R12)

Being different. Feel relaxed and happy. (R5)

I felt relaxed because usually, we don't sit down and think. I felt like, it allowed me to reflect upon my current situation. And when you ask me to think about different things it allowed me to reflect upon so many things. (R3)

Just good. Mm hmm (R8)

Relaxed and kind of happy (R4)

I'm very calm. I felt comfortable. And kind of like I am here. (R2)

I feel good, more relaxed than I was before (R6).

I felt that I was able to organise my thoughts about my future. I saw a clear picture about my future. It was everywhere before (R1)

The statements suggest that participants felt relaxed, happy, and different immediately after returning from the mental time-travelling phase. Some participants could reflect on the aspects they were guided in during the process.

I noticed a considerable change in their facial expressions before and after participating in the mental time travel activity and during the envisioning process. At different stages of the envisioning process, while closing their eyes, some of them smiled. I assume they were able to experience the emotions and feelings of what they had imagined.

Few participants mentioned that they intentionally avoid imagining their desired future in the past since it could disappoint them when it is not realised. However, envisioning enabled them to imagine the future that they would like to have. However, it was noticed that the time they took for the imagination process was relatively more extended than the other participants. During the discussion, it was noticed that compared to other participants, the ones who were scared to imagine described the details of the images briefly, not in detailed.

“I moved from Kandy to Colombo. It's a huge change in my life. I have left behind everything that I had and started from scratch. Maybe because of that, I've learned a lot of things. We left behind most things, many things that we love, we thought like we will never be able to just get rid of these things. But we did. So, at the moment also I'm content. I have plans. I have dreams, of course. But, if I don't get to go to those dreams if I cannot fulfil those dreams or change things, I'm OK with that too. I am in such a phase of my life now.”

Interestingly, one of the strong observations was that the youngest participants' images were varied, diverse and detailed compared to the older cohort of participants. They have imagined every detail of the places they have travelled from their mind.

I pictured a lady walking down a hill, greeting people along the way while wearing a trench coat and a warm hat in the cold weather. Children were playing nearby, while their parents were watching, and an older person was observing the scene. Some people were riding their bicycles downhill, while others were going uphill, waving and greeting one another. This is the kind of community interaction that came to my mind.” (R4)

During the discussion, it was figured out that participants have imagined their future of a good life, not as a wish list; they have consciously or subconsciously questioned the current issues, limitations, and barriers while looking into the future possibilities that could emerge positively. When analysing the data using the CLA method, it was observed that participants criticised the

current realities through their imaginaries. Some of them shared these reasons during the discussion as well.

“I think as a Sri Lankan I am lucky because we have everything we need. So in 2-3 hours of drive, we can have a sunny climate as if you want a cool climate you can have that too. Within few hours we can see dolphins to sharks to tigers...And within 2/3 hours of driving, you can have every climate in the world on one island, right? So, we are blessed with a good nature and a good surrounding. But I think the politicians in the country don't use it.”

It was observed that despite common themes among the participant's images, each participant has a unique imagination. Some have mentioned they have imagined the things they have not considered before.

By reflecting on future images, it can be concluded that envisioning has enabled us to imagine novel images. However, how envisioning can be utilised to shape the future requires a more explicit study, which demands observations about the participants' behavioural changes or attitudinal changes in the long run, which is out of the capacity of the study.

5 DISCUSSION

The chapter discusses the findings of the study, focusing on three aspects. Firstly, it reflects on the main findings of the study regarding the future images of the good life and explores the aspects constitute in the good life. Secondly, it discusses the theoretical implication of the study by comparing its findings with previous work to explore the nature of the knowledge generated through the study. Further it discusses how the findings contribute to improve the conceptual framework of the study. Finally, chapter examines the contribution of the methodology in empowering and shaping youth futures.

5.1 Reflection of Future Images of Good Life

To answer the first research question of the study, what are the future images of the good life among urban youth in Sri Lanka in ten years, the study created four future images. The first image of future, ‘Back to Nature’ illustrates a life that youth is having a reciprocal relationship with nature. The second image, ‘Shangri-la’, the good life centers around the development of spirituality and equality. ‘Wanderlust’ is the third image. In this image, the good life circles around personal growth, adventure, and openness to diversity. The fourth image is named ‘Minimalistic Urban Heaven’, a good life that embraces minimalism, simplicity balance and harmonious integration of technology into daily life.

One of the salient findings of the study, was that the participants’ preferred futures turned out to be hopeful and optimistic. Even though Covid 19, economic crisis, extreme weather changes resulting from climate impact challenging the hopes and aspirations of youth, envisioned future images reflected positivity, solutions, adaptation, and awareness. Given the constantly evolving nature of the world we live in, young people grapple with myriad of challenges and are expected to adapt and develop new coping mechanisms. In response to this, the Sri Lankan youth imagined various coping strategies within the imagined good life.

Notably, the findings about the positive personal futures are consistent with prior research findings (Rubin & Anita 1998; Rubin & Linturi 2001; Rubin, 2013). However, contrary to Rubin’s studies the youth in Sri Lanka envisioned bright futures for the country and community. It can be assumed that the study’s focus on good life and desired futures might lead the participants to envision hopeful futures. However, this confirms the idea that the act of envisioning can help individuals to navigate challenging times and maintain positive outlook, even in difficult circumstances.

The images represented solutions for the prevailing issues. During the interview, participants discussed the envisioned images, but voluntarily criticised the current systematic political corruptions, broken promises of the Government, dependence of import-related economy, absence of personal space within the community and competitive education system. The participants of the study demonstrated a clear understanding about the dominant challenges that exist currently, while acknowledging the possibility of a new crisis emerging. This understanding led them to imagine good lives that are resilient in front of challenges.

Each future image illustrates how young people prefer to cope with the foreseen future challenges and creatively tackle prevailing issues in their own envisioned futures. Therefore, the study suggests good life can be envisioned as a way of developing resilience. Since resilience was not considered as an aspect of defining the good life in the conceptual framework, it can be considered as a novel input that can be utilised when studying about the good life in developing countries in future.

Several key concepts including harmony with nature, human relationships, social equity, spiritual fulfilment emerged in the study as essential aspects participants prefer to have in their future good life. These concepts resonate with concepts borrowed from Global South. Simultaneously, the autonomy, purpose, meaning, self-growth originated from the data analysis align with concepts borrowed from the Global North.

It was observed that in every imagined personal good life there is a greater need for human connection and for human relationship. However, the study does not address the reasons why individuals fail to create the collective transformation they wish for. The participants envisioned alternatives ways that embrace the wellbeing of both humans and planet, which confirmed that they have given a thought about living a sustainable life. They have visions in their mind. What stop them from bringing these images into reality or actions is another important question to be consider, particularly in the context of sustainable transformation.

The study revealed similarities in the perception about the preferred good life among young people of similar age groups, but difference s across age groups. The age range of the participants of the study was between 24-35. The participants from the 24-26 age category preferred independence, autonomy, and freedom in their envisioned good life. They had ambitious dreams and imagined the most positive images. However, instead rooting into commitments, responsibilities, relationships they preferred to continuously keep on moving in most aspects of their life.

The participants who belonged to 27-29 age category, preferred 'balance' in their preferred futures. Their desires centered around looking for alternative solutions to balance their work life and personal life. This age cohort had a greater hope on integrating technology to their daily lives. Investing on meaningful relationships was considered as a priority among these participants, while growing in their career. The age cohort between 30 – 32 imagined good lives

that focused on slow living. The eldest cohort imagined self-sufficient futures. Furthermore, it was noticed that participants between age of 30-35 imagined the most sustainable futures and desired ways of living that resembles strong sustainability focus.

When reflecting about the feasibility of the images, Shangri-la is an overly optimistic image that resembles utopian ideals. However, it could be viewed as a successful execution of envision activity that led participants to think free from mental blocks. It can be assumed that participants might have imagined a good life where individuals are travelling between physical reality and purely spiritual good life. Notably, the Shangri-la image itself deconstructs both Global South and North perspectives and offer a radical alternative for the future of good life.

The Global North well-being theories integrate autonomy, self-growth, meaning and purpose while the world views of the Global South consider communal well-being, spirituality and cultural diversity. However, Shangri-la does not resemble the collaboration of ideas of both Global North and Global South, instead it goes beyond. Shangri-la is an image that illustrates the earthly paradise, where earth flourishes and there is no requirement for sustainability or conservation of resources. The society is portrayed as a vision of a homogeneous community, where it does not embrace diversity. Furthermore, it disconnects the current history and progress.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

The study borrowed both Global North and Global South perspectives to conceptualise the good life and to define the boundaries of the study. The connections are drawn derived from the Eudaimonic Well-being Theory (Ryan & Deci 2001, 148; Grénman et al. 2023, 3; Waterman 2008, 236), Psychological Well-Being Theory (Ryff & Singer 2008, 20.), PERMA (Seligman 2018, 2.), Hedonist Well-Being Theory (Waterman 2008, 244) and Sustainable Hedonism (Lelks , 2021). In addition to these theories, further perspectives and world views has been integrated from Buen Vivir (Villalba, 2013, 1431), Ahimsa (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), Ecological Swaraj (Kothari et al. 2015, 368), Haura among Māori people (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), moderate living (Dayaratne, 2018,338) mindfulness (Sheth et al., 2011) and Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (Mongsawad, 2010).

The theoretical choice is guided by the scientific philosophical orientation and interdisciplinary perspectives. Good life is a highly complex and subjective concept. Therefore, interdisciplinary approach provides a boarder understanding. Even though the concept of good life has been studied within individual disciplines, except psychology and philosophy, there remains a research gap that integrates relevant disciplines comprehensively. The study draws the connection to the concept of good life by considering both Global North and Global South perspectives.

The future images of the study can be considered radical, contextual, and diverse. Each future image illustrates the participants' understanding of the good life and how their beliefs, hopes, dreams, fears, culture, principles, and mental models shaped this understanding about good life. During the interview, the majority of the participants mentioned that they are aspired to continue their current value system in their desired futures. The envisioned images illustrate the desire of the participants for an emergence of new societal structure that enables them to embrace their current values. These findings are presented in the deeper level of futures images, where each image discussed about different social causes. The collaborative societies, integration of technology, Universal Basic Income, travel between physical reality and spirituality shows the youth's deep desire for a transformation from current systems instead of their own values. The futures images created in the study and the personal futures envisioned by the participants, contribute to rethinking possibilities of future beyond capitalism and socialism. The youth critique the inability of the prevailing capitalistic structures to solve the and face the challenges.

When considering the contribution made by the theoretical framework in creating future images of good life, it can be argued the comprehensive understanding gained by integration of both the Global South and Global North aspects facilitated the study to generate diverse images about future of good life. Although not initially conceptualised within the theoretical framework, the concept of resilience emerged as a significant concept to understand good life through the data analysis. According to Wong (2011, 82) resilience involves “the process of adjusting and overcoming setbacks, resulting not only in bouncing back but also in becoming stronger”. When comparing the study results with the conceptual framework of good life, resilience is an essential aspect needed to integrate in to the conceptual framework when examining good life in developing economies context.

It becomes clear that the young people transform themselves to be more resilience after facing adversity. The youth in developing economies undergo economic, social, environmental and political challenges. However, the future images explain how young people turned to become more adaptive, innovative and creative in problem solving and imagination, in the face of these challenges. According to Wong (2011, 75) it is critical to understand how positive desires and negative realities influence each other in order to understand the concept of good life. The experiences, understandings and courage developed by facing adversity is reflected in their future desired images of good life.

The theoretical frameworks focuses aspects of good including virtuous living and experiencing a sense of fulfilment (Ryan & Deci 2001, 148; Grénman et al. 2023, 3; Waterman 2008, 236), autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, environmental mastery, positive relationships and meaning and purpose (Ryff & Singer 2008,20.), positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman 2018, 2), harmony with nature, social equity, cultural diversity and spiritual fulfilment (Villalba,2013, 1431), non-

violence and cooperative society (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), interconnectedness between family well-being, environmental well-being and spiritual and physical health (Haywards & Roy 2019, 113), moderate living (Dayaratne, 2018,338) and self-reliance (Mongsawad , 2010).

The good life and well-being have been studied in psychology utilising the concept of resilience (see Wong, 2011). But the mainstream theories did not discuss adequately the resilience relation to good life. It can be assumed that resilience might have emerged as a significant concept to understand the future of good life among youth due to the paradoxical relationship between GDP and HDI in Sri Lanka which was discussed in Chapter one.

5.3 Evaluation of methodological Implications

The study aimed to envision the future images of good life among the urban youth of Sri Lanka, while understanding how the envisioning can be utilised to empower and shape the youth futures. To achieve these objectives, the study employed a mental time travel method beginning with a guided meditation. The study conceptualised mindfulness as a practice that has the transformational capacity to direct youth towards a life that prioritise both human and planetary wellbeing. Gramsci as cited in Göpel (2016, 161) suggested that sustainable development begins from 'progressive self-consciousness' when individuals start to change themselves and inspire others to change.

The mindful meditation that was utilised before the mental time travel, enabled the participants to be aware and to be conscious about the current moment before they envisioned the preferred futures. Milne et al. (2020, 4) state that mindful practices help individuals regulate their minds better to respond to internal and external stimuli. As the facilitator of the mindful meditation and mental time travel exercise, I observed that mindful meditation prior the mental time travel phase helped participants to be relaxed and connect deeply with the current moment before travel to the future.

The mental time travelling together with the mindful meditation , allowed participants not only to imagine their desired future, but to feel the emotions that they prefer to experience in future. Cuhls (2017, 119) introduced mental time travel as a 'fantasy trip' that we take with our intuitive imagination and is driven by the facts we know and stored in our mind. The process enables the participants to face the fears of imagining future, connect and feel the future. When the participants returned back from the mental time travel phase, they were aware about their desires, preferences and dreams for future. The awareness of this future could encourage them to make conscious decisions about future, and take actions that guide them towards their preferred futures. Further the envisioning process enabled the participants to feel emotions and feeling of

the future they desired to have. This could enhance the self-awareness, that could motivate youth towards positive behavioural changes.

5.4 Future research and limitations

The suggestions for future research can be made deriving from the issues raised in findings, the limitations inherent in the study and considering additional avenues for improvement and refinement. First the study suggest that good life can be envisioned as a way of developing resilience. Since resilience was not considered as an aspect of defining the good life in the conceptual framework, it can be considered as an input that can be utilise when studying about the good life in developing countries in future. Therefore, while employing the aspects discussed in both Global North and Global South, further researches can be reflected on the positive desires and negative realities in envisioning a good life.

One of the critical findings is related to the desire for human connections and relationships. However, the study did not examine the inability of humans to collectively create sustainable societies that they desire. Therefore, what stops them from bringing these images into reality or action is another important question to be considered, particularly in the context of sustainable transformation. Even though humans have a more profound quest to change themselves and society to be collective and a part of the collective transformation, in reality, most individuals and communities operate with conventional practices. It would be a relevant and impactful area to research why and what factors prevent individuals from being a part of collective transformation that they desired to have.

The study does not analyse the pathways to get into these images, instead it discusses at the general level the desired changes that participants wish to have in their future. In my opinion, the process of reaching the end point is essential as knowing the end point. The images of futures present the end point. Therefore, scenario analysis together with futures images might provide a strong methodological approach to the future research.

When reflecting about the methodology, it would have been more useful if one set of participants were guided to the future using mindful meditation prior to the mental time travel and another set of participants are guided only utilising the mental time travel. Comparison between the results could have provide more insights on how mindfulness can influence the choices participants make during the mental time travel process.

The study adapted one to one online interview, but it could be complemented with a workshop after the one-to-one interview process to discuss futures images created. This can allow to discuss the created images with the participants and provide opportunity for them to revise the images to further align with their thoughts generated. During the analysis, it was understood that

participants are interested to live a sustainable life and prefer to contribute towards sustainable transformation. But the participants represent a niche youth segment of the country. Therefore, more data is required from urban youth living in Sri Lanka to have a broader perspective on their preferred future and relationship with alternative ways of living that enhance the well-being of both people and planet.

Imagining positive futures can be a powerful tool to engage youth in shaping the future of their societies. To understand the future of a good life among youth, it is critical to consider more worldviews, contributions from different disciplines, data from various geographic locations while maintaining gender balance, and representation from indigenous communities. All of these factors are crucial to envisioning sustainable futures.

5.5 Final Thought

Every individual on the planet must have the freedom to envision their good life for future. It should be utilised as a practice to gain more clarity to make life decisions, to have the autonomy and to make choices that individuals are really needed. The individual imaginaries of good life can help the youth to feel the hope, positivity, and agency over their future. The urban youth in Sri Lanka, did envision their future with hope and flourishing. Nevertheless, until they were guided to imagine these desired futures, most of them were not even aware of them. While contributing to filling the literature gap, the study further helped youth see their future.

Moreover, the transition occurs when an individual travels to their desired future and feels what they want. Then, the actions started to guide towards achieving these desired images, where the innovation and creation occurred. It could happen at an individual level, but if this is transferred as a practice, then more people will try to see their future and work accordingly. Therefore, imagination and vision act as catalysts in the process of transformation.

The youth are often overlooked interms of taking part in shaping the narrative and finding solutions to create a better future. Although none of the possible visions of the future will become a reality, engaging in this creative exercise is crucial as it allows to chart a course towards a better future. The stories that created during this exercise will play a significant role in determining the direction. Therefore, individuals must imagine a better set of futures for both people and the planet to make better choices when it comes to envisioning a desirable future from the perspective of young people.

Transformation occurs gradually and everywhere but it takes time. Transformation is simply explained by using the metaphor 'river'. It will continuously flow, and moulds it shapes according to the terrain it flows through. If the transformation needs to be occurred deliberately, then imagination is required. Milkoreit (2017, 1) suggests that "envison of possible, likely, and

desirable futures can guide decision-making and direct social change in collectively determined directions''. In the process of creating a deliberate transformation, youth can play the role of the change agents.

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APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW PROCESS

ATTACHMENT : THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

FIRST PHASE- OPENING QUESTIONS:

1. Please introduce yourself: name, age, nationality, education or occupation
2. Could you please elaborate on your day to day buying behaviour; What kind of factors influence your purchasing decisions?

THE SECOND PHASE- MINDFUL MEDITATION

The script of the mindful meditation:

Welcome to the Voyage to the Future Good Life. It is a creative exercise where a time machine will transport you to the future. It will take about 20 minutes to imagine the future of your good life. For this experience to work optimally, I invite you to relax and sit in your chair comfortably before starting our journey to your future. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers in this process.

This meditation will help you to be relaxed to travel to the future. So, it's important that you can release your mind, relax a bit, breathe and enjoy your journey to the future of your good life.

If you are ready, we can start.

So, sit comfortably in your chair with your feet on the ground and take a moment to relax your body. Feel how your feet touch the ground, maybe wiggle a bit with your toes.

Now feel how you sit in the chair, how your body touches the seat now; take three deep breaths and with each breath, you release the tension you may have and all thoughts.

So, you focus on the breathing now.

THE THIRD PHASE - MENTAL TIME TRAVEL

Welcome yourself in the present moment. Now, imagine you are travelling with a time machine to the year 2034. You can go anywhere in the future. It can be a desired place or a desired

situation. In this situation, you have accomplished something you desire and learned to deal with some difficulties you may be experiencing.

Now look around where you are, your surroundings. What does it look like? What do you look like? How old are you? What are you wearing? How are you feeling? What are you doing?

Home

If you aren't already there, move to your home now. Walk around your home – what kind of a dwelling is this? Do you live alone, or do you share the dwelling? What does the interior look like? Do you have your own room? Can you go there? Open your wardrobe. What does it look like? What do you feel when you see your wardrobe? What kind of brands do you see? Can you identify some brands you know in your home or bedroom?

Now let's go to the place where you dine.

Food

What kind of food do you see around? How do you prepare food? How do you bring food for preparation, and from whom? What does your favorite meal look like and why? Where do you eat?

Shopping

Where do you shop? What are your shopping habits? How often do you buy from the second-hand market?

Work and leisure

How will you finance yourself? How do you spend your leisure time? What is the role of money in your life?

Nature

What is your relationship with nature? How much of nature is there? How do you interact with nature?

Travel

How do you travel? What does the transport system look like?

Community

We will go outside to investigate your immediate neighbourhood. Step outside and stand there for a while, eyes closed. What do you hear and smell? Sense beneath your feet: What is the

surface you're standing on? Now look around: what's your neighbourhood like? Walk around and see whom you meet.

What is your relation to these beings you see? What is the role of the community? If there are people, what are they doing, and is this something you are usually part of? Do you feel accepted in this community? And why? How does the community function here?

In preparation for our return journey, I want you to sit outside in a lovely, quiet spot.

Sense inward:

Do you feel bound to this place? What is your relation to it?

Take a few deep breaths as you let yourself be filled with the sensations of this future

And now, make your goodbyes.

I will count from 5 to 1.

And then you can open your eyes

FINAL PHASE: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel now?
2. What does the good life in 2033 look like for you and your community? (mental well-being, physical well-being, emotional well-being, family)
3. Can you reflect on what matters the most in this imagined future?
4. Can you describe what you imagined? (housing, food, leisure, work and travel)
5. How do you feel about your consumption habits and your good life? (relationship between them, is strong or weak, sufficiency/ materialistic, sustainable, the relationship with objects)
6. Do you have any ideologies or set of values or any communities that could influence your future consumption choices? (who, why, role models, warning examples, societies or communities)
7. What is the role of money, economic activities and consumption in achieving a good life in the future? (money is a facilitator or the prominent, relationship between money and good life)
8. How do you interact and connect with nature?
9. How does your community thrive in this future? (equality, social capital, individual role in the society)
10. Did you identify any shifts in values in the imagined future from now, and what are they?
11. What influenced you to imagine your aspired life like this and why?
12. Do you have any other comments about what we've discussed?

Acknowledgement

To improve the readability of the thesis report, I have employed the Grammarly AI tool to proofread and revise the language of some of the chapter sections of the study.