Crypto Twilight Productions

Associative Truth

A Model for dealing with the world's problems

Introduction

The following paper has been created as part of the Maps Map Hack 2022 funded by Protocol Labs. The goal of this paper is to outline a constructive, viable alternative approach to mapping in a bid to address current challenges in society such as Climate change, AI automation and global poverty.

Why maps need to move on

As an approach the map is a phenomenally powerful tool, with a long history of orienting humanity forward. The challenge however is that they are by design built to neglect or even omit key details that need to be considered when contemplating a destination. In the case of society's modern day ills this manifests in maps being incapable of capturing concepts of history, nature or culture. Oftentimes these "soft" concepts are viewed as immaterial to the challenge at hand usually leading well meaning solvers to the implementation of in-apt solutions. Another challenge the mapping approach poses is that of an inability to capture the post delivery consequences of a solution. The usual rationale behind this being that of scope and an attempt to avoid scope creep. Added to this the predictive modeling necessary to hold both current state and future state simultaneously usually results in an unwieldy representation that fails to highlight the issues of most import.

To illustrate, let us go to back in time to 1908, to the invention of the famed Ford Model T, the pioneer mass produced car that led to the automobile industry as we know it today[1], and consequently climate challenge. Depicting a forward map of the consequences of the Model T taking into account the culture and moores of the time the diagram would look something like this:

[1] https://corporate.ford.com/articles/history/the-model-t.html, accessed 2022/03/11

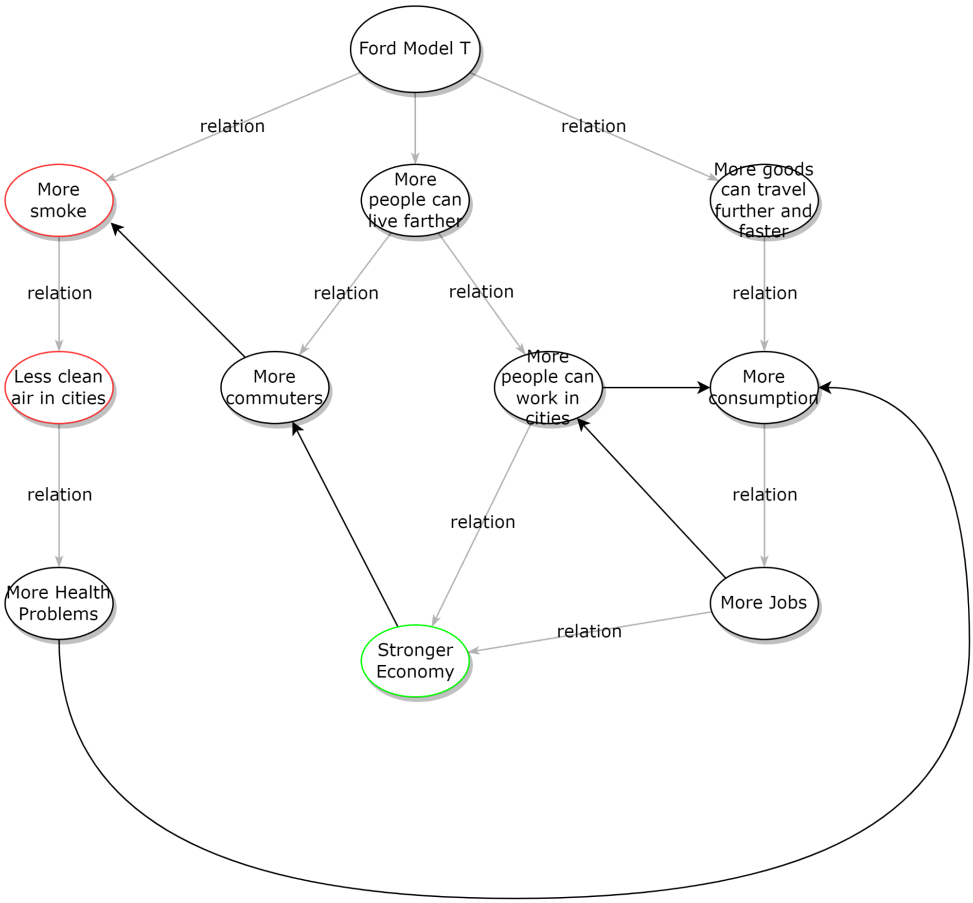


Figure 1 - Model T Consequence and Effects

What Immediately becomes apparent is that the map is full of holes and seemingly overlooked issues, such as the impacts on industry, the creation of more roads, greater consumption of natural wildlife habitats for suburban settlement and so on.

Given the thinking at the time, these aspects would not have been important and in many cases would have been viewed in a positive light as they would spur the concept of economic growth and productivity. Hence the problem with maps is fundamentally deeper than that of omission. It is a problem of culture and hence thought.

Thinking about thinking differently

The premise of global society today is based on numerous dark histories, of slavery, genocide, colonialism, war and many more. These dark histories are often obscured by the reigning world order to keep society focused on the present and away from more disruptive or rebellious pursuits. Modern and aboriginal sciences are not immune to this phenomena, hence we call into question our current understanding and methods employed when mapping because in light of the above they are designed to be naturally exclusive of certain truths over others. Hence despite many attempts to solve problems with maps these dark realities have often surfaced quietly, devouring well meaning champions, leaving the masses right back where they were. For example would-be water powered car inventor or UN peace keeper. The temptation may be strong to put this into the "that's over there box" but when looking at climate change the water powered car inventor was positing a solution better than any offered by the latest Tesla, and the UN peacekeeper is being allowed to become part of the problem where they are supposed to be part of the solution. Hence the need to open thought.

Thus armed with this understanding as a starting point we start to see global issues and problem solving less as a matter of relationships and more as a matter of associations and nature, in brief as a matter of situational drivers. The underlying principle being we do not know and might never know the whole truth hence we shy away from asserting relationships that may be instantly disproven with disastrous consequences for those on the ground. The thought distinction we are looking to establish is that of the difference between what "feels good" and what "does good."

For example, to stop and take time to understand the problems of a person in need does not usually feel good. However it is actually closer to doing good for that person and their situation, than simply paying money for the problem to go away, an action very much in the feel good arena. With this in mind the challenge with mapping of activities is that the thought mode is systematically designed to encourage participants to express (and include) what they want to see (feel good) whilst deprecating that which (though it might be pertinent) they do not wish to consider (do good). In summary, mapping hides the hard

items which are usually the keys to doing good. Hence we ask where does this leave us? I.e. We still need to understand what to do?

With this shift in thinking we begin to step slightly outside of culture so as to view the situation holistically to the extent that available truths allow. We do so with the understanding that new information is continually being added and removed, thus we arrive at the concept of Associative Truth Modeling or ATruM.

Associative Truth Modeling

Associative Truth Modeling (ATruM) is the practice of expressing contextual concepts as Truths around a challenge in a way that allows for associations to be easily made and unmade. Each Truth has a history that is understood and represented in the context of time. Each truth has loose associations to other truths around it. The only relationship a truth has is with history e.g. a truth may exist in one history and not another, or a truth may emerge in one history and die in another. To understand histories, think culture, so a truth born in one culture may be taken on and die in another culture, and when viewing concepts each participant has their view of history and hence the Truths available to them.

Associative Truth Modeling differs from relational modeling as exemplified by maps in that ATruM does not assert relational truths. ATruM is a non-static experiential model where participants experience the model not so much in a bid to reach a communal consensus but more in a bid to reach a fleeting singularity, i.e. “I see what you see as you see it.” The defining aspect here is that whilst consensus is broad, complicated and time consuming, singularities are small, short and quick in nature. They are way point indicators as to the direction each party should move in it’s respective context and understanding towards a reflective (i.e. self applicative) solution. The point here being that each party is guided by enlightened self interest[2].

The power of the ATruM model is the ability to play back and playforward histories with the ability to interpose possibilities. The point to note here is that histories do not fork, they converge and they diverge whilst being distinct, separate and independent.

[2] https://www.gutenberg.org/files/815/815-h/815-h.htm, accessed 2022/03/11

To illustrate what this would look like in practise we would use a presented example on reducing poverty so the 99% can eat[3].

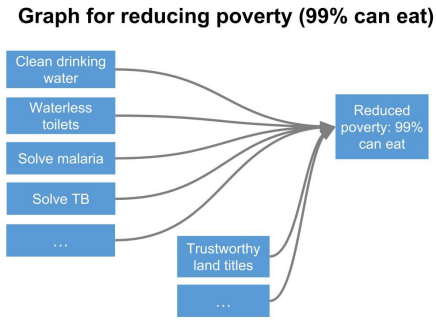
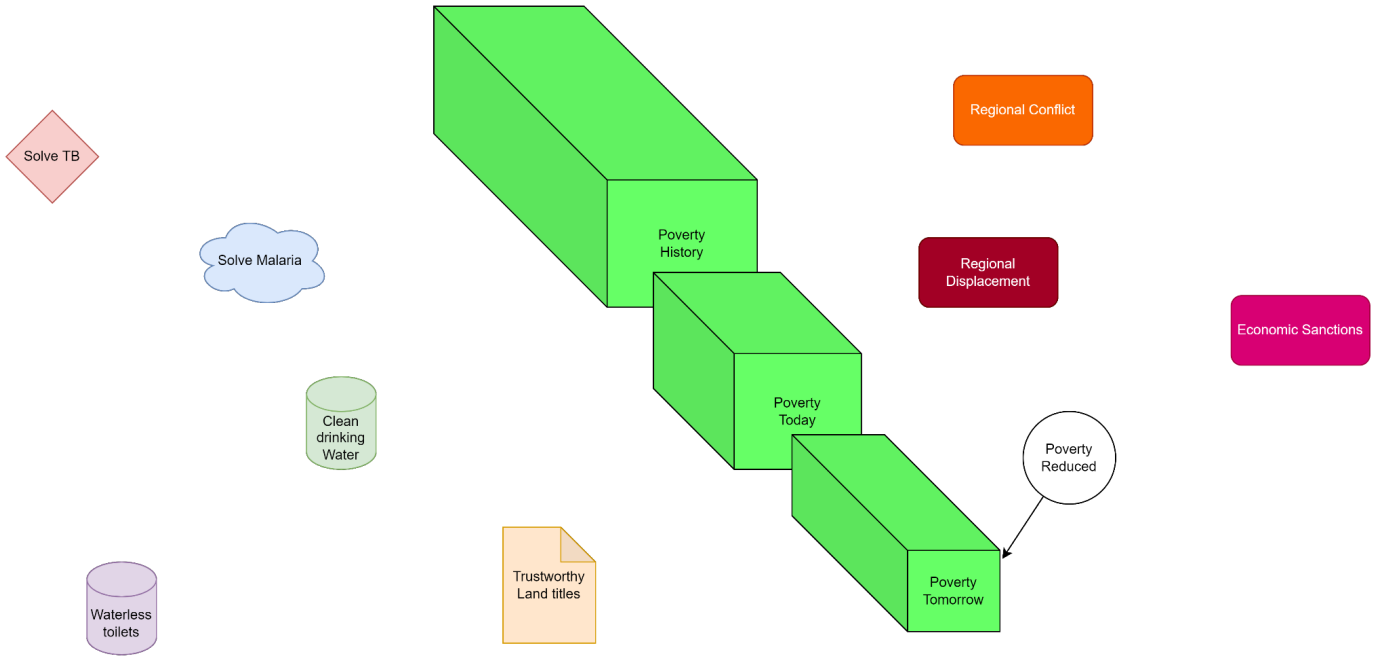


Figure 2, Source: Trent McConaghy

The map in this example points to "Clean drinking Water, waterless toilets, etc. as pertinent issues to addressing the problem, however at this resolution this leaves out other truths such as impact on the "helping" population (i.e. the people doing the giving), systemic histories of poverty in the location and more. Hence although the proposed solutions in the map seem appropriate, as with the Model T example there is a lot that is assumed to be assumed.

Working with an Associative Truth Model on the other hand the same concepts stand each on its own with it's own history, associations and position. Returning to the issue of Poverty Reduction we are able to more clearly understand whether funding should be allocated to the loud issue of "Clean drinking water" or whether funding should go to promoting the less urgent but more important land title issue. In short, determining which provides the more sustainable (do good) as opposed to the tactical (feel good) answer becomes easier, with a stronger degree of traceability and congruence. The diagram below illustrates what the model might look like visually expressed, reiterating that the illustration represents a state of truths.

[3] https://medium.com/@trentmc0/starships-and-tokens-d8c32728a24b, accessed 11/03/2022



Poverty Reduction - Associative Truth Model

Conclusion

To conclude, mapping does still have applicability in as much as Satnav guides us on our route commutes, and our focus when dealing with tactical issues. For larger, longer running and more insidious challenges like climate change, sustainable development, poverty reduction etc Associative Truth Modeling provides a “moved” needle in tooling.

A closing thought, if you were to head to a conflict zone, would you bet your life on a mind map or would you prefer to wager on something that gives a closer reflection of the Truths on what is known and unknown about the situation you’re about to enter? To solve our climate challenges and more, we will need truth and quite a bit of it.