

# Shaping the Anatomy of Socio-Economic Community Problems towards Effective Solutions

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## **Abstract**

Socio-economic community problems (CPs) are getting complicated every day, despite many developments regarding social innovation, behavioural economy and inspiration economy programs that advanced the way socio-economic problems are tackled. The literature is also scarce in relevant to CPs and how they can be shaped to bring-in socio-economic out.

A qualitative approach is followed for randomly selected socio-economic CPs to explore the way they are realised and then how their anatomy was dissected. Based on the reviewed literature and the findings, a framework for shaping CPs towards an effective solution and outcome was proposed. The paper concludes with minimum success factors that can be used when shaping a socio-economic CP, in order to ensure breakthrough unique outcomes, where the problem won't occur again with the same causality.

**Keywords:** problem solving, communities problems, socio-economy, breakthrough solutions

## 1. Introduction

Any socio-economic problem regardless of its nature carries with it default solutions. However, these solutions might not bring-in effective outcome solutions in a way prevent such a problem not to occur again. i.e. many solutions offered today either they are totally resource-dependent, or carry no breakthrough solution that would ensure society development. Kendler et. al, (1962).

Therefore, in this paper review the communities' problems (CPs) and the way they are analysed. Then the capacity inside the socio-economic issues are explored to realise how it demands could be met. The complexity of the socio-economic problems shall be investigated through understanding its anatomy. (Cox, 1995; Wals, 1994; Bull et. al.,1988).

Based on the synthesis of the literature review, a framework shall be extracted from a qualitative analysis of the different socio-economic problems analysed, Jonassen, (2000). The analysis shall help to understand how the problem is dissected in a way that its hidden opportunities are exploited and optimised towards an effective outcome. Buheji (2018b).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *Communities Problems*

Problems are available in every community as a fact of life. No community regardless of its level of development is free from problems. In fact, any community claims that it doesn't have problems means it is not developing. However, there are communities who managed to tackle its issues with a close focus on the socio-economic stability, as Scandinavian Communities, and thus eliminated or mitigated the influence of such problems. Qin et. al (1995).

There are many communities problems that have been tackled by different socio-economic advocates that covered issues as: instability of the community economy, unemployment, theft, security, youth migration, quality of life, adolescent problems, low accessibility to important survival services and utilities as electricity or clean water, increase in child and women abuse, families instability, crime and violence, domestic violence, drug use, environmental contamination, ethnic conflict, health disparities, HIV/ AIDS, hunger, inadequate emergency services, inequality, jobs, lack of affordable housing, poverty, racism, transportation, extremist control, corruption, low society productivity, etc. In this paper, we shall try to understand the anatomy of the communities' problems and the best way in eliminating it. This is very important as we foresight the challenges of the communities in future and it high possibilities of being more complicated. Wals (1994); Newell and Simon (1972).

Studies show that communities problem that was analysed carefully or tackled based on observation early are less prone to repeat again. Being resource driven to solve might help a community problem (CP) to decline, but won't necessarily help to prevent it from occurring. (Buheji, 2017; Cox, 1995; Bull et. al., 1988).

## *2.2 Analysing a Community Problems*

Solving communities' problems with appreciated outcome requires good analysis that would lead to better long-run solutions. The CP analysis would need to take into consideration the frequency, the duration of the problem occurrence. How many people are affected or impacted with it? We need also to appreciate how the CP is disrupting the community's life, and the possible severity on the stability of the socio-economy. How this CP is creating cultural change or influencing about assumptions, attitudes and mindset about life. (Buheji, 2018a; Davidson and Sternberg, 2003; Bull et. al, 1988).

Sometimes an issue is perceived as a CP, but in reality, there are many opportunities of it, or it is an issue that is giving us signs for the greater problem, Buheji (2018b). For example, the issue of more suicides registered in a certain community is a sign for non-ability to control hidden mental health diseases, such as anxiety. The suicide was a sign for us to take care of the lack of anxiety management in the community. Hence, we need to ensure when we analysed CP why such an issue exists and do that without bias. This means we need to start the analysis after collecting many unbiased observations that can be synthesised and turned into pieces of evidences. Cox (1995).

Any CP should be seen as being the outcome of something; this something is what needs to be discovered. Thus we need to determine the barriers and the resources or the assets associated with CP, Cox (1995). Here we need to investigate what are the opportunities, that sometimes might be represented by the barriers or the obstacles towards a solution that we need to explore and exploit. When we exploit the opportunities in the CP, we could specifically address where to hit or pull, with minimal resources, to come with a problem solution outcome. Buheji (2018b, 2017).

The analysis of the community problem means we could clearly analyse the CP and realise its possible consequences. This means finding opportunities that would give chances for addressing causalities more effectively.

## *2.3 Managing the Capacity vs. the Problem Demand*

Any CP need cognitive energy that requires modulation (Goldstein and Levin, 1987).

Attempting to solve CP need first development of its recognition through observation that clarifies the problem and creates an analysis of all data and thus developing solutions. This means we need to dissect the problem to the level where we discover its capacity.

When CP solution is planed it should include till the stage of the validation of the piloted or model solution, or the maintenance of its outcome. Once a CP is recognised the community issue should be clearly defined with precise objectives and impacts. This means understanding the CP environment and the type of capacity that would address its demands. Hence we can focus on symptoms that would enhance the capacity with minimal dependence on extrinsic resources. Cox (1995); Wals, (1994).

One of the sources of discovering the type of CP capacity is through studying the sources of failure frequencies. I.e. having causes for intermittent failures is different that conditional

failures. Hence, addressing issues as the CP frequency, duration, range, severity, equity, perception all participate in exploring a problem capacity. For example, knowing and recognising of the rising percentage of the population who are at risk of being patients with Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) during any stage of their lives would lead seeing the capacity in relevance to speed of discovering the NCDs potential patients before they acquire it during any stage of their life. Or in minimising the period in their life where they would acquire it. Or minimising the severity of the NCDs during any stage of their life.

The other way of discovering the CP capacity is to investigate the type of problem mindset, Mayer (1992). i.e. what behaviour, or condition, or attitude it carries. Again one of the outcome solutions for the NCDs is dealing with the attitudes and the behaviours or the mindset. Hence, shaking the assumptions about the lifestyle through working with chronic NCDs families means we raise the capacity for facing the CP. (Buheji, 2018a; Davidson and Sternberg, 2003; D'Zurilla et. al.,1971).

Hence, one could conclude that the real cause of a CP may not be immediately apparent. It may be a function of social, economic, or political conditions, or it may be rooted in behaviour or situation that may be manipulated, D'Zurilla et. al. (1971). We need to dare to identify the forces that drive the CP. These forces are considered to be the force field analysis. Part of the rising of the CP capacity is to restrain those forces that act to enhance the problem. Example of these forces would be as the social structure, the cultural traditions, the ideology, the lack of knowledge, the lack of accessibility or availability to specific services. Cox (1995).

#### *2.4 Why Socio-Economic Problems are complex?*

Most of the socio-economic problems can be characterised as being intransparent, i.e. lack clarity of the situation. For example, most of the socio-economic problems would have unclear constructs about its reason for existence, or transience. The CP complexity is represented in the numbers of constructs that are related or interrelated with it. Even the number of decisions that influence it. Take for example the issue of poverty. Swaminthan (2008); Cox, (1995).

In order to simplify a CP, we need to deal with its dynamics, i.e. how it changes over time. Again here the issue of NCDs is a good example as NCD are increasing generation after generation. We need also to investigate what are the constraints and the sensitivity of this CP.

The more CP is real and deep into the society the more it is likely to be complex. Economic development may depend on the global economy; a force you can't have much effect on. You may have opposition, either from within the community itself, or from powerful forces trying to protect their own interests. Cox (1995).

#### *2.5 Socio-Economic Problem Anatomy*

It is very hard to change anything in life without understanding its structure and its anatomy. Targeting the anatomy of a socio-economic problem help in differentiating the level of

understanding of the function of the problem outcome and how its structure can be observed, categorised and then diagnosed. Without understanding the problem anatomy, we can't realise the story it carries within it. If the case is a complex socio-economic problem, we need to have close analytical views similar to what is done when dissecting the anatomy of that problem. The idea of dissecting the socio-economic problem is to study the most effective ways and approaches that would create the greatest outcome efficiently. Understanding the story of a socio-economic problem build its value-streamed solution or what we call 'outcome'. The clarity of this 'outcome' would help us to create a differentiated change in our lives, besides the lives of our communities. Buheji and Ahmed (2017).

The anatomy of any socio-economic problem is made of two main parts: social problem and economic problem, Buheji (2018a); Newell and Simon (1972). These two part are inter-related, i.e. they are dependent on each other, i.e. one influence the other. Through understanding the relation of these part and their influence directions we can catch the threads of breakthrough solutions. For example, having social problems like poverty, illiteracy, corruption, unemployment would lead or be related somehow to economic problems later. Same thing when we have energy crisis, inflations, over-population and/or unequal income distribution it would be related to social problems later. Once we establish the detailed relationship between the 'social problem' and its 'economic factors' of the socio-economic issue this would mean that we have started to 'dissect' the problem anatomy. Dissecting a problem would help to search and see new approaches to interpreting and experiencing its insights. This would create a great environment for breakthrough solutions. Swaminthan (2008).

In certain socio-economic situations, a socio-economic problem is regarded as an unwelcomed, or a harmful condition that needs to be dealt with, or managed effectively; dissecting it effectively would ensure its proper elimination in the most efficient and effective way. A problem might be due to instability in certain results, or unsustainability of the expected ones, as the issue of the instability in the rates of unemployment in a country.

In certain high achieving cultures, the socio-economic CP start when opportunities are missed, or the resources are limited, or not effectively being utilised. Other culture would see their socio-economic problems start when their community has a low capacity in pursuing innovation, or has been losing initiatives. In certain communities' socio-economic problems found to exist due to the unaligned, or the unattained development, or growth strategies. In many leading countries as Canada and Scandinavian countries, a CP could be heard when searching for breakthroughs and creating legacy or recording performance. Buheji (2018a), Cox (1995).

### **3. Methodology**

Based on the literature reviewed, a qualitative evaluation of the CPs would be explored through two types of evaluation tables. The first table would focus on the list sample of communities issues that shape the socio-economic problems anatomy. This table links the field visits observations with the opportunities seen. The second table focus on the type of

communities issues shaping the socio-economic problems anatomy. i.e. this table links the communities issue with the socio-economic problem.

These two tables would build both the framework of solving socio-economic issues which is called (DARE) and is represented by the first table and then (DISSECT); which is completed by the second table. Based on the framework, some success factors would be proposed to help setting the socio-economic CP's towards a differentiated outcome and a breakthrough solution that develop the community.

#### **4. Findings**

In order to understand how the community problem (CP) practically works in relevant to socio-economic issues, we need to (DISSECT) it as we do in anatomy. This would be done in two stages first through problem realisation stage as synthesised from the literature reviewed and it could be called (DARE). In (DARE) the way field observation brings to the CP is realised through the opportunities discovered for each socio-economic issue presented. Then, we'll see how to design community issue outcome from (DISSECTING) the problem and defining its main sources.

Table 1 which represent the DARE part, list sample of communities issues that shape the socio-economic problems anatomy. To show practically how opportunities are exploited from CP, five socio-economic issues were selected. The socio-economic issues vary in background, starting with CP issue shown in the failure to optimise the utilisation of the role of thermal water to the benefit of health tourism in a Bosnian village through its treatment SPA centre services. The other issue, was the quality of life with people with disabilities that managed through NGO's. The third issue was the challenges of 'children of unknown parent' Home-Care centres. The fourth issue taken was discussing the effective outcome of Women-Empowerment associations. The last issue in Table (1) shows how we can exploit the opportunities for a village through their honey and fruit juice factory.

Table 1 shows examples of early observations (called for short 'obs') from the first field visit for the assets, or the barriers, or the resources, or the processes that might influence the socio-economic status of the community in relevant to each issue sampled. The table shows how the observations and the 'hidden opportunities' (called for short 'opp') that build-up the proper information on the problem, to generate potential solutions and outcomes.

Table 1. Relation between observations and opportunities that are generated from the field visit

<b>Field Visit Observations</b>	<b>Opportunities Seen</b>
<i>Socio-Economic Issue1: No clear value-added contribution for 'Thermal Water Treatment' in the village SPA Services</i>	
Obs 1- Variety of Treatment Specialty Obs 2- Level of Services to be challenged Obs 3- No enough studies to prove the uniqueness of Water Treatment Obs 4- Only 50 % of the treatments use water	Opp 1- Need for compiling the data on cases of Water Treatment effect Opp 2- Need for classification of the conditions of the patients (range, diseases, sex, etc.). Opp 3- Can measure and publish the impact of water treatment Opp 4- The Wealth of 'thermal water' services are not clearly appreciated Opp 5- Improve the ways of packaged services are delivered Opp 6- Many possibilities of sharing-economy in tourist attraction marketing program
<i>Socio-Economic Issue2: Unstable quality of life for People with Disability getting services through NGO's</i>	
Obs 1- Operating cost Obs 2- No evaluation for the type of strengths within the targeted sector	Opp 1- potential investment in people with disabilities Opp 2- Classification for the type of abilities available Opp 3- No trust funds that support such NGO's Opp 4- No measures on tangible results of the services delivered
<i>Socio-Economic Issue3: Children Of Unknown Parent Home Care</i>	
Obs 1- Not clear whether causality of cases is deeply analysed Obs 2- Total dependence on external funds Obs 3- 140 children to the age of 18 Obs 4- No clear followup plans for youth after leaving Home Care Centres	Opp 1-Focus on the three parties for volunteering (financiers, intermediaries, beneficiaries). Opp 2- Potentials for creating Trust for Home Care Opp 3- No efforts for preventing the repeat of cases (i.e. Children with unknown parents) and to prevent the problem from the source Opp 4- Follow-up cases and ensure their total independence & 'leading by example'
<i>Socio-Economic Issue4: Enhancing the level of Women's Empowerment targets through NPOs'</i>	

<b>Field Visit Observations</b>	<b>Opportunities Seen</b>
Obs 1- Focus on the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and for Profit Org. Obs 2- Research in the field of women Obs 2- Women empowerment is seen from the services angle only.	Opp 1- Strategic planning and impact measurement focus on basic empowerment through services mainly Opp 2- Re-evaluate type of woman competitiveness training programs and their value towards ‘women development’ and ‘women advancement’.
<i>Socio-Economic Issue5: Improving the villagers return of honey and fruit juice factory</i>	
Obs 1- Market (Supply vs Demand) Obs 2- Increasing consumer confidence Obs 3- No clear measures to enhance market size & differentiation of product	Opp 1- Research Focus on high-end products supply chain (i.e. honey) Opp 2- Conduct market study to re-packaging, distribution and supply chain of the honey and fruit juice. Opp 2- Diversify the villagers products using the factories facilities.

Hence, the main part of CP anatomy is to apply DARE table constructs, i.e. to link observations with the ‘hidden opportunities’ inside the socio-economic problem.

After the field visit observations, one could analyse and synthesis the socio-economic CP. Therefore, DISSECTING the CP can be exploited through Table 2. Table 2 shows that when gathering information about a CP, there are several different methods one could use. It is worth to mention that no one method is better than another and that opportunities exploitation depends on many conditions that surround the socio-economic problem.

Table 2. Type of communities issues shaping the socio-economic problems anatomy

<b>Community Issue</b>	<b>Example of Socio-Economic Problem</b>
Opportunities are missed	Lack of basic needs in creating safe food
Resources are limited	Stretching of Police Forces to cover the fast demographic development
Resources are not effectively utilised	Lack of effective utilisation of patient beds
Low Innovation Capacity	Reduce sanitary system blockages that cause diseases and reduce the quality of life.
Loss of Initiatives	Closing the gap and accelerating the transformation towards ‘Women Development’ instead of ‘Women Empowerment’ after 5 years from the Women National Plan Kick-off.
Unaligned, or unattained development or growth strategies	Re-establishing the National University (Research and Development) outcome that would help to deliver better profitable multi-disciplined projects and also inspire effective



Community Issue	Example of Socio-Economic Problem
	project closure. Re-alignment of and integration between contracted projects and published papers is achieved.
Searching for Breakthroughs & Legacy Creation, or Creating better Record performance	Specifying the qualities of water in the ‘Water Treatment Spa’ in the specific region of Bosnia rather than treating with water without scientific claim or evidence. This breakthrough niche helped to establish better results in the patients ‘length of stay’ and enhancing the marketing strategy about the nature of water uniqueness compared to popular Spa competitors in other countries.

Each of these community issues sets the scene for an outcome that would develop the community and address all the CPs once and for all.

### 5. Discussion

The study of the CP principles from socio-economic perspectives requires defining and understanding its anatomy. Without the anatomy of such problems, it may not be clear exactly what could be its solution outcome. Defining the problem accurately based on the hidden opportunities seen through its dissected anatomy found to clearly influence the solutions, or even the breakthroughs it can bring to the community. To reach a creative breakthrough problem solution one may sort out the symptoms of the problem from the problem itself. Therefore, it is important to identify the underlying socio-economic problem in order to generate the right solutions and differentiated outcome. Buheji (2017).

Figure (1) illustrates the eight steps that make us move from (DARE) to (DISSECT) in dealing with the socio-economic problem. As shown in Figure (1), CP problem could start counter-clock after setting the intent to discover how to establish the socio-economic problem thinking that would differentiate our communities’ development. This could help to establish the socio-economic models through the different ‘vectors of wealth’ which is a term summarises the assets, or the barriers, or the resources that would bring the problem solution outcome, or explore the ‘hidden opportunities’.

These vectors of wealth would help us to start the first attempts in visualising how re-invent the socio-economic stories. Once this early visualisation is done we can start our journey to understand and dissect the socio-economic CP effectively. At this stage, we can put a design or factors on how to overcome CPs ‘mental blocks’ and establish its breakthroughs.

## Principles of Problem Solving (DARE to DISSECT)

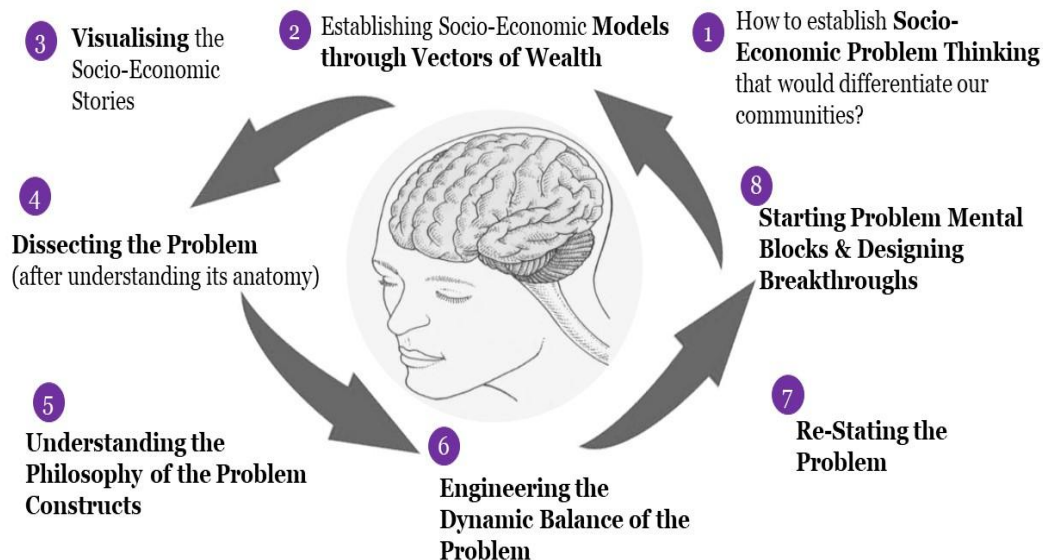


Figure 1. Framework of DARE to DISSECT steps in dealing with Socio-economic CPs

### 5. Conclusion

Taking into account the literature reviewed, the synthesis done in the tables and the framework proposed for dissecting a socio-economic community problem (CP's); a guideline from factors could be proposed that would bring breakthroughs toward an effective community outcome. There are *key success factors* that could be proposed for shaping the anatomy of socio-economic CPs towards these breakthrough of effective solutions.

*The first success factor* for an effective CP outcome is the problem solution which comes from small projects consisting of several small, accumulated and connected attempts. These attempts help us to explore opportunities within the problem, or what the problem could bring to the organisation, or the community. In summary, this success factor creates a value-added contribution to the targeted socio-economy.

*The second success factor* retrieved from the discussion is the problem solution which seeks to address the mindset of the socio-economic issue identified. This could be followed by a problem-solution that aims to measure the impact of the outcome proposed on the community. This could be followed by a success factor for the problem-solution that maximizes the exploration of CP internal capacities. This, in turn, makes us feel that we can change and appreciate reality, no matter what are the circumstances or the working environment of the socio-economic issue.

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