

Conference Proceedings



Communal Pathways to Sustainable Living

Conference of the *International Communal Studies Association (ICSA)*
Findhorn Community and Ecovillage, Scotland: 26 - 28 June, 2013

Communal Pathways to Sustainable Living

**Proceedings of the 11th conference of the
International Communal Studies Association (ICSA)
Findhorn Foundation and Community, Scotland
26 – 28 June, 2013**

**Edited by
Dr Graham Meltzer**

**This conference was held under the auspices of
the ICSA and hosted by the Findhorn Foundation.**

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Proceedings of the 11th International Communal Studies Association Conference,
Findhorn Foundation and Community, June 26th – 28th, 2013.

Edited by Dr Graham S Meltzer.



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in these proceedings – those of the 11th conference of the International Communal Studies Association (ICSA) hosted by the Findhorn Foundation and Community in late June, 2013. The ICSA holds a conference every three years. It attracts communal scholars (academics from disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, education, architecture, politics, utopianism, geography, religious and cultural studies etc.) as well as community activists (members, advocates and associates of intentional communities) who come together to exchange research data and analysis, ideas and applications. Presentations cover diverse aspects of collective life in intentional communities (both historical and contemporary) such as communes, kibbutzim, sectarian communities, ecovillages, cohousing, and housing cooperatives.

The 2013 conference focussed on the nexus between ‘community’ and ‘sustainability’. At a time of increased public awareness of the human causes of climate change, there is a critical need for information about, and demonstration of, low impact sustainable lifestyles. Historically, many intentional communities developed materially modest lifestyles in small socially cohesive groups, striving for self-sufficiency and exercising stewardship of their land. Modern day ecovillages, of which Findhorn is a prime example, seek to further reduce their ecological impact by technological, social and other means. The 2013 ICSA conference showcased sustainable lifestyles within communal settings and offered a wellspring of data, analysis, ideas and applications to inform and inspire those who attended. We hope that these proceedings (and the associated video footage of conference presentations) similarly inform, encourage and inspire.



Graham Meltzer

Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABOUT THE ICSA

The International Communal Studies Association was founded in 1985 through collaboration between the US based Communal Studies Association and the Kibbutz Studies Centre of Israel. The ICSA promotes and supports research of communal groups, functions as a clearing house for research projects, encourages comparative studies and maintains a list of communal organisations and individuals active in communal research internationally. The ICSA also encourages the exchange of ideas and information amongst communal scholars and with communards from around the world. The purpose of the association is to provide a common framework for the exchange of information about communal life in communes, ecovillages, cohousing, kibbutzim and other collectives throughout the world.

The organisation is multidisciplinary and strives for international representation amongst its members. Its structure was led from the very beginning by a Board of Directors composed of scholars and activists from different countries. International conferences are held every three years and are organised in the host country by one or more ICSA members. The ICSA Board meets face to face only every three years at each conference (although electronic Board meetings occur annually). At each conference, the Board considers potential venues for the following conference and elects a Chairperson for the following three years. Since that first conference, the others have been held in New Lanark and Edinburgh, Scotland (1988), Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA, USA (1991), New Harmony, IN, USA (1993), Yad Tabenkin, Eyal, Israel (1995), Amsterdam, The Netherlands (1998), ZEGG, Germany (2001), The Amana Colonies, IA, USA (2004), Damanhur, Valchuisella Valley, Italy (2007), Emek Yezreel College, Emek Yezreel, Israel (2010) and the Findhorn Foundation Ecovillage and Community (2013).

The conferences of the ICSA enable scholars and members of kibbutzim and communes to meet and exchange views and research. The participation of scholars at the conferences has promoted many reciprocal visits of kibbutz and communal scholars to kibbutzim and other communities around the world, thus enhancing first-hand experience and the exchange of knowledge. The ICSA maintains contact with parallel associations like the CSA (Communal Studies Association) in the USA. It also instigated the establishment of the European Utopian Studies Association as the result of the participation of some British scholars at the second ICSA conference, in New Lanark.

The ICSA central office is located at the Yad Tabenkin Institute. The Institute's archives and library contain extensive collections about communities from around the world which are available to the general public upon request. An electronic Bulletin of interdisciplinary material is distributed to members biannually, as well as a stream of relevant material received from various organizations and publications throughout the world. The ICSA also promotes the publication of the conferences' proceedings and maintains a list of scholars active in kibbutz and communal research.

The ICSA Office is financially supported by the following institutes:

- Research & Evaluation Authority, Oranim Academic College of Education
- The Institute for Research of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, The University of Haifa
- Yad Tabenkin, the Research & Documentation Center of the Kibbutz Movement
- Yad Yaari Hashomer Hatzair Research & Documentation Center



The ICSA is very much dependant on subscriptions from members. Enquiries from new and renewing members are always welcome. Please visit the [ICSA Website](#) and/or contact:

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MESSAGE FROM JAN MARTIN BANG, OUTGOING ICSA CHAIR

A Change of Direction?

The ICSA conference held at Findhorn in Scotland in June of this year marks a major change for the Association, in several ways.

The title of the conference, suggesting that we look closer at what intentional communities can contribute towards sustainability, puts our studies firmly on the road map to a more secure future. The world is reeling from severe global problems, in economics, in pollution and its resultant climate change or climate chaos, and in social problems, with wars and conflicts going on in many places around the world even as I write. Many communities around the world are addressing just these problems, and are experimenting with possible solutions, looking for new ways to relate to the environment, and new social systems. Research done on this can make a major impact upon the rest of the world, and I am proud to be associated with an organisation that is doing just that.

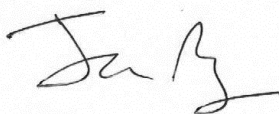
Over the years we have used a variety of venues for our conferences, but I think everyone who was at Findhorn will now agree that to have our conference at a living community enhances our experience considerably. Many participants availed themselves of the opportunity to take part in the three day “Taste of Findhorn” experience just before the conference, and the feedback that I heard was overwhelmingly positive. I was heartened to find that in our discussion of the next venue, we on the Board were firmly in agreement that it should be at another community. This is a tradition I hope we have now established.

The ICSA was founded as an academic research association, but was right from the beginning open to community activists, partly due to the many kibbutz members who were also doing research. For the first time, this conference at Findhorn opened up to workshop and poster presentations from activists, giving them a chance to share their experience and information in a non-academic framework. I found this hugely successful, and hope that space will be given to this side of ICSA’s activities in future conferences.

We had a very good attendance, with nearly 200 participants, and in addition anything between 50 and 100 from the wider, local Findhorn network. This meant that the hall was crowded with about 250 people for the plenum sessions. I feel that we can be proud of such an impressive figure, and that we owe an enormous vote of thanks to the extremely professional Findhorn conference team, and especially to Graham Meltzer for pulling all this together.

Findhorn might be a hard act to follow, but we have opened up new vistas and directions for our work, and I hope that this will give us an impetus for the next conference.

With best wishes,



Jan Bang, outgoing Chair of the ICSA Board

MESSAGE FROM CHRIS COATES, CURRENT ICSA CHAIR

Thirty five years of being involved one way or another in my own communal pathway has taught me that the myriad of ways of organising communal life are robust, resilient and as relevant as ever. Despite the fact that individual communities come and go I see no reason to doubt that communal living will continue to provide models for a different way of living into the future. I hope as ISCA chair over the next three years I can play my small part in helping the Association to continue to provide a focus for research and serious inquiry into the various strands of communal living for both practitioners and academics alike.



Chris Coates

ICSA Chair, 2013 – 2016

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

The ICSA is a diverse organization of scholars, community members and others with an interest in communities. This is one of the strengths of ICSA. The papers included in these proceedings reflect this mix; they have a variety of styles and content – from academic articles to personal essays on community life. They have not been through a selection process, let alone, peer reviewed; any paper presenter at the conference was entitled to have their written paper published here. A selection process was previously applied in accepting presentation proposals for the conference itself, to ensure that they met an acceptable standard and were relevant to the theme(s) of the conference.

The papers *have* been through a simple editing process. Rather than impose a style, academic or otherwise, the papers have been edited only for consistency of layout (i.e. font, line spacing, etc.). Otherwise, the style used by the author has been retained, including the spelling conventions used in their country of origin. The contents have been divided into seven sections, beginning with the plenary presentations followed by six ‘themed’ sections. The content of the papers represent the views of the authors alone and not those of the ICSA, The Findhorn Foundation, or the conference sponsors.

During the conference we filmed each of the paper presentation sessions. This had several purposes. With participants having to choose between four parallel sessions, we hoped it would ease their concerns about missing those sessions they could not attend. Also, we wanted to be able to make the presentations available to a much wider audience around the world. The videos also offer you, the reader, the opportunity to view the 20 minute conference presentation to get a more personal and accessible version of the material. You will find a link to the video presentation at the beginning of each paper. Note that videos are not available for all of the paper presentations, just as written papers are not available for all of the conference presentations.

The decision to produce an electronic book (eBook) of the proceedings was motivated by a desire to make them available to the widest possible audience at the lowest possible price (i.e. free of charge). It is a format that worked well for previous conferences. We welcome feedback on whether this still works for you. Enjoy!



Dr Graham Meltzer

Editor

PART ONE

PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

Keynote Address: The Dynamic Planetary Context for Intentional Communities¹

Robert Gilman
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Video of presentation: <http://youtu.be/Wi0MFsrrW7k>

Abstract

Where is the momentum of history taking us? What can demographic, economic, technological, environmental, and cultural trends tell us about our possible futures? What role might intentional communities play in shaping that future? How will that future shape communities?

In this talk I will address these questions from my perspective as a former astrophysicist who has spent the last 33 years exploring the possibilities for 21st century sustainable cultures, was centrally involved in starting the Global Ecovillage Network, and spent seven recent years as an elected City Council member in a small town.

Central to this perspective is the idea that humanity is now involved in a cultural transformation as profound as the shift out of hunting and gathering and into agriculture and cities that happened roughly five to ten thousand years ago. The leading cultural forces of population and technology already reflect the new era but our major institutions – government, business, religion, finance – reflect the old. Building new institutions can only be done in groups, and intentional communities provide an important laboratory for creating and testing such new cultural DNA.

Yet these communities must also adjust to their rapidly changing societal and natural environment. A whole-system understanding of our times can help to create realistic future expectations so that these communities can stay on the right side of history. Such an understanding will hopefully also suggest promising new research questions.

1. Introduction

Thank you. It's a delight to be back here [at Findhorn]. Graham was talking about being moved. I'm very moved to just be standing here. Thank you, Graham, for inviting me to present to this ICSA conference. I'm very touched to be here.

I have something that I'm really excited to share with you. I need to warn you up front that it's something with a number of different pieces to it. I want to be able to connect some dots but I've got to communicate what those dots are to begin with. I have the confidence that this is a high-capacity crowd, so I think we'll be able to do all right with it.

I am cognizant that, for a number of people in the audience, English is not your first language, so I will try to speak in a way that will be intelligible. I also have more text in the slides than I might have if I were just speaking to a group of fellow Americans. For those of you who are

¹ Apart from the Abstract, this is a direct transcription from Robert's presentation.

into the fine points of how to do presentations, understand that the reason that I have more text is for the sake of those who don't have English as a first language. And then the other reason is that it helps me remember what it was that I meant to say.

I'd like to start off with a little preview, which is to say...

***I've never been more encouraged
about the future than I am today***

This is the summation of the talk...that I've never been more encouraged about the future than I am today. I hope that by the end of this talk, you'll understand why I'm feeling this way.

The major focus of this talk is going to be looking at where we are in history. What is it that's going on right now? What's the momentum of the times? Where have we come from? Of course for this conference, a particular emphasis will be on the implications for intentional communities.

2. System domains

But before even getting into that, I'd like to start with a piece that deals with a certain characteristic of systems that I haven't found a lot of literature about, but I've increasingly felt is one of those really important things to understand about systems. I'm describing this as system domains. So what is a system domain? A system domain is something that grows out of the relationship between a system and its context. I'm going to give you a verbal description but then I'm going to give you a bunch of examples, and this is most easily understood through the examples. So don't worry too much about understanding this verbal description. A system domain is a region in the relationship between a system and its context, where the system has a characteristic set of behaviors. Additionally, the behavior of the system can change dramatically when you move from one domain to another domain.

2.1 H₂O

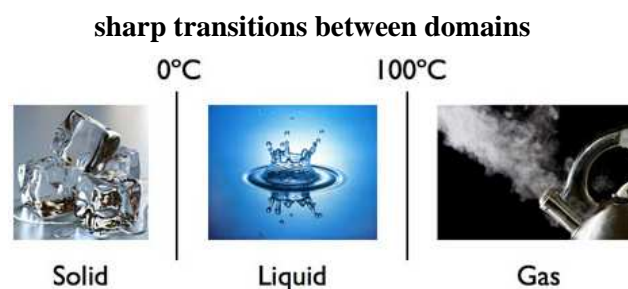


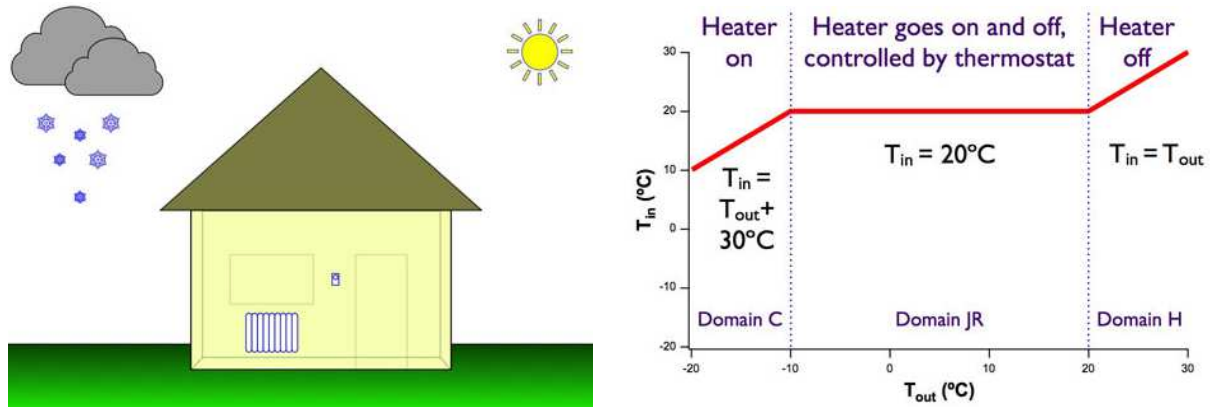
Figure 1: The very different domains of behaviour with

For our first example, let's look at H₂O, which we're most familiar with as a liquid. But if you get the temperature above boiling, of course it becomes a gas. And the behavior of a liquid and the behavior of a gas are quite different. Go down below freezing and it becomes a solid. Again a very different set of behaviors. Anywhere from just above freezing to just below boiling, it's a liquid. It has a similar set of properties in all that territory, yet when you cross a

very narrow transition, it moves into a very different set of properties. Note the sharp transition between those domains.

2.2 Home Heating

The next example is going to be something most of us experience – home heating. There’s a house. Sometimes it’s warm and sunny. Sometimes it’s stormy and cold.



Figures 2a & 2b: Home Heating Example

And because of that and because we like to have a more uniform experience for ourselves, we put in heating systems. So the house has got a little thermostat here and a little heater. We’re going to treat the house and the thermostat and the heater as the system, and the inside temperature is going to be the key characteristic that we’ll track. We’re going to treat the outside weather and the outside temperature as the context, and we’ll consider the relationship between the system’s inside temperature and its context in terms of outside temperature (See Figure 2b).

Over a wide span of outside temperature, hopefully the inside temperature stays constant. That’s after all why we have the heating system. But if the outside temperature goes above where the thermostat is set, then the inside temperatures is going to go up also. And if it gets get cold enough, you’ll get to a point where your heating system is going full time and yet it’s still not keeping up, so the temperature inside the house will go down as the outside temperature goes down.

Each behavior can be described by a simple formula but we need three different formulas. So we’ve got three different domains. In the center, which I’m calling domain JR for ‘just right’ (this is a sort of Goldilocks story), the heater goes on and off and the temperature stays constant. That’s the set of behaviors in that center domain. Up in domain H for ‘hot,’ the heater is off and the temperature goes up. And then down in domain C for ‘cold,’ the heater is on but it’s not able to keep the temperature from dropping. So we have three separate domains in which the description of the behavior stays the same within the domain but between domains it changes dramatically.

2.3 Ecosystem

The third example is an ecosystem. We’re going to look at a forest. The context will be the resources that the forest draws on. And we’re going to start with bare ground and watch how

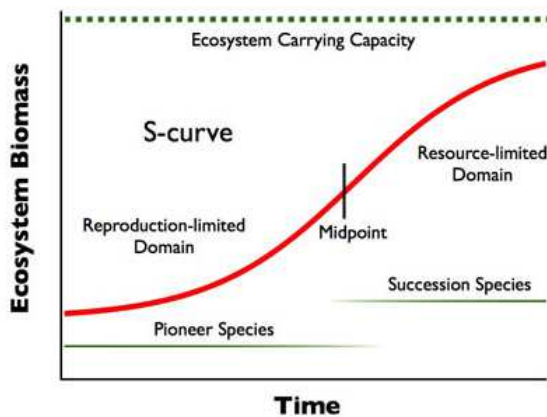
the forest develops over time. We're going to start with something like this (Figure 3a). And we will wind up with something that looks like this old-growth forest (Figure 3b).



Figures 3a & 3b: Ecosystem

That's the Hoh River rainforest out in my part of the world, by the way.

If we look at how the total biomass develops over time, we'll find that we get a curve that initially shows accelerated growth. But if we keep watching it, the curve decelerates and changes its shape. The overall curve is something that's called an S-curve (Figure 3c).



Figures 3c: An S-curve

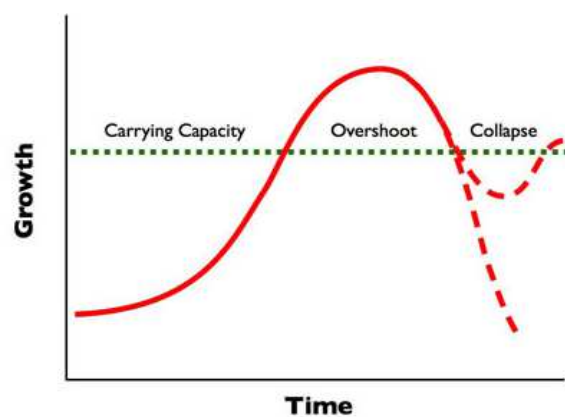


Figure 3d: Time-lags allow Overshoot

It's a very common curve to show up in biological systems or any system in which you have some kind of reproductive growth that depends upon resources. The reason that the curve is turning over is because there's something known as the carrying capacity, a certain limit that you can't grow too much beyond.

I do want to acknowledge, however, that a lot of times you actually *can* overshoot the carrying capacity and, depending on what happens with the overshoot, you go into either a deep collapse or some kind of an oscillation (Figure 3d). But the S-curve (which is similar to the first half of the overshoot curve) will serve our purposes for now, because I'd like to focus on the midpoint of the S-curve. Below the midpoint, the ecosystem's growth is reproduction limited. That is, the ecosystem is growing as fast as the various species can reproduce because there are lots of resources for the number of plants that are available. Once you get above that

midpoint, it's resource limited. So we've got two domains, but here the transition between them is much more gradual than in the previous examples.

You wind up with two different sets of species predominating in these two different domains. In the reproduction-limited domain, you get what are called pioneer species, and in the resource-limited domain, you get succession species. And this distinction between pioneer species and succession species serves as a wonderful analogy for understanding a number of things that are going on in human society at this point.

Attribute	Pioneer	Succession
Resource Consumption	high	low
Resource Efficiency	low	high
Growth Rate	high	low
Longevity	short	long
Diversity	low	high
Complexity	low	high
Relationship With Others	isolated	cooperative

Table 1: Success Strategies

I'd like to point to the success strategies of the two different groups – the pioneers and the succession species (Table 1). They're mirror images of each other. I'm not going to go down this whole list. I'll just say that the top four are pretty obvious in terms of what you would get if the distinction between pioneer and succession depends upon how many resources you have. But the bottom group isn't quite so intuitively obvious. I want to point particularly to the attributes for succession species. They have high diversity; there are a lot of different succession species. The individual species tend to be relatively complex. And their relationship with each other is cooperative; there is a lot of symbiosis that goes on within succession species.

To summarize about system domains: They are created by the relationship between the system and its context. Sometimes it's because the system is changing; sometimes it's because the context is changing. The transitions between the domains can be either sharp or gradual: sharp like water was or gradual like the ecosystem was. System behavior changes across the transition.

If we know only one domain, we can be misled into thinking we understand the system. A great example of this is what happened with Newtonian physicists around 1900 when quantum mechanics and special relativity start coming in, and the Newtonian physicists said, "Hey wait a minute. We understand the world. It's all Newtonian." Well, the problem was that

the domain that Newtonian physics works in has to have speeds that are slower than the speed of light and distances that are large compared to atoms. When you're dealing in that domain, Newtonian physics still works really well.

We as humans get caught up all the time in discovering a certain domain of understanding. We extrapolate that it is the total understanding and then we get really shocked when we discover the edge of the domain. So because of this, identifying a system's domains and transitions is critical to fully understanding the system.

We're going to take these ideas about system domains and apply them to the 'system' of human culture as it evolves through history.

3. Where are we in history?

I'd like to start this look at history with a brief look at the last century or so and then step back further to look at the last 16,000 years. Finally, grounded in that sense of deep human history, we'll move forward to look at the 21st century and where things are headed.

3.1 1900 to now

I want to focus on world population. Population is a wonderful aggregate indicator for what's happening to the average person and not just the people who show up in history books. From 1900 to 2010, the population grew by 4.2 times – a huge increase in population in the last century or so (See Figure 4). However, if we do a little curve fitting, we will find an S-curve that fits the data quite well. It's not exponential growth. It only looks exponential at the beginning. The midpoint on the S-curve comes at about 1990. We're a little over 20 years past the midpoint. If we make the analogy with the pioneer and succession species, then indeed up until 1990 or so, pioneer-type strategies should've been the thing that the context was supporting. But we've now moved into a new domain, yet because we're humans, we don't realize it yet. Going forward, it will be the succession-species strategies that will have the support of the context that we're in.

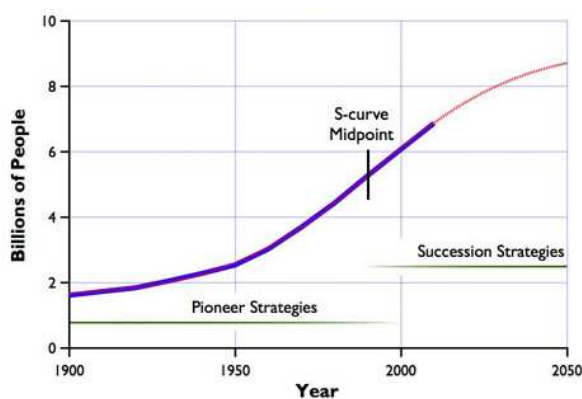


Figure 4: World Population

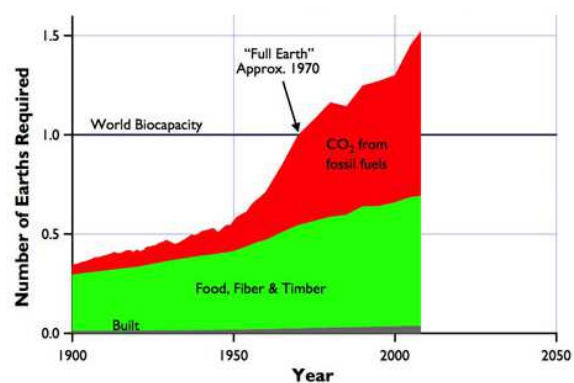


Figure 5: Humanity's Ecological Footprint

Someone might object and say, “Oh yeah, curve fitting, easy, but what is there around us that suggests that we really have moved from a time that wasn't resource constrained into a time that is resource constrained?”

One of my favorite indicators of what’s going on for that issue is the global ecological footprint (Figure 5). How many of you are familiar with the ecological footprint? I see some hands going up, others not. Let me just say that it is a measure of how much human activity is filling the bio-capacity, the ecological capacity of the planet.

I would point out that more than half of humanity’s current ecological footprint is from CO2 from fossil fuels. We’re now at a point where we’re using one and a half Earths. You could say, “How in the heck could we be using one and a half Earths?” The ecological footprint is a measure of what the sustainability requirements are. We’re over our sustainability requirements. We’re effectively over our carrying capacity, but the atmosphere is absorbing the CO2 and the effects won’t come through for a while, so that’s how we can do it.

There’s nothing hard-fixed about saying that a certain population must have this kind of footprint. If we were getting our energy from renewable energy sources for instance, not from burning fossil fuels, then the CO2 part of the footprint would go away. If we were being more efficient in the way we were using land for getting food, fiber and timber, then that part of the footprint would be smaller. So this isn’t a strict hard sentence. We actually have a fair bit of choice in the ratio between human population size and global ecological footprint. But this graph reflects business as usual. It reflects how we’re currently functioning.

This is an example of – an indicator of – what I would more broadly describe as the limits-to-growth crisis, which comes out of the fact that we’re dependent on a number of resources that are themselves finite in one way or another. There are nonrenewable resources (fossil fuels and others); renewable resources that have maximum sustainable yields, like fisheries where we’re overfishing; and natural waste processing services, such as the estuaries that clean up water and the planet’s ability to absorb carbon dioxide. In all these cases, we’ve overshot but time-lags are delaying the full impact. This is a huge crisis that we all will need to deal with, one way or another.

I also want to say that, as far as I’m concerned, the issues here are not primarily technological. I like to say, “There are no environmental problems. There are only environmental symptoms of human problems.” This doesn’t reflect what we could do. This reflects the choices that have been made.

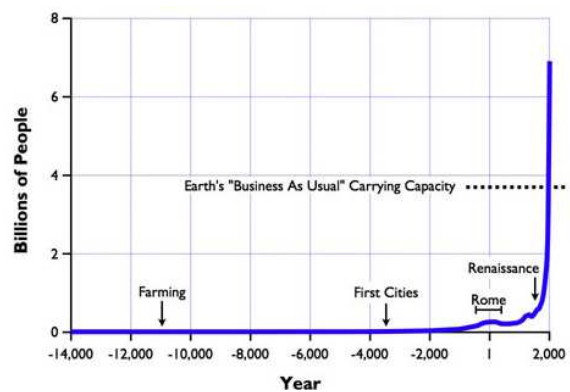
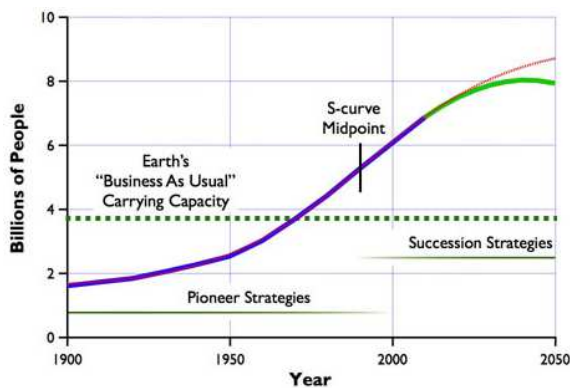


Figure 6: World Population, 1900 BCE–Present. Figure 7: World Population from 14,000 BCE

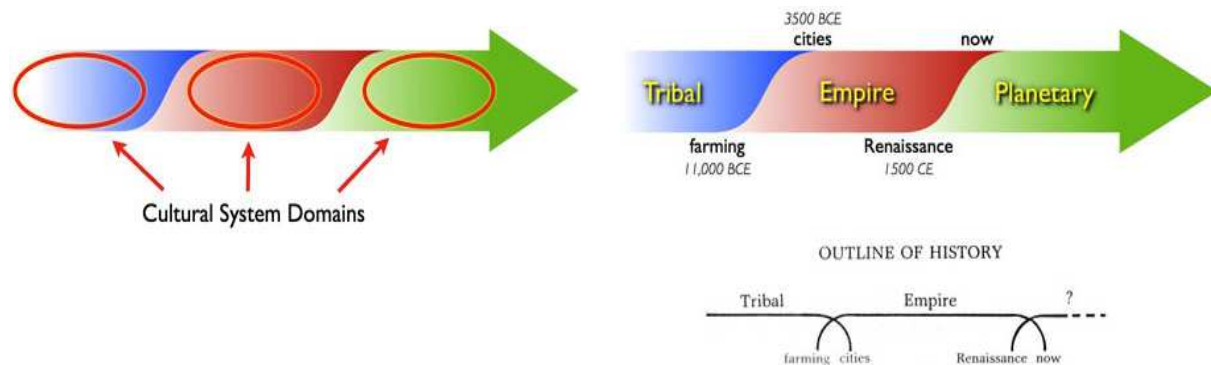
Pulling this back together, the chart now shows the carrying capacity which we crossed in 1970 when we had a population that was a little bit below 4 billion (Figure 6). And because it sure looks like we're in overshoot, we could use a more realistic estimate of where the world population is going rather than just a simple S-curve fit. The curve that I've added is taken from Jorgen Randers in his book "2052." Jorgen Randers was one of the three authors of the original limits-to-growth study in 1972. His curve peaks in 2040 at a population of about 8.1 billion. We're currently about 1 billion away from that peak.

I want to point out how different it will be to be in a time when we're not only at the peak but, before long, heading down, compared with the 20th-century experience of such explosive growth. This will have huge impacts on all kinds of different things, number one being the economy, because we've built an economic system that presumes unending growth and when you don't have unending growth, things change.

3.2 Past 16,000+ years

Again I want to look at population. By the way, historical dating has all sorts of interesting conventions. BCE is Before Current Era. It's the same thing as BC, for those of you who are more familiar with that. I've used minus signs on the chart for BCE dates because frankly it's easier to plot that way. There's a 1 where AD meets BC instead of a zero because apparently there is no year zero: 1 AD and 1 BC are consecutive.

I want to show you data that the U.S. Census gathered – the best estimates for human population over this timeframe. That's what the population curve looks like (Figure 7). It's kind of interesting. To give you some points of reference I've indicated where farming starts, the first cities, where Rome was at its height, the Renaissance and the "business as usual" carrying capacity.



Figurea 8a & 8b: Outline of History

I've worked with this over many years in terms of what I like to describe as an outline of history, in which there are three cultural system domains (Figure 8a). This is why I had to introduce the system domains to you, so that we could look at history in terms of these domains, with two cultural system transitions between them.

I describe the three domains as Tribal, Empire and Planetary (Figure 8b). Some people use different terms but that's what we'll use in this talk anyway.

The first transition starts with farming and ends with cities. The second transition starts with the Renaissance and it probably hasn't ended yet. We're still in it. I can't tell you how much longer this transition will last but I think we're more than halfway through. And I think the next 20 to 40 years are going to be hugely consequential in terms of how this second great transition plays itself out.

This outline of history is something I've been playing with for a while. I went back and dug out the first time that I published a chart of this kind (in 1985) and you can see that was back before I decided to call the third era Planetary.¹

But this overall outline isn't what I grew up with. I grew up with the sense that there was history, which began when writing began, and before that was something called prehistory. That's what I learned in school and my sense is that that's actually what most people in the mainstream carry around in their heads: that what's happening now is all just part of one continuous flow of history.

Of course, especially here at Findhorn, I want to acknowledge that there have also been people who have said that we are at a significant turning point and in one way or another have described that we're moving into some sort of new age. Joanna Macy's 'Great Turning' is an example of focusing on this point.

Historians have also looked at this. I want to draw on the work of David Christian in his book *Introduction to Big History*, where he breaks up this timeline in terms of Paleolithic, Agrarian and Modern (Figure 9). However, he also says that break-up isn't sufficient. He adds a second dimension in terms of kinship-based and state-based. So he has a split Agrarian.

If you put vertical lines in, you'll see that this upper outline of history lines up pretty nicely with all the other breakpoints. And it's not just because of what I've chosen here. I would say that these breakpoints of farming, cities, Renaissance and wherever we are now are pretty common breakpoints when people are trying to get a big overview of history.

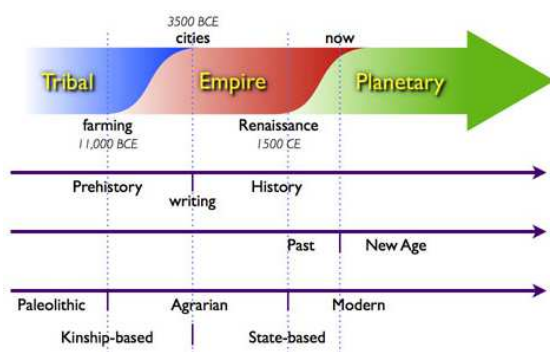


Figure 9: Outline of History

Quality	Tribal	Empire	Planetary
Main Livelihood	Hunting & Gathering	Agriculture	?
Basis For Social Organization	Kinship	Violence-enforced, Religiously-sanctioned Hierarchy	?
Communications Level of Development	Oral Stories, Songs and Verse	Elite Literacy	?

Figure 10: Cultural System-Domain Qualities

We're going to focus in on three characteristics. Remember when we were looking at home heating, we just had temperature? Well, this is a little more complicated because it's culture. There are many additional characteristics we could look at, but these three will do a good job of distinguishing the three eras (Figure 10).

¹ See the journal, *In Context*, Spring 1985, p 21.

We're going to look at main livelihood, the basis for social organization and the communications level-of-development, which I would also call the communications state-of-the-art. In the Tribal Era, the main livelihood is hunting and gathering, the basis for social organization is kinship and the communications level-of-development is orality – stories, song, verse, etc.. And those characteristics are consistent throughout the Tribal Era.

In the Empire Era, the main livelihood is agriculture and the basis for social organization is violence-enforced, religiously-sanctioned hierarchy. Some of you may not like my expressing it that way, but for me that's just the bald truth. Then the communications level-of-development was elite literacy.

In the Planetary Era, well, we don't know yet. That's the whole point. We're trying to sort out what those characteristics might be like in the Planetary Era.

How are we going to do that? How shall we discern the future? First of all, we need to recognize that humanity doesn't have a terribly good track record in terms of being able to discern the future. So we need to approach this first with a certain amount of humility and second with a willingness to take a fresh approach to trying to discern the future.

It's hard to imagine beyond your own domain. Think, for example, if you are part of a hunting and gathering band back 20,000 years ago and you had this thought that came into your mind of cities and writing and all of that (Figure 11). It would be very hard for you to understand those things. It's just totally out of your experience.



Figure 11: 20,000 Years Ago

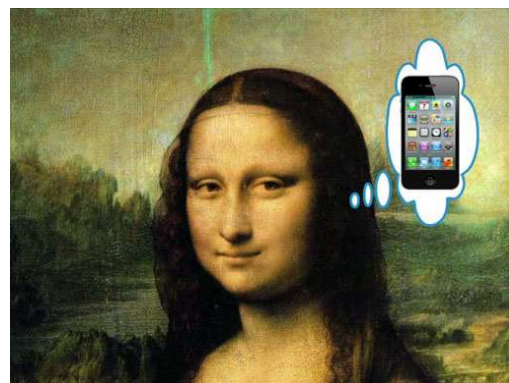


Figure 12: 1500 AD

In the same way, think of somebody in 1500 (Figure 12) – you might recognize her – trying to understand what our life is like today. It would just be bizarre. As we try to think about what may be coming, we need to do it with recognition that it's a challenge.

So we need some kind of strategy that's going to help us look across the Empire-to-Planetary transition. The strategy that I will be using and sharing with you is to first of all, look for analogies in nature. That's where the pioneer and succession species come in. We'll also explore deep history from the perspective of cultural system domains, in search of essential patterns that transcend any one domain. Part of our problem here in trying to do this is that we are so immersed in the mentality of the Empire Era that we don't see it. It's the water we swim in. And so we've got to find a way to step out of that water far enough to be able to look into our potential future.

We're going to proceed by starting with the first great transition. Then we'll look a little bit at the Empire Era. Out of this, hopefully, we'll get a sense of how to approach our current transition. And then, what we can learn from our current transition, hopefully, will give us a sense of where we're headed in the Planetary Era.

3.2.1 Tribal-to-Empire transition

What's going on as we move from Tribal to Empire? Let's start with focusing on the change of main livelihood, from hunting and gathering to agriculture. This happened in what gets described as the Lucky Latitudes (Figure 13). It happens first in the area of the Middle East that's called the Hilly Flanks. It happened around 11,000 BCE there and then later happened in China – what's now China – and in Middle America around 8000 BCE.

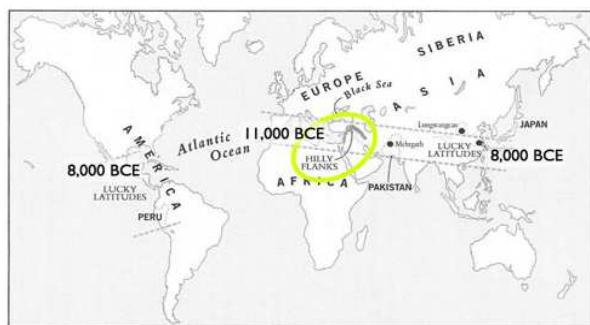


Figure 13: Lucky Latitudes for Agriculture

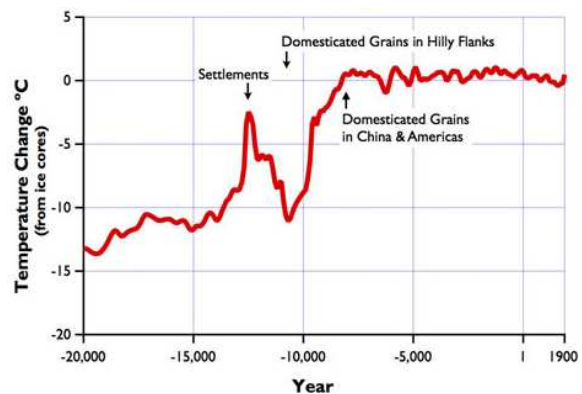


Figure 14: Global Climate Changes (Context)

Why agriculture? Why did it appear there? What's going on? It seems as though the key trigger was climate change coming out of the last Ice Age (Figure 14). This chart is from ice cores, sort of a proxy for changes in global temperature. And you see the spike that comes up and goes back down again? There was a lot of local variation in the *depth* of the dip, nevertheless, there definitely was a dip, which is known as the Younger Dryas, or the Big Freeze.

What shows up in the archeological record is that at this spike, we start seeing lots of settlements. In most of the Tribal Era, people lived in a nomadic way. Especially during the Ice Age, things were not that abundant and you had to keep moving. Well, this peak as things warm up is sometimes described as the Golden Age of hunting and gathering, when there was such an abundance relative to the human population that people were actually able to stay in settlements. And some of the ones who stayed in settlements started actively cultivating some of the local wild food sources.

When the temperatures started going down again, most groups just went nomadic again, but in the Hilly Flanks area, their cultivation of wild grains had gone on long enough to breed them into higher-yielding domesticate varieties. You start seeing, in the archeological record, domesticated grains down in the dip of that little bit of repeat of the cold period. It wasn't until things warmed up again that you get the grains in China and the Americas, where conditions were not quite as favorable for domestication as they were in the Hilly Flanks. So

in this sense, we have a change within the human cultural system that's driven by the outside influence (the context) of the end of the Ice Age.

But once it gets going, it sets off a really powerful dynamic. Settlements and farming go very much together. They encourage each other. They depend on each other. Once you get that started, farming actually allows you to capture more energy per person and per area, per hectare. That, combined with the characteristics of settlements – the fact that the women who are going to be bearing children aren't walking all the time – leads to population growth, quite significant population growth. These together allow not only population growth but higher population density. That's what happens in a settlement. Well, with a higher population density and higher population, you overexploit all the animals and gather-able plants around you. So you become more and more dependent upon what you actually domesticated. In that process, you lose the skills that are required for hunting and gathering. And all of this – the overexploitation, the de-skilling and the higher population density – mean that once you got past a certain threshold of population growth, you really can't turn back to hunting and gathering. It is an irreversible transition.

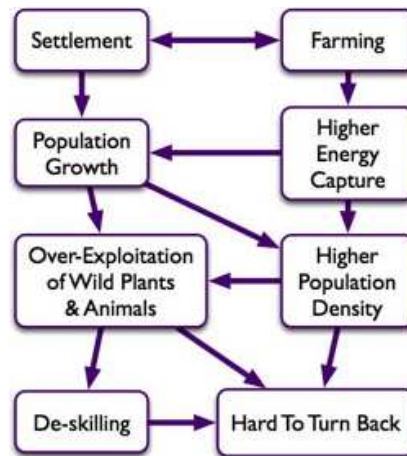


Figure 15: Irreversible Transition to Agriculture

Now let's look at the basis for social organization, moving from kinship to the violence-enforced, religiously-sanctioned hierarchy. Here I'm going to draw on the work of Ian Morris, another historian, particularly his social development index and the components for that.

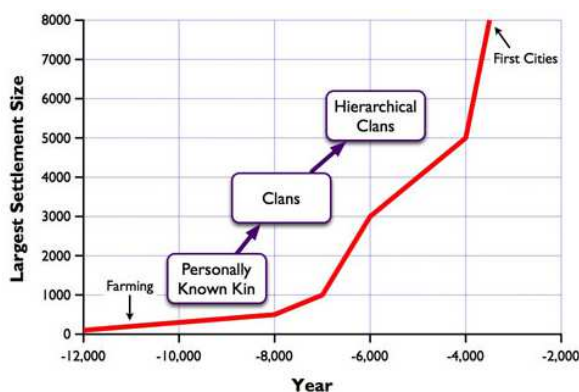


Figure 16: Scale Changes Social Dynamics

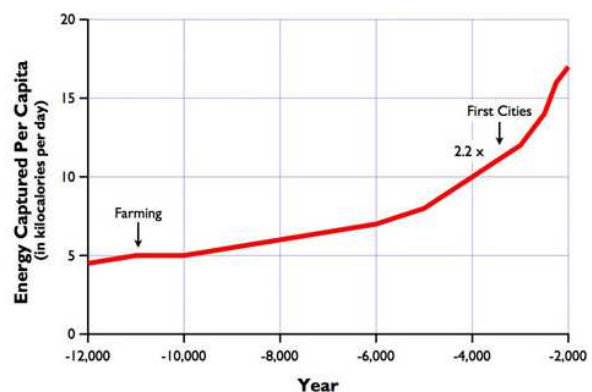


Figure 17: Energy Capture Per Person

This is out of his work – a look at the size of the largest settlements as we move along in time (Figure 16). This is going from 12,000 BCE to 2000 BCE, or from the start of farming up to the first cities. When we’re close to the start of farming, especially with settlements that are below 500 and even below 1000, you’re in a range where the brain is able to really know the other people in the settlement. You can know them in a way in which you have a personal sense of them, and because of the history, it’s very much a kinship-based knowing.

Once you start getting larger settlements, you can’t personally know the 2000 or 3000 people in the same kind of way and so things morph. The kinship system morphs into something that’s much more dependent on clans and knowing people through clans. What the archaeological record shows is that as you move up in size, the clans begin to differentiate themselves and they become more hierarchical in terms of what goes in the burials and other things of this sort.

There’s also an important dynamic that comes out of energy capture (Figure 17). This chart shows how much energy is being captured per person. It gradually increases between farming and the first cities. At the first cities, it’s 2.2 times what it was at the start of farming. So that’s actually a big increase in the amount of useful energy – the kilocalories per day that you’re gathering per person – and it opens up all kinds of fresh opportunities (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Energy Changes Social Dynamics

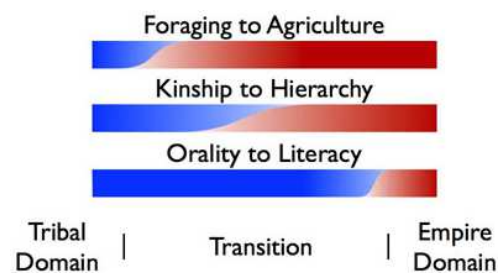


Figure 19: Transition Timing

When you have more energy per person, it allows more division of labor, because not everybody has to be working all the time on gathering food. You also create a situation with farming where you get a storable and steal-able surplus, and this is hugely important. More storable and steal-able surplus mean you’ve got more motivation for raids. More division of labor and more motivation for raids means you get better weapons and fighters. And that all shows up in the archaeological record. You get more violent intergroup conflict and more militarization of the communities. As time goes on, you go from communities that initially have no fortifications to communities that eventually have lots of fortifications.

This all developed into the patterns of Empire Era hierarchy. There were lots of different ways that this manifested. I’m only listing a few here: adults over children, men over women, powerful men and women over others, humans over nature, mind and spirit over the body, sky gods over everything. This legacy is still very powerfully with us today.

Finally, let's look at the transition to literacy (Figure 19). It begins with numbers actually, before there's much in the way of real transcription of spoken language. A lot of the first writing focuses on accounting and record keeping. You had to have enough people close enough together to have enough scribes to make it worth it to write things down. If you were the only scribe in town, who would read your writing? So it emerges with the first cities. It's really important for the development of the Empire Era because it's the complement to military force. Before that, you could go out and raid, you could do protection rackets, but you couldn't really manage the area that you had conquered. With writing, you now can manage it.

Within this big transition, there were a series of what you could call sub-transitions that spread out over time. Before, you're in the Tribal domain. It's pure Tribal characteristics. At the end, you're in pure Empire characteristics, but in the middle, it's a rolling transition.

So what lessons can we draw from this? First is that the driving forces were gradual and unobtrusive. Small changes could grow to irreversibility. Changes in one part of the system destabilized other parts. And it was powered by positive feedback loops that kept changing things until a new stable constellation of qualities was found. Also, the initial set of qualities – the foraging, kinship and orality – never go away. They just become secondary.

3.2.2 Empire Era

Quickly, as I've been saying, the Empire Era characteristics are agriculture, hierarchy and literacy. I'll just point out that 90% or more of the population were involved as peasants or serfs or slaves or whatever in agriculture, and literacy even in places like Athens apparently never got above 10 percent, so it really was an elite phenomena. These three characteristics stay stable for at least 4500 years. If you look at Egypt and you look at the Chinese Empires in 1500 and all the various different civilizations in between, they have the same group of patterns. Nevertheless, there were some changes over that 4500 years.

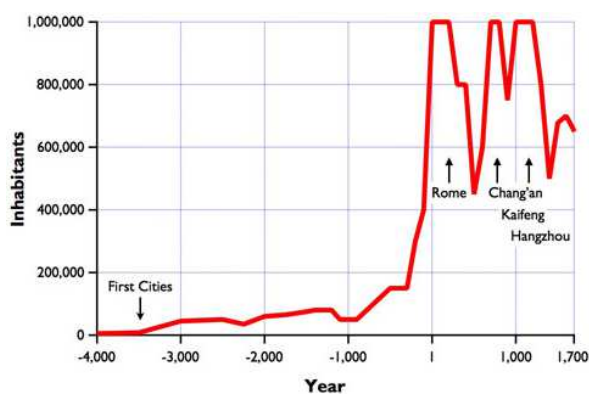


Figure 20: Largest Settlements

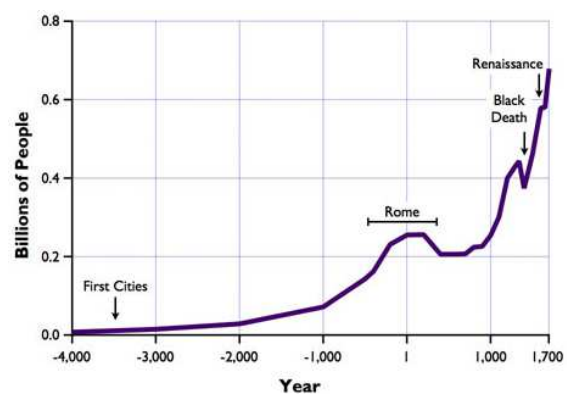


Figure 21: World Population

This is what happens with larger settlements (Figure 20). All those Roman engineers figured out how to do sewage and other things that enabled the settlement size to really grow. Then there were Chinese cities later that also grew up to about 1 million in population, but there seems to have been some kind of ceiling that was very hard for an agrarian civilization to go beyond.

This chart shows population over that period of time (Figure 21). It kept growing as well. I like to think of population, and what I'm going to show you next, as being like raising the temperature of water. As you move up towards boiling, but short of boiling, water keeps the properties of a liquid even as it moves closer to the liquid-to-gas transition. I think of this population growth as raising the temperature (getting closer to a transition) while still staying within the Empire Era cultural system domain.

The other thing that 'raised the temperature' was that there were a number of really significant inventions that happened along the way (Figure 22). They didn't coalesce well enough to change the pattern, but they laid the groundwork for the second great transition.

3.2.3 Empire-to-Planetary transition

A key factor that to me sets off the second great transition or at least is a characteristic of it – and there is a lot of debate about why the transition started – is that innovation gets to be seen, at least in some ways, as an asset. That sets off a whole chain of activity that again creates a rolling transition. By innovation, I don't just mean the technical stuff. Social innovations, economic innovations, anything that is a cultural change that lands. Of course, innovation has always been a factor in one way or another, but before the Empire Era, it was really just too slow to even notice, so people could maintain the mythology that they were always following tradition. During the Empire Era, elites were wary of innovation. They occasionally encouraged it a little bit then stomped on it, often pretty quickly. They were probably right. It was a threat to them. History has shown that it was a threat.

Europe wound up being best positioned to lead on innovation, just like the Hilly Flanks were best positioned for agriculture. There were multiple competing centers of power, so there wasn't one central authority that could just stomp it all out. In 1500, Europe was relatively backward and they were just becoming aware that there were other places in the world more advanced than they were. So they knew that they had places to learn from. They had a major initial success with warships (Figure 23).

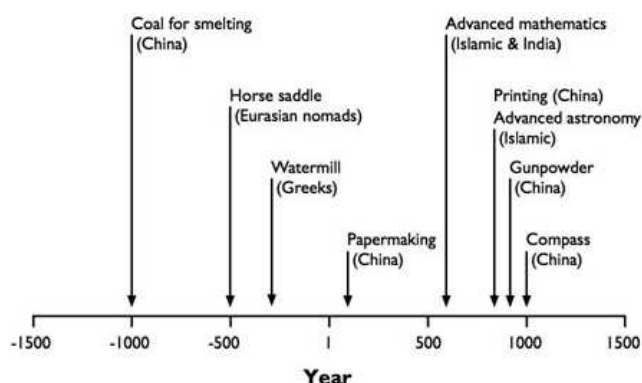


Figure 22: Late Empire Era Inventions

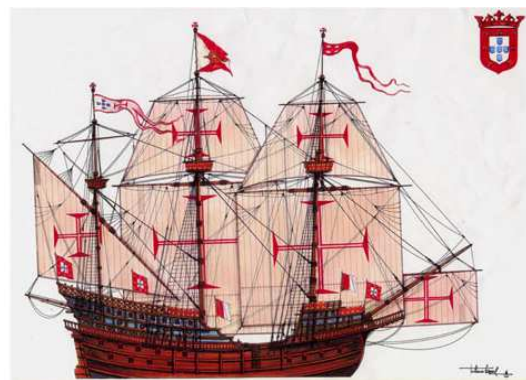


Figure 23: Portuguese Warship

In 1500, this boat was the high-tech of the times, and it was what allowed a small, at that point culturally relatively backward, country like Portugal to establish a global empire. The problem was that it was a global empire based on technological superiority, which is a hard thing to keep because other people can copy you unless you keep moving.

So what’s the dynamic that happened? You had multiple centers of power and dependence on technological superiority (Figure 24a). This led to a local arms race. The British wanted to their global empire and so did the Dutch. So did the French and the Spanish. So they got into battles with each other. That local arms race wound up accelerating Europe’s advantage because they moved each other forward in the process of that arms race. But it also cost the various kings quite a bit and they had to turn to the commercial sector and allow it more than had been allowed in the past. That was a dangerous thing (for the old elites) to do. All this emphasis on boats benefited commerce. So power started spreading to the commercial elites.

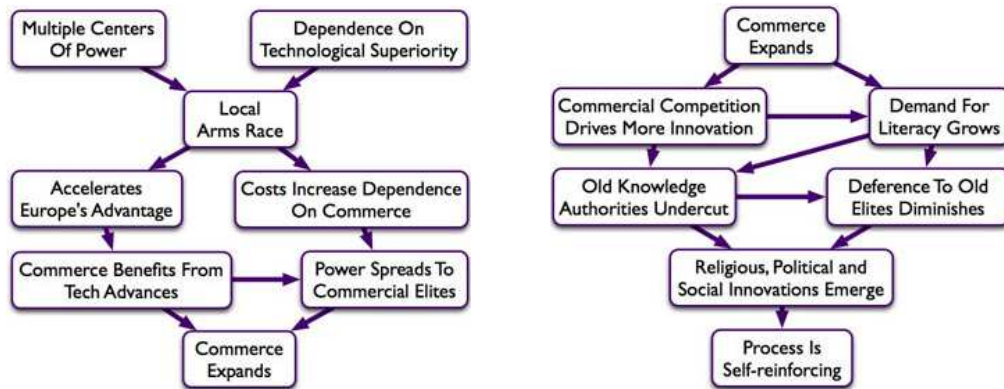


Figure 24a & 24b: Innovations’ European Dynamics

Commerce then expanded and as commerce expanded, it drove still more innovation (Figure 24b). Demand for literacy grew. That undercut the old knowledge-authorities. Some of them didn’t like it – there was this thing called the Inquisition, you know – but it did wind up meaning that the deference to the old elites got diminished. Then you had all of the upheavals: the Reformation, the French Revolution, etc. all got driven in this atmosphere. It was a process that was, and still is, self reinforcing.

With dynamic innovation as an important factor, what can we now start to say about the transition for the three characteristics of livelihood, social organization and communications? If we treat the transition as an overlap between two eras, what can we say is showing up about the Planetary Era so far? We’ll start with main livelihood.

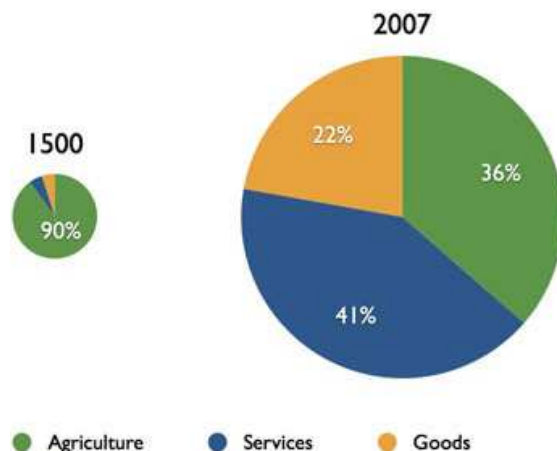


Figure 25: Worldwide Workforce

Here is the distribution of workforce in 1500, and the size of the circle is proportional to the world population at that point in time. Ninety percent of it is in agriculture. And here it is in 2007. The circle is much bigger, of course, because there are a lot more of us, but it's also a much more diverse distribution. Agriculture is not even the largest of the pie slices. So we've moved to a time when there is no more main occupation. We have a huge diversity of occupations. I am going to suggest that in the Planetary Era, not only will we have diversity of occupations, but we will have diversity in a great many ways, just as succession species are characterized by a high level of diversity.

I'm going to jump down to communications next. In the past 500 years, the whole communications arena has changed enormously, especially in the last hundred years. It begins with travel, with all those boats and the way that opens up connections all over the world. Next, expansion of literacy, which began in Europe and is now at the point where the UN says that 84% of the world's adults are literate to one degree or another. We passed the 50% literacy level somewhere around World War II, so it's only been since then that more than half of the world is literate. It's really quite recent from a cultural history point of view. Then there is the increase in the speed of communications: We all experience that today. Probably most people in this room can remember back to the point where you had fast telephone connections but a lot of other things moved a fair bit slower. Finally, we've move beyond just language. It's multi-sense at this point, especially visual.

There's been a huge increase in person-to-person access. I want to illustrate this with cell phone subscriptions. Here's the curve of increase from 1990 (Figure 26). This is a much smaller timeframe than we were looking at [for population] – 1990, 2000 2010. You're probably not at all surprised to see that the curve has shot up in this way, in that space of time, but look at the vertical scale. It is the percentage of world population, and in 2011 the number of cellphone subscriptions equalled 86% of the world population.

Now there's a caveat that I have put in here. That doesn't mean that 86% of the world's population had cellphones, because of the way cellphone subscriptions get counted. But the World Bank says that in 2012, 75% of humanity had *access* to a cellphone either through a family member or a friend. Most of these cellphones are just what are called feature-phones – they're relatively simple cellphones. However, 20% of humanity 15 years or older had smartphones at the beginning of this year. That's a little over 1 billion people having smartphones. Another billion smartphones are expected to be sold this year, and for the first time they're selling more smartphones than they are feature-phones. Now you may have your feelings about whether you like or don't like smartphones, but from a cultural history point of view, putting that degree of communications access into the hands of so many people and allowing communication that is person-to-person rather than all done through broadcast is a huge system changer. From my point of view, just as the Empire Era needed literacy to come into full form, my sense is that the Planetary Era needs these new electronic tools – computers, internet, digital video and audio, smartphones, etc. – as well. That's why the Planetary Era is still birthing.

Let me come back to the basis for social organization. I want to focus in on the way that over the last 500 years, more people have gotten more choice in their lives. It's hard to think back to how little choice a peasant had in 1000 CE, but consider how much has changed in choice of: occupation, place of employment, political leaders, friends and associates, marriage partners, where to live, information sources, beliefs, goods and services, etc. Now I know not everybody in the world has that. The level of choice is not necessarily what it could be. I'm not saying this is perfect. What I'm saying is that these things have increased dramatically in the past 500 years. And I would also say that choice destroys the power of coercion. Coercion depends upon having people trapped, and if you have a meaningful choice, if you can vote with your feet, if you can simply walk away from the situation that would attempt to coerce you, then that coercion has a lot less power.

There have been two responses to this way in which there is now more choice. One of the responses has been a shift to indirect, covert, psychological methods of control. Let me step back and say that in the Empire Era, the elites were primarily military and religious and combinations of those two. We're now in a time period when the Empire consciousness has moved into the commercial realm and the present elites are primarily commercial. They are more accustomed to using things like advertising and public relations. But this new approach to control is basically a system that doesn't have integrity. It depends strongly on being able to control the flow of information, because if people get the total picture, it blows the game. So it's actually a fairly vulnerable position for these elites to be in.

The other thing that's happened in response to more and more choice has been the growth of all kinds of self-organizing consensual collaboration – everything from people choosing whom they are going to marry, to shared-interest groups that these days happen on all sorts of different scales, to businesses that form by people coming together with a shared intention, to communities like what you all are involved in and study. To me, this is analogous to nature's approach to organizing complexity. In natural systems, you have co-evolution and symbiosis, co-evolution being a dance of collaboration. My sense is that, because this second response really is reflected in the way that nature deals with complexity and choice, it's the one that has more staying power. So I'm going to say that what we're seeing in the Planetary Era so far is a move towards self-organizing consensual collaboration as the basis for social organization. However, we're still in the transition. I'm not saying that's all there is.

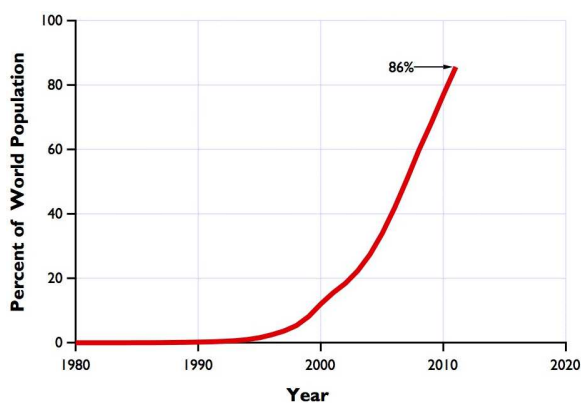


Figure 26: Cellphone Subscriptio

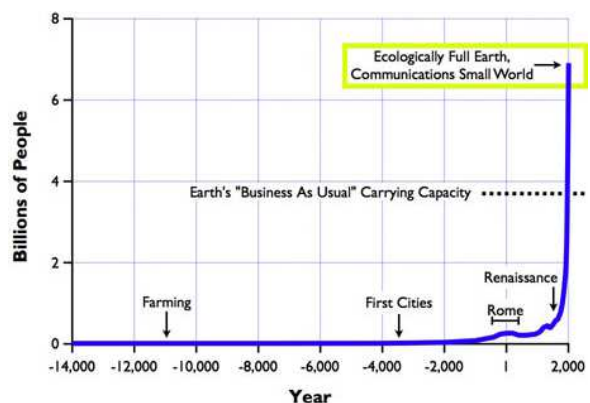


Figure 27: We are in a Different World

I'd like to close this backward look in history with really taking in this population chart (Figure 27). I just love this chart; I think it tells us so much: it emphasizes that we are in a truly different world right now. With an ecologically full earth and communication so tight, we really have a small world – it is unlike the full gamut of that previous history in so many ways. And yet we think, “It’s just another century.”

3.3 21st century

Now let’s look forward and again ask, “How are we going to think about the future?” One thing I think we need to acknowledge is that the Empire Era is still very strong in our minds. It shapes our language and our beliefs. Almost all of them have their roots in the Empire Era, and that includes our ideas about human nature and simply how life works. And because we’re in a different world in terms of our daily life, but our minds are still in the past, this leads to all kinds of cognitive dissonance as we attempt to interpret what’s going on around us in the old terms. This leads to all sorts of frustrating misunderstandings – for all of us.

The other thing about the future is to know that there will be surprises. Truth is stranger than fiction. Some things will turn out better than we expect, some things worse. I like to say that it’s easy to see the disasters that are headed down the road. What we don’t see yet are the things that are yet to come up over the horizon, some of which will actually be beneficial. For example, it wouldn’t surprise me at all if, in the next 10 years, we got an invention like nanotechnology-based water desalination that made water desalination cheap enough that you could do it for agriculture. That would have a huge impact on where food could be grown and how much food could be grown. I just cite that as an example. We may have all kinds of positive things come up over the horizon, as well as the more challenging things. Of course, some things will just be totally unexpected.

I’d like to hope, though, that as long as we take these system domains and transitions into account, then at least the big picture, near-term, is potentially discernible. So that’s what I’m going to try to do next – to look at where we might be going with the Planetary Era.

In the process of stepping into that, I want to acknowledge that earlier in this talk I was emphasizing the big change that’s happened. We’ve moved into ‘full Earth’ and we’ve crossed over the carrying capacity. Yet as I was trying to discern what the characteristics of the Planetary Era had been so far, we looked back over the last 500 years. So does this moving into ‘full Earth’ invalidate what we’ve been seeing so far? I think not. I think actually the limits-to-growth crisis is going to simply enhance and accelerate the trends that we’ve seen so far.

It’s going to spur yet more innovation. Again I don’t mean just technologically. I think that the real constraints today are in social considerations. How people live and work with each other. The kinds of things that communities actually deal with best are the arenas where the broader society has the most significant constraints holding it back from completing the transition to the Planetary Era. And I certainly expect that successful innovations will use the succession species strategies. So that means there will be high levels of diversity, high levels of symbiosis, which I translate into human terms as self-organizing consensual collaboration.

Communications will be prioritized. I think one of the messages out of the high level of cellphone subscriptions is that people who don't have running water and flush toilets nevertheless feel it's important enough to be able to get communication access that they have prioritized it. I think that will continue to be the case. However, sustainability needs to be added as a fourth defining characteristic, because unless we manage sustainability, we're still in a chaotic transition.

Particularly because of this need to transition to sustainability, and because we're moving from this rapid population growth to something where we're leveling off and then even going down, every facet of culture is likely to be affected in the near term – economics, governance, legal systems, healthcare, education, religion, warfare.

I especially want to comment on warfare and say that the long-term trends are that warfare is, in fact, winding down. My sense is that within two generations, we will have ended warfare as an institution, and when we end warfare as an institution, we will really know we have moved out of the Empire Era. I think we're that close. If you think about the way in which warfare has been with us for 5000 years, another two generations is not that long. This is not a time to flag. This is a time to redouble the efforts to move through the transition. And it's not simply because it's morally the right thing to do. It also has huge system support. With our tight levels of both economic and communications integration and the need to become much more efficient, we will finally be able to acknowledge that warfare is enormously wasteful. It no longer is as economically valuable as it was in the Empire Era, and it will just lose its support. Right now, it really doesn't even have the system support it used to and is running purely on the momentum from the past. My sense is that as new generations come along, they will not be convinced of its value.

That said, I also want to acknowledge that a lot of these changes are going to be resisted. After all – this is a sort of crude way to put it, but – the Empire Era was built on bullying. The bullies are not going to be enthused about losing their place and, of course, their mode of operation when they get stressed is to try to bully. As far as I'm concerned, I see this showing up in the behavior of all kinds of different fundamentalisms. To me, it's not a matter of religious this or political that. It's actually about people who have been raised in Empire Era traditions and feel those traditions are right. They draw on their interpretation of their religious traditions to justify why all of that Empire stuff needs to continue and they go for it. But they're on the wrong side of history and the wrong side of the system support.

Nevertheless, agriculture, literacy and some level of command-and-control hierarchy are certainly not going away. I don't see coerced command-and-control hierarchy continuing, but if there is a fire, I want the fire chief to be directing what the other people do, and they probably do too. These are just going to become secondary, the same way it worked in the previous transition.

3.3.1 Planetary Era

Okay, now let's look at the Planetary Era. As I see it at this point, the Planetary Era will be characterized by sustainability; diversity, not just in occupations but in lots of ways; self organization, which will seem chaotic to our minds but it's the way nature does it; and

connectivity, huge connectivity. One of the key things is that it will be at ease with innovation. It will be at ease with learning. It will not be afraid of discovering new things. And when we get to the point of being not afraid of discovering new things, then surprisingly enough we will have moved into a new stability. We will have moved into a new stable domain. Finally, human relationships at all scales will be fundamentally consensual.

So for me, the central issue of our times is not whether humanity or the Earth will survive. We very likely will. We could lose 90% of the human population and be back at the point that we were in about 1700. I'm not inviting that. I'm just pointing out that even a very great catastrophe would not eliminate humanity. Short of something like global nuclear war that destroyed most life on the planet, it would be very hard to completely kill off this widespread and highly adaptable species. We'll likely find our way through this crisis and in so doing, complete the transition. I think that the limits-to-growth crisis is the final piece in the transition to the Planetary Era.

For me, the issue is how graceful can the transition be? How much suffering can be avoided? How much long-term damage can be prevented. So I'm not trying to say to you, "Hey, it's all okay, you can go on vacation and it's over." No, this is the time to really redouble the effort because what we do over the next few decades will have a huge impact on how much suffering there is and how much long-term damage occurs.

I like to say we're being called to be cultural midwives. There is a birth that is happening, and just as in a birth, you have a full spectrum from the possibility of a stillborn baby and a dead mother to something that is really beautiful and ecstatic. A good midwife can make a difference in terms of where you fall along that spectrum. So there's a birth that's underway and what we do will make a real difference in terms of how much suffering and how much long-term damage there is.

What we each do matters in that sense, and I want to acknowledge that it's taken countless courageous choices by millions of people in hundreds of generations to get us to where we are at this point. And it's going to take countless more. But if we're aligned with those succession species strategies, we will have a path to success. And with today's communications, learning and innovation processes have accelerated enormously, so that if we build good cultural DNA, we can spread it quickly.

So what do we need to do? First of all, we need to recognize that we are in this great transition and let go of the Empire Era. It's still very strong in our minds. Find a way to honor it, bless it for its gifts, but let it go. And then step forward into the Planetary Era. In an ironic way, we need to be pioneers of what it means to be a succession species.

And we need to do it all with compassion. All of us are torn inside between what we grew up with and the reality that we have to deal with around us. And as we see others freaking out because they're torn by those things, I think it's important for us to approach them with compassion. To me that is the Planetary Era way to do it. If we see ourselves as fighting the Empire Era, then we're still in the Empire Era. It's only when we say, "It's done" at some

level and “I can meet you with compassion” that we really have stepped into the Planetary Era.

And then the action step is to innovate, implement and educate. What is going to drive this forward is all of the good social innovations that will come from places like the communities that you’re all involved with. And unless we work on those, we won’t change the system. If we’re focused backward on saying, “No, we don’t like this thing that’s going on” or “No, we don’t like that thing that’s going on,” then we won’t change the system. Bucky Fuller used to say that the only way that you change something is to make it obsolete. The only way that you make it obsolete is to come up with a better way of doing things, which is what innovation is all about.

So why am I so encouraged? I hope you get some sense of it by now. As I see it, the momentum of history is moving towards a cultural system domain that’s based on sustainability, diversity, self-organization and connectivity, and I’ll acknowledge that I like those things. I’m happy to be moving in that direction and I like the feeling of having the winds of history at my back as I do this. Even though we’re moving through turbulent times right now, the larger momentum is moving with us.

The obstacles we face are human, cultural and solvable. It’s not as if there were an asteroid approaching us and there was nothing we could do about it. This is all of our own making and of our own remaking. Even individuals and small groups can have a big impact through the innovate – implement – educate process if they’re aligned with Planetary Era qualities, because that’s what it takes to be successful as we move forward.

I see people all over the planet who are rising to the challenge and seizing the opportunity of this time. So it’s not as if it’s just the people in this room by any means. There are millions of people out there who are doing wonderful things that are moving us forward. All of that I find hugely encouraging.

4. Implications for intentional communities

Now let’s look at implications for communities. We’re going to have many days to get into this part, so I’m going to be relatively brief. I want to acknowledge that the things I’m going to describe here are things that many communities have been doing for decades. I hope you will take this as an appreciative acknowledgment of the foresight of what those communities have been doing.

The first thing is that so many of the innovations that need to happen as cultural innovations are really best worked on in human-scale communities. So there’s a wonderful opportunity to build the cultural DNA that we really need. The communities that are innovative get to enjoy the benefits of living in this new culture sooner. As someone who both goes away from and comes back to a place like Findhorn, I can see the contrast with the broader society and I get the pleasure of experiencing the culture that’s here and being nourished by the culture that’s here.

These communities can also serve as sources of hope and experience – not just hope but grounded experience – for the wider world, by being centers of research, demonstration and training. I think that communities who are focused on creating their own private salvation, with the idea that the world is going to hell and they’re going to be the only safe places left, are in for trouble, frankly. I think that the communities who truly serve are the communities who see themselves as connected to the wider process and are willing to be the human research, demonstration and training points.

Related to this, here are my suggestions for communities:

- Examine your own images of the past and future. Look at places that you’re stuck in Empire Era thinking or in reaction to it, which is another form of being stuck in it.
- Expect the pace of change to be even greater than what we’ve had. For those of you who may not know hockey, there is a hockey expression that says, “Skate to where the puck will be.” The idea is to anticipate where things are going. Don’t just look backward and react to what has happened, but anticipate those changes, so that what you’re doing can meet them when you’re ready to get there. Work with the flow of history. Lead towards the emergence of Planetary Era by aligning yourself with those Planetary Era qualities.
- Innovate, implement and educate. If you have an inspiration for something that you feel would be a positive change, please go ahead and innovate with that. If you see some positive changes, some idea that somebody’s had or they’ve done a little bit of it, but you feel you could get it functioning better, you can do the development part. That’s what I mean by implement. And then once you’ve got something working well, get it out to a wider public. There’s something everybody can do along this innovate – implement – educate spectrum.

Thank you.



Robert C. Gilman, PhD is a renowned thinker on community and sustainability whose work with his late wife Diane defined the ecovillage movement and shaped the early direction of the Global Ecovillage Network. Robert’s early research was in astrophysics but since the mid-1970s has focused on local and global sustainability, futures research and strategies for positive cultural change. He founded and still heads the Context Institute, one of the earliest and best known NGOs focused on sustainability.

**Panel Session:
Findhorn – Fifty and Flourishing**

Mari Hollander, Robin Alfred, Alex Walker
Findhorn Community

Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/gKXbhCnDXtU>

Abstract

The community at Findhorn has just passed its 50th year. Its longevity alone marks it as a highly successful intentional community. During the birthday celebrations last November, past and current members reflected with justifiable satisfaction upon its historical evolution as a contemporary, spiritual (but non-sectarian) community. And as an education centre for conscious living, it continues to attract thousands of residential guests every year.

Over the last twenty years, a second impulse has emerged, that of the *ecovillage* as a model of sustainable human development. In the same period, the community has grown from 150 to 500 members and morphed from a homogeneous to a poly-centric entity. This panel session will offer personal reflections on different aspects of the community's history and culture, and consider the contributions and challenges that these changes have brought:

- Mari Hollander – history, development and education,
- Robin Alfred – spirituality, culture and governance,
- Alex Walker – community economics, housing and enterprise.

The Findhorn (Foundation) Community: Growing Organically

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Our journey began without foreknowledge that we would become an intentional community. Community grew as an expression of the core impulse of this centre. Our beginnings were in a productive and diverse organic garden. People were attracted by the ideas and practices of communion with Nature and with God. Gradually, they become a community. Early advances, apart from the garden, were in the arts, education, crafts, and publishing, to be followed by construction, businesses and a vision for sustainable settlement ... expressions as diverse and complimentary as the food grown in the original garden.

The core impulse, as I have understood and lived it, is to honour the sacred in all life by welcoming grace, listening deeply, and attuning to the chords of limitless love and truth in all daily activities. Yes, it's a tall order; it's a practice and a vision – contributing to our efforts to build a more creative and harmonious culture, one heart at a time.

With such idealism comes deep shadows for us mere mortals, – a tyranny of the positive which must be addressed if we are to live together – not just for a weekend workshop, but year in, year out. Community, as a setting and a stage offers fast-track learnings that support

self-knowledge and self-realization – *the rubbing off of our edges* as Peter Caddy named it. And in that process of self-discovery, a deeper understanding of our interdependence, our oneness, become more evident. And thereby we learn to balance individual needs with collective requirements. Willing exploration opens us to feedback at home, at work, in social time and alone time as we aspire and commit to living community ‘as a practice’. The attention we bring to our relationships – with all of life – is the ‘real work’ we do as we undertake our various tasks and responsibilities.

The community at The Park grew quickly for the first 20 years – expanding, developing and planting. A caravan park is a very convenient way to grow an intentional community. People wanting to participate in the life of the flourishing Findhorn community could occupy more and more caravan sites. Rapid expansion in the 70s brought in new properties and projects, including: the building of the Universal Hall; the gift of Traigh Bhan on Iona; the purchase of Cluny Hill and Cullerne House; the gift of Drumduan; the sister community at Newbold; and a partnership lease on Isle of Erraid off the Ross of Mull. The fledgling community grew quickly from a family-sized adventure under the strong leadership of Peter to an international community of over 300 aiming for group consciousness. However, there were not sufficient management structures to handle this stretch in all directions – significant debt mounted up. The cunning solution to this deep financial challenge was to buy the caravan park, thus lowering the Foundation’s rents and annexing a viable business in the Findhorn Bay Holiday Park.

The fund-raising campaign to purchase the caravan park required us to take a longer view. Our identity as a ‘University of Light’ with the students as community members, often taking part for short spans of time, become a vision for a Planetary Village, with residential villagers as community members. Through personification of our core principles, we envisioned building a settlement in co-creation with the Intelligence in Nature, a settlement that expressed loving attention to detail and a fervent desire to integrate harmlessly with the environment. A tall order – once again.

How could this be achieved, in a northern climate and in compliance with industrial world planning regulations? The exploration is ongoing; we have only scratched the surface of what might be possible.

An early ‘identity’ for the growing community in the 70s was the University of Light. Courses were created to host students for a New Age. A few of those ‘students’ are still active community members today. David Spangler, co-director with Peter Caddy from 1970-73 is credited with bringing an educational focus to the daily work activities of the community. He offered regular lectures, study papers and music, exploring ways to bring presence alive in all daily activities. Since the mid 70s many more courses, workshops and seminars have been developed – essentially exploring the core themes: listening for a clear inner voice, co-creation with Nature’s Intelligence and service. As the concept of the ‘planetary village’ became the ecological village and eco-approaches became more interesting to education providers, the community began to welcome students of all ages wishing to study ‘sustainability’.

The Findhorn Foundation College was established by the Foundation in 2001 to further explore holistic education, as well as provide the academic world with access to our collective community ‘research’ and practices. ‘Sustainability’ in its broadest sense has been an excellent way into the discussion. We showcase solar panels, eco-homes, the Wind Park and the Living Machine. Questions arise amongst the students as to how and why we decided to develop these initiatives well before they were fashionable. Conversations about motivation, values and philosophy emerge from these questions. It becomes clear to students that ‘sustainability’ challenges are primarily about values – not technologies.

Today the Findhorn College delivers an undergraduate semester programme exploring Arts in community, Group Dynamics, Worldviews and issues of Sustainability. Our partner in this enterprise is Living Routes, a non-profit that enables North American students to study in a variety of ‘ecovillage’ settlements around the world. The College also contributes modules in community design to an MSc programme at Heriot Watt University, a variety of trainings including Ecovillage Design Education and it hosts short field study visits for university programmes in architecture, horticulture, religious studies, environmental management and the like.

The Park is frequently a subject for tertiary research projects in ecological living. Frequently, surveys and questionnaires are sent to us and we are interviewed by students. The Findhorn College is also engaged in a three year study coordinated by Heriot Watt University’s School of the Built Environment – The Origin Project – with a goal to optimize the use of renewable energies and further reduce our carbon footprint by intelligent coordination of the grid.¹

In conclusion, by working together mostly as well-intended amateurs (like most intentional communities) we are able to address key global concerns in a localised, human-scaled, heart-connected way. And we are truly heartened when others are inspired by our efforts to do likewise.



Mari Hollander has been a Findhorn Community member since the mid 1970s. She has served as Chair of Management within the Findhorn Foundation and played other key community governance roles. Mari was involved, early on, with our ecovillage project and the launching of the local Steiner Waldorf School. As Education Coordinator of the Findhorn College, she promoted holistic education for sustainability. Mari is currently a Foundation Trustee, Chair of Findhorn Wind Park and works freelance on a number of community projects.

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Spirituality, Culture and Governance in the Findhorn Foundation

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“Work is Love in Action”, “All is Very, Very Well”, practice “Patience, Persistence and Perseverance” – such are the spiritual watchwords of the Findhorn Foundation Community (FFC). When aligned with practicing the laws of manifestation, processes of attunement and invocation, and the heartfelt desire to serve, these are a part of the explanation as to why, 50 years after its founding in November 1962, the FFC is thriving, growing and deepening.

The spirituality here is in the doing. Yes, there are practices – and a recent count listed 47 different groups engaged in forms of practice, from meditation and yoga, through the Course in Miracles and The Work of Byron Katie, to spending time in nature and being engaged in art and dance. This broad palette makes the FFC extremely accessible for anyone who wishes to access and live in harmony with something beyond the 5 senses, be it God, Spirit, Nature or The Unnameable – something greater than oneself to which one can surrender.

On a good day, that is what happens. The practice of serving God through serving the community, allied to the giving and receiving of feedback and mirrors from fellow community members in work departments, or in any of the myriad groups in which we live and work can create a powerful vessel for growth and transformation. We become more aware, and more awake, and thus have more choice about how we wish to live and work. We can live by better choices.

On a bad day, we are as unaware, mean and petty as anyone else. Ego struggles, power plays, the abuse of rank and privilege – all these are known to us too. Again, on a good day, we work with our failings with love, compassion and a keen intent to improve. And on a bad day...

Peter Caddy, Eileen Caddy and Dorothy Maclean, our three principal founders, each embodied an archetype that, taken together, form a potent and magnetic spiritual core. Peter (Will and Action), Eileen (Inner Listening) and Dorothy (Co-Creation with Nature) were also clear that they were not the spiritual teachers of the community. Their energetic blueprint plays out today. To the extent that we have a healthy and balanced expression of all three principles, we thrive. When one dominates we go out of kilter. As the founder who stayed throughout, the ‘Eileen Principle’ of being still and listening within has tended to dominate. We miss some of the more active, decisive ‘Peter Principle’ and have, in the past decade or so, reconnected more strongly with the ‘Dorothy Principle’ of co-creation.

The other way the founders’ blueprint plays out is in the challenge of accepting spiritual authority in the community. It is much more a place of ‘Get Your Own Guidance’ than of accepting the spiritual authority of another. This is problematic. Clearly there are people who are more spiritually awake than others. It would be odd if there were not, as hierarchy and different degrees of proficiency are plain to see in every other discipline. While we accept this

in our visiting teachers and flock in our hundreds to see them and learn from them, we are reluctant to invest such authority in other community members. In the absence of such, we are left with the question of how the ego can dismantle itself. Or as my Sufi teacher once put it to me, ‘Who will hold your feet to the fire?’

The rejection of hierarchy and the call for leadership and its simultaneous rejection is part of what creates our culture. It may be helpful to see culture through the lens of Spiral Dynamics (www.spiraldynamics.net) – a way of seeing the evolution of consciousness and world views in individuals, groups, and communities. The Findhorn Foundation – the charity that sits at the heart of the community – may be characterised as primarily Green, Blue and Purple.

The Green creates a place where we can practice deep democracy, listen to all the voices, sit in circle, build consensus – where everyone is welcomed and accepted, more or less. Decision-making can be slow but thorough, so that when there finally is a decision there is strong energetic support for it. Arguably it has to be this way for a primarily voluntary workforce, where the good will and energy of co-workers is of paramount importance.

The Blue can be seen in the many systems and processes we have evolved for the smooth running of a somewhat complex enterprise e.g. booking meals in the Community Centre; not entering the sanctuaries once the red light is on; the Staff Handbook and contracts of employment etc.

The Purple manifests in our belief in the unseen realms, the nature kingdoms, the Angel of Findhorn, the Landscape Angel, and the rituals we engage in – attunement, meditation, sweat lodges et al – all binding us together as the tribe of Findhorn.

The other more ‘individualistic’ worldviews live more in the wider community. Harnessed under the umbrella of the New Findhorn Association, which was founded in 1999 and now numbers some 375 individual Members and 34 Organisations, this is more the place where the Red and Orange can live.

The Orange takes care of our material wellbeing. The businesses and private individuals in the wider community in general earn significantly more than Foundation staff. They are more likely to have pensions, more likely to be entrepreneurs, and more likely to have families. While there is entrepreneurial energy in the Foundation too – just look at the ever broadening range of educational programmes and the new buildings and energy systems we have manifested in the last 5 years – the Orange worldview – success, rationality, rewards, material wellbeing – lives more fully in the wider community.

Lastly, the Red – the place for the free expression of the self – be it in passionate art, or sometimes the raw unleashing of emotion – does not fit so easily into the Foundation’s community ethos. This may be right and proper. I once described the Foundation as a place where the ‘I’ is surrendered to the ‘We’ and the ‘We’ is surrendered to God. Nevertheless, if we are to build the bridge into a higher consciousness, Spiral Dynamics would suggest that

we, and in particular the Foundation, will need to more fully embrace and allow the more expressive (Red and Orange) worldviews to flourish.

We might say then that the Findhorn Foundation Community has one goal – to serve humanity as a place of personal and planetary transformation – and this manifests in two subtly different cultures, one within the Foundation and one living in the wider community.

We find this, not unnaturally, reflected in our governance structures.

The Foundation is a charitable trust, with a Board of Trustees who meet monthly by Skype, and for 4 days in person twice a year. The Trustees hold the legal and financial responsibility for the work of the charity and delegate its day-to-day running to the elected Management Team. The Management Team has resisted various suggestions that it be renamed a Leadership Team, yet clearly holds much of this energy, consulting and liaising with the Council¹ and Co-workers² regularly.

The New Findhorn Association is an Unincorporated Association under Scottish Law, and is ‘the community association for individuals and organisations within a radius of 50 miles of Findhorn, who acknowledge to live and work by the ethical and spiritual guidelines laid out by the community.’ The Foundation, therefore, is a part of the NFA as an organisation. In addition, many individual co-workers are also members in their own right, this giving them voting rights at the AGM and the right to elect the Councilors and the two Listener Conveners (one male and one female) who serve for two-year terms.

Founded in 1999, after sterling work by Robert Gilman, the NFA has grown over the years to take on a key place in the social and cultural life of the community. The NFA and its members organise numerous events and practices for the FFC, ranging from summer barbecues, through full moon meditations and creative sharings, to a community-wide phone directory and monthly community meetings. It has not yet grown into the kind of overarching governing body that was envisaged.

The question of a unified governance structure for the community that better reflects and supports our aspiration to create a unified field of consciousness, is one that has been exercising us for some time. Over the past two years, a partially representative group of ‘the governors’ and ‘the governed’ met to examine this. The group is ongoing but my sense was that at least half its members felt that the organic, slightly quirky, governance systems that have evolved over time³ work well enough and that focusing attention on strengthening the inter-personal relationships that underpin them would yield more benefit than creating new structures.

¹ A group of up to 40 people who have been co-workers for at least a year, commit to attending meetings and staying informed and who pledge to take decisions in the long-term interests of the Foundation and those it serves. In collaboration with Management, it sets the Strategic Directions for the Foundation and empowers Management to lead their implementation.

² All those who work at least 3 shifts a week in a work department and attend that Department’s weekly attunement. This includes staff, students and committed volunteers.

³ At the last count there were at least 6 organisations involved in some form of governance of The Park

For some our governance structures are too complex and concentrate too much power in too few hands. It is not uncommon to sit in small group meetings where several people could be representing more than one organisation and some may be working for 4 or more. Other forms of governance, such as Sociocracy, have gained attention and some currency but it is hard to see how we might get there from here.

To close, a well-known change equation reads: $D + V + A > R$

Discomfort with the current situation + a *Vision* of what could be created + an *Achievable next step* need to be greater than our inevitable *Resistance* to change, to bring about the necessary change.¹

We have many Visions for governance and many ideas about Achievable next steps, but it is not clear that there is sufficient Discomfort with the present system to propel us into a step change in our governance structures.

Should we be grateful for that – *If it ain't broke, don't fix it* – or was Carl Jung right that *'The good always gets in the way of the better'*?

I leave the reader to ponder this.



Robin Alfred is founding director of Findhorn's Consultancy Service and current Chair of Trustees. He has been a faculty member of the Findhorn Foundation's Ecovillage Training for the past five years; taught on the Ecovillage Design Education programme; and recently, has represented the Findhorn Foundation on the two-year 'Transition to Resilience' Learning Partnership programme. Robin worked as a trainer, educator and social work manager for 15 years in London, prior to coming to Findhorn in 1995.

¹ The US author James Baldwin said that 'Most of us are about as eager to be changed as we were to be born, and go through our changes in a similar state of shock'.

Economics, Housing and Enterprise

Alex Walker

Findhorn Community

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A caveat: conference delegates should be aware of the important distinctions between:

- The Findhorn Foundation – an intentional community.
- The ‘wider community’ of organisations and individuals associated with and including the above.
- The local community, few of whom seek such an affiliation.

In this paper, ‘community’ refers to the second of these three definitions.

An Overview of the Community Economy

A 2002 study undertaken for Moray Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise estimated that the Findhorn Foundation and its associated organisations and businesses supported approximately 300 full-time equivalent jobs in the Findhorn/Forres area and provided about £3.8 million in household income within Moray. The subsequent global financial crisis, the closure of RAF Kinloss in 2011 (the base is now a smaller army barracks) and the subsequent financial difficulties of a few community organisations notwithstanding, there is every reason to suppose that the community’s economic impact in the local area is now greater than it was then. Estimates vary but (for example) there are now over 650 adult names in the community telephone directory and at least 40 community organisations and businesses.

Some of these establishments are more visible than others. In addition to the Findhorn Foundation, they include: Phoenix Community Stores, the Park campus’s main retail outlet, which has about 30 employees; Moray Steiner School in Forres, which has circa 80 pupils; New Findhorn Directions, the Findhorn Foundation's trading subsidiary which, amongst other things, runs the holiday park; Duneland Ltd., which owns land north of the Universal Hall it is currently in process of developing; Findhorn Wind Park Ltd., which produces electricity to our local grid using four wind turbines with total capacity of 750kW; and Big Sky Printing, whose premises are adjacent to the Hall.

Others that may be less obvious to the casual observer are: Station House Co-operative, a "fully mutual" housing co-op in the village of Findhorn near the Kimberley Inn; Newbold House and Woodhead community in Forres and Kinloss respectively; Biomatrix, a waste water treatment company; AES, which manufactures solar panels; Park Ecovillage Trust, which owns some of the affordable housing described below; and Ekopia, our community ‘bank’, which has invested over £1 million in various community projects and runs the local Eko currency that has operated since 2002.

The inter-relationships between all of these different bodies are hard to describe, but this diversity brings strength to the economy and a richness to social and economic life that was all but absent from the first half of our fifty years of collective existence.

Affordable Housing

The community has a long and honourable tradition of pioneering ecological house design (admittedly borrowing a great deal from mainland northern Europe which has usually been well ahead of the UK building industry). There are now over a hundred ecological houses and other buildings on the Park campus and the numerous experimental designs, materials and heating systems will be evident to those with an interest in the subject. However, in common with most of rural Scotland, west Moray has something of a crisis in the provision of genuinely affordable housing. For example, official statistics show that the parish of Findhorn is one of the few areas of Scotland where houses in the cheapest quartile cost more than eleven times average wage rates.

Some observers of the British rural scene have suggested that two contrasting pictures of the countryside now sit side-by-side. One is of a “grey and pleasant land populated by the retired or near-retired who have become the new custodians of the country's national heritage”. The other is of a rurality “struggling to come to terms with new economic realities and receiving limited help from an unsympathetic planning system” in which “buses are infrequent, the shops are closing and buying a home is becoming an increasingly distant dream”.

These are rather uncomfortable descriptions for those of us who live here. We have always been a community that has welcomed those from very diverse economic as well as philosophical backgrounds. Nonetheless, some time ago it became clear that if we are to continue to rise to the challenges of ensuring that we are “in this together” and in practical ways demonstrate that our strength, health and wealth are available to help those who lack these things, then initiatives to promote genuinely affordable housing will be increasingly important.

Various schemes are now in operation. One such is at East Whins, the new housing development north of the Hall. The majority of the homes are owner-occupied but there is a cross-subsidised, affordable rented element. As a requirement of the planning approval, a minimum of four affordable units had to be provided – two for social rent with priority for community care and two for shared ownership (with a rental element).

Duneland (the housing developer) and partners have created a community-owned housing model that ensures affordability through social housing guidelines, while retaining community control over tenancies. This was funded by donations and low and zero interest loans from community members. The development also includes an innovative tenancy model for the two community care flats, which are ground floor accessible. Able-bodied tenants can sign up for six month rental agreements, however at the end of the six months, elderly or disabled community members may be given priority.

Enterprise

We are an enterprising community. Moray is an area that is distant from major markets and is a low wage economy based on the traditional combination of ‘fishing, farming and fermentation’ and, since the 1940s, the armed services. It is not an easy place to start a commercial enterprise and although there are a significant number of community businesses,

some of which are listed above, we have in fact been relatively poor at creating new ones over the past decade or so. A great deal of the recent growth in community activity is based on a diversity of micro-businesses – usually single traders.

There is a ‘forum of organisations’ that used to meet regularly but became moribund some time ago, By happenstance there have been recent moves to revive it. In the past it became clear that there were genuine limits to how much our businesses had in common with one another, beyond a shared philosophy and an enthusiasm for the local over the multi-national. There are however, new imperatives now and I hope that this body can help foster a growing spirit of entrepreneurship here, especially with the aim of finding ways to support younger community members.

Finally, I am aware that our community has a tendency to see itself as something wholly new and based on first principles that may be timeless but which were essentially re-interpreted in the post-war era. As a counterpoint I recently wrote a short piece about our relationship with an older British tradition as part of a recent affordable housing fundraising drive. The following is a brief extract, based on Steve Wyler’s booklet "A history of community asset ownership".

Community-owned Housing in Britain – a little history

Attempts to promote common ownership of housing have a long history, many of which have something in common with modern beliefs in social equality and the divinity inherent in all mankind. The Ranters, for example, were a radical movement in the 17th century. One of their most prominent members, Abiezer Coppe believed in these things and an imminent new millennium. He rejected organised religion in favour of communitarian principles and was an inspiration to other similar movements of the day such as the Levellers and the Diggers.

We take our inspiration from a stream of thinking that stresses co-operation between the various realms and values localism over corporate profits. Here, there is an echo of William Blake who observed the negative effects of commercialism on the human spirit in London, and whose 18th century calls for "Mutual" to build a "New Jerusalem" inspired so many.

We are part of the ecological village movement and promote the prospects offered by renewable energy - like Robert Owen and the 19th century co-operative community scene. They used hydro-power at New Lanark and named a windmill they erected in Cambridgeshire "Tidd Pratt" after the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

In this context our aim may be less to create something wholly new but rather to find ways of ensuring that what we do create remains true to its community roots.



Alex Walker, M Phil has worked on a variety of projects in Findhorn Ecovillage and in the Moray Firth area over the past three decades, including in recent years Findhorn Wind Park and Duneland Ltd. He was a member of the Scottish Government’s Rural Development Council from 2009 to 2011 and has participated in the development of plans for a proposed "Rural Parliament" in Scotland. From 2006 to 2012, Alex was Chairman of Development Trusts Association Scotland.

Panel Session: Communalism of the Great Turning

Graham Meltzer, Findhorn Community, Scotland
Joanna Macy, Independent Researcher, USA
Timothy Miller, University of Kansas, USA
Bill Metcalf, Griffith University, Australia
Kosha Joubert, Global Ecovillage Network
Bindu Mohanty, Auroville Community, India

Video of conference presentation: Coming

Abstract

Many of the world's most respected futurists agree that an upheaval or 'revolution' (one often compared with the Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions) is imminent.¹ They broadly argue that we are about to be hit by a perfect storm – a confluence of accelerating climate change, resource scarcity, global financial collapse and the sweeping consequences of peak oil – and that life as we know it will change forever. However, most also suggest that if it is met with human resilience borne of intelligence and compassion, such a transformation will ultimately lead to an agreeable future. If not, or where not, the fallout could be apocalyptic, many say.

In whichever way our uncertain future unfolds, there is little doubt that events and circumstances of the next decades will challenge the human species as never before. We will need to reconsider every aspect of our existence. If they don't do so willingly, people will be *forced* to collaborate simply in order to survive. Hence, the quality of our human relationships will be crucial if we are to salvage a life worth living. Social technologies developed within intentional communities for a very long time, (such as personal change and transformation, relationship building, dispute resolution, inclusive decision making, integrated spirituality and holistic education) will become the new 'currency'. Should some form of communal imperative take hold, then it could be the saviour of vast numbers of people.

It is not the role of this panel session, nor the purpose of this conference, to paint a comprehensive picture of a future eco-communal, sustainable society. Indeed, there can be no best, optimal, preferred or otherwise pre-empted development trajectory, let alone a pre-determined outcome. Nor is a sustainable society ever going to be static. Growth and change are inevitable and desirable characteristics of any human endeavour. Yet, a vision of a better world is necessary in order that the first steps in the journey be taken with optimism. Let there be no doubt that communal praxis (interpreted, for the purposes of this polemic, as communal living informed by communal scholarship) within and out with the intentional community movement will play a central role in its unfolding. "We are moving from a world created by

¹ The coming 'revolution' has been variously called the: *Ecological Revolution* (Lester Brown), *Sustainability Revolution* (Donella Meadows), *Great Work* (Thomas Berry), *Great Turning* (David Korten and Joanna Macy), *Great U-Turn* (Edward Goldsmith), *Great Disruption* (Paul Gilding), *Great Transition* (Paul Raskin et.al.), *Long Transition* (David Hicks), *Long Descent* (John Greer), *Long Emergency* (James Kunstler), *Blessed Unrest* (Paul Hawken), *Sacred Demise* (Carolyn Baker), *Age of Reunion* (Charles Eisenstein) and, most colourfully, *Slo-mo-splat* (Richard Heinberg).

privilege to a world created by community” says Paul Hawken (2007:194) in his book, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming* (New York: Viking). As the subtitle of the book unequivocally declares, the journey has already begun.

This panel session offers an opportunity to hear several speakers address (speculate about) the future direction of the communities movement, communal scholarship, humankind and the biosphere over the coming century – the period of The Great Turning.

- Graham Meltzer: Introduction – where are we headed in the 21st C?.
- Joanna Macy: the unfolding of the Great Turning in the 21st C;
- Tim Miller: the relevance of communal scholarship in the 21st C;
- Kosha Joubert: the trajectory of the ecovillage movement in the 21st C;
- Bill Metcalf: the evolution of intentional community culture in the 21st C; and,
- Bindu Mohanty: intentional community, crucible for transformation in the 21st C.

Introduction: Where are we headed in the 21st C?

Graham Meltzer

Findhorn Community

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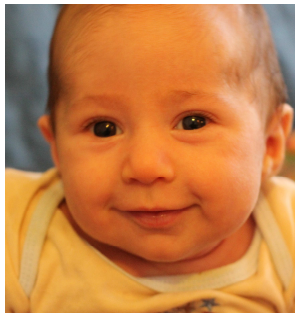
I whole-heartedly, and open-heartedly, welcome you to this final plenary session which, sadly, also marks the formal closing of this conference. The format is a panel discussion titled “Communalism of the Great Turning”. For those of you not familiar with the term, *The Great Turning*, you very soon will be. What I have to say by way of introduction will not be at all academic. Rather, it will be polemical, provocative and personal – as I am determined to take the one opportunity I have at this conference to share my concerns and preoccupations. As some of you will know, I have been somewhat driven for the last three years in putting this conference together. In a sense, it’s been a culmination of what I’ve been driven to do my whole life, namely, contributing to making a better world – a more just, a more decent and a more sustainable world.

This life purpose, if you like, was borne of breakthrough insights of the 60s and 70s which were, I would argue, that relationships of imbalance and inequity are fundamentally unhealthy and that relationships of domination and exploitation must be resisted and dismantled. We reasoned back then, incited as we were by the Vietnam War, by apartheid, by the disclosures of feminism ... that there *are* inalienable rights, that all people, all species, every element of the biosphere deserves to be treated with respect ... and that all life has intrinsic value. In that single most important sense, we are all equal. And we are all equally essential links in the web that connects all life.

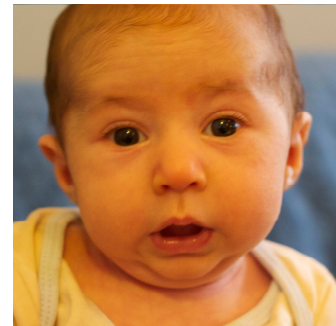
As a teenager, I had discovered and devoured utopian socialist literature – the writings of Moore, Fourier, Owen, Marx and Kropotkin – and fell in love with the ideas and ideals underpinning communal living, which, it’s often said, is utopian socialist thought made

concrete. From that point on, communal living became a deeply-rooted preoccupation. Like many of you, I have lived in, researched and visited hundreds of intentional communities. During those periods of my life when I've lived in community (on kibbutz, in a hippie commune, in ecovillages, and in this spiritual community) communal living has been the means by which I've been able to unselfconsciously apply my values in daily life and integrate them with my lifestyle. Lived congruency of values and lifestyle is, for me, the key to contentment, fulfilment and a life well lived.

At an analytical level, it's been my experience, and the outcome of my observation and academic research, that communal living is extremely effective in deepening an understanding of the aforementioned issues of equity, natural justice, relationship and purpose. Communal living is fundamentally about mutuality – the interconnection and interdependence of members of a group. And it's from that source, which is essentially ecological, that I believe communal scholars and community activists derive their fascination – a shared fascination that has brought us together for this conference. Intentional communities are social science laboratories in which progressive ideas are tested – ideas aimed at building a more socially supportive, respectful and compassionate world both within the boundaries of a given community, and elsewhere. Intentional communities incubate, develop and model ideas and strategies that inform and inspire the world beyond.



I'd like to pause at this point to introduce you to my, recently born, first grandchild, Gus. Gus is now 5 months old. He's a bonny wee chap. We haven't met yet except via Skype, but we'll meet face to face in September and I can't wait. Now, here's the thing – the thinly veiled reason I have for showing him off like this. Gus will likely live until at least the end of this century. Having read what I have about the future trajectory of our species, our biosphere and our planet, I find that a very scary prospect indeed. And so might he if he had any idea of the state of the world that he's been born into...



It's impossible to imagine how life might be for Gus when he's my age and older. If we were to only consider the scale of the social and technological change that we've witnessed over the last century, and recognize that the rate of such change is relentlessly quickening, then in those terms alone, it's impossible to imagine. But we know that there'll be many further, more serious challenges facing Gus's generation – peak oil, resource depletion, reduced biodiversity, financial crises, wealth inequity, climate change ... amongst others. Of these, I see climate change as the single biggest threat to Gus being able to live a contented, fulfilled and well-lived life like his Grandpa. Fortunately for him, he and I have something in common other than our shared DNA; Gus holds a New Zealand passport, which undoubtedly will become a valuable possession when the going gets rough ... that is, when climate change due to global warming renders much of the planet uninhabitable. Does that sound alarmist? I truly don't believe it is. If I may quote that great social thinker and mentor to us all, Woody Allen,

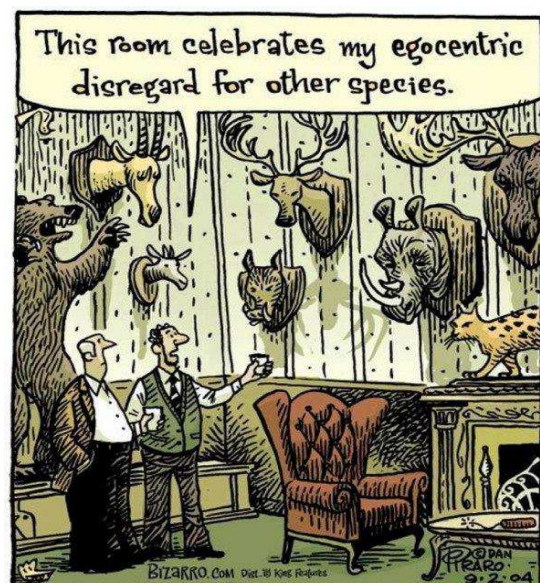
“More than at any time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total extinction. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to choose correctly”.¹

And yet, I actually don't despair when I think about our common future ... nor even Gus's future. No, surely it is these very same challenges that will solicit humankind's greatest creativity, courage and effort. And it's crucial to remember that problems and challenges are not all there is. So long as there is life, there is, and there must be, hope. So long as there is life, there is beauty, solace and joy. So long as there is life, there is compassion, intelligence and love. I absolutely *do* anticipate that we'll see widespread chaos and suffering in the decades to come. But I am also confident that our species has the capacity to be able to carve out some manner of civilised and sustainable future. I see that unfolding mostly within pockets of progressive folk, anchored in their bioregions and their neighbourhoods, building communities, cultures, habitats and economies with sufficient resilience to be able to withstand what's coming – the kinds of communities and initiatives that we've been canvassing at this conference. That's why I've been a life-long advocate of communal living. That's why I've been so driven in piloting this conference. That's why I proposed the conference theme, Communal Pathways to Sustainable Living. I truly believe that the future is communal!

Woody Allen is right about one thing. As a species with intelligence and will, we *are* at a crossroads ... faced with a choice between business as usual and a more sustainable future. The problem is that we've been standing, indecisively, at these crossroads for some 50 years. In the meantime, the devil has sidled up to us with a Faustian offer ... our souls in exchange for material and consumerist wealth and power ... tempting perhaps, but a self-defeating and self-destructive bargain made only at immeasurable cost ... socially, culturally and spiritually.

Intentional communities are crucibles of social wellbeing, cultural resurgence and spiritual growth. And as such, they have the potential to diffuse and supplant futile materialist and consumerist preoccupations. That, in a nutshell, is why I believe they are so important – because they model a better, more conscious mode of being for our species. And a more conscious, less anthropocentric, egocentric direction for *our* species will help safeguard the biosphere for every other surviving species...as cartoonist, Dan Piraro, ironically puts it...

The link between communalism and sustainability has been invoked as a theme for this conference because that choice at the crossroads has become the project of our time ... such that every effort need be made, every opportunity taken, to address it. I don't doubt that future generations will look



¹ *My Speech to the Graduates*, first published in the New York Times in 1979.

back upon this period with total disbelief, especially this last 50 years we've spent dumbstruck at the crossroads – a period of growing awareness of environmental degradation and global warming but one also characterised by powerful resistance to change and complete political ineptitude and indecision. To have held a conference on communalism and not addressed sustainability would have been, for me, negligent, if not criminal – a further perpetration of interspecies and intergenerational injustice. And besides, I want Gus to be able to say of his Grandpa, that “he did what he could amidst the madness of his time”.

I'd like to complete by suggesting that communal scholars should become more proactive, supportive and affirmative of the value and importance of communal living for the future of the planet. We are poised at a pivotal point in human history. It's really not, as the crossroads metaphor might suggest, that we have a simple choice between two futures, sustainable or not. There can be no best, optimal, preferred or otherwise pre-empted development trajectory, let alone a pre-determined outcome. The 21st C will clearly deliver a patchwork of outcomes. And even a sustainable society is never going to be static. Growth and change are inevitable and desirable characteristics of any human endeavour. However, a vision of a better world is necessary in order that the first steps in the journey be taken with optimism. And I strongly believe that collectivism – communal, cooperative, and collaborative endeavour – both within and outwith the intentional community movement will play a central role in its unfolding.

Australian sociologist, Jennifer Sinclair, writes about what she calls, 'affirmative sociology.' I quote, “The need for sociology to reinvent, re-imagine and reconfigure itself on the side of hope and life, and to position itself as a participant in solutions, rather than a detached observer and chronicler of problems...has perhaps never been more pressing”.¹ I believe that what Sinclair advocates for sociology applies equally to all the social sciences, not least, communal scholarship. I see the ICSA as a community in and of itself – of colleagues, comrades and communards. As we set out on the adventure that is the Great Turning, I invoke that the ICSA becomes one small but proactive and effective element of a much larger community of communities – a growing movement focused on bringing about change that delivers justice for all life, and not least, the lives of future generations.



Graham Meltzer, PhD has enjoyed a lifelong involvement with intentional communities, having lived two years on Kibbutz, eight years in Australia's largest commune and seven years at Findhorn. His doctoral research of cohousing looked specifically at the link between social cohesion and pro-environmental behavioural change. Graham has been on the ICSA board for 10 years. He has worked previously as an architect, academic and commercial photographer, and currently works in the Findhorn community as a designer, project manager and educator.

¹ Sinclair, J., 'Towards an Affirmative Sociology: the role of hope in making a better world', *Proceedings of TASA Sociologists' Conference*, Melbourne, August 2008.

Community in the Great Turning

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In our quest for sustainability, indeed survival, we are learning to see our lives within a larger context. For more and more of us, that larger context is the story of life on Earth. When I enlarge the frame beyond my personal agendas, I glimpse the wonder and beauty of that story, and how amazing it is to be born on Earth at this time of such huge challenge.

This wider context gives rise to a two-fold experience. One is sheer gratitude for the gift of life, and for the chance to be alive at a moment when each thought and action can matter greatly. The other is stronger felt connection with the generations who came before us and those who will come after. In our workshops we have "deep time" exercises that help us feel our connections with the ancestors and the future beings. We rediscover that the past and the future are inside us and can support us as we face the huge social, political and ecological dislocations in store for us all. They help us sustain the gaze and be more present to our world. That fullness of presence is, I believe, the greatest gift we can make.

For this the fostering of community is essential. A group working together creates a field of synergy, where intersecting relationships reinforce the intentions of our hearts and minds. Groups build courage to face the facts. They also help you see the Great Turning that is happening.

The Great Turning is the essential revolution of our time. It is impelled by the fact that the industrial growth society is now out of control and destroying the bases of life itself. Our globalizing political economy, driven by its need to accelerate growth and measuring success by its rate of growth, is what systems theorists call a "runaway" system. It is, in effect, a suicide economy. We're all part of it.

Life, however, wants to go on and continue to unfold its 14-billion year story of dazzling creativity. Its capacity to self-organize and evolve is expressed in efforts to transition toward a life-sustaining civilisation. This shift is as great in scope and magnitude as the first revolution of our human journey: the agricultural revolution, which took centuries. And it is as epochal as the second revolution, the Industrial Revolution, which took generations. Now, right on the heels of that, comes this third massive change, the Great Turning – and it is to happen within a matter of years. This transition must not only be swifter, but also more thorough because it involves not only institutions and technologies, but the whole human mindset: who we think we are, what we assume we need, and how we're related to our living planet and to each other.

It is, of course, not in the interests of the industrial growth society for us to know about this revolution. Since we can't expect to hear about it through the corporate-controlled media, it is important to develop a lens or frame through which to see that the Great Turning is a reality, that's already underway. An excellent frame is to look at its three dimensions or arenas of activity.

One dimension consists of what we call Holding Actions, which slow down the destruction being wrought by the industrial growth society. Much of what we call activism is of this nature: political, legal, legislative, regulatory efforts, as well as direct actions, blockades and boycotts. Even though these efforts often fail, they are necessary work, because they save some lives, some species and ecosystems, and some of the gene pool.

A second dimension is that of alternative or Gaian structures and ways of organizing. These include permaculture, for example, and new ways of holding land and producing food, local currencies, new indices of wealth, and ways of teaching, and of healing, and of generating energy. Some of these technologies are ancient in origin; some are recent; blended together they generate the structures required for a life-sustaining society. Though they may appear marginal now, they are the seeds for the future.

But such new structures will shrivel and die unless they are deep-rooted in our values, anchored in our assumptions about the nature of reality. So the third dimension of the Great Turning is a shift in consciousness. Staggering in scope, it amounts to a cognitive, scientific, perceptual, and spiritual revolution – and it is happening now, all around us.

In each of these dimensions, community is essential to the Great Turning. That is not only because we work side by side, shoulder to shoulder, but also because the outcome of our work is so uncertain. There is no way to know whether our efforts to preserve civilization or even complex life-forms will succeed. But together we realize that uncertainty brings forth our courage and creativity. Community nourishes these capacities, and helps us keep our minds and hearts and eyes open.



Joanna Macy, PhD is a scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory and deep ecology. Author of ten books, she is an international spokesperson for anti-nuclear causes, peace, justice, and environmentalism. Joanna is renowned for conceptualising the *Great Turning* – the transformation from what she calls *industrial growth society* to a more sustainable civilization.

Why Communal Studies Matters, Twelve Years Later

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Twelve years ago at the ICSA conference at the ZEGG community I was asked to tell our colleagues why I thought communal studies mattered. Here I am going to recapitulate what I said then, with topical modifications, because I believe now substantially what I believed then.

We live in a world that needs community as never before. I believe that never before in human history has real human community been in such decline as it is today. Especially in the ‘developed’ countries of the West, egotism and selfishness have become paramount values, while traditional values, such as close, nurturing community, have marched steadily toward oblivion.

A terrible irony embraces us. On the one hand, the world is drowning in its own material and cultural excesses, and an important root cause of that suffering is the retreat from community we see all around us. On the other hand, communal studies, one of the few places that stand to make a real contribution to the restoration of community as a vital principle in human culture, is a field inhabited by the smallest handful of scholars, communitarians, and preservationists. But despite our small numbers our work is vital. Even we few, I believe, have answers the world needs.

What I would call the crisis of the contemporary world is made up of elements quite familiar to all of us. Perhaps foremost is our continuing assault on our common global environment. I won’t list details here, because we all know what they are. Beyond our environmental crisis, we have crime. We have poverty. We have widespread social injustice. We have racism. We have prejudice against women, against homosexuals, against certain ethnic groups, and against unpopular religions. War and other kinds of violence remain ever with us.

So where do these terrible, seemingly intractable, social problems come from? I would argue that they stem from a variety of human activities. Industrial capitalism has led to a society in which a small elite controls enormous resources while vast numbers waste away in poverty. Urbanization has contributed to an unwholesome physical environment. Alienation is everywhere. Our technology has only fueled our race into a world of anti-community. Our cars have given us sealed little anonymous environments in which we do not have to interact in a human and personal way with others. Television has taken us out of the public square and isolated us in our living rooms. The vast flow of information now coming through computers takes us out of libraries and has us sit alone in front of computers and walk down the street looking down at iphone screens. Western culture glorifies rampant individualism of the worst kind – not the kind that embraces creativity and diversity, but the kind that promotes a “me first” attitude that puts the selfish interests of the individual ahead of the common good.

So where to from here? I do believe that the solution to the breakdown of community is the creation of more community. That is exactly what the world is calling out for at this difficult

moment in its history.

Of course there are many types of community. The word “communitarianism” is now often used in the United States to denote a pursuit of broad, common values. Community, however, can mean something much deeper than that as well. For those with high levels of dedication to their ideals, living in an intentional community is perhaps the best of all possible ways to establish community.

Although the number of persons living in intentional communities is small, communities do provide a crucial model of another way of life. Some today, as in the past, continue to be heavily communal, with all members living from a common treasury and giving up virtually all private property. Some have a heavy focus in a particular religious outlook, or in a similarly central secular philosophy. Secular communities, especially ecovillages and cohousing, have risen to prominence in recent years. At the same time, the traditional religious communitarians, such as the Hutterites, are still an enormous part of the overall communal scene. The kibbutzim of Israel remain world leaders as communal pioneers. The world of community is diverse.

Academics are supposed to be analysts, not advocates, but I believe that the massive celebration of individualism of the destructive sort, of anti-community, of the last two or three hundred years has produced some dreadful consequences, and that the return to community in its many forms, and the development of more intimate and supportive human relationships, are major parts of the answer to the problem.

And that, in short, is why I think communal studies matters, and why the International Communal Studies Association is important. I profoundly hope that communal studies scholars could have high dedication to a socially beneficial outcome to their work.

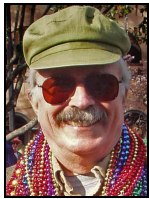
That makes it sound as though the ICSA is only for and about scholars, but the ICSA to which I am proud to belong has far broader horizons than that. It has two principal constituencies, the scholars and the practicing communitarians, and they need each other. For scholars I suppose that’s obvious: we do, after all, need subjects for our research. But the other side of the equation is equally important: communitarians and communities today need scholars. A major reason for that is that communities, for all their strengths, are widely regarded by the general public as cesspools of odd and deviant human behavior. Words such as “commune,” “cult,” and “sect” arise all too often. For many today, there’s really no difference between commune and cult, and that’s a good reason to banish the word “cult” from our vocabulary. People who do things differently are suspect, unfortunately.

The simple fact is that scholars need communities, and communities need scholars. Thus the ICSA has a most valuable role to play. It is my hope that we can make it live up to its very considerable potential.

One of the best known of the American communes of the 1960s era was the Farm in Tennessee, USA. Beginning as a loose group of spiritual seekers in San Francisco, the people who eventually became the residents of the Farm piled onto a long caravan of buses and finally, after months on the road, settled down to build a commune. They continued, however,

and continue today to perform tireless work for social and environmental justice and reform. About three years after arriving in Tennessee they published what was one of the most evocative primary documents of the communes of that time, a colorful book called *Hey Beatnik: This Is the Farm Book*, written largely by the Farm's charismatic leader Stephen Gaskin. One of the short articles in the book is entitled "This country needs in great numbers to become voluntary peasants." I will end my own remarks by quoting Stephen's clarion call in that essay, a paragraph I have quoted many times before:

That's what I go around the country for: to try to talk to lots and lots of people... And it says on the front of our bus: OUT TO SAVE THE WORLD. That phrase is chosen from the old thing, "Well, I ain't out to save the world, but..." We are. Out front. I don't know anything else to do that seems worthwhile. I can already feed myself. I already was a college professor. Not as much fun as this. Want to help?



Timothy Miller, PhD is a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, USA. He is a historian of American intentional communities, particularly during the twentieth century. Among his books are *The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities*, *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America*, *The 60s Communes*, and *American Communes 1860-1960: A Bibliography*. Tim is a long-standing ICSA board member, recognised by the US based *Communal Studies Association* as a distinguished scholar.

Evolution of Intentional Community Culture in the 21st C

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The above title raises several questions: Is there one or many intentional community ‘cultures’, is it/are they evolving, and finally, how would I know? When asked to predict the future, most pundits start from the past, extrapolate through the present, to the future. Unfortunately, while historically many people have imagined glorious futures for intentional communities, whether it be ‘a New Jerusalem’, ‘Socialist Utopias’ or the ‘the Age of Aquarius’, all have failed to materialise so why should one assume that ‘The Great Turning’ will fare any better?

Nevertheless, I believe that I can observe several *mega-trends* with intentional communities over the past centuries.

- 1) Almost all groups have changed from being more to less radical over time, and many were then eventually replaced more radical groups.
- 2) There has been a move from urban to rural communal experiments, but now the movement is back towards urban.
- 3) The large-scale communal experiments of previous centuries became small experiments in the late 20th century, but now are becoming larger.
- 4) The middle-aged to older membership of 19th and early 20th century groups was replaced by young people in the mid to late 20th century, but average ages are now increasing and intentional communities are again becoming more of a seniors’ activity.
- 5) Early communal groups were carefully planned with most aspects of personal and social life closely prescribed. This changed to a quasi-anarchistic approach during the mid to late 20th century, with many groups eschewing any form of planning or member control. Groups are now becoming better planned and members perhaps more constrained.

So I predict:

- Ecovillages will become less rural and more suburban.
- Cohousing will become less suburban and more urban, and become more common, with governmental support, in most western countries.
- Ecovillages and cohousing will blend, becoming almost indistinguishable, with many containing small, radical communal family households.
- As anti-social survivalist and terrorist groups recognise the benefits of intentional community, they will probably infiltrate and adopt this form.
- Finally, there will be a huge increase in intentional communities for ageing people, whether this be ‘senior cohousing’ or ‘elder communes’.

But then I might be just as wrong as my predecessors who predicted a New Jerusalem or the Dawning of the Age of Aquarius!



Bill Metcalf, PhD is a social scientist from Griffith University, Australia. He is a world expert on intentional communities, past President of the ICSA, on the Editorial Board of several refereed academic journals including *Communal Societies* and is International Correspondent for *Communities* magazine. Bill is the author or editor of nine books, plus numerous academic and popular articles about intentional communities. He is also a long-standing Fellow of the Findhorn Foundation.

The Trajectory of the Ecovillage Movement in the 21st C ¹

Kosha Joubert

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I have to say I feel so lucky, because being in this very special and privileged role that I have, serving as president of GEN, I am connected to people all over the planet that are doing the work on the ground. And I have the incredible privilege, in each of our, international board meetings, to get the freshest news from Asia, from Africa, from South America, from North America, from Australia, about what are the new things are happening. So I'm really sorry, but I can't help but be totally, not only blown away by the beauty of what people are doing, but also be incredibly hopeful. I don't know whether I'm naïve, but this is what is totally flowing through me – it's what I see, it's what I hear and it's what I'm connected to.

I think that we need to go beyond Western, European and Northern perceptions to really see what is happening on the ground at the moment. This is what's been strong in the ecovillage network over the past seven years – it has been the Southern networks that have come up with the force, and a power, and a youthfulness that is amazing and that is bringing new energy and new meaning. Once, when I spoke to Robert Gilman about this, he spoke about the dead centres. What is happening in the ecovillage network, well yes, in the North and the West it's ageing, but there is this new wave of energy coming up. So, that's where I come from. I feel very hopeful.

At the core of what we've all been talking about at this conference is the fact that the greatest and also the most under-utilised resource we have on this planet, is the wish people have to make a difference, to be part of the solution, to create new realities, to talk to each other about solutions. In the heart of every person on this planet is that impulse to heal, to leave the world a more beautiful place for their children and grandchildren. We saw Graham's grandchild here. All the elders in the room have connection to grandchildren – either their own or others'. We all have connection to children. We all know that these are the people that we are passing the planet on to.

The longing to be a part of the new is so big in us. Some of us have had the privilege to believe enough and to find a pathway – to feel that that seed of longing has been able to flower and express itself in the work that we're doing. And many of us at the moment on this planet have not found that pathway yet – have not found the way to actually feel we *can* become a part of the solution. We know that we have the intelligence; we know we don't have to continue with business as usual. We know about solutions. Yes, we can say we haven't been intelligent enough as a collective to make that shift. We have shown collective stupidity; we haven't shown collective wisdom. This is true. But all it takes is for the switch to flip in each of us. And we know that this flipping motion, it needs to start somewhere, and as the numbers increase, at some point we'll flip collectively. We don't know when that moment will be, but it

¹ A direct transcription from Kosha's talk.

is the Great Turning. I believe in it. I believe that it's possible. It's what I feel, because of that seed of longing that's alive in the hearts of people.

When I was thinking about what to talk about here, I actually had a memory come. I'm still not quite sure why it's important, but it came to me strongly. It was a crystal clear memory of a moment of power in my life, when I was much younger, much wilder. I was walking in the Himalayas, really far, far up. I was above the source of the Gangus, the holy river. I was there with one of the sadhus who lives there in a cave. I had the honour of staying with him in this cave. He had on his lungi and he had dreadlocks down to his bum. I was dressed in my kind of hippie dress, trousers and a shirt of some kind ... and flip-flops. I walked with him over a glacier and over stretches of snow up to this cave.

As we walked over a meadow collecting some herbs, we ran into a group of mountaineers. They were dressed in like total, hi tech stuff! They were dressed from top to toe, I don't even know how to describe it ... but it was like this mountaineering stuff! ... the whole thing, complete with stuff over their noses to protect them from sunburn and sunglasses and hats and walking sticks. We looked at each other in total amazement. It was just this meeting, you know, this total meeting of opposites, and opposite ways of engaging with the surroundings that we found ourselves in. As we walked on, we met the carriers of their luggage, we also saw the place of their camp the night before and we saw the tins and the plastic waste that they left behind. Somehow, I think this image just teaches us something about what is needed at this time around reconnection and how far it takes us from our attachment to safety, and security.

I think it's so beautiful that the work is also called *The Work that Reconnects* as I think that's so much at the core of what we do. There's the work of reconnecting inside of us to those parts of us – the emotions, the feelings that are not so comfortable – that are anger, that are mourning, that are sadness, that are fear. There's the connection that really needs to happen within human culture across the planet. How do we *really* connect to each other? This is what we are learning so much about in the Global Ecovillage Network at the moment, as we deepen our dialogues: South-North, North-South, East-West, West-East, South in the North with the North in the South, etc. And above all, there's the need to reconnect to nature – nature within and without. And there is something about where we're asked to become naked and really understand that we *don't know*, and that we must let go of our baggage. I don't think we can make the necessary step into the future without that.

So for me, looking at the ecovillage network ... and I acknowledge that we are a *village* network. This is what we are, this is our nature. Yes, there are villages in urban settings but I think it's true that the main thrust of the ecovillage network is in the rural areas. I know there is a deep collaboration happening with cohousing and with Transition Towns which is about *town*. There is a collaboration happening to transition *society* at this moment in time. This transition process really takes us beyond the concept of intentional communities and ecovillages as islands, because today we're at a place where every village needs to become a sustainable settlement or an ecovillage, every city needs to become a green city. It's not a question of a dream or a wish. This is the necessity.

One thing I want to say around urbanisation, is that wherever we travel and wherever the feelers of the ecovillage network go, which is far and wide, we don't find traditional and indigenous villagers that say, "Oh, well actually, we find urban life much more interesting, and we'd love to move into those slums because it's so great to live there". That's not the information we get from our networks. The information that comes is, "We don't have a choice! Our waters have been polluted. Our forests have been appropriated. Our land has been taken and polluted. We cannot survive any more! We'd love to survive!"

I believe that with the Internet happening now, there is no longer a need for humanity to move into urban centres. I don't believe that urban centres have the same capacity for sustainability, for thriving, that smaller settlements have. So I think we are going to come back to a balance. I think that currently, we need to put energy into, and from governments as well, to see what is happening in those villages. How can we support those villages? This is what's happening and this is also where we're active.

The places of hope I look to at the moment are those places where government understands that we cannot create the change without the people. We don't have the money anymore; we don't have the economic capacity we need to do the work without also utilising the power of the people. It's already happening in places like Senegal, where the government has a program for transitioning 14,000 traditional villages into ecovillages. And in Thailand, which has just decided to transition its northern provinces into eco-provinces using ecovillage strategies for sustainable development. I think there is a very special kind of ignition process that can happen when bottom up and top-down strategies come together and really started working together.

So coming from the seed, and this potential that lies within the hearts of all people, and the possibility of new collaborations across all strata of society, where we really know that the transition is a necessity ... I really believe that the Great Turning *is* a possibility, and that the intentional community movement and the ecovillage movement are a deep part of inspiring that change. Thank you very much.



Kosha Joubert has been living in intentional communities for 20 years. She is President of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Executive Secretary of GEN-Europe. Kosha co-authored the Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) curriculum and co-edited *Beyond You and Me - Inspirations and Wisdom for Building Community* (2007). She has just published a book in German on the Power of Collective Wisdom and looks forward to translating it into English. Today, she organises EDE courses and works internationally as a facilitator and consultant.

Intentional communities: A crucible for individual transformation in the 21st C

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All of us here are aware that *The Great Turning* – a turning from the dominant paradigm of unsustainable economic growth to a paradigm of sustainability and interdependence – is already underway. Various thinkers and writers have explored different aspects of *The Great Turning* but insufficient attention has been paid to the transformative effort that is demanded of individuals and communities who choose to participate in this great turning.

The need for a shift in consciousness or a psychological turning

To be explicit, David Korten speaks of the Great Turning in terms of: a “Cultural Turning,” an “Economic Turning,” and a “Political Turning.” To Korten’s differentiation of these indispensable features of the Great Turning, I would like to add a fourth facet, that of a “Psychological Turning”. Korten sees a shift in cultural, economic, and political values as being imperative in bringing about the Great Turning. But such a shift can happen only when there is an inner psychological shift within the individual. What is required is a transformation of consciousness that enables individuals to transcend the narrow boundaries of their egoic personalities to embrace a wider transpersonal sense of self – a sense of self that is rooted in the realization of one’s interconnection with all.

The importance of this psychological shift is borne of the fact that, as Einstein reputedly said, we cannot solve problems from the same level of awareness that created them. In the 21st century, the world faces immense environmental and social challenges that have been brought about by individual and corporate greed. So in order to successfully extricate ourselves from the problems that we have created, we need an inner transformation, an evolution to a higher level of consciousness, where we think not just of our needs but the needs of others. Take for example, the biggest threat that is facing the world today – the threat of climate change. This is not a problem that affects just a particular tribe, community, or nation – it is a problem that affects us all for it threatens the very viability of life on Earth. To successfully overcome this challenge, we need to psychologically grow to realize our essential interdependence with all of life and matter.

So, the Psychological Turning I propose is essentially an inner change consciously undertaken by the individual to act, not out of selfish and aggressive drives but, out of a deeper awareness of one’s unity with the cosmic whole. The psychological turning can also be seen as a shift from the current emphasis on Freudian psychoanalysis to an understanding of the emerging discipline of participatory transpersonal psychology. Joanna Macy, of course, recognizes the need for this psychological shift by calling the third dimension of the Great Turning as a “Shift in Consciousness.” As she says, it is a “profound shift in our perception of reality.”

Given the problems facing humanity in the 21st century, I feel that intentional communities, which are part of the second dimension of the Great Turning, should consciously engage with the third dimension of the Great Turning and act as crucibles that allow for the transformation of the human personality. By consciously choosing to join an intentional community, a person is engaged in the process of co-creating a different reality than the market reality of mainstream society. By choosing a communal lifestyle, a person is consciously choosing a participatory lifestyle based on sharing rather than individual appropriation of wealth. I would further invite the intentional communities of the 21st century to extend their notions of interdependence and sharing to all of humanity and indeed to all living and non-living things.

Recognizing the transformative power of the universe as individuals and communities

To participate in this great venture, of a psychological turning towards unity with all, I would further like to propose that intentional communities consciously engage with one of the greatest discoveries of our time, that of the complex reality of an evolving universe. Since the Big Bang, the primordial radiation with which the universe began, and throughout its journey of 14 billion years, the universe has a marked tendency for complexity. Life forms produced in the course of evolution are increasingly complex in its mode of organization. Teilhard de Chardin also sees this complexity in terms of bringing things of a higher degree of value into existence – a higher degree of freedom, of sentience, of feeling, of enjoyment, and of consciousness.

Complexity in an organization is also defined as that which holds the forces of differentiation and integration in a precarious balance. Evolution on earth has resulted in tremendous diversity where no two snowflakes are alike, or no two leaves on a tree are exactly the same. Even our eyeballs or fingerprints are different from each other. The universe delights in diversity and differentiation, and yet everything is dependent on everything else. Our very existence is a matter of co-existence. By meaningfully engaging with the evolutionary powers of the Universe, we are led to recognize the complexity of our lives that holds in balance the opposing forces of differentiation and integration. On the one hand, we are asked to affirm the power of our own unique individual reality (or differentiation), and on the other hand we are asked to act in ways that serve our connection to (or our integration with) the entire universe.

Mikhail Csikszentmihalyi, author of the book *The Evolving Self* says that, even just by reflecting on this evolutionary process, our understanding expands. And to the extent that we invest psychic energy in directing the evolutionary process toward greater complexity (that is greater differentiation and integration), we help in sustaining the continual unfolding of life in the universe. Like Csikszentmihalyi, I believe, that an individual's participation in the evolutionary process is more effective if it is done within the context of a community. A community provides an individual with an immediate frame of reference of one's interconnection with others. Our very existence as individuals is dependent on community, and in turn the community prospers and grows with the inner development of the individuals that constitute it.

The individual is often in an uneasy tension with society. If we look at human history, we see that capitalistic societies have resulted in the alienation of the individual while communist

societies have largely repressed individuality. History tells us that, the needs of the individual and the needs of the society are dialectically opposed to one another. But the deeper subjective truth, which perhaps will be expressed one day on Earth, is to know one's own unique soul and simultaneously experience the one's connection with the society. The challenge for communities of the 21st century or post-industrial communities then, is to foster a differentiated unity where the individual is not repressed but both the individual and society mutually grow together.

Auroville as an example of a community that is a crucible for individual transformation

Auroville, the community that I belong to, draws its inspiration from such an evolutionary vision of the individual and of society. Auroville is based on Sri Aurobindo's vision of evolution and his psychological understanding of the transformative potential of the human being. According to Sri Aurobindo, individuality is predicated on the profound spiritual truth that the Divine expresses itself uniquely in each individual. Hence, as a social experiment, Auroville acts as a crucible that allows for the full flowering and transformation of the individual.

On the one hand, Auroville is an intentional community, for you have to intentionally choose to participate in it; but on the other hand it is a community that is at the service of humanity. As the first line of our Charter says, Auroville belongs to "humanity as a whole." It is a place where human endeavor, individually and collectively, seeks to be to be in alignment with the trajectory of a spiritually evolving cosmos. And as an Aurovilian, I call upon all individuals to help transform this suffering world by consciously engaging with evolutionary processes in the context of some form of communal living.



Bindu Mohanty, PhD is a writer and teacher. She joined Auroville in Southern India, the world's largest intentional community, in 1994. Committed to the practice of Integral Yoga, Bindu believes that social change requires a radical transformation of the individual. She serves as faculty for an experiential programme on integral sustainability and is currently working on a book on social evolution, which incorporates a case study of Auroville as an experimental evolutionary society.

PART TWO

**COMMUNAL PERSPECTIVES:
INDIVIDUAL, COLLECTIVE & GLOBAL**

Was There Ever Such a Thing as The Communes Movement?

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/T3CzELEHBSc>

Abstract

This paper looks at the history of intentional communities in the late 1960s and 1970s in Britain and asks, “Was there ever really anything that amounted to an identifiable Communes Movement?” And if so, “What were its aims and achievements and what happened to it?” Based on ten years research for the recently published *Communes Britannica*, the paper draws on archive material from the period and interviews with participants.

There is a regularly repeated historical chronology of the founding of the Communes Movement in the UK. In brief, it goes something like this:The Communes Movement was started in the late 1960s by Tony Kelly of the Selene Community in Wales. It had emerged from the Vegan Communities Movement which was itself a breakaway from a group called Ahimsa. After struggling along with small numbers the movement took off at the beginning of the 1970s with increased sales of the magazine *Communes*..... and the rest as they say is history. This story has become the accepted version of communes’ history by communities and academic commentators alike. From Kenneth Leech in *Youthquake* 1973, Andrew Rigby in *Alternative Realities* 1974, through to Pam Dawling tracing ‘Life before Communes Network’ in the pages of *Diggers & Dreamers* in 1992. A more complete version of the story is told by Clem Gorman in *Making Communes* 1971 & *People Together* 1975. Rereading these ‘given’ histories alongside accounts of communes in the underground literature of the time I am struck by the disparity between the orderly narrative created by the later commentators and the much more chaotic, layered feel that you get from the contemporary literature. Almost as if the need for a historic narrative has rounded the story somewhat, neatened up the fuzzy edges and conveniently stopped mentioning those bits that don’t quite fit the jigsaw. I’m not saying I think that the story is in some way false, rather that there is a richer mosaic-like and somewhat more confusing tale to be told.

It perhaps starts somewhere towards the end of 1963 when a small group of people gathered together by a Stanley Farmer planned to set up a vegan community. This group is mentioned by Gorman in *Making Communes* and may be the same group that involved a Ruth Howard described later by Tony Kelly as “...a strict vegan. She was strict in other ways too. She put that sort of people together and then she had some trouble, and the whole thing fizzled out.” Whatever happened, this group never seems to have set up a community. Sometime in the following year Ruth Howard joined a group being set up by a Joseph Ledger. This was the *Agriculture and Hand-Industries Mutual Support Association*, a title chosen because its initial letters made the Sanskrit word ahimsa – meaning to do no harm. Ledger’s idea was to be a

vegetarian society, to repudiate all mass-produced goods and promote agrarian self-sufficiency. Tony and Betty Kelly also joined this group.

....we joined with Joe Ledger's organization, and he said people would come together when they thought they'd like to do so. And the idea was that when enough people got together they would take off for an island somewhere which they would buy, preferably a tropical island, and they would then live happily the idyllic life. **Tony Kelly**

The first edition of a planned regular journal, *Ahimsa Progress*, came out in May 1964. In it, Ledger explained that Ahimsa was not going to actually be a vegetarian community, but should be seen as a base from which communes could be set up and would act as a support for them once they were established. A conference-cum-AGM was organised and a constitution proposed. But as the year progressed, the association slipped into debt and members fell out with each other. By the end of the year a split had developed between Tony Kelly & Joe Ledger and Kelly left with a few others to form *The Vegan Communities Movement*. Having split with Joe Ledger and Ahimsa, Tony Kelly managed to get hold of the Ahimsa address list by a combination of inserting a piece into the final Ahimsa Progress newsletter and sending everyone a Christmas card with an invite to join the new *Vegan Communities Movement*. The aims of the new group were to establish and support vegan and progressive vegetarian communities and to "initiate and support humanitarian social experiments and to propagate the principle of non-exploitation of all sentient life forms". A new newsletter was produced called *Ahimsa Communities*, the first copy coming out in March 1965. An initial gathering of members was held in Gloucestershire; Tony Kelly was elected the first secretary of the movement. Things seemed to be going well; membership increased to 22. In issue 3 of the newsletter Kelly wrote an article entitled "The Need for Urgency" in which he set out his thinking as to why people should join communities and adopt a vegan diet.

This country and Europe are the most densely populated areas in the world, and we are going to feel the effects of world food shortage first....With food prices claiming an ever greater share of our income, there will be a rush to acquire a stake in our own diminishing acres and land prices will soar out of reach.....At present a few pioneers such as we can still afford to make mistakes and while making them, learn to make our shrinking acres more productive. If groups such as we undertake a hundred experiments and only one succeeds, that one will make the hundred worthwhile and the only viable economy – a vegan one – will be established as a pattern upon which to base future efforts at averting the famine.

In November '65, Tony & Betty Kelly and Pat Blackmore set up their first communal household in a house at Wheathampstead that would evolve into the Selene commune, the first actual commune to emerge from any of these 'movements'. Unfortunately after this somewhat promising start things took a turn for the worse – with something of a repeat of the conflicts that had occurred in Ahimsa. Ruth Howard had become the movement secretary and seems to have taken offence at the open sexual relationships at the Wheathampstead house. Things came to a head after an article by Tony Kelly on group marriage appeared in the newsletter. Howard claimed that she had a letter from the London Vegetarian Society objecting to the article and had replied as secretary guaranteeing that no more such articles could appear in the journal. Kelly took offence to this censorship and the whole thing blew up into a major conflict with Howard tipping off the News of the World and The People and even

handing in copies of the journal to the police. Finally after trying to get Kelly expelled from the movement Howard and a number of other members resigned.

In 1967 the three members of the Selene group bought 22 acres of land and a caravan near Llanbedr.

We thought because we know nothing about agriculture, we had better not risk too much. So we bought this bog for £500, and we towed this caravan into this squelch.... There developed a terrible fungus all over the walls of the caravan dripping down the walls and windows in a 22 foot caravan with 4 people – 5 at one time. And ice on the floor in winter.”

They attempted to grow food on the wet boggy land.

After a time we realised that you can't grow very much in a bog.... It was horrible. We got discouraged. We'd plant seeds and nothing happened.... About two thirds of it was very squashy marshy agricultural – no, not agricultural – rushy land. And almost the other whole third of it was stagnant swamp bog.

They tried to keep the Vegan Communities Movement running, continuing to put out bi-monthly newsletters to a dwindling number of members.

...one of our ideals in setting the commune up was to show that we could live on our vegan diet, vegan ecology. But both the Vegan and Vegetarian societies disowned us so we were virtually isolated.... And there were no other communes at the time either, nothing. We had only about twenty members and things got worse and worse, because the membership went down and down, and then there were only seven members left....

During this period they were visited by a rather strange character called 'Ticka', who claimed to be a hereditary witch who worked in a scientific lab and was travelling the country wild camping in a 'tetrahedral tent'. Over two days of discussion and argument, 'Ticka' persuaded the group to stop being vegans. He then disappeared. In the August '68 issue of the newsletter, an account of this discussion was printed under the title 'Vegan Ethic Reappraised'. This radical change resulted in the next issue of the newsletter appearing in Oct '68 under the title of *Communes: Journal of the Communes Movement*. Around this time the house in Wheathampstead was sold and Selene moved to a 54 acre hill farm near Farmers in Carmarthenshire. The Communes Movement at this stage was almost entirely the creation of the people at Selene, you might actually say it was an ambition rather than an actuality and its existence relied on them producing issues of the journal, writing most of the material themselves. What happened in the ensuing years has given the Selene pioneers a status as 'founders' of a movement that would seem to somewhat over emphasise their actual contribution. Yes they were there at the beginning, but things only started to resemble anything like a movement once they had handed the reins over to others.

Dropping the vegan ethic broadened the appeal of the movement and membership started to increase. John Driver, from Taunton in Somerset, took over the 'first secretaryship' in 1969 and for the first time numbers did not drop when subscriptions became due. By the end of the year there were 100 members and the print run of the journal had risen to 700. A federation fund was set up for the purpose of accumulating finance to establish future communes. The following year the fairly disparate bits of the communes world started to link up. This would

largely be due to the influence and work of Nicholas Albery who worked for the underground information service, 'BIT', in London at the time and who became the communes movement secretary during 1970.

That Nicholas should have been executive officer of the Commune Movement and at the same time a long serving member of the underground's twenty-four-hour information and co-ordinating service, was significant. With Nicholas Albery taking up the office, it meant that links between the specific Commune Movement and the more general underground scene, centred as it was and is in the Notting Hill-Ladbroke Grove area of West London, were made more firm and tight.

Andrew Rigby

BIT information service was something of a lynchpin-hub cum clearing-house for the growing counterculture in London. Started by John (Hoppy) Hopkins and friends in May 1968, it had evolved out of International Times because the paper got far more inquiries for info and help than it could cope with and produce a newspaper at the same time. According to John May who 'worked' there for a while,

BIT was a constantly changing collection of drop-outs, misfits, visionaries, deviants, information freaks, students, runaways, travellers, electronics whizz-kids and even "normal" people from all over the world, none of whom were paid and many of whom worked all hours God sent. Apart from social welfare, info on jobs, housing, squatting, social security, the law and health, BIT could also supply information on anything from geodesic domes and herbalremedies to how to mend your bike when you got stuck on the Yorkshire Moors. It would even mend your television set for you.

BIT received no funding from any official government source for the services it provided. Instead it was financed by a hand-to-mouth combination of income from a highly popular guidebook, *Overland to India & Australia* (Minimum donation 50p). It received the odd £500 or £1000 gift from rock stars with radical leanings and the occasional small grant from the likes of the Gulbenkian foundation, though in general BIT avoided anything with 'strings attached'. As well as giving the Communes Movement a helping hand, BIT acted as midwife to various other alternative schemes including the Community Levy for Alternative Projects, also known as the CLAP Tax. During its existence, it raised over £30,000 for radical projects throughout Britain by asking readers of alternative magazines to give 1% of their income to projects of their choice from a regularly published list of projects needing money. Through the efforts of Nicholas Albery and helpers at BIT, sales of the Communes journal shot up in the first six months of 1970 to 2,500, appearing in the windows of most of the 'head' shops in London alongside Oz, IT, Gandalf's Garden and Peace News.

Suddenly, everyone is talking about living in communes. And, although there are far more people talking than doing, there is now a fair sprinkling of thriving communities around the country. There is talk of 'the commune movement'...

Nicholas Saunders Alternative London 1970

As the Sixties turned into the Seventies, the embryonic Commune Movement issued a manifesto for the creation of a *Federal Society Based on the Free Commune*. Running to thirteen sides of A4 and starting off as an article in Communes magazine penned by Tony Kelly, it consisted of a libertarian critique of the 'supermarket society' followed by a call to communal arms with descriptions of various forms of intentional community that readers are urged to aspire to: urban craft based communities, rural back to the land groups, Island

communities, self-build country communities, and big house farming groups. Painting a realistic picture of the challenges faced by the 'Movement' it proposed a distinctly anarchist approach and ethic.

Let us state our ethic as a federation: Everyone shall be free to do whatever he or she wishes provided only that he or she does not transgress the freedom of another. The only morality is to experience and create contentment for all of us – and species not withstanding. Such a federation is the only alternative to present dictatorship by democracy, and the growth of a federation of free communes would eventually render centralised government largely irrelevant.

Showing the movement's vegan roots, it encompassed early animal liberation philosophy calling for support for 'freerange farming' and "... the contentment of animals on the same basis that we urge ours because they, like us, are sentient." The manifesto then details the achievements so far which included the founding of the association with "no officers, no censorship, no committee". Decision making was to be by balloting the whole movement and "...to prevent any possible growth of a power structure, we do not allow rejection or expulsion of any member for any reason whatsoever." Alongside this the Communes magazine was coming out bi-monthly. This was seen as the bare minimum to get the movement going but was seen as still being "...a long way from a realization of a federation of free communes".

Another piece of the handed down received history of communes in the sixties is that whilst there was a lot of talk about setting them up and a lot of rhetoric about how they were going to change the world, actual flesh & blood/bricks & mortar communities were somewhat thin on the ground. This is not born out if one does a bit of delving. A quick trawl through info on communes from the period comes up with at least 40 communities of varying types that formed during the sixties. Yes, some were short-lived, but many lasted through to the end of the decade and beyond. Add the few communities that had survived through from the immediate post-war period (Braziers Park, St Julians, Othona... the couple of real long term survivors – Whiteway and the Brotherhood Church, a handful of Camphill communities) then certainly, by 1967/8, there was actually getting on for something like 50 or 60 clearly recognisable intentional communities dotted around England, Scotland & Wales. It looks like it was more of a case of there being very little contact between groups that existed, or a lack of any co-ordinating body that had a broad enough definition of communal living to encompass the range of communities that existed, rather than there not being any.

In 1971 a self-published book, *Making Communes*, by Australian theatre director Clem Gorman came out with the stated aim of filling the gap "that exists between the ideals upon which most British communes are founded and the realities they have to face." The book was part how-to-do-it manual with everything from maps of nationwide soil types and weather patterns, alongside advice on how to find property and DIY renovation. It also included a brief history of communes since 1965 and a survey of current communes. The book was upbeat in tone throughout, pointing to successful examples of communes including: the Diggers on Dornish Island, a group of Cambridge graduates sharing a house in Lambeth called the Square Pigeon Community that had been going since 1968, Braziers Park, Selene and the recently formed Birchwood Hall in Worcestershire.

...Because the communes and communities movements are still in their infancy, their plans and possible future directions are in some ways their most important product. Communards tend to talk of the future, which may be a mistake because communal life can provide here and now what Utopians have always hoped for in the future ... They are laboratories of future ways of living, in which the experimenters are their own guinea pigs. I think they are both a response to, and a part of, the most profound revolution ever to transform society. I also believe that they constitute one of the few hopes that this revolution can be peaceful.

Clem Gorman

1971 was a real year of hope for the embryonic communes' movement, after the ideological euphoria and eventual dashing of hopes of the '68 'revolutionary moment' there now seemed to be a realism and pragmatism that would lead to the establishment of a real alternative to mainstream society with communes as a crucial part of that new society. The first years of the decade saw a flurry of commune forming going on across the country. As well as Parsonage Farm and Birchwood Hall, down in Kent there were groups in Ramsgate and Rochester, in Norfolk Shrubbs Family had got going on a farm at Larling, in London there were the Street Farmers and the Chapel of Isis (Trans Sex Trip) commune. Further west in Gloucestershire a group had managed to get government funding for 'shared housing' channeled through a sympathetic local authority and bought a large medieval manor house called Postlip Hall. All these groups were up and running by the end of 1971 joined in the following year by the formation of Hoathly Hill Community, Whitbourne Hall, Trogwell and Laurieston Hall. Despite all this activity and the publishing of an annual directory of communes listing some 30 groups Sarah Eno opens the editorial to the 1972 Communes Directory in a decidedly pessimistic mood.

The following words will probably seem very depressing ... the ideas about communes and the interest in them has grown enormously but the actual growth of real communes has been very slow. There are many reasons why this is, but not the least of them are the practical ones of acquiring a property and perhaps some land. The ideas of the Federation Fund although very good, have not taken off very well ... England is a very overpopulated country anyway, so land and housing is in short supply and capitalist methods make hay of such a situation with the quick profits to be made from rapidly rising property prices. It is not easy, either, to build accommodation suitable for communal living since any building land is also an exorbitant price. The difficulty of raising capital, of finding compatible people free enough to make the plunge are the main hindrances to growth ...

This mood seems to have been as much frustration at the slow pace of progress than a reflection that nothing was actually happening on the ground. As well as there being a steady trickle of communes being formed that by the end of 1972 was beginning to produce something that might actually be called a movement, newsletters were being distributed almost every month to a membership of around 200. There were also occasional Bulletins, a 'Commune Services' skills lists of members willing to volunteer their help, the Communes Journal was being printed bimonthly with a staggering 3000 print run, 600 of which went to subscribers the rest being sold in shops and the 1971 Communes Directory sold a thousand copies in nine months. While the early 1970's might well lay claim to being the heyday of communes forming across the country the actual state of the 'Movement's' organisation seemed to lurch from one self-inflicted crisis to another. With seemingly endless arguments about how the movement should be structured going on in the pages of the movement's

publications and at meetings of members. The rows rumbled on with accusations of ballot rigging, of the publication of an ‘unauthorised’ issue of the Journal (Issue 42) which was only resolved by Nic Albery stepping in and regularising the ‘unofficial’ journal with a ballot, but as one newsletter writer put it “... not before considerable bad feeling and chaos had virtually split the movement.” This eventually led to a number of members, including Tony Kelly of Selene, resigning their membership and issuing stark warnings about the Movement’s future.

... I doubt whether (the Movement) will survive in effective form another year. With ... Bob Matthews’ cynical reliance on members’ apathy and susceptibility to his ‘sales talk’ ... when the Movement is pushed aside so blatantly by one entrepreneur, the movement is virtually dead and wishful thinking will not stop Bob’s finally killing it ...

Tony Kelly CM Newsletter 90 2 July 1973

During 1973 problems came to a head. The Journal was getting into financial difficulties, proving expensive to produce and was seen as too infrequent to be useful to people seeking a community to join. There were further financial problems in 1974, and the secretary had stopped replying to letters. There seems to have almost been a correlation between the increasing activity in actual formation of communes and a decrease in enthusiasm for the Movement itself with reluctance among communes to host a Journal production weekend. A meeting was organised to resolve the situation in Aston, Birmingham at the home of The Gorilla Family on February 15th and 16th 1975. Those attending the meeting decided that the Movement had run its course – at least for them that they would set up a looser ‘Network’ that better suited their needs. Bob Matthews reported back the outcome of the meeting in the next Movement newsletter

CM is dead Long live CN! – not exactly an accurate statement of the results of our meeting, but likely to be near enough in practice. About 30 of us gathered over the weekend and, we surprised ourselves that so many came to concern themselves with the moribund CM. It was a peculiar meeting and a very fruitful one. No secretaries came, there was no protocol nor tradition to follow. Nobody could have foretold the outcome. But over the course of the weekend we evolved a leaderless consensus style and came to some harmonious decisions. What did CM need? To be revived or buried? We decided to bury; then resurrect. **Bob Matthews report of the meeting CM Newsletter 104 14.3.75.**

The new network of communes would proved to be more robust than it's earlier Movement incarnation and would continue to promote communal living for another 20 or so years.



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Painting over Other People's Paintings: Barriers to recruiting young people into New Zealand's existing communities

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/_v5pbQCSVKE

Abstract

New Zealand's long-established intentional communities generally support predominantly ageing core populations, reflecting a similar tendency in Australian communities, where "it is common to find a fairly narrow age cohort ageing gracefully".¹ Younger people tend to visit these communities, rather than commit themselves to permanently joining them. The majority of the adult children who were raised in community are also choosing not to return to their communities to live.

This paper examines one long-established community which has undergone extreme change in the last decade. Founded almost 50 years ago, Wilderland was considered to be one of Australasia's "most prominent communes" during the 1970s.² It now supports a small core group of committed young people, the oldest of whom are in their forties. A comparison of Wilderland with two other long-established New Zealand communities provides some insights into the complexities surrounding the issue of ageing communities and a disinclination on the part of younger people to commit themselves to membership of those communities.

Introduction

A common theme amongst long-established intentional communities in New Zealand, and indeed intentional communities internationally, is the overall ageing of core populations.³ This is by no means peculiar to the contemporary communal movement. Rosbeth Moss Kanter identified an inability to retain the second generation as well as to recruit new members as a major contributor to the dissolution of long-lived 19th century communities.⁴ With a few exceptions, generally the next generation is not inclined to return to the communities they

¹ Metcalf, W. J., & Christian, D. (2003) Intentional Communities. In K. Christensen & D. Levinson (Eds.) *Encyclopaedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World* (Vol. 2, pp. 670 – 676). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

² Sargisson, L., & Sargent., L.T. (2004). *Living in Utopia: New Zealand's Intentional Communities*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Company, p. 33

³ See Metcalf, W. J., *Shared Visions, Shared Lives: Communal Living Around the Globe* (Forres, Scotland: Findhorn Press, 1996). Also Metcalf, W. J., & Christian, D. Intentional Communities. In K. Christensen & D. Levinson (Eds) *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World*, 2003) Vol. 2, 670 – 676.

Also, the author's thesis: Jones, O., *Keeping it Together: A comparative analysis of four long-established intentional communities in New Zealand* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Waikato, New Zealand, 2011).

<http://hdl.handle.net/10289/5962>

⁴ 1972, p. 147

grew up in to raise their own families.¹ Nor are significant numbers of other young adults committing themselves to membership. Core populations remain primarily those from the 70s-era generation. In 2003, Metcalf and Christian wrote “Australian research found that the mean age of intentional community members was in the high forties and increasing at about half a year per year.”² In 2013, that would put the mean age of comunards in their high fifties. Metcalf and Christian also report that “relatively few community children remain in their communities once they become young adults, so it is common to find a fairly narrow cohort, ageing gracefully.”³

I believe this is also the case in New Zealand. Tui community, in Golden Bay (established 1983), and Riverside community in Tasman (established 1941), both have resident bodies that are keenly aware of their ageing, and acknowledge the need to actively encourage young people to join if they want to keep their communities vital.⁴ While young people *are* choosing to spend time living in these communities, they do not necessarily consider it to be a permanent choice. Some older members speculate that they may well become communities of old people in the not too distant future. The concept of another kind of intentional community or co-housing initiative designed to cater for the needs of elderly people is a topic that is increasingly emerging amongst the baby boomers in community. The reasons why the next generation of environmentally-conscious and community-minded young people is not choosing to make existing long-established intentional communities their permanent home is the focus of this paper.

One reason given by young adults attending a Permaculture course at Tui for not wanting to join an existing community is that joining an established community which is run by a group of ageing members is not an appealing idea. Their perspective contrasts with the experience of the first wave of founding and early members who settled bare land in the 1970s and early 1980s when they were young adults. Frans Muter is one of Tui’s early members. He said, “We had an empty canvas and we had to form community. ... We could just paint over the canvas with bold strokes – we weren’t painting over other people’s paintings.”⁵

Frans also believes that younger people who come to Tui in the present have a different attitude to community living to that of the original group held. He said:

It feels like they are not willing to input as much as we used to. But of course it’s a different thing. Now you have older folk around who say yeah, we tried that already. Also, when we came, nobody was established on the land so you couldn’t say oh poor me, I don’t have a house; I have to look after myself. So when new people come, they

¹ Exceptions tend to include religious groups, such as the Hutterite and Bruderhof (now known as the Church Communities International Group) communities, where a high percentage of young adults stay in their communities.

² Metcalf, W. J., & Christian, D. (2003). Intentional Communities. In K Christensen & D. Levinson (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2004) Vol. 2, 674 - 676.

³ Ibid.

⁴ These communities are two of four long-established New Zealand communities that were the focus of the author’s doctoral research. That study examined some of the ways in which foundation structures and ideological underpinnings influenced the culture that evolved in each community.

⁵ Personal communication with author, 25 February, 2009.

first start looking after themselves. The community is already there and it looks like they don't have to put energy into that, and that sets a dynamic in place that is hard to change. They might want to have more [communal involvement] but they are not willing to give up their time [to make it happen].¹

This perceived reluctance to 'give up their time' is consistent with Metcalf's observation that "many contemporary people seem commitment-shy"² when it comes to embracing membership in communities. But from the point of view of young adults who might be interested in living communally, the prospect of joining a community in which the majority of members are of their parents' generation, hold entrenched positions of power, and live fairly independent lives, not only sets a precedent, but does not exactly represent an alternative way of living.

The reluctance to commit is not peculiar to the current generation. This is evident in comments made by some ageing members of Riverside community, when recalling their own first encounters with that community decades ago. Riverside is New Zealand's oldest intentional community, having been in existence for more than 70 years. Barbie Cole started living at Riverside in 1976. As a young woman she recalled an initial aversion to joining because:

It was too established – everything was already in place, and when I came to meetings I got this feeling that no-one was really interested in listening to each other. ... I thought how did these people make decisions when they all seemed to be pushing their own barrow? But what actually happened was, the more I got to know these people, and saw what they were doing, it was alright. It wasn't how I initially thought it was. Decisions would come out of those meetings.³

Another Riverside member, Verena Gruner, first visited Riverside in the early 1980s, with her partner and young family. She recalled:

Riverside felt too tight – too regulated. I was at a stage in my life when I needed space. I wanted something based more on the free spirit of Renaissance⁴. Maybe I've tempered down a bit my need for complete freedom. I've realized the need for some structure.⁵

The views of Barbie, Frans, and Verena expose the conflicting perspectives, experiences and expectations of different generations. The pioneering attitude, and a desire to start with 'an empty canvas' as Frans described the experience of settling new land, starkly contrasts with the present generation who do not appear to have the same willingness to start from scratch and rough it in an equivalent way to the older generation when they first started out.

Another of Tui's founding members, Robina, has observed that the material expectations of younger people who come to Tui in the present are very different to those of the founding

¹ Ibid.

² Metcalf, W.J., *The Findhorn Book of Community Living* (Forres, Scotland: Findhorn Press. 2004), p. 108.

³ Personal communication, 27 February, 2009.

⁴ Renaissance is another community discussed in the doctoral research that informs this paper. That community is based upon anarchistic principles; it has a minimal structure and an open door. Anyone can go there to live, without being obliged to abide by a set of regulations. Verena lived there for 22 years before moving to nearby Riverside Community in 2004.

⁵ Personal communication, 28 February, 2009.

generation who initially lived in housetrucks and tents and ‘made do’ in the early years of establishing the community. She said:

The generation I was raised with had a more do-it-yourself ethos, to give things a go and start from the beginning. Now it’s a different era. For young families that might want to come ... there’s not a house to rent so they feel they can’t stay here.¹

However, the members who made do in the early years also have greater material expectations in the present. Robina concedes that the long-established community members at Tui set a benchmark for standard of living expectations, and that new people coming in expect to enter on that level.

An awareness of the need to encourage younger people has been present in that community since its first generation of children grew up and left en-masse in the early 90s. While the community continues to support a core population of ageing members, it still attracts a steady trickle of younger people, though they tend to be foreign nationals rather than New Zealanders. Many of them are in the county for a finite period, and often visit as part of the WOOF Scheme.² Community members acknowledge that an essential part of the process of assimilating new people is for the older ones to consciously step back and relinquish some of their control over community affairs, and to allow newer members to have some influence and responsibility. However, an unfortunate effect is that there is the temptation to use it as justification for withdrawing from community involvement altogether. The withdrawal of long-established households contributes to a gradual transformation from inter-dependent communities to friendly rural suburbs or pleasant neighborhoods.³ Thus the precedent it set for newcomers entering the community, and they ‘first look after themselves.’

The effects of ageing populations

The withdrawal of members from active community involvement not only reflects a shift in emphasis associated with ageing, but for some, waning interest in actively participating in community affairs reflects a waning physical energy. This is further exacerbated by the topography of Tui community – its houses are spread across two valleys and hilly terrain. In practical terms it makes sense for households to become more self-sufficient in the long term. Robina observed that many members who have lived at Tui a long time “really want and like their private lives. ... Basically they’ve become more conservative and more like the status quo.”⁴ The generation she is referring to are generally in their late 50s and 60s and their needs and circumstances have changed considerably since they first joined communities in their 20s and 30s.

There are, of course, exceptions. Verena, who is turning 60, and has lived in community for most of her adult life, enjoys a high degree of communal involvement. She describes herself

¹ Personal communication, 25 February, 2009.

² WOOF – an acronym for Workers on Organic Farms (or WWOOF – Willing, or Weekend Workers on Organic Farms). See <http://www.woof.co.nz>

³ See Cock, Peter, From Communal Theory to Eco-Spiritual Practice. In B. Metcalf (Ed.), *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Co-operative Lifestyles in Australia* (Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press, 1995) 154 - 169. Also, Metcalf W.J. (2004).

⁴ Personal communication, 25 February, 2009.

as “a person that needs to work with people to realize my dreams. I didn’t go to live [in community] to have a pretty piece of land to do my thing.”¹ She acknowledges the challenge of attracting younger people to established and ageing communities like Riverside, particularly in being “open to them and allowing them some space ... because the system is quite limiting and makes it harder for them to come and live here.”² Limitations at Riverside not only include a commitment to a shared economy, but also the restrictiveness of the community’s decision-making process, and

being your own boss - other people always having a say in what you want to do. ... It narrows people. I think that’s probably part of the reason why Riverside isn’t flourishing the way it might do if it was run a different way, because part of being creative and entrepreneurial is having the space to do that. That’s one of the big challenges for Riverside. How can we change that particular way of limitation into something that’s more open and dynamic and at the same time not lose that togetherness, and the fundamental basis which Riverside has operated on for so long.³

Divergent motivations: Ideological vs. lifestyle choice

A reluctance to relinquish a certain level of material comfort or standard of living identified by Tui members as a reason why younger people are not inclined to commit to the community suggests that many contemporary people are motivated by self-interested reasons rather than a greater vision or ideology.

This seems to be evident at Riverside, where there are currently plenty of young people who are living in the community as paying tenants, occupying the houses that have become empty as membership has declined. While they provide welcome youthful and social energy, they are the equivalent of paying guests; they are not expressing a desire to commit themselves to membership. Membership carries the attendant requirement of sharing income, resources, work, and responsibility for collective decision-making with the group. This reluctance is particularly pronounced in a community as long-established and collectively operated as Riverside which has evolved traditions and particular ways of doing things over its 70 year history, including a fully inclusive approach to decision-making. From the perspective of an outsider, the benefits of membership over tenancy are not obvious. Commitment to membership means commitment to Riverside’s ideological foundations, which includes a commitment to voluntary poverty. A fundamental difference between Riverside and other intentional communities is that they share a common purse, thus commitment to membership involves relinquishing personal income. Riverside’s core tenet is equality in all things. Commitment to membership at Riverside assumes an ideological choice, whereas to live there as a tenant enables the retention of independence while enjoying the social benefits of living in a community.

Sylvia Bauer was raised at Tui community, and as a young adult spent two years living at Riverside with her partner and young child. She expressed her frustration as a young newcomer trying to find a place to fit in and be fulfilled. She said:

¹ Personal communication, 28 February, 2009.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

In practice they try to get complete consensus where possible which makes things even more drawn out. For some, perhaps longer-time members, there is great value in this because they feel that a better decision is made in the long run; for me it was too frustrating and is making the community stagnate. I'm an action-orientated person and being thwarted by other people not being able to compromise or come to a common solution feels like a terrible waste of my energy. It's demoralizing, because if I see something that I think needs to be fixed, I want to go and fix it.¹

Colin Cole, who was born at Riverside and has lived there for most of his 65 years, is very aware of the difficulty of cultivating an encouraging environment where newer people feel empowered to act. He said:

The challenge is trying to integrate people wanting to reinvent the wheel. You've got two approaches – you can say we've been there, done that, and give people a picture of what's happened in the past, or sometimes you have to say “oh well, we'll do it again.”²

Wilderland

Wilderland, established in 1964, is another long-established New Zealand community.³ Sargisson and Sargent state that during the 1970s Wilderland was “one of Australia and New Zealand's most prominent ‘communes’”⁴ and that it “influenced the development of many later communities.”⁵ The community has always had a high number of visitors and short-term residents and has hosted several thousand people over its lifetime. Currently, it supports a small resident group of about ten people, none of whom are over forty years of age, and none of whom have lived there for more than four years. In some respects, Wilderland can be considered to be a new community because between the beginning of 2009 and the end of 2010 there was a complete change of resident population. Wilderland has recently emerged from some very difficult years, having experienced the death of its founder Dan Hansen, and survived a legal challenge to the Wilderland Trust that owns the land, and a court order by the Thames Coromandel District Council demanding the demolition of all of its thirteen illegally built dwellings, which were considered a health and safety risk.

While they are a completely new group of people, the views and attitudes expressed by current resident body bear similarities to the recollections of long-term members of other communities regarding their early motivations and ideas. That is, their primary motivation to live communally was ideologically driven rather than focused on cultivating a lifestyle.

Russel is in his mid-30s and describes his role as one of “general manager ... looking at overall direction [and] the architect of the management system ... with the approval of everyone.”⁶ He has been instrumental in the recent rebuilding of Wilderland, including negotiating with the council to stay the demolition order and settling the high court challenge to the Wilderland Trust. Russel explained that his goal was to draw on some of the positive

¹ Personal communication, 2 March, 2010.

² Personal communication, 27 February, 2009.

³ A comprehensive discussion of this community and its historical basis can be read in the author's thesis.

⁴ (2004, p. 33) Sargisson, L, and Sargent, L. T., *Living in Utopia: New Zealand's Intentional Communities* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Personal communication, 3 November, 2009.

aspects of how Wilderland had been in the past and to introduce some new systems to foster a stable and sustainable enterprise. As far as he is concerned,

The community isn't the purpose. In other places perhaps the purpose is that – there is a community and it's for the people there. With this place, we're like a project really. We're working together for something for the world. ... I kind of feel that what was set up here before, it had already achieved its goal a long time ago, which was just to *be* and to be a group of people. When people come here and I see they're looking for a lifestyle situation, then I'm not really enthusiastic about that. But when people come and you can see that they're really excited you can just tell that they are interested in the public benefit. A very important part of my vision, and it seems evident that it was part of Dan's, is that you don't privately invest here, because that in itself creates division. In all those places that have it, you have a slow settling into private living.¹

Russel's views, including the assertion that Wilderland's residents are 'working together for something for the world' is shared by Avner, another key member of the current group. Avner describes his role as 'farm manager' of Wilderland. In 2010, after a year at Wilderland, he told me

I'm not building securities; I'm sacrificing security for something that's happening now. For me it's quite easy because this is my passion. I don't have to enslave myself to the system of buying land, but it's a sacrifice as well because you don't build something for the future. You are living in the here and now and when you go out you have nothing.²

Russel added, "its clear to all of us here that what you give here is forever. It's part of unconditional love, unconditional giving."³

These sentiments, expressed in the first year of community building, reflect a utopian idealism that many individuals express in the early stages of establishing a community, generally before they have invested large amount of energy and capital over an extended period of time. They also demonstrate the freedom that Wilderland's young new resident group have to forge new directions, and to experiment with ways of doing things without having to negotiate with older established residents who might restrict their ability to act or direct the way things might be done. Because of this, the young people who continue to visit and stay at Wilderland experience enormous freedom to experiment with creating community amongst others who are in the same position. Comments on the community's website reflect this.⁴

In 2013, three years after Russel and Avner first expressed their enthusiasm for the enterprise they were involved in building at Wilderland, both men appear visibly worn from the sheer hard work of living with very little money in a place that is in urgent need of infrastructural repair and upgrade, has extensive orchards and gardens and an apiary to maintain, and supports many young visitors who are enthusiastic but lack practical skills and experience. Avner's passion has been somewhat tempered. He said:

There's something about my house, it doesn't feel like my home. It's a house I'm staying in. Being here is exhausting all my resources. I have no money.... I am thinking of stepping back and seeing if the place can manage without me. ... It's almost like a cage.

¹ Ibid.

² Personal communication, 15 November, 2010.

³ Personal communication, 15 November 2010.

⁴ See <http://wilderland.org.nz>

... All my priorities are for the existence of Wilderland. ... It takes your thoughts, your everything. If you are the kind of person that really gets into it, you end up doing more and you don't have much left of your own. I can't say this is what makes people leave – there's heaps of reasons – but as far as I can see myself, I'm tired.¹

When Avner first arrived at Wilderland he replaced another man who had inhabited the same role, and had reached the same point of exhaustion. That man in turn had replaced another who had also become overwhelmed by the sheer hard work of subsistence living combined with guiding a transient population of young unskilled people. The experience of Avner demonstrates not only a repeated pattern that has characterized that community over its fifty year history, but also provides some insight into why long-established groups tend to evolve over the long-term to become more protective of individual enterprise and independence.

Conclusions

Wilderland is a community of young people who, in one sense, *are* painting over other people's paintings, and in another, are starting with a clear canvas. They have taken on a project which has a fifty year history. The new group have the freedom to feel they are creating community without the constraints of having to negotiate with an established group or entrenched traditions, unlike the newcomers to the other communities discussed here.

Wilderland has always attracted high numbers of transient young people. However, the ghostly outlines of the old painting remain visible though the layer of new paint. They are evident in the patterns that emerge as the community re-develops. The sentiments expressed by Russel and Avner reflect the philosophy that has always been Wilderland's basis; Russel said the community isn't the purpose. For him and Avner, it is not important that people establish homes at Wilderland, nor is it necessarily desirable. Dan Hansen held this same view (despite maintaining control and living there for more than forty years himself).

Avner described himself when he first arrived at Wilderland as being 'ripe for learning.' He believes that when he leaves,

there might be another one who is ripe just as I was for learning, and then move on and maybe another one will come. This is one option for Wilderland, having a group of people that is always changing; to be a centre where people can just take it and have a go....²

Avner has encapsulated Wilderland's entire 50 year history in this last statement. The focus on cultivating an environment that prioritizes an educational emphasis over security and protecting the needs of its core group encourages the continuation of a transient and youthful resident population. In a broader sense Avner is also describing the process of change and repetition that happens in society at large. Perhaps this is also an inevitable long-term outcome for intentional communities with ageing populations (that have enduring land ownership structures). As the current generation dies off in those long-established communities, they may well be replaced with younger ones who will proceed to repeat the process all over again, with variations, as appears to be happening at Wilderland.

¹ Personal communication, 6 April, 2013.

² Personal communication, 6 April, 2013.

The experience of the communities discussed here shows that young people with strong ideals need the space to experiment, to struggle, and to overcome or adjust and adapt their ideas in the process of creating community. People who have lived in community a long time have been through this process. When this has been achieved communities are able to enter a more prosperous and settled phase. Young people entering such communities can enjoy the benefits of this prosperity, but because they have not been part of the struggle to build community, they are less inclined to feel a sense of commitment to it, and more inclined to enter with a very different set of expectations to those that long-established members began with.



Olive Jones, PhD lived communally from the mid-1970s until the early 1990s in rural intentional communities in New Zealand and Australia. After tertiary study in the 1990s she became a primary teacher for seven years before returning to postgraduate study. She was awarded her doctorate in Sociology in 2012, for a comparative study of four of New Zealand's long-established intentional communities. Her paper presentation draws on that doctoral research. Olive is an ICSA board member.

All or Nothing and Nowhere to Hide: Reflections on the challenges and potential of ethnographic fieldwork in two intentional communities

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/FRAk33C8ucY>

Abstract

What is it like to do research in an environment that constantly encourages self-disclosure, personal transformation and deepening relationships? What is it like to do research with a group with whom one closely identifies, with people who share one's own passions, beliefs and life choices? Is being too close an obstacle or an advantage? This paper addresses these questions. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork for my PhD dissertation in social anthropology, carried out in Findhorn during 2011–2013 as well as shorter stays in the Swedish community and course centre, *Ängsbacka*, during the same period. The issue raised in this paper is whether field research in intentional communities poses special kinds of challenges to the engaged fieldworker, and what might come out of those challenges.

Rather than focusing on the hazards of going native, I argue in this paper that doing research in intentional communities carries a potential to contribute new insights on the nature of local engagement, and to the development of anthropology generally. As I myself am a communitarian doing research in community, the challenge was not that of going native, since I regarded myself as a native already. My own fieldwork experience was that of rediscovering my professional self, while taking part in an already ongoing collective process of community building, personal transformation and intimate sharing that often felt overwhelming. I was forced to reconsider my ideas about research, ethics and representation, and find ways of turning personal engagement, emotional attachment, strong sensory and emotional experiences and self-disclosure into tools rather than obstacles.

Paper: Not available



Anna Kivasna is a PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology at Lund University, Sweden. Specialising in ecovillages and the creation of small-scale, sustainable economies and cultures in Europe, she is currently based in Findhorn, Scotland, carrying out long-term fieldwork for her dissertation. Anna is also the former president of the Swedish Ecovillage Network, where she continues to play an active role.

Why is Community so Popular in Individualistic Society? The longing for a new kind of community and the potential of intentional communities

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/ByLI-ACBRUc>

Abstract

We live in individualistic times. In the big cities of industrialised countries, more than half of households are single-person apartments. On the other hand, we can observe a growing number of people who are longing for new kinds of cooperation and a number of them have a real interest in living more communally. What is their longing about and do intentional communities satisfy these desires?

Community is as old as humanity – or even older. Just over the last century has individuality fully emerged. And yet, we can also observe that the variety of different community forms has exploded exponentially in recent times. Their fluidity shows that people are searching for new forms of community. Many manage to live it, while many attempts fail. In an internet survey in the German speaking countries, people were asked about their community aspirations and motivations. In this paper, I will present who they are, what they are searching for and what is their understanding of community.

I will then interpret these results with previous other findings of my research in sociology and intentional community living. I will ask if and what kind of intentional communities meet the longings of postmodern man and woman. Last but not least I emphasise the tensions between the aspiration of those communities on the one hand and the actual reality of communal living on the other hand: How do people deal with differences and what are the secrets of ‘successful’ communities?

Paper: Not available. However, a similar paper has already been published in the scholarly journal, *Communal Societies*, available from <http://www.communalstudies.org/store>.¹



Iris Kunze, PhD has been a social researcher at the University of Life Sciences, Vienna, since 2011. From 2001, after living several years in two intentional communities, she researched and taught about intentional communities and sustainable ways of living at the University of Münster, Germany. As one of the European academic experts on ecovillages and intentional communities she received the Donald Durnbugh Award from the Communal Studies Association (CSA) in 2011.

¹ Kunze, I., ‘Social Innovations for Communal and Ecological Living: Lessons from Sustainability Research and Observations in Intentional Communities’, *Communal Societies* Vol 32, No 1

The Camphill Experience: Dying and Becoming – From development to Metamorphosis

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/SO_S62i8gBA

Introduction

My introduction to ICSA came through my attendance and presentation at the Damanhur Conference in Italy in 2007. At this conference I became aware of the strong links of ICSA to the kibbutz movement and the wide research undertaken into the origins, development and present circumstances of this endeavour. This is of interest, as the founder members of the Camphill Movement were almost all from the Jewish community, and were also refugees. Also I became aware that, whilst the kibbutz movement has been in existence since the end of the 1920's and is well known to the world, the worldwide Camphill Movement, which is 73 years old this year, is little known.

In this presentation I will be describing the origins of the Camphill Movement, its ethos, and its present circumstances and challenges, especially in the United Kingdom and Ireland. I will be describing the developmental processes which have affected aging Camphill communities, and positing a view on the future of this Movement from the point of view of a *metamorphic* rather than a *developmental* model.

The Camphill Movement

The Camphill Movement has its origins in a confluence of spiritual streams, including Judeo-Christianity, the Herrnhuter Brotherhood and the generally human (anthroposophy) spiritual scientific research of Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925). The guiding principles in communities of the Camphill Movement are expressed in the forming of:

- 1) A cultural life enabling members of a community to realise their potential;
- 2) A shared community life based on Christianity and recognition of the special qualities in every individual; and
- 3) An economic life based on the needs of the community and the ability of each person, where there is a separation of work from money.¹

Karl König

The founder of the Camphill Movement, Karl König (1902 – 1966), was born and raised in Vienna in a Jewish family. He later converted to Christianity and became a student of anthroposophy. Anthroposophy is a path of learning arising from the human capacity for self-development. It aims to enhance consciousness of what it means to be human. It can help in leading the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the cosmos. (*Luxford 2013*)

As a doctor and paediatrician, König trained in anthroposophic medicine in Switzerland and it was here that he encountered *children in need of special understanding*. Later in Silesia, he

¹ Opinion of Peter Trevett QC (1998)

met his future wife Tilla Maasberg and through her the Herrnhutter movement. Eventually he returned to Vienna with his family, and found a group of young people with whom to study and meet. In 1938, as a result of the imminent arrival of Nazi terror to Vienna, he and his young compatriots left Austria. He arrived on his own in London in 1938. His young friends arrived during the next one or two years and found a place to make a new start north of Aberdeen in Scotland. Thus, similar to the kibbutz movement, Camphill was conceived in a condition of homelessness and refugee-ship.

In its early years the fledgling community was formed out of central European cultural values combined with König's expertise in the education and care for children and young people with special needs, today termed learning disabilities. These beginnings gave birth to a worldwide movement of over 100 intentional communities spread over 20 countries, almost all of which are supporting people with learning disabilities and/or mental health needs.

Ethos

An ethos is made up of: the fundamental values, spirit, distinctive character or disposition of an individual, race, group, community. The underlying sentiment that informs belief, customs and practices of a culture. The moral element that determines action.¹

A key principle, or ethos, in the Camphill Movement is the *Fundamental Social Law*, described in a short essay by Rudolf Steiner in 1906. This law states:

In a community of human beings working together, the well-being of the community will be the greater, the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of the work he has himself done; i.e. the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow workers, and the more his own requirements are satisfied, not out of his work, but out of work done by others.

Much can be said about the optimum conditions for the following of this law, but for now a main condition I want to point to is one which Rudolf Steiner emphasised; that work must be kept quite separate from remuneration. Where possible throughout the Camphill Movement this work and finance principle has been adhered to.

A second key principle in the Camphill Movement has to do with forming of communities on a threefold basis; meaning recognising that all social organisms show three distinct parts to their social structuring. These are the aspects of 1) culture, education, research and development 2) social and working arrangements based on agreements and inclusive decision making, and 3) the actual task or work of the community. These three areas are to be approached with certain principles in mind, namely:

- 1) Cultural activity to be approached on the basis of **Freedom**
- 2) The sphere of agreements through **Equality**
- 3) Working life to be carried out in **Cooperation**

It is crucial that each of these realms is recognised in their own right and that the conditions pertaining to the operation of each one is understood and kept separate from the others. In *Towards Social Renewal* (1919, GA 23)² Steiner put it this way:

¹ Chambers Dictionary

² GA numbers refer to the collected works of Rudolf Steiner.

- In cultural life, freedom predominates
- In the sphere of rights, equality is essential
- In economic activity, associative working is required

Leadership

From 1940 until his death in 1965, Karl König provided leadership as to how these two ethos areas (the Fundamental Social Law and the threefold distinction within social life) might best inform the developing Camphill Movement and its member communities. His aim was that practicing the Fundamental Social Law would help in creating well-being for all members, and being mindful of the three approaches as described above would provide order and structure to the spiritual, social and economic affairs of communities. After twenty years of work König wrote (*The Cresset* 1959) that the Camphill Movement has three Stars or patrons, these being:

- For the cultural spiritual domain - Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670)
- For the social/rights area - Count Ludwig Zinzendorf (1700-1760)
- For economic life - Robert Owen (1771-1858)

At the same time, he described how these Stars are related to what he called the Three Pillars of the Camphill Movement. He named these Pillars as: *The College Meeting* (meetings which attempt to gain imaginative insight into a question), the *Bible Evening* (a festive way of meeting on a Saturday evening and turning to the Bible using readings shared by the whole international Movement), and the *Fundamental Social Law* (a vocational way of working for others without payment in the usual sense). A year before his death (1965) he wrote about the *Three Essentials of Camphill*. He described these as:

- The conviction that all human beings possess a spiritual entity or 'I'
- Faithfulness, responsibility and the ability to sacrifice
- The threefold ordering of social life (as described above)

Therefore, it can be said that the Camphill Movement was built on the foundations of homelessness, Christianity, anthroposophy, service to others, creating community, and the leadership of Karl König.

The Fundamental Social Law Research Group

By 1992, having been a Camphill Movement co-worker for over twenty years, I realised that although I experienced my life and work as fulfilling and worthwhile, it was clear to me that the brave new world beginning in the sixties and seventies was coming to an end. In the wider community of the world at large signs of a decline in well-being on all levels were to be observed. This realisation prompted me to ask the question, "If I have experienced the well-being the Fundamental Social Law refers to, how could the wider community benefit from its wisdom and learn to implement its conditions?"

In 1993 in England, and with this question as starting point, I and a few others founded *The Fundamental Social Law Research Group*. We met regularly over an eight year period with different constellations of people. The paper *Five Steps to a New Direction* was written during this time. (Published as an appendix in *A Sense for Community*, 2003)

The question can be asked, “Why did it take so much time just to discuss this short essay?” One answer is to say that it needed this amount of time to begin to understand what Steiner is suggesting as its direction is so radical and far reaching. It is necessary to thoroughly ‘know of these depths’ before attempting to point out its value to others.

Five Steps Research Project 2001-2003

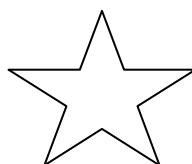
This work led to an initiative to visit Camphill communities and other ventures to enquire into the five areas which *The Fundamental Social Law Research Group* had highlighted as being in need of change if there was to be a beneficial change in direction for the world. These are the areas of:

Land and Resources Work and Labour Money Capital Economic Associations

This project made research visits to forty Camphill communities and other organisation (e.g. banks and social ventures) in fifteen countries, and met with numerous socially and economically active, experienced, and well-informed individuals. The results of this research were published in *A Sense for Community: A Five Steps Research Paper 2013*. Directions for Change: Social Research (out of print.)

Understanding

As a result of this research and the outcome of the many conversations and reports from those in these communities and beyond them it became clear that there are four key related aspects which are relevant when considering the question as to whether a Community is healthy. These are:



The presence of a Star (or vision) for a Community and the identification of individuals with this Star at a profound level.

Engaging in personal development at a spiritual level in freedom. This is the realm of the:

‘I’

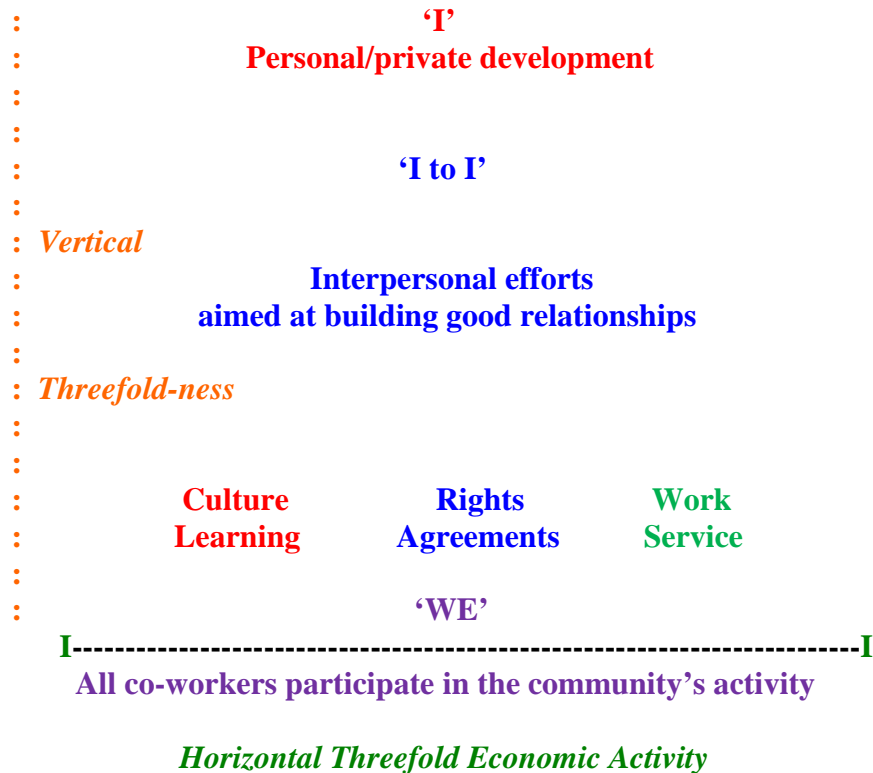
Making a personal effort to understand and work with colleagues. This is the social realm of:

‘I’ to ‘I’

Forming a task-based community to develop the three separate yet interconnected areas of:

Research and Development	Working relationships	The task itself
Cultural Life	Sphere of Rights	Economic Activity
Freedom	Equality	Cooperation

The research showed that, if these four vertically and horizontally interconnected areas are present in the conscious awareness and engagement of individuals in a community or enterprise, it is possible to create social and community health and well-being. This relationship can be presented in this way:



After image

One of the main understandings or after images resulting from the *Five Steps Research Project* had to do with community well-being and how the various elements in the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the above construct relate to each other.

It became clear that there will be negative effects on the ability of the participatory **‘WE’** realm to be successful if there is reduction in the commitment of individuals in freedom to pursue ways of personal development in tune with the ethos of the community (in this case with anthroposophy), and/or there is a breakdown of relationships between people in the community and the individuals involved make insufficient effort to resolve these.

The three parts of the **‘WE’** realm cannot help but be present in any human activity which has the characteristic of an organisation. For they involve ideas (spiritual insight), people (rights and agreements) and have a task to undertake (economic activity).

An economic activity can be successful if it looks after its workers and engages with research and development, thus keeping it ahead of the game in its particular field of endeavour. But most likely it will not see the need for its workers to embody an ethos to a profound degree, expect individuals to pursue a path of personal development, or ‘go the extra mile’ with colleagues they may have personal issues with.

However, it became clear from this research that, in communities which have the intention to

embody a spiritual aim, it is vital for the success of such a community that those who have stated their commitment to serve a common vision or Star engage in personal development. And particularly in an approach to personal development informed by anthroposophy, this activity has the potential to bring imaginative, inspirational and intuitive insights into the community. These are particularly relevant in bringing vibrant and creative forces to bear on the cultural, educational, research and development areas of the community's work.

In addition, even if slow and seemingly hesitant, genuine and honest attempts at establishing healthy interpersonal relationships between members of a 'vision-committed community' will benefit relationships in the working life of the community. This may sound obvious but the obvious may not be happening, and that is when conflict, personal differences, indifference etc. begin to have their effect. Communities where individuals have found it impossible to deal with these difficulties are the ones which have either failed or have had to become something different. The Star is no longer in sight.

Biography

Looking back to the formative days of the Camphill Movement, as described by Anke Weihs in *Fragments from the Early History of Camphill*, it can be said that this community, coming about during the Second World War period and in outer circumstances with a personal 'wilderness' character, the Star or ethos was shining strongly.

In 1927 Karl König had his seminal inner experience concerning his mission. This moment occurred in Switzerland at a festive event at Advent time in a home for children with special needs. He witnessed a child walking with a lit candle along a spiral of greenery in a darkened room.

Seeing this, he resolved to dedicate his life to helping such children who, despite their apparent difficulties, possess the same spiritual potential as all other human beings. It is of interest that this experience took place at the same time as the kibbutz movement was being founded in Israel.

It can be said that in the above moment what was to become the Camphill Movement was conceived. It was only later in 1940 that the Movement was born with the move into Camphill House in Aberdeen.

This Movement has fulfilled its life of 'three score years and ten.' In generational terms it faces its third phase and questions about how to make the transition into this phase successfully.

Dilemma

Change is implicit in transition, and change is certainly what is taking place in the Camphill communities in England and Wales, the communities with which I have had the most involvement.

In the lead up to this 'three score years and ten' moment, I began to hear some long-term committed co-workers of Camphill say, "What is Camphill? What is the ethos? Maybe it has gone?"

It also became apparent that of the twenty six communities in England and Wales, some of these no longer had any of these committed people present who could be expected to know of and practice the values of Camphill. Yet these places/so-called communities wished to remain part of the Movement. The dilemma is obvious. How can an intentional community continue to exist with integrity if there is no one in the community who connects to its Star, intention or purpose?

Analogy

In the plant world a seed falls into the ground, and in favourable conditions it germinates and begins to grow. This growth continues until it flowers and then fruits. At the fruiting stage a point will come when the seeds will be shed and the plant may or may not die, depending on the species. This is the archetypal process.

If on a number of occasions we observe a particular plant species going through this life process, we get to know for certain that the seed of one generation will give birth to a similar plant as soon as the next germination takes place. In this sense the plant is not what we see when it is flowering beautifully, but is the totality of the whole process which is unfolding from germination to growing, to flowering to fruiting and seed formation and scattering. Here form and process are a unity in time and space.

Organisational development analysis shows similarities to plant development, in that organisations have early stages usually led by an initial purpose e.g. an economic project. This is the pioneer stage, characterised by simple structures, hard work and a small 100% committed leadership. This is like the plant breaking out of the soil into the world above and having to go through the early stages of establishing itself in what might be an uncertain environment.

If an organisation gets through this early phase it will begin to grow. Without going into detail over this analogy, this growth phase will be like the leaf stage in a plant; it begins to flourish, to gain substance and becomes increasingly visible to the world.

Over time, just like the plant, the organisation will leave behind the pioneer establishing phase and enter the phase of greater complexity and diversity of activity and involvements. This is the kind of increased complexity which we see taking place in the transition from the relative simplicity of the leaf to the flowering stage in a plant. Who could imagine if they had not seen it before, how the stem and green leaf structure of a particular plant can give rise to the formatively complex blossom of, for example, a rose? In this manner organisations become complex and diversify in ways which can hardly have been imagined at the outset.

The fruit stage in an organisation is when it is fully established, has achieved a clear sense of purpose, has evolved a sound management structure well beyond the charismatic pioneer phase, and is on good financial footings and is well-known and visible to the world at large.

At this point, even though all may be going well, organisations may find themselves asking, “What next?” Complacency may set in, innovation may lessen, and the well-established leadership and management structure lose its edge.

This is a vulnerable point and, unless a business (for example) can discover how to deal with the above challenges, it may find itself going into decline in one way or another or be open to take-over being unable to generate its own capital for its next stage of development. This can be seen as the re-generating stage. It is the seeding out phase in terms of the plant development analogy.

From development to metamorphosis

I maintain that an intentional community which has conscious connection to a spiritual vision or Star is different to an organisation or business. It will have characteristics of an organisation in that, if it wants to be useful to the world, it will have to be organised and will be subject to the same influences, biographically and developmentally, as any other organisation or business. But its main purpose is to manifest a cultural-spiritual mission as well as to be functionally well organised and successful.

From this point of view I maintain that the Camphill Movement is a manifestation of an intentional community impulse and it is related to a Star or impulse which has accompanied its biography from 1940 when the seed was sown in Camphill House until now. Its conception has its roots in a moment of spiritual, not yet earthly, inspiration (König's 1927 experience).

However today in 2013, characteristics of the situation of the Camphill Movement in England and Wales lead me to the thought that applying an organisation developmental model (concerning the understanding of which I am indebted to Andrew Plant of Milltown Community, Scotland, for his advice) is only partly adequate as a way of understanding what is taking place developmentally.

Twenty years ago when the Camphill communities in England and Wales came together in conference or conclave there was no doubt that each place was 'Camphill inspired.' Members clearly related to the Star of Camphill. This was the flower/fruit stage. This continued until doubts about the presence of the Star appeared. I started to hear these doubts four years ago in 2009. The ethos was becoming unclear, the essentials uncertain.

It seems to me that this situation showed signs of decline, even of death. This is a peculiar and almost contradictory thought, since Camphill communities are still present in the world and are appreciated. However the question is, "Have these places become successful organisations without the presence of the Camphill Impulse or Star or will they be able to transition to a further stage?"

Seeking advice from Rudolf Steiner, many Camphill communities refer to the *Social Ethic* he formulated for the English artist Edith Maryon in 1920. I consider this to be a good formulation for a third generation stage.

One Ethic - Three Laws

This ethic speaks of how an individual might see his or her relationship to their particular community and how their community might hope for the engagement of the individual.



A Social Ethic

*The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection
And when in the community
The virtue of each one is living.¹*

This is an example of a Star which might have been shining over the 1927 conception of what was later to become the Camphill Movement, and in the early decades of the Movement up to and beyond 1966, the year of the death of Karl König, there was a strong identification with this Star. Individuals called themselves and each other ‘Camphillers’ and knew what this meant.

This strong sense for community expressed itself in the adoption of Steiner’s Fundamental Social Law or Principle as one of the pillars of the Movement. Thus, it can be said that this Law was the guiding principle or ethos of the pioneering, developing, growth phase of Camphill. This law applies particularly to how best to live and work together in task-based intentional communities. It is repeated here as:

A Social Law

In a community of human beings working together, the well-being of the community will be the greater, the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of the work he has himself done; i.e. the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow workers, and the more his own requirements are satisfied not out of his own work, but by the work done by others.

It is not possible to identify exactly when it began to happen, but it became apparent in the mid-1980’s into the 1990’s that individual perspectives on community life became stronger and a more communal phase came to an end. This did not mean that places stopped being communities, only that the situation and experience of the individual in them was experienced as different. The individual stood out in a way which might have been frowned on before. Individual needs were expressed more strongly and communities knew that these had to be considered in a new way without feeling that people were being self-centered or stepping outside the community. This is a natural phase in the development of communities as is expressed in Steiner’s Sociological Law.

A Sociological Law

In the early stages of cultural evolution humanity tends towards the formation of social units, where initially the interests of individuals are sacrificed to the interests of those associations. The further course of development leads towards the emancipation of the individual from the interests of the associations, and to the unrestricted development of the needs and capacities of the individual. In this sense the greatest ideal of the state will be to not control anything. It will be a community which wants nothing for itself, but everything for the individual.²

¹ *Motto of the Social Ethic*: 5th November 1920 (GA 24)

² Extract: *Freedom and Society*, article in *Deutsche Wochschrift* 1887-1901 (GA 31)

Keeping with the plant analogy, Camphill communities entered into a flowering/fruiting stage. In England and Wales the regulation of special education and social care made them less independent as communities and increasingly visible and known. Being in an increasingly complex situation they were forced into an organizational mode. Essential questions for this time were to do with self-identification and purpose e.g. “Are we organisations or communities?” Such questioning was a sign of uncertainty over identity.

Yet, this process of opening to the world is inherent in the biography of any healthy community which wants to be in the world as a helpful initiative and not just for its own satisfaction. Rudolf Steiner describes this situation in a Spiritual Law. For an intentional community which has had a strong sense of identity it can be challenging to find itself in this situation. Yet this law is a way of describing conditions for the practicing of healthy social processes within an evolving and living process.

A Spiritual Law

No spiritual movement can really survive in our time which is in any way specialized or separatist. It is simply an occult law that every sound and fruitful spiritual movement will exist for the good of general humanity. In the moment any spiritual movement becomes in any way a bearer of group egoism, it damages rather than furthers the progress of general humanity. This is no more open to discussion than a law of nature: it is a spiritual law.¹

I see these three laws applying to the conditions Camphill has encountered over its biographic situation since 1940.

Community Building Diversity and Individualisation Complexity and Integration

Social Principle

Sociological Law

Spiritual Law

Communities are living beings because they are made up of people. They are also subject to change and self-realisation as described above. At the point when the Spiritual Law becomes operative and relevant and the early community has evolved into something different it will face certain dilemmas. Either:

- a. become an organisation with little connection to the founding impulse,
- b. retain the essentials and have co-workers who can keep these alive, or
- c. a range of different stages between a and b.

It is up to the people who are involved with these communities to decide which of a, b or c they wish to be. They have become free and this is a good position to be in the time of the consciousness soul (as Rudolf Steiner calls our present cultural age). It is an age when individual human beings are developing different degrees of self-consciousness and have to learn how to relate to each other and work together in new ways.

Metamorphosis and seeding out

I maintain that in a development process the subject in question (the organisation) always remains before our eyes. If we consider the wealth of knowledge and research material which has been accumulated over time concerning organisational development, it is possible to

¹ 2nd September 1923, London (GA 259)

predict the various ways in which a developed organisation or business might evolve once it reaches the stage of optimal fruition, success or complexity. It won't be obvious, but will be predictable.

In contrast, a metamorphic process has different criteria. There is development, but at a certain point the visible developed form disappears from view. For example, in the natural world this is visible in seed formation and in the formation of the chrysalis in the life process of the butterfly.

Natural science knows about the process of metamorphosis in as far as it can be described, but it is not yet understood. "How does it happen that in the chrysalis the butterfly is no longer visible, the chrysalis dissolves into a soup-like condition, and the only connecting thread between the butterfly and its future are a few *imaginal cells*?"

From observation it is known that the chrysalis of a particular butterfly will always give birth to the same species, even if at this stage there is no visible sign that this is going happen. We know it will happen, though we don't know why.

When considering natural processes in this way it is necessary to keep in mind that we are always concerned with a whole being (i.e. at each stage we have only a part of what makes up the formative totality of the being of that plant). In this sense we are always dealing with a dying and becoming process which goes through different stages over time. It is only in the imagination that we can hold this totality in mind.

I consider that this is the same situation for an intentional community, which will always be an emerging being. There cannot be any foreknowledge of how it will evolve over time. Each such community, be it Herrnhutter, a kibbutz or a Camphill community will have this identity. They will each have had a seed moment in their biography, a moment when a particular Star or intention began to shine and became the guiding spirit of what eventually grew and manifested as a living being on the earth.

If this analogy applies to intentional communities (in that they are living beings which we can expect to go through periods of change which have the characteristics of a metamorphosis) then it will not be surprising that at some point they will enter into crisis and even death-like conditions. The question which might arise in this situation is, "Are there any signs which indicate how the community might continue into the future?" The plant analogy may be helpful at this point.

Seeding out

At the seeding out stage a plant may appear to be dying. And yet considering the whole image of the plant as an entity, seeding out is only one part of its being. Thus, though it does die out of one stage into another and appears to die, it doesn't. It proceeds into a further and linked state which has a metamorphic character.

What signs might we expect to see if the metamorphosis of an intentional community is starting to take place?

Firstly, it will have had to reach a point of maturity, meaning it is well-established, known and effective. At the same time it may show signs of stress and serious self-questioning. Maybe (as in the case of Camphill) some ask, “Where is the Star?” Such fundamental questioning indicates that a transition is underway; the butterfly is now entering a chrysalis condition. The plant has become fruit and is about to seed.

This does not mean that the future is secure since people and communities are not plants. There may be little history or experience to go on to get through this experience. Given the analogy of the seeding out in a plant prior to the appearance of new growth and in the chrysalis to the emergence of the imaginal cells before the appearance of the new butterfly, what I experience in the Camphill Movement is the presence of a few people who have retained and further developed a creative and profound connection to the founding Star of the community, its *status nascendi*.

Their presence does not have to be high profile in the usual sense. What matters is that there are people present to whom the Star is visible. These are the seed-bearers for the future. It may be that these people are no longer even living or working within the physical community, as the seeding process casts seeds outside the organism, and this for a variety of good reasons.

What will be critical in the unfolding of a future beyond the fruiting stage of a community are:

- The presence of a few people who are still connected to the Star, the archetype of the founding impulse
- People who are able to move forward and can cope with the loss of past forms and accept new circumstances
- Individuals and groups who trust in an unknown future, are patient and filled with faith, hope, love and resilience

Faith, Trust and Love

Faith, trust and love underpin human community, yet each is almost impossible to define. Perhaps this is because they are fundamental human attributes, concepts we use to describe the indescribable. We know of them only through their presence or absence.

My observations, exploratory as they are regarding the Camphill communities I am most familiar with, are based on over forty years of experience and collegial enquiry. These tell me that in the present state of partial loss, some communities will retain a clear view of Star, some will struggle to keep it in view and apply its light to daily community affairs, and some will lose sight of it completely, become something different, follow another Star, or become nothing more than a good organisation.

As communities are living beings this situation is the inevitable consequence of the metamorphic process which is inherent in their nature. Therefore, despite the appearance of decline there can be continuation of life and form for those communities which strive to keep the Star in view, despite the experience of loss.

People have to be open to the future, to the Star manifesting differently, and maintain faith, trust and love as inner sources of strength and resilience. It is likely that these people will be

many and be scattered in the world. They may be unknown to each other and hence invisible compared to the situation in tightly-bonded early period communities.

Conclusion

The metamorphosis of a mature intentional community may appear to be an esoteric subject and research into this be without evidence or numerical underpinning. But research has many possibilities. Since I awoke to the importance of how the relationship of the vertical to the horizontal threefold dimensions in a social organism is understood and practiced and how the Social Ethic and Three Laws play into the evolution of communities, thirty three years of intense interest have shown me that attention to these aspects are directly related to creation of well-being for individuals and the communities they are part of.

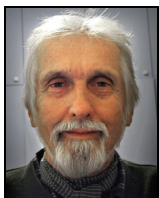
Because of this, it is important to make use of the experiences made in intentional communities. In their sometimes hothouse atmosphere, signs of new seed formation and the imaginal cells for a next step in cultural, social and economic life may be present and waiting for the right conditions to germinate.

If they are to germinate they will only do so if enough people notice their presence. If they are attentive (despite all the uncertainties of today) and have faith, trust, love, resilience, and confidence in the future, they will create the cultural, social and practical conditions for new growth to begin. These latter qualities are necessary as, in the early stages of a new era, decline and loss will be present as potential distractions.

The crucial factors to be kept in mind in intentional communities when they reach this seeding out point are:

- The vision for what makes us truly human - the Star
- On-going and determined personal development
- Love for others despite our differences
- The wish to do something worthwhile for the world and the earth by working together with others

We have needs of the spirit because we are the only species whose fate is not simply a mute fact of our existence but a problem whose meaning we attempt to understand.¹



Michael Luxford, a co-worker of the Camphill Movement for over forty years, has written/edited five books; the last, titled *A Sense for Community*, involved research of forty Camphill communities, worldwide. Michael is involved in adult education, retreats and other group facilitation processes, community management, horticulture, festival presentations, social research to strengthen the understanding of what it means to be a Camphill co-worker and how Camphill has dealt with money in communities.

¹ Michael Ignatieff in *The Needs of Strangers* Vintage 1994

Single-Sex, Secular Intentional Communities

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/x6C1Xfj-gyU>

Abstract

Intentional communities around the globe can be roughly divided into those with either religious/spiritual or secular orientations. Many religious/spiritual groups, such as nunneries, monasteries and ashrams, comprise a single-sex and either ban or tightly constrain sexual activity, while most secular intentional communities include both sexes, usually with few limits on sexual orientation or activity. Of course there are exceptions.

Searching scholarly literature from around the world shows that secular intentional communities comprising only one sex are under-researched. This illustrated talk presents findings from one such study, based in Australia.

Australia has a long, rich and colourful history of intentional communities with the first attempt being *Indiana Institution* in Tasmania in 1824 (within the first generation of European settlement). The first Australian intentional community formed was *Herrnhut*, 1852-89, in western Victoria. Today, Australia has several hundred intentional communities of great variety including single-sex, secular ones.

The *Spinster Land Association* of 1872 in South Australia was the first single-sex, secular intentional community in Australia. Others include *Co-operative Home*, *Ramco*, *Alice River* (all male) and *Wirawidar* (female) in the late 19th century, and *Emilliah* (female) in the early 20th century. More recent and contemporary examples include *Faerie Sanctuary* (male) as well as *Amazon Acres* and *Plum Farm Women's Land* (both female).

As well, this paper will explore the challenges specific to undertaking research in this field.

This research is part of a larger project called the *Encyclopaedia of Australian Utopian Communalism* that has already resulted in four books, plus refereed journal articles and chapters in edited books.

Paper: Not available. However, a similar paper has already been published in the scholarly journal, *Communal Societies*, available from <http://www.communalstudies.org/store>.¹



Bill Metcalf, PhD is a social scientist from Griffith University, Australia. He is a world expert on intentional communities, a past President of the ICSA, on the Editorial Board of several refereed academic journals including *Communal Societies* and is International Correspondent for *Communities* magazine. Bill is the author or editor of nine books, plus numerous academic and popular articles about intentional communities. He is also a long-standing Fellow of the Findhorn Foundation.

¹ Metcalf, W. J., 'Single-Sex, Secular Intentional Communities in Australia', in *Communal Societies*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2012, pp. 146-78.

Continuity and Change: The evolution of intentional communities

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/2FPAP2A_wZ0

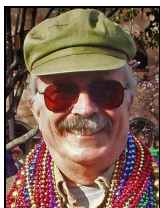
Abstract

Intentional communities start with enormous bursts of idealism, often with a vision of little less than transformation of the world. Those who help start and build them put their lives and fortunes on the line for causes in which they passionately believe.

The energy involved in envisioning and building a community, however, is difficult to sustain indefinitely, and over time change – sometimes major, sometimes minor – is inevitable. Its causes and manifestations can vary greatly from one intentional community to another: It can stem from transitions in leadership. It can happen as a result of evolving economic circumstances. Basic tenets and aims of the community can change as new members join and existing members mature. Hostility from neighbours outside the community can make a large impact, as can changing interpersonal relations among members. The list could go on at some length; reasons for change are many, but change happens. Various situations and pressures cause some communities to close, but in many other cases they are simply agents of institutional transformation, for better or worse.

Despite the fact that some communities close and others continue under modified conditions, there are still others that endure for long periods of time with few fundamental changes. The Hutterites, the Catholic Worker, and the Camphill Communities, for example, have all been around for many decades or even centuries, still adhering to their original purposes and lifestyles. Exploring the reasons why some communities change and others experience stable continuity will be part of the thrust of this paper.

Paper: Not available. However, it is based on a chapter in the upcoming book, *Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious Movements*, edited by Eileen Barker, London School of Economics and Inform, UK, which is part of the series: *Ashgate Inform Series on Minority Religions and Spiritual Movements*.¹



Timothy Miller, PhD is a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, USA. He is a historian of American intentional communities, particularly during the twentieth century. Among his books are *The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities*, *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America*, *The 60s Communes*, and *American Communes 1860-1960: A Bibliography*. Tim is a long-standing ICSA board member, recognised by the US based *Communal Studies Association* as a distinguished scholar.

¹ <http://www.ashgatepublishing.com/default.aspx?page=638&seriestitleID=533&calcTitle=1&forthcoming=1>.

The Globalisation of Communes

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/Wm4V2QBa82c>

Abstract

Communes and intentional communities are today a global phenomenon and can be found, in their various forms, in most countries of the world.

A review of the history of communes in the 20th century reveals two separate periods. Up to the years of World War Two it was a history of sporadic local phenomena in various countries, with no significant relationships. The second period, which began after World War Two, reveals a phenomenon which could be defined as the globalization of the communal communities and it could be considered an integral part of the global civil society.

From the 1950s, initiatives were commenced for the establishment of communal communities that crossed the borders of the countries in which they appeared. This was particularly notable in the pacifist communes after the end of World War Two. This trend was seen in the United States in 1948 with the establishment of the Fellowship of Intentional Community. The membership of this association comprised communal communities of various types whose common denominator was pacifism and the desire to show the postwar world that they represented a path towards peace and harmony. Although the organization took place in the United States, the trend was international and embodied openness to the participation of communes outside the United States.

During those years there were also pacifist communes in other countries, like Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia, and they had international contacts.

After World War Two, The Group Farming Research Institute was established in the United States with the objective of international research into the situation of cooperative and communal settlements.

The Institute's activities and publications advanced international cooperation between scholars engaged in the study of cooperation and communes. In 1949 the Institute launched its journal, *Cooperative Living*, edited by the sociologist Henrick Infield. The journal's objective was to provide information on different communal communities throughout the world, such as communes and agricultural cooperatives in America, kibbutzim in Israel, the Ejido Colectivo in Mexico, and the kolkhozes in Russia.

During those years there were also additional international initiatives undertaken by various communes in Great Britain and in continental Europe.

The 1960s were the years in which these international linkages were expanded, deepened and reached global proportions. The most significant development in the globalization of

communes took place in the United States in the late 1960s, with the waves of protest of youngsters and students. This social protest brought in its wake the hippie communes that constituted the biggest wave of communes in the modern era. This wave that began in the United States immediately spread to Great Britain, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

In the 1970s communes appeared in most European countries. Europe of that time had a similar background to the United States. In the communes established there the predominant way of life was one of a 'counter culture'. In the countries of Western Europe there were communes that bore a similarity to the radical wave of the hippie communes, and later, differences particular to each country were created.

Although the wave of hippie communes waned in the mid-1970s, it did not entirely disappear. The world was then a global village thanks to modern communications and television that spread the word of the communes. The communes' and other alternative groups' underground press was also a source of information on communes throughout the world.

In the wake of the wave of hippie communes, the literature on communes past and present expanded and spread, and important studies appeared in the early 1970s that disseminated the subject of communes. The most notable book that gained wide acclaim was *Commitment and Community* by Rosabeth Moss Kanter. At that time, there appeared publishing houses specializing in literature on past and present communes (such as Porcupine Press).

1972 saw the first appearance of *Communities Magazine* which in its format, the scope of its distribution and its avowed objective of bringing the word of the communes to the general public, constituted a significant turnabout in the style and character of the magazines and newspapers that the communes had published in the past.

The 1970s saw the appearance of international initiatives by communes in the United States, Great Britain and Japan, whose objective was to establish international relations and also to foster an international periphery.

In 1974 *The Farm* commune from Tennessee launched an initiative of global horizons with the establishment of *Plenty*. This enterprise was designed to aid distressed areas in the United States and throughout the world. It was in the spirit of "Out to Save the World", which had been the commune's motto since its inception. It adorned the front of the buses that had set out in convoy eastward from San Francisco to the settlement they established on the land of Tennessee. Their greatest action on the international level was providing aid to the victims of the earthquake in Guatemala in 1976. This was followed by other such activities, so much so that *The Farm* people were dubbed "The Hippie Peace Corps".

In the 1970s, the Findhorn commune in Scotland that had started with a group of Britons became a Mecca for hippie travelers and later an international spiritual center of New Age ideas. Findhorn had wide influence on the globalization of the commune idea, and later on the communes' linkage to ecology and 'sustainability'. Findhorn hosts annual international conferences and in recent years established an international institute, The Findhorn College, which offers courses on a variety of subjects in the spheres of community life and ecology.

In France of the 1970s the Longo Mai movement was founded that set itself Pan-European objectives and later established a commune in Costa Rica. In 1958 the Yamagishi Kai commune movement was founded in Japan, and later expanded to establish settlements in various countries several years later.

The spread of communes throughout the world in the 1970s raised the need and desire for constant relations between them. The forming of international relations began at the end of the 1970s, and between 1979 and 1985 six international commune festivals were held. The first was at the Laurieston Hall commune in the north of Scotland and was attended by 100 commune members from 16 European countries, Canada, the United States, Japan Australia and Israel. Its organizers assessed its contribution thus: "The world commune movement has taken its first big step here towards global cooperation." Following the festival, the *International Communes Network* was formed, which had branches in 15 countries.

The history of international relations efforts between 1979 and 1985 expressed a social need for get-togethers in which the atmosphere was spontaneous and informal, and which were designed to raise morale and form interpersonal and inter-communal relations. After six years of such assemblies at international festivals, the commune membership came to the realization that this form of contact had run out of steam. In the 1980s, new paths towards international cooperation opened.

In 1976 the *International Communes Desk* was formed in Israel, on the initiative of Mordechai Bentov, one of the founders of Hakibutz Haarzi and an outstanding political leader of Mapam. He set up wide-ranging relations with commune members worldwide. Bentov also established a committee for relations between the kibbutz movement and communes worldwide. In 1981 he initiated an international conference of communes that took place in Israel. He hoped that from this conference would come a call to establish the *Internationale*, but its participants did not rise to his initiative. Following the conference this idea waned and disappeared, and only the International Communes Desk founded by Bentov continues to maintain international contacts to this day.

A new phase in the globalization trends started in the 1980s with the founding of the ICSA, which served as a common platform for researchers, academics, kibbutzim and communes the world over, thus opening new horizons for international relations with the increased academic interest in communes on a global scale. Even the sister association, the CSA, which was a home for American researchers, was from its inception open to membership and participation of researchers from outside the United States.

In the 1990s a new dynamic in international relations appeared in the *Fellowship for Intentional Community*, which was incorporated in 1986 as a nonprofit, tax exempt charitable educational organization. It became an inclusive association of many different communities in the USA and abroad. It became very influential in fostering global contacts between communes. One of the main instruments was the publication of the *Communities Directory*, a reference guide describing communes all over the world. The 2007 edition has descriptions of over 900 communities in North America, 70 international communities, and more than 250 alternative resources and services. Over 30 articles provide basic information about a wide range of community topics.

At the beginning of the 21st century the communes' international contacts became more extensive with the appearance of the *Global Ecological Network* and Cohousing associations in Europe and North America.

This short historical review traces the different phases and realms of the globalization trends of the communal communities which was concomitant with a substantial extent of these phenomena.

It should be noted here that this survey dealt mainly with the secular communes. It did not include the secluded religious communes such as the Anabaptists, Hutterites and Bruderhof. These communes, like other Christian Communes, maintained their seclusion during most of the last decades and thus intentionally avoided the globalization trends.

Nevertheless there are clear indications which are made by recent studies that there are cracks in the walls of their seclusion, internet and emails penetrate and they are gradually opening to outside society and with that to the globalization trends.

In conclusion

Nowadays there are literally thousands of groups with hundreds of thousands of members that live in communes and intentional communities. The scope of their primary values is broad, including ecology, equality, appropriate technology, self-sufficiency, humanist psychology, creativity, spirituality, meditation yoga and the pursuit of global peace. What is common about modern intentional communities is their tendency to be open to new ideas, their willingness to be tolerant of other approaches, and their commitment to live in a way that reflects their idealism.

Many contemporary groups are exploring ways to achieve a true sense of community while maintaining a balance between privacy and cooperation, a concept quite compatible with values prevalent in *mainstream* society today.

When all is said and done, one may ask, "Can we note a contribution to humanity that derives from the communes' experience, apart from that made in the circles in which they lived?" There is no simple answer, and the pros and cons must be carefully considered. On the debit side are the small numbers and isolation that characterize the communes, which are selective social cells. This limits their general social contribution. Their achievements have revealed ways of living together, while their failures have shown the limitations of the communal lifestyle. But to their credit the communal experience and lifestyle have and do constitute social laboratories in which the possibility that human beings can live cooperatively in voluntary communities with no private property is realistically examined. In our multi-cultural modern world, if there are still aspirations for alternative societies, then these communal phenomena could have a significant contribution.



Yaacov Oved, PhD has been a member of Kibbutz Palmachim since its establishment in 1949. He is Professor Emeritus in the Department of History, Tel Aviv University. Since 1980, Yaacov has researched communes throughout the world and has published books and articles on the subject in Hebrew, English and Spanish, including the encyclopaedic *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (1987) and *Globalisation of Communes: 1950-2010* (2012). Yaacov was a founding member of the ICSA and served as its Executive Director from 1985 until 2004.

Becoming Communitarian: New citizens and a new life in Damanhur¹

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/89v3-u65Z0w>

Abstract

Damanhur – a federation of intentional eco-communities in northern Italy – has purposefully developed new citizenship programmes that achieve a certain amount of what Williams (2008) describes as ‘consciousness raising’. Gwyn Williams (2008) explored the resistance movement of alterglobalisation activists on the Larzac plateau in southern France. There are similarities between the process of becoming an activist in the Larzac sense and becoming a communitarian in the context of Damanhur. Damanhurians, as with the Larzac, “conceive that a person is a being that constantly evolves” (Williams 2008, p. 72) and so purposefully facilitate a gradual immersion into community life through specific new citizenship programmes. Such an approach is based on the idea that participating in a community, particularly communal living assists in the ongoing evolution of the individual.

This is a jointly written paper analysing the process of becoming a communitarian in the context of Damanhur. Damanhur is the home of one of the authors, Quaglia, and the field site of the other, Kara, who is an anthropologist. While this paper will be primarily based on reflections of a period in Damanhur’s history – the year in which Quaglia joined Damanhur and Kara conducted fieldwork – there will also be discussion of current new member programmes in Damanhur. This paper will also include analysis of the potential links between the process of becoming communitarian and a deeper understanding of sustainability – of the environment and of community groups in general. Further, the correlation between the degree to which new members successfully integrate in a community and the longevity and vitality of the community will be addressed.

Introduction

[Kara]

Damanhur, Federation of Communities is located in northern Italy at the foothills of the Swiss-Italian Alps. Damanhur is described by its participants – known as citizens – as a spiritual eco-community that began in 1979, when a small group of people chose to found a community, united by their spiritual ideals. Damanhur is a complex community group that integrates new citizens in an intentional process of socialization towards becoming communitarian.

¹ Note - This conference presentation was read by both authors, indicators of reader change are made throughout.

We see this process as a key element that has allowed Damanhur to retain what seems to be a relatively stable citizenship over time. Damanhur is a multi-generational community, not only in the diversity of biological age, but also in Damanhurian age – which is the length of time a citizen has been part of Damanhur. This longevity of personal commitment to the community creates a collective condition of sustainability: the stable community population increases the energy efficiency on a social level. With stronger group familiarity and less coming and going of its members, more energy can be harnessed and dedicated to increasing innovation with greater velocity. One of the intentions and projects of Damanhur is sustainable eco-living with an attention to energy savings, as well as its goals for social sustainability.

[Quaglia]

During the time of Kara's fieldwork, I was joining the community as a new citizen through a program called the *Nuovi Damanhuriani* (New Damanhurians) Program.

Before entering into the paper, we would like to take a moment to send our gratitude to Falco (also known as Oberto Airaudi) the main founder of Damanhur, who passed away last Sunday. I remember the first time I went to visit Damanhur, and I was at the weekly question and answer session he consistently held for guests every Friday, up until last Friday even, and at that time years ago, I asked him, "Do you have any advice for people who want to start a community?" He said, "It's important to move forward and take action to realize your dream. Once you have landed, just start clearing it and cutting down trees in order to build your community. Don't hold endless consensus decision making meetings about cutting down each tree or not, just start doing it." It was this pioneering spirit of courage and direct action that has enlivened the hearts of all Damanhurians and made Damanhur what it is today, an inspiration, a shared dream become reality. Thank you, Falco.

This paper pays particular attention to the process of becoming a new citizen in Damanhur during the period of 2008 to 2011. Since then the program has changed, now called New Life, it allows just about anyone who wants to have an experience as a Damanhurian to come and live in the communities as a citizen for three months. This is a big change and opening from the previous process, enabled by the evolution and growth of the community. New Life is a much more flexible and integrated way for potential new citizens to experience what it is like to live in Damanhur.

I am now what is called a Damanhur 'A' citizen, which means living and participating in all aspects of the community on the most committed level, full-time. Kara's own process of getting involved was not an intentional program like the new citizens, though she had a lot of parallel experiences. We were both learning not only how to be communal citizens but also how to think and feel communal as well.

Becoming Damanhurian

[Kara]

An intentional community, in the majority of cases, requires a continual input of new members to: allow for growth, keep ideas fresh, expand the community's future goals and fill gaps left when members leave. However, there is a delicate balance between these benefits of new membership and the potential for disruption. New members are needed but they must not

hamper the survival of the group as a whole. The process of integrating new members into a community has been referred to as socialisation. Bill Metcalf (1986: 249) describes socialisation in the intentional community context as “the mechanism by which these differences are resolved in a complex process of implicit negotiation”.

There are strong similarities between this concept of socialisation and what Gwyn Williams (2008: 72) describes as “becoming an activist”. Williams (2008) describes a process of ‘becoming aware’ and then acting ‘coherently’ in accordance with that new awareness. This is very much the process of becoming a Damanhurian. Damanhurians believe and attempt to live (consciously act out) a wide of array of alternative philosophies regarding lifestyle, the self, relationships and spirituality. New citizens must ‘become aware’, educated, about these philosophies before they are able to ‘act coherently’ and integrate within the community. An essential part of this learning process and indeed an approach taken towards all new initiatives during my stay was that of ‘learn while doing’. First-hand experience or action now, was the fastest way to achieve a complete socialisation within the community.

[Quaglia]

The spiritual philosophy of Damanhur is based on action. We are here as human beings with a divine spark in order to make matter divine – bringing the spiritual into the material. Our evolution moves forward by making a mark in the material world creating things with our hands – whether it is tending a garden or painting a mural in the Temples or cooking Sunday lunch. It is through this active process of co-creation that we create the strongest bonds between people. Sometimes the things that need to be done are just an ‘excuse’ for us to be together as community groups. Sometimes this thread of connectedness is quite visible, like passing firewood from hand to hand. Collective art-making is highly valued for this reason, more than the individual artist doing his or her own work and being recognized for it. Community art is an opportunity to strengthen the connections amongst us all in the social alchemy of creating things together.

[Kara]

Damanhur’s new citizenship program is a model of socialisation that intentionally aims to allow for the kind of experiences that would prepare individuals for life as a communitarian. The scholar Gwyn Williams (2008: 72) describes a similar process as ‘consciousness raising’ where a group of alterglobalisation activists in southern France, “conceive that a person is a being that constantly evolves”. Similarly Damanhurians believe that participating in a community, and particularly communal living, assists in the ongoing evolution of the individual. It stands to reason then, that individuals who have already participated in communal living, like those full-time residents of Damanhur, would have achieved a certain level of ‘evolution’ beyond individuals who have yet to have had that experience – from a certain perspective it is like new-citizens are playing ‘catch-up’.

[Quaglia]

Embracing constant evolution in a structured way was helpful for me to integrate as a new citizen. This is one of the main points of focus in Damanhur, to grow beyond our limitations and character flaws and develop and express our talents. I engaged in this practice as a New

Citizen. The process includes practical points to pay attention to and actualize and receiving regular feedback from a chosen person within the community. The points may focus on containing extremes of behavior and personality that prevent me from being at my best and from integrating harmoniously with others. They may also exalt the potential excellences I have.

For instance, one of my first points of attention was to give space to my artistic and creative expression, which is often overshadowed by the part of me that loves working and accomplishing everyday tasks. The result was that I started doing creative writing and sharing it with the community. I have also given space to painting, singing and dancing in various creative contexts within Damanhur. This process has given me new tools to approach intimidating situations in a new way, to courageously embrace an opportunity for growth.

[Kara]

A new citizen described the process of socialisation in this way, “It’s like living communally peels away the layers [of yourself, and] slowly you get deeper, although, it can be painful”. Living communally reveals aspects of someone’s personality that may not have consciously realised before – this can be as basic as not cleaning the toilet properly to more fundamental personal conditions like talking ‘too much’ when anxious or nervous. These aspects become ‘recognised’ by the individual because it is not just one or two other people alerting them to their condition, rather, it might easily be tens or even a hundred people identifying the same thing.

Negotiating communal life – replacing ideals with reality

One of the biggest challenges faced by new citizens was the process of replacing their imagined view of living in community with the reality that was Damanhur. The gap between the ideal and the real was something Damanhur attempted to close through its mechanisms of socialisation. “Damanhur is far from paradise” was a phrase I heard many times, emphasised mostly for the benefit of those who had expressed an interest in joining.

[Quaglia]

Living communally involves a precarious balance between the individual and the communal elements of self. This is often referred to as the difference between being motivated by ‘ideals’ and ‘personal interests.’ It’s a question we all ask ourselves, if our dedication to the core spiritual ideals and goals of the community are being diluted by personal life concerns, whether it is family, work, relationships, possessions, vacations. These areas of life are of course important for everyone to cultivate and serve, though it is a question of equilibrium in priorities. The intention of building a community like Damanhur is creating a context where large-scale collective missions and dreams can be realized in tandem with individual missions and dreams. If the personal desires and comforts gain priority over the community ideals and visions, then there is risk of the community not being distinguishable from everyday society and not being sustainable.

[Kara]

It is a challenging process where one must prioritise the need to contribute to the community along with the other equally important elements of an individual’s daily life. Although some

of the demands of life are lessened through sharing with others (e.g., you don't have to go food shopping every week, as it is likely someone else will have this role) there are, at least at first, many new elements that need to be negotiated. Each individual citizen not only has specific commitments to their nucleo (the smaller residential communities that make up the Federation) but also to the larger community of Damanhur.

An example of the adjustment some citizens needed to make was in relation to the division of household responsibilities among participants. There seemed to be a sense among some new citizens that they needed to ensure that any tasks were divided and accounted for equally – much like how one is treated in paid employment. Rather, it was communicated to me that participants needed to treat household chores like one would treat chores in one's own home; they needed to be done and there was no accounting. A trust, that each would contribute equitably, had to be built among the participants and the approach to chores needed to become one of 'wanting to contribute' rather than there being a singular focus on the equitable divisions of chores. This point was demonstrated to me very early when I was being introduced to some work I was to do in exchange for lodging. [Excerpt from field diary, 2009]

“Could you do some weed-whacking?”

“Do you mean, whipper snipping?”

“Whipper-snipping?” [*laughs*] “I'll show you”

We walk towards the shed and sure enough Billie extracts a whipper-snipper from the numerous garden tools to be found there. She then proceeds to point out the areas that need to be 'weed-whacked' and I diligently follow trying to memorise all her instructions. At one point I notice that all the clipped grass from a previous weed-whacking episode had been left where it had been clipped leading me to ask:

“Do I need to leave the grass where I cut it?”

“No it would be good if you could rake it up for the compost”

“Oh okay because I see that it has been left here?”

“Oh that is probably because the person didn't have time to clear it up”

The response to my final question was quick and without thought, there was no sense of dissatisfaction with the incomplete job performed by the previous whipper snipper. The assumption gave the person benefit of the doubt. At the time, this response demonstrated to me a sense of understanding among the participants in this nucleo regarding the time constraints of others.

[Quaglia]

Trust is built over time in communities by demonstrating continuity and constancy to one another despite the ups and downs of life and consequent level of community participation. The strength of a community group as a collective whole can contain and balance the individual highs and lows that fluctuate over time.

For example, if a Damanhurian citizen goes through a period of pregnancy, debilitating illness or unemployment, they receive support and help from their nucleo community and the wider community. This kind of support is built into the system of community solidarity, acknowledging that each one of us, at some point, might be moving through some situation of

need before becoming fully active and contributing again. New Citizens will eventually cycle through both the giving and receiving role of this solidarity, for example, playing the role of caregiver to others who are bedridden, as well as being the person lying in bed sick, assisted by others for our needs.

Conclusion

[Kara]

Building a community of individuals who feel and contribute to a feeling of *esprit de corps* in Damanhur is a learned process. The new citizens were learning how to consider others – even if they weren't biologically related – and treat them in accordance with how Damanhurians treat their communal family. Individuals needed to understand not only the current structure and philosophy lived by Damanhurians but also had to adapt their attitudes directly in accordance with the other people they were living with.

By the time a new citizen commits to full Damanhurian citizenship, they have already begun a socialisation process of becoming communitarian. In particular for Damanhur, they learn the importance of translating spiritual ideals into action. New citizens also commit to a process of personal evolution, often overcoming the discomfort of seeing their own points of growth mirrored back to them by a myriad of other citizens. Balancing one's individual perspectives needs and desires with the communal structures, goals and projects is a delicate process of learning. New citizens found that if they were able to do so, they could then receive the benefit of the solidarity and trust of communal living. This demonstration of mutual commitment during the process of entering into a community seems to increase overall sustainability, both through longevity of community membership and the social efficiency resulting from a stable citizen base.

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Being the Change: Gandhi, intentional communities and the process of social change

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/cvnyqGeG28AI>

Abstract

This ethnographic project explores how members of six rural and urban intentional communities reflect Mohandas K Gandhi's social thought in response to contemporary social and agrarian failures in the United States. Almost one century ago, Gandhi conceived of and experimented with a set of values including voluntary simplicity, non-violence, appropriate technologies, and participatory democracy in his efforts to free India from British colonialism; his holistic linkage of equity, economy, and ecology anticipates contemporary frames such as bioregionalism and sustainability. Today, many intentional communities draw upon this constellation of Gandhian values, both implicitly and explicitly, to develop sustainable and just food systems. Members of these communities wrestle with the practical implications of translating Gandhian values such as self-sufficiency, non-violence, voluntary simplicity, and public service into specific practices of food production and consumption.

In 2011 and 2012, I conducted fieldwork at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage (MO), the Possibility Alliance (MO), New Hope Catholic Workers Farms (IA), and their urban affiliates, Cherith Brook Catholic Workers House (MO), LA Ecovillage (CA), and Gainesville Catholic Workers House (FL). Each group describes itself as experimental and focuses on the process of moving towards a more just society and strives to practice non-violence, sustainability, and simplicity. I chose these communities, in part, because they stress their role as demonstration sites and view outreach and service to larger community as vital. Entering these communities required written and oral disclosure of my own position, role, and interests regarding their (and my) goals of social change. Using food practices as a lens, this project helps us understand how Gandhi's social thought is translated and practiced in the contemporary US and further how these experimental communities demonstrate alternatives to an increasingly individualistic and commercialized world.

Several years ago, I began searching for Gandhi's agrarian legacy because I wanted to see how Gandhi's views on non-violence, equity, and self-sufficiency influenced contemporary environmental thought, especially in regard to food and agriculture. I had recently completed my book, *Growing Stories from India: Religion and the Fate of Agriculture*, which asks how we might create a sustainable food system that is equitable for multiple populations.¹ The

¹A. Whitney Sanford, *Growing Stories from India: Religion and the Fate of Agriculture* (Frankfort, KY, The University Press of Kentucky), 2011.

book focuses on our stories about food, but I wanted to explore these ideas in practice: What would a non-violent food system look like? To address this question, I identified and conducted field research in three intentional communities, defined broadly as residential communities that are organized around shared values, to see how Gandhi's social thought, either explicitly or implicitly, has influenced their practices surrounding food and food production. All of these communities critique, in theory and practice, contemporary industrial agriculture, and, like Gandhi, their food practices are embedded in larger experiments regarding governance, voluntary simplicity, and self-sufficiency. Exploring how these communities reflect Gandhian values suggests possibilities for others considering alternatives to existing systems.

Gandhi's social thought can help us, both theoretically and practically, move towards more sustainable and just food systems. First, Gandhi and how his prescient words provide a discourse to respond to the reality of an encroaching agricultural monism in which control over the world's food supply is increasingly concentrated into fewer hands and small farmers worry about access to seeds and appropriate inputs. Second, the intentional communities I visited, one in India and two in the United States, exemplify instances of Gandhian values translated into practice. Although the communities I have studied focus on issues beyond food and agriculture, food provides a critical lens through which to explore contemporary interpretation and practice of Gandhi's social thought.

Almost a century ago, Gandhi offered a paradigm for democracy that, to use contemporary language, emphasized sustainability, equity, and social justice regarding natural resources, and he prompted us to expand notions of what constitutes violence. Today, Gandhi's worst fears about centralized or corporate power over many aspects of our lives, including food, water, and seed, seem to have materialized – in India and the United States, and corporate imperialism has replicated the violence of colonial control. The globally dominant paradigm is one of high production that privileges large-scale agriculture and wealthy nations and reflects the growing entrenchment of neoliberal ideologies. Contemporary debates about food miles; the ethics of bottled water; and whether corn should feed people, animals, or cars reveal tensions in relationships between people, food, and the earth. Discussions about food have never been simply academic questions for those of the global South, and the recession has rendered these questions central to an increasing number of North Americans. For those seeking social change, Gandhi has become an iconic figure for those seeking democratic control of resources and for nonviolent resistance to social, economic, and now, environmental injustices.

Though Gandhi drew upon traditional Indic concepts that would resonate in India, he also drew heavily upon western thinkers, including Henry David Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy, and emphasized western ideas and modern concepts, particularly the scientific tradition and individual responsibility.¹ His social thought – forged in a colonial and transnational context –

¹ Joseph. S. Alter, *Gandhi's Body: Sex, Diet, and the Politics of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press), 2000; Parama Roy, *Alimentary Tracts: Appetites, Aversions, and the Postcolonial* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

has been equally informed by and responsive to Indian and western influences and speaks to those grappling to find a balance between community responsibility and personal autonomy – which is an enormous challenge for us in the US. What I have seen, in visiting with multiple intentional communities in India and the US, is that a raft of values associated with Gandhi, including non-violent communication, appropriate technologies, voluntary simplicity, and self-sufficiency, have provided a vocabulary to reconsider, and perhaps resist, an increasingly individualistic and commercialized society.

To explore how Gandhi's thought might help us, I will discuss three intentional communities that demonstrate experiments in the translation of Gandhian thought into practice. First, I describe Brahma Vidya Mandir (BVM), an ashram for women in Paunar, Maharashtra, India, and then I turn to the Possibility Alliance and Dancing Rabbit, both located in rural northeast Missouri. Residents of BVM are steeped in both Hindu and Gandhian thought and draw heavily on the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Residents of Dancing Rabbit and the Possibility Alliance draw on Gandhian tropes, but do so in the context of contemporary US culture. These communities emphasize voluntary simplicity, and this emphasis brings up an important point: members of these communities have chosen this lifestyle, and so have had either the financial or social resources to make this decision. Although these communities contribute to a growing chorus in India and the US of those questioning the consumer culture and existing industrialized food system, they are by no means a large and powerful movement. Nonetheless, they are necessary for the process of social change – they demonstrate alternate frames of reference.

What unites these diverse communities is a commitment to practice non-violence in virtually all facets of life, from agriculture to building to inter-personal communications. As rural agrarian communities, they are especially attuned to the systemic violence imposed on human and non-human communities by industrial agriculture. While some practices, e.g. factory farming, application of toxic pesticides, and unfair labor regimes, are easily identified as violent, other less visible practices, including growing corporate control over political and educational institutions, privatization of germplasm, inequitable financial structures, and rural poverty are also understood as forms of violence. These communities understand themselves as experimental responses to the violence of environmental and social crises, and as demonstrations sites and models for broader social change.

India -- Brahma Vidya Mandir

The farmers and activists I visited in Maharashtra understand this global context and are well aware of these injustices. In 2008 and 2009, I visited two agriculturally-focused ashrams, Brahma Vidya Mandir and Nilayam Nivedita, and Samvad Farm, and spoke with Gandhi-focused farmers who visited Brahma Vidya Mandir.¹ They clearly articulated their concerns regarding industrial agriculture, the global financial system, and the overwhelming power of multi-national corporations to virtually all aspects of lives in India and all over the world and consistently framed their responses in terms of engaged critiques of big agriculture, big business, and greed. These individuals are well-educated and well-informed – these are not

¹ Sanford, A. Whitney, 'Gandhi's Agrarian Legacy: Practicing Food, Justice, and Sustainability in India', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, 7 (2013), 65–87.

peasants, but individuals who have chosen voluntary simplicity. Further, they represent a small demographic of India's population – the subset who have chosen to practice Gandhian values. A parallel in the US might be the small population of college-education middle-class Americans who have chosen to populate agrarian-focused intentional communities. In short, I interacted with a set of farmers and activists who have had the power and means to focus their energies on their social and environmental concerns, and I use the term “farmer” advisedly in this context.

Vinoba Bhave, a close associate or disciple of Gandhi, established Brahma Vidya Mandir in 1959 for women to achieve spiritual liberation and to practice ideals of self-sufficiency, non-violence, and self-discipline in a community setting. Brahma Vidya Mandir and similar ashrams were experimental laboratories in which residents could “test” out new ideas and practices to for a radically democratic and self-sufficient community. The sisters have no official leader, and all decisions are made by consensus. This ashram has become a hub of agricultural resistance, and the women have trained a number of farmer-activists who themselves train others.

Like Gandhi and Bhave, they articulate their responses to industrial agriculture, among other things, in religiously inflected language drawn from the *Bhagavad-Gita* and use this text as a guide to develop practices that they deem non-violent, e.g. “non-violent” organic/natural farming practices, appropriate technologies, and local distribution networks. For example, the affiliated Samvad Farm only sells their mangos regionally, consciously rejecting a neoliberal model that sees export-driven trade as the best means to global food security.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* also provides the religious and philosophical basis for the personal, spiritual transformation that, they contend, must drive and accompany broader social change. Cultivating inner non-violence through attention to the *Bhagavad-Gita* and using a consensus-based decision-making process maintain non-violence as an interior practice and a personal transformation. Frequently, at both Samvad Farm and Brahma Vidya Mandir, residents cited to me Bhave's statement that “religion is out-dated, we need spirituality” to make the point that larger social changes must stem from individual transformation.

As an experiment in radical democracy, decisions are made by consensus, meaning that all opinions must be heard and acknowledged. The traditional democratic one-person, one-vote system can become adversarial, and the voices of the minority can be obscured by the majority, a form of violence. Decisions about what vegetables should be grown and under what conditions are made by consensus so that all residents have a voice in the process; however, the trade-off is that this process diminishes the influence of those who might have the most agricultural experience.

In the morning after prayers, residents and visitors work, performing such tasks as sweeping, food preparation, and gardening. The sisters grow their own vegetables, without inputs such as herbicides and pesticides, and the ashram's cows provide dairy needs as well as manure for fertilizer and bio-gas. Water from the kitchen's grey-water system provides some fertilizer; the sisters use ash to wash the pots and dishes which then becomes fertilizer for the garden. When cutting vegetables, I was admonished to do so with “*ahimsa*”, that is, to avoid harming

the worms that inevitably appear in organic produce. Using only what one needs and being self-sufficient offers them a freedom not enjoyed by farms trapped by debt.

Every morning, after mid-morning prayers, the sisters spin. It would be difficult to underestimate the symbolic importance of spinning and homespun cloth for Gandhi's view on self-sufficiency and independence. For Gandhi, Bhave, and contemporary spinners, spinning functions as a means of self-transformation and mindfulness. Spinning cotton and wearing clothes made of homespun cotton reinforces one's identity as one who has made these behavioral choices. Spinning today, however, integrates contemporary controversies surrounding the violence of cotton production and difficult choices.

Members of BVM are well aware of the farmer suicides attributed to the conventional (or non-organic) cotton industry in the states of Maharashtra and neighboring Andhra Pradesh. The seeds and necessary technological packets, e.g. herbicides and pesticides, incur both massive debt and high ecological costs, and many cite the nutritional deficits that resulted when monoculture cotton crops replaced traditional systems of inter-cropping of food and cotton. BVM is able to source their cotton locally, from an ashram between Wardha and Paunar, thus supporting regional self-sufficiency and local economies, and this cotton is organic. However, the remainder of their cotton is local, but not organic, so the members of BVM, perhaps not consciously, have had to choose between the violence of a globalized distribution system to obtain organic cotton and the violence of conventional agriculture. Like Arjuna, they must re-evaluate what constitutes violence and appropriate responses.

The sisters of Brahma Vidya Mandir enact their values in food and agriculture and demonstrate a balance of reflection and practice. The focus on practice, as well as consensus decision-making, place these communities in a context of process and experimentation, rather than adherence to fixed dogma. The reflexivity of engagement and assessment ensures that this process is not a simple application of a Gandhian platform or an ideological absorption in which theory is divorced from practice, a persistent problem for intentional communities seeking social change. Communally and individually, the sisters actively engage these values in performing daily work and assess the process and consequences on themselves and others of translating Gandhian values into practice.

US – The Possibility Alliance and Dancing Rabbit

During the summer and fall of 2011, I made several visits to the Possibility Alliance Sanctuary, occasionally referred to by the shorthand Sanctuary, and Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage and visited both sites again in 2012. I chose these communities, in part, because they stress their role as demonstration sites and view outreach and service to larger community as vital. (I am not interested in insular communities.) And, you might wonder why northeast Missouri. Both communities boast a broad geographic distribution of members from across the US and abroad and are not regional movements. Missouri has relatively inexpensive, arable land and has few, if any, building codes and other restrictions. This is important for groups who want to experiment with sustainable building techniques and water reclamation systems, such as grey-water which goes against codes in most places.

Additionally, the presence of Amish and Mennonites provide support for self-sufficient communities, and both groups have actively cultivated good relations with these groups.

The Possibility Alliance is a newly formed community with approximately 6 full-time residents; the population swells during the growing season with 9-month interns. The Possibility Alliance, though non-denominational, has a strong Quaker flavor, and they hold meeting on Sunday morning. This group also has strong ties with regional Catholic Worker houses and farms. Founders Ethan and Sarah Hughes purchased an existing Mennonite homestead, with the criteria that it be located near a railway station, be proximate to Mennonite and Amish communities, and have arable land. Since their arrival, similarly-minded families and groups have purchased land nearby, and the affiliated community has grown significantly. Ethan and Sarah specifically articulate their vision in terms of Gandhian values, including non-violence, appropriate technologies, and self-sufficiency. As part of their practice, they do not use fossil fuels or electricity at the homestead, and they grow virtually all of the food they eat. They raise chickens and will occasionally eat eggs or one of the chickens. They abstain from fossil fuels and electricity, both for environmental reasons and also due to the economic and political violence of oil production systems, especially in non-western nations. Similarly, they abstain from foods, such as coffee and chocolate, that are typically produced through unfair labor practices.

The existing homestead has enabled the Possibility Alliance to focus on food and agriculture, rather than building and infrastructure. They cultivate a range of fruits and vegetables, and each summer, interns with specific agricultural or other skills add to their knowledge base. As I worked along side the interns and in later interviews, they emphasized the primacy of non-violent communications, intrapersonal relationships, and inner transformation. Several emphasized that as long as one has violence in ones' self or in relationships, then violence will seep into practices, such as agriculture. Founder Ethan Hughes understands the Possibility Alliance as a safe space, where groups with divergent views can hold facilitated conversations that might not take place under other circumstances. For example, he has hosted simultaneously groups of European communists and an evangelical youth ministry, and apparently they all survived.

Ethan specifically frames his work in a Gandhian context, although he would not label the sanctuary as Gandhian per se. Members and interns have less familiarity with Gandhi's writings, but see the emphasis on non-violent communications as being related to Gandhian thought.

Approximately forty miles northeast lies Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, with neighboring communities Sandhill Farm and Red Earth. While the groups communicate and cooperate, the forty mile gap is disproportionately large given the sanctuary's abstinence from fossil fuels. (It's a long bike ride, even in the flat Midwest.) Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage was founded approximately twenty years ago by three Stanford students who wanted to build an ecovillage from the ground up. So, a great deal of DR's energy has gone into developing alternate building techniques that used local materials and doing the actual building. Prior to breaking ground, the founders created a consensus-based system of governance based on principles of

non-violent communications. All members and residents undergo some training in non-violent communications, but many seek much more rigorous training in group facilitation. They, too, emphasize that building community is far more difficult than the physical labor of farming or building, especially when you cannot escape into the anonymity of urban life.

Dancing Rabbit has approximately 30 members, plus short-term residents and summer interns. It is best described as a community of communities, and these smaller communities develop according to shared views on income, food, and building. The larger Dancing Rabbit Community has six relatively loose rules, for example, no one may own an individual vehicle and all building materials must be of local origin or repurposed. These loose rules do provide for some lively discussions, but help avoid the imposition of a strict ideology. Like BVM, both Dancing Rabbit and the Possibility Alliance stressed their experimental nature, and their ability to accommodate a range of ideas and behaviors demonstrates an important aspect of the practice of non-violence. For example, the residents of the Possibility Alliance were kind to me, not judgemental, when I desperately needed coffee to stave off massive caffeine withdrawal, and they illustrated to me that compassion, not dogma, holds the power of persuasion.

Of these communities and others I visited, Dancing Rabbit demonstrates the least clearly-stated debt to Gandhi; members, residents, and interns cite phrases associated with Gandhi, “Be the Change, and Gandhi’s name and words appears on the walls and in literature, but his legacy is best represented in their practices of voluntary simplicity, self-sufficiency, and appropriate technologies. To me, Dancing Rabbit exemplifies how deeply Gandhian values have penetrated the US and that these tropes provide a public vocabulary to discuss and critique individualism, hidden forms of violence, and unbridled consumption.

Conclusion

This fieldwork represents an initial foray into my search for Gandhi’s legacy. My work in India demonstrated the clear influence of Gandhi in the South Asian context, but my visits with intentional communities in the United States confirmed my intuition that Gandhi’s social thought has shaped the discourse and practices of these communities in ways that are not always obvious. More importantly, these visits have shown me that Gandhi’s thought offers a set of concepts and practices to help us move forward towards food democracy and a sustainable and just society. My work thus far has focused on rural communities, and, in my future research, I plan to shift my focus to urban communities and ties between rural and urban communities. According to the 2010 US Census Report, 80% of the US population lives in urban areas, and urban agriculture presents enormous possibilities and challenges.¹ I plan another visit to LA Ecovillage, a well-established community right in the heart of LA, and to several urban Catholic Worker Houses in Missouri and Iowa that are networked with the Possibility Alliance. The Catholic Workers Movement is strongly influenced by Gandhi, and the food practices of individual Catholic Worker farms and houses and associated Agronomic Universities also demonstrate the practice of Gandhian thought. However, each house and

¹<http://proximityone.com/urbanpopulation.htm>

farm is different; there is no central structure or hierarchy. For example, the Catholic Workers House in Gainesville opens their home to serve homemade organic meals to people in need, many of whom live in Gainesville's tent city. Most of the food is locally sourced, and much of it is from the House's own garden. The leaders of this group practice an ethic of care and justice informed by Catholic social thought. They offer sit-down shared meals – complete with table cloth and candles – that provide their guests, typically homeless, a moment of dignity and respect that is not often present in their lives.

Food has proven a critical lens to consider these communities and the process of social change. Food practices are central to all of the intentional communities I have visited, and members have made conscious choices about their relationships to food, its production and distribution. Our intimacy with food offers possibilities to enact food choices that are socially and environmentally sustainable at the personal, community, and national scales. Like Gandhi, members of the communities I have chosen question the dominant narrative of what constitutes good food and what constitutes our responsibilities regarding food production.



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The Search for Balance: Prior communal experiences among members of the cohousing movement

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/IBOmhhyp9T8>

Abstract

How do members of intentional communities choose the form of community that best suits their needs? For many it is a process of trial and error. This paper explores the role of past communal experiences in motivating participation in the cohousing movement. The goal of the cohousing movement is to create an alternative to mainstream housing through the creation of cooperative neighbourhoods where privately owned, individual households are clustered around a common house with shared facilities. It is a form of intentional community that explicitly seeks to strike a balance between the needs for community and for privacy and does not profess any overt ideology beyond a valuing of cooperative living and a greater sense of community. This research is based on field research and qualitative interviews with members of the cohousing movement. The cohousers in this study had a variety of prior communal living experiences in both cooperative households and intentional communities. These experiences helped them to identify the type of intentional community that was the best fit for their communal aspirations and current personal circumstances. The findings indicate a wide variety of paths to cohousing and investigate some of the challenges of various forms of communal living.

Paper: Not available.



Heather Sullivan-Catlin, PhD is a sociology professor at the State University of New York at Potsdam with interests in family, community, and sustainability – all of which come together in her cohousing movement research. Her passion for sociology is realised in the classroom. “I love to help students develop their ‘sociological imagination’.” To that end, Heather will be bringing a class of students to the conference. In her own community, she is actively involved in a food justice organisation and busy building community.

PART THREE

**INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES
AS MODELS OF SUSTAINABILITY**

Revisiting Walden Two: Sustainability from a natural science perspective

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Video of conference presentation: Not available

Abstract

In his 1948 novel, *Walden Two*, B F Skinner proposed using principles and methods of natural science as a means to design a healthy society that was not only satisfying and meaningful to its residents but also socially and environmentally sustainable. A number of intentional communities were inspired by Skinner's ideas, perhaps the most well-known of which is Twin Oaks, located near Louisa, Virginia, USA. Few Walden Two-inspired communities, however, maintained a focus on behavioural science for long, possibly because they misinterpreted Walden Two as a blueprint for a community rather than a call to use natural-science methods. *Comunidad Los Horcones*, near Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, is one group that has maintained its focus on natural science methods since its inception in 1973. Another group that used a science-based focus for several decades is Sunflower House, a Walden-Two inspired student housing cooperative in Lawrence, KS, USA. This paper will review the results of research conducted by the experimental living project at Sunflower House to see what lessons can be gleaned about designing sustainable social systems.

B. F. Skinner was one of the most eminent psychologists, if not one of the most eminent scientists, of the 20th century (Haggbloom, et al., 2002; Rutherford, 2009). Through his laboratory research, he established a science of behavior – the experimental analysis of behavior – and its corresponding philosophy, radical behaviorism (see Morris, Smith & Altus, 2005), although he was perhaps best known for, and also vilified for, his popular writings, including *Walden Two* (1948) and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971).

Skinner originally wrote his utopian novel, *Walden Two*, in 1945, as *The Sun is But a Morning Star* – the title taken from the conclusion of Thoreau's *Walden* (1854). In his 1979 autobiography, he indicated that the inspiration for writing the book came from a dinner party where he discussed what soldiers would do when they returned home from serving in World War II: He worried "...that they would abandon their crusading spirit and come back only to fall into the old lockstep American life – getting a job, marrying, renting an apartment, making a down payment on a car, having a child or two" (Skinner, 1979, p. 292). Instead, he felt that "they should experiment; they should explore new ways of living, as people had done in the communities of the 19th century" (p. 292). His dinner companion encouraged him to write down his ideas, and, so, Skinner set out in the same year to record on paper what it

¹ The author would like to thank Edward K. Morris, L. Keith Miller, and Tom Welsh for their collaboration on previous projects that inspired and influenced this paper.

might look like to experiment with new ways of living. The subsequent book, *Walden Two*, was published three years later in 1948.

Skinner was not ignorant of the utopian movements and intentional communities of the past. In his 1979 autobiography (p. 292), he noted that he had grown up near the spot where Joseph Smith had dictated the Book of Mormon, had read about the Shakers and other perfectionist sects, and had gone to college near the site of the Oneida Community. He thought that most of the communities of the nineteenth century had come to an end for irrelevant reasons and he felt that young people in the post-war era might have better luck. He believed that “they could build a culture that would come closer to satisfying human needs than the American way of life” (Skinner, 1979, p. 292).

While Skinner and Thoreau are not typically viewed as possessing a common outlook, Skinner felt that his book shared several premises with Thoreau’s *Walden* (Skinner, 1979, p. 346):

- (1) No way of life is inevitable. Examine your own closely.
- (2) If you do not like it, change it.
- (3) Do not try to change it through political action. Even if you succeed in gaining power, you will not likely be able to use it any more wisely than your predecessors.
- (4) Ask only to be left alone to solve your problems in your own way.
- (5) Simplify, your needs. Learn how to be happy with fewer possessions.

To Skinner, however, *Walden* was a “utopia for one” (Skinner, 1973, p. 2). He was interested in addressing societal problems, not retreating from them. And he was interested in addressing them from a natural-science perspective. Data from his empirical research (e.g., Skinner, 1938) convinced him that behavior is a function of natural laws. Skinner felt that we should use what we know about behavioral principles to arrange conditions that promote valued outcomes rather than allow ourselves to be controlled by unknown, and potentially destructive, forces (Altus & Morris, 2008). As he wrote in the preface to *Walden Two* when it was reissued in 1976: “Either we do nothing and allow a miserable and probably catastrophic future to overtake us, or we use our knowledge about human behavior to create a social environment in which we shall live productive and creative lives and do so without jeopardizing the chances that those who follow us will be able to do the same. Something like a *Walden Two* would not be a bad start” (p. xvi).

In *Walden Two*, Skinner described practices he thought might help to promote health, wealth and wisdom (see Altus & Morris, 2009) – for example, regular physical exercise and nutritious meals to promote physical health; meaningful work and plentiful leisure time to promote mental health; equal distribution of resources and compensation of all forms of work to promote community health; energy-efficient dwellings and reduction of waste to promote environmental health; equitable participation in labor and judicious use of resources to promote wealth; and free and equal education in both academic and interpersonal skills to promote wisdom.

Yet despite the careful description of these practices in his novel, Skinner did not write *Walden Two* as a blueprint (Altus & Morris, 2008; 2009). The practices Skinner described

were simply conjectures about methods that might promote the good life at one point in the community's existence and were based on values that were meaningful to him. Indeed, the main theme that Skinner stressed in his novel and that he communicated through Frazier was that of experimentation. As Frazier tells Castle: "The actual achievement is beside the point. The main thing is, we encourage our people to view every habit and custom with an eye to possible improvement. A constantly experimental attitude toward everything – that's all we need" (Skinner, 1948, p. 25). And, later, Frazier adds: "I've very much misrepresented the whole system if you suppose that any of the practices I've described are fixed. We try out many different techniques. Gradually we work toward the best possible set" (p. 106).

Many people, however, seemed to miss this point, and have viewed *Walden Two* as a blueprint rather than a call to applying scientific principles to daily life. During the late 1960s and early 70s when interest in *Walden Two* took off (sales jumped from only about 750 per year for the first dozen or so years to sales of 100,000 per year in the early 1970s; see Bjork, 1993), a number of groups attempted to form intentional communities based on the practices described in the book (see Kuhlmann, 2005). Some were more successful than others. Undoubtedly the best known of these communities is Twin Oaks (see Kinkade, 1973, 1994; Kuhlmann, 2005), an intentional community established in 1967 near Louisa, Virginia, USA. Other *Walden Two*-inspired communities that still exist include Comunidad Los Horcones, established in 1973 near Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico (see Comunidad Los Horcones, 1986; Chance, 1999; Fellowship for Intentional Community, 2012a); Lake Village, established in 1971 near Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA (see Altus, 1998; Fellowship for Intentional Community, 2012b); and Sunflower House, established in 1969 in Lawrence, Kansas, USA (see Miller & Feallock, 1976; Fellowship for Intentional Community, 2008).

Twin Oaks began as a *Walden Two*-inspired community, but members became disillusioned with what *Walden Two* had to offer in the way of effective practices in relatively short order. Kat Kinkade, one of the founders of Twin Oaks, wrote in 1999 that, at first, "we accepted the blueprint in *Walden Two* as if its author knew all about how to found and maintain such a community" (Kinkade, 1999, p. 51). Soon, though, they found numerous faults with practices outlined in *Walden Two* – for example, mothers' unwillingness to have their infants raised in a community nursery, the impracticality of rammed earth bricks, the lack of need for air cribs, and the impossibility of the four-hour workday (Kinkade, 1999).

However, as Valerie Renwick, a long-term member of Twin Oaks, wrote in 2009, "We continue to employ both the planner-manager self-government model and the labor-credit work system, both of which were taken directly from *Walden Two*" (Renwick, 2009, p. 337). The labor-credit system, as developed by Kat Kinkade at Twin Oaks, has been credited by Allen Butcher (2013) as "the most significant accomplishment since St. Benedict created 'Benedict's Rule,' which saved and reinvigorated Catholic Monasticism." Butcher continues that "Kat has done essentially the same for secular communalism."

What Kinkade did was to take the idea of the labor-credit system from *Walden Two* and figure out how to make it work in the real world. In other words, she took precisely the experimental attitude that Skinner was championing in *Walden Two*. Kinkade and community members

developed the labor-credit system into a workable system that has been emulated by many communities (e.g., see Kuhlmann, 2005) and that is seen as one of the reasons behind the community's remarkable longevity (Butcher, 2013).

Kat wrote that they “experimented” for five years with the variable credit system described in *Walden Two*, including “at least four variations on the variable credit system” (Kinkade, 1994, p. 31) but ultimately rejected it for a fixed system of one credit per hour. In her 1994 book, *Is It Utopia Yet*, Kinkade admitted that the labor-credit system was not perfect and was a work in progress. While she noted that the system helped to promote equality in work-sharing, reduced resentment and guilt, and allowed for flexibility, she conceded that there were problems with the system. For example, she pointed out that some people lie on their labor sheets, others can't handle the freedom that comes with a flexible work schedule, and the focus on the labor credit detracts from the intrinsic enjoyment of the activity (Kinkade, 1994). But she concluded that she wasn't bothered by the flaws in the system and even saw them as part of her interest in it. She concluded, as Skinner would have approved, that “problem solving is what we do here” (p. 36).

Roger Ulrich, the founder of Lake Village, a community also inspired by *Walden Two*, expressed similar sentiments about the difficulty of implementing practices described in the book, such as a point system for work that they abandoned after they discovered that children were getting points for cleaning when all they were doing was “sweeping cat litter under the carpet” (Altus, 1999, p. 54).

Still, like Kinkade, Ulrich seemed grateful to Skinner for the initial inspiration provided by *Walden Two*. In a 1998 interview, Ulrich noted that “...what attracted me to *Walden Two* was its social conscience. That for better or for worse, we should be doing some things with children early, and things like that... And then I got very much taken by the thing that he had Rogers say to him in the opening pages of the book: ‘It's a job for research but not the kind you do in a university. You have to experiment with your own life. Teaching is alright to turn people on, but in terms of finding things out, you've got to experiment, and experiment with your own life.’ So that was, and still is, very important to me” (Kuhlmann, 2005, p. 219).

Two *Walden Two*-inspired communities that have focused deliberately on following the science of behavior rather than simply emulating practices in the novel are Comunidad Los Horcones and Sunflower House. At Comunidad Los Horcones, members not only apply behavioral principles to group practices, but they also experiment on their own behavior in an effort to improve their individual and collective lives (see Chance, 1999). Children start recording their own behavior around age 3 or 4, and all members keep clipboards with their own behavioral self-management records (Comunidad Los Horcones, 2002).

Juan Robinson-Bustamante, son of one of the founders of Comunidad Los Horcones, expressed the community's philosophy in a 1999 interview: “From our point of view, the fact that a community is inspired by the novel does not make it a ‘Walden Two.’ In our opinion, a Walden Two community is one in which the members are strongly committed to applying the science of behavior to design a new and better society. We consider Los Horcones a Walden Two community because we do this to shape a humanistic society based on cooperation,

mutual help, nonviolence, and ecological sustainability” (Altus, 1999, p. 56). He adds: “I’m as optimistic as my parents about the advantages of using the science of behavior to design a better culture... To me, living in a Walden Two culture is a lifetime project. I am strongly convinced, as grandfather Skinner was, that only by applying the science of behavior to cultural design, as we do it in Los Horcones, can we live happy and productive lives” (p. 57).

At Sunflower House, a Walden Two-inspired student housing cooperative at the University of Kansas, the first couple of years were filled with problems. The work was not shared equitably, the building was not adequately cleaned or maintained, meals were not prepared on a predictable schedule, and many of the rooms remained vacant. If equity and well-being are primary constituents of social sustainability as some theorists have suggested (e.g., Barron & Gauntlett, 2002; Magis & Shinn, 2009), the co-op did not appear to be socially sustainable.

To address this problem, members, with the help of behavioral psychology professor Keith Miller at the University of Kansas, designed a work-sharing system for completing the domestic work that followed behavior-analytic principles. First, they defined each job with a checklist of tasks. Then, they created a labor-credit system where members would earn credits for completing these jobs and the credits would be exchangeable for a reduction in rent. They created a job for an inspector who would check each night to see if work had been completed. This job was rotated regularly among members. Credits were given only if the inspector judged that the work was at least 90% complete. After creating the work-sharing system, they ran an experiment to test its efficacy (Feallock & Miller, 1976). They measured the percentage of cleaning that was done each day under different conditions. First, for several weeks, the work-sharing system was put into place. During this condition, a mean of 96% of the cleaning tasks were completed each day. During the next condition, the labor-credits were removed. The percentage of tasks completed dropped precipitously, hitting a low of 33%. Members were very dissatisfied living under these conditions and labor credits were reinstated “at the demand of members after 18 days” (Feallock & Miller, 1976, p. 280). After credits were reinstated, the percentage of cleaning tasks completed jumped to 93% over the next five-and-a-half weeks.

Sunflower House has, in the spirit of *Walden Two*, taken an experimental approach to the design of many of its practices over the years. In addition to empirically analyzing the labor-credit system, studies have been conducted on its management system (Johnson, Welsh, Miller, & Altus, 1991), meeting system (Welsh, Johnson, Miller, Merrill, & Altus, 1989; Welsh, Miller, & Altus, 1994), system of educating new members (Altus, Welsh, Miller, & Merrill, 1993), and worker recognition system (Altus, Welsh, & Miller, 1991). In addition, data on member turn-over has been collected and analyzed to try to understand why members leave the co-op (Couch, Miller, Johnson, & Welsh, 1986) and a system was developed for making systematic changes so that the co-op could operate effectively without outside support from Professor Miller and his research team (Merrill, 1984).

But the goal has not been to become wedded to these systems. Rather, the goal has been to teach and maintain an experimental approach to solving problems so that decisions are made based on data rather than emotions or politics. The work-sharing system, for example, has

evolved considerably over the years. Members eventually decided that they preferred a self-report system over an inspection system. They were able to maintain satisfactory levels of participation in housework with this system. Data collected 37 years after the co-op opened showed that around 90% of cleaning tasks were still being completed each night with the self-inspection system (Miller, Welsh, Altus, & Zwicker, 2006). What mattered about the work-sharing system was not that specific components were being used, but that the members were taking an experimental approach to analyzing the impact of their decisions and that the system was meeting their needs. Frazier's words are echoed in their approach: "The actual achievement is beside the point. The main thing is, we encourage our people to view every habit and custom with an eye to possible improvement. A constantly experimental attitude toward everything – that's all we need" (Skinner, 1948, p. 25).

This is not to say that practices didn't matter to Skinner. On the contrary, Skinner stressed the importance of regular, systematic evaluation of community practices by residents in *Walden Two* to ensure their social acceptability (Altus & Morris, 2008). Sunflower House has done the same (e.g., Feallock & Miller, 1976; Johnson, Welsh, Miller & Altus, 1991). Systems were not studied solely by observing objective behavior. Measurement of member satisfaction was conducted through surveys and votes to determine the social significance of the goals, the social appropriateness of the methods, and the social importance of the results – a practice that has become standard in applied behavior analysis since the late 1970s (Wolf, 1978). Doing so helps to promote democratic participation in the design and evaluation of community practices and helps to increase the chances that these practices promote equity and human well-being – conditions that are primary constituents of social sustainability (Magis & Shinn, 2009).

In conclusion, Skinner's contribution to the intentional community movement is not any of the specific practices described in *Walden Two* but, rather, the process for achieving them – i.e., adopting an experimental approach to design a society that is socially sustainable – in other words, a society that is equitable, democratic, and promotes the well-being of its members (see Altus & Morris, 2009). While a community's practices will always be situated in a specific historical context, a naturalistic study of behavior suggests principles that are enduring (Altus & Morris, 2008). Skinner expresses this theme succinctly in his 1979 autobiography: "Regard no practice as immutable. Change and be ready to change again. Accept no eternal verity. Experiment" (Skinner, 1979, p. 346).

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Academia's Hidden Curriculum: Ecovillages as Campuses for Sustainability Education¹

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/uNX4Q_3cHUK

Abstract

From appropriate technologies to holistic health, from sustainable agriculture to group facilitation, ecovillages are integrating solutions within human-scale communities and creating new cultures and "stories" in which we can live well – and lightly. While not utopias, they are developing real-world models of sustainable development that make ideal 'campuses' where students can learn about sustainability while striving to live it.

This talk will start with an introduction to the growing ecovillage movement, the work of Living Routes, an educational non-profit which partners with UMass-Amherst to offer study abroad programmes based in ecovillages worldwide. The remainder of the talk will explore why academia needs to utilise and help develop ecovillages as campuses for sustainability education and unpack the following nine comparisons between the educational contexts and 'hidden curricula' of academia and ecovillages:

1. Conservative vs. Experimental
2. Hierarchical vs. Heterarchical
3. Competitive vs. Cooperative
4. Fragmented vs. Transdisciplinary
5. Proximal vs. Intimate
6. Theoretical vs. Applied
7. Secular vs. Spiritual
8. Large Footprint vs. Small Footprint
9. Problem Orientation vs. Solution Orientation

I will conclude by offering four reasons why ecovillages also need to reach out to academia in order to fully manifest their educational potentials.

We are living in a unique time, not just in human history, but also in *planetary* history. From the recent war in Iraq to the war on rainforests, from global markets to global warming – it is clear we *must* learn to live in ways that honor all life.

Yet we continue to dig deeper and faster into the earth's resources. Best estimates are that humans exceeded the earth's biocapacity sometime in the late 1970s and our global ecological footprint is now over one and a half planets (WWF 2010: 7). How is this even possible, given

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we only have one planet? We are living off the stored capital, or “ghost acreage,” of fossil fuels that have accumulated over millions of years.

Unfortunately, our cupboard is getting barer every day. Many experts agree we are close to global peak oil and the difficulty and cost of extraction will continue to rise in coming years (e.g., Heinberg 2004). In addition, a century of burning oil, coal, and natural gas has dramatically increased atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and is ushering in a period of rapid climate destabilization. Given our current (and increasing!) dependence on oil, these twin issues will likely have dramatic impacts on all sectors of society.

Donella Meadows, systems analyst and Dartmouth professor, once wrote that “[t]here is nothing so powerful as an exponential whose time has come” (1991: 53). Whether we are talking about species extinction, population growth, social inequity, deforestation, or acidification of the oceans, we are now witnessing unsustainable exponential growth (or decline) in a whole host of domains. Yet, as a species, humans seem evolutionarily unequipped to understand exponentials and unprepared to address the global issues facing us. For the most part, business is going on as usual: governments – at best – are thinking ahead only to the next election, and, as Oberlin professor David Orr has said, “[w]e are still educating the young as if there were no planetary emergency” (1994: 27).

We need to pause, take a step back, and consider how we can educate for a post-carrying capacity world – for a post-peak oil world. We need to move beyond the industrial era and train leaders who know how to *heal* the earth and build durable economies and sustainable communities. But how? Einstein once said that “[w]e can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” So we also need to move beyond the ivory towers of traditional academia and create campuses and pedagogies that are better able to educate for a sustainable future. This is where ecovillages come in.

What is an ecovillage? The classic definition was offered by Robert Gilman in 1991 when he wrote “an ecovillage is a human-scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future” (1991: 10). Unfortunately, using a strict interpretation of this definition, one could argue there are *zero* ecovillages on the planet. So, practically, the term is better thought of as a *process* than as a product. Ecovillages are communities striving to achieve this ideal, rather than completed utopias.

Ecovillages are living laboratories – “beta test centers” – for a more sustainable future. In order to survive, humans need to both reduce the ecological impacts of the resource rich and raise the quality of life among the resource poor. Julian Agyeman refers to these thresholds as humanity’s “profligacy ceiling” (aka “carrying capacity”) and “dignity floor” (Monani 2009: 60).

Ecovillages have essentially staked out a middle ground between the resource rich and resource poor and are experimenting with how we can live high quality lifestyles with low ecological impacts. How can we live well and lightly – together? This is likely the most important question of the twenty-first century.

Seen in this way, it becomes clear there are actually two directions toward the ecovillage model. Top-down ecovillages are typically intentionally created communities within developed, resource-rich countries in which members are exploring how they can reduce their footprints while maintaining high-quality lifestyles. Bottom-up ecovillages are more often indigenous, traditional communities attempting to develop in ways that preserve their local culture and resources. Both directions are valid and necessary and both are creating models of sustainable, human-scale communities.

Living Laboratories for a Sustainable Future

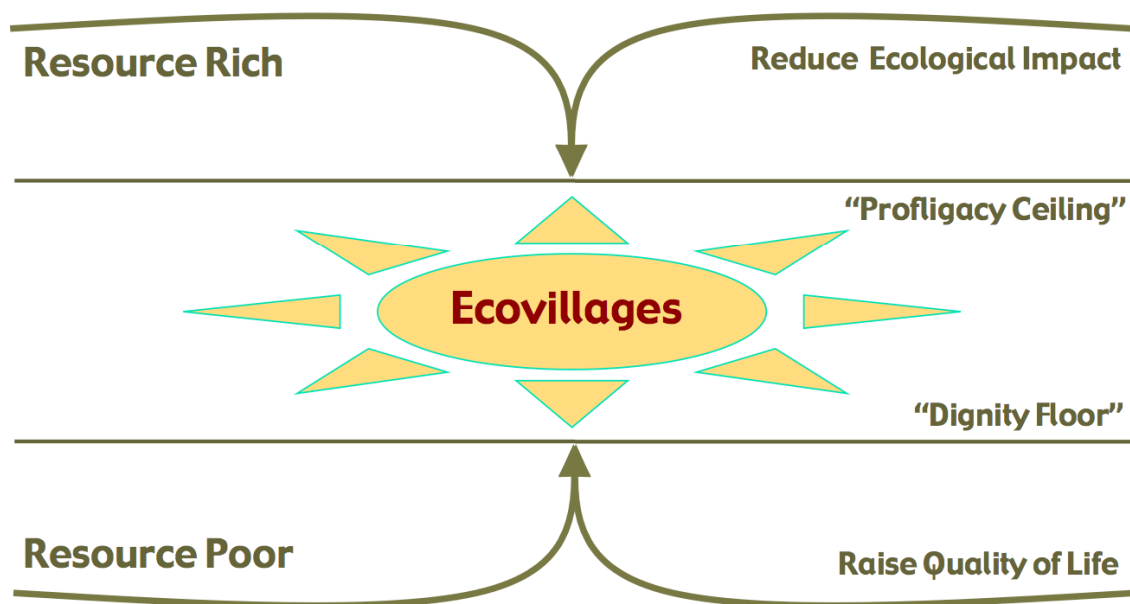


Figure 1: Living Laboratories for a Sustainable Future. Design by Daniel Greenberg.

According to the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), an international network of sustainable communities and initiatives, over five hundred ecovillages are currently developing and refining ecological and social tools, such as community-scale renewable energy systems, ecological design, organic farming, holistic health and nutrition, consensus decision making, local economies, and mindfulness practices (GEN n.d.). It is important to note, however, that ecovillages are generally not on the cutting edge of sustainable development. There are few initiatives being attempted in ecovillages that are not – *on their own* – being done better elsewhere. One can easily find more successful organic farms, renewable energy facilities, green buildings, and even decision-making processes outside of ecovillages. What makes ecovillages unique and relevant is how they are putting these pieces together into wholes that are greater than the sum of their parts. They are, in effect, creating new cultures, new “stories” about what it means to live interdependently with each other and our planet.

Recognizing this core work, ecovillages are increasingly being viewed as “campuses” where students can learn about sustainability while actually living it. Many ecovillages have already had considerable successes creating educational centers and ongoing partnerships with government agencies, research centers, and schools of higher learning.

Living Routes is one such organization helping to build bridges between ecovillages and academia by creating college-level programs based in ecovillages around the world (Living Routes n.d.). Founded in 1999, Living Routes is an educational nonprofit that partners with the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to offer fall and spring semester programs in India (Auroville), Scotland (Findhorn), Costa Rica (Monteverde) and Israel (Kibbutz Lotan); three week winter term programs in Mexico (Huehucoyotl) and India (Auroville); and summer programs in Peru (Sachamama), Brazil (Ecocentro IPEC), Australia (Crystal Waters), and the United States (Sirius Community, Massachusetts). To date, over fifteen hundred students from over four hundred colleges and universities have completed a Living Routes program. These alumni have become more inspired and knowledgeable about topics such as permaculture, group dynamics, ecological design, worldview development, peace and social justice, and sustainable community development.

Living Routes works closely with another nongovernmental organization (NGO) called Gaia Education, which was created by a group of approximately twenty international ecovillage educators and GEN advocates known as the Global Ecovillage Educators for a Sustainable Earth (GEESE; Gaia Education n.d.). This group convened five times from 1998 to 2008 for the purpose of developing an ecovillage design curriculum, which attempts to offer an exhaustive and mutually exclusive outline of twenty design modules held within four dimensions of social, economic, ecological, and spiritual development. The curriculum is now available online in seven languages and has been deemed an official contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) 2005–2014. Gaia Education was formally launched by the GEESE in 2005 and has since supported the delivery of over sixty intensive training programs on five continents, providing a core understanding of ecovillage design. While not specifically focused on academia, Gaia Education has partnered with a number of universities, and most of Living Routes' semester programs have been certified as ecovillage design education courses.

Why Academia Needs Ecovillages

To understand why ecovillages offer ideal campuses for sustainability education, it is helpful to unpack the “hidden curriculum” embedded within higher education as compared to ecovillages. Anyone who has been in school understands that students learn not only through their school's official curricula, but also implicitly through their day-to-day participation in that institution. For example, regardless of the topic being taught, students at most schools are expected to listen attentively to the instructor, be organized, and follow instructions. These unspoken yet powerful expectations are often referred to as an organization's “hidden curriculum.”

While higher education is changing, its tacit structure, “story,” or metanarrative is still more aligned with producing industrial-age specialists rather than the neorenaissance generalists and practitioners that are required if we are to slow down and reverse this juggernaut of destruction we have become. As David Orr so eloquently put it, “The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their

places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world more habitable and humane. And these qualities have little to do with success as our culture defined it” (1994: 12).

How do we educate for this? And where? The following are ten examples of how academia and ecovillages offer contrasting hidden curricula that either hinder or support the development of the new type of leader that Orr describes. While these examples may seem provocative, and notable exceptions exist within each, it is hoped that the gestalt will ring true.

1. Conventional versus Experimental

Universities tend to be burdened by cumbersome bureaucracies that resist change. In fact, the basic structure of universities has not significantly evolved since the Middle Ages. This structure was effective during an industrial economy when a college degree conveyed a scarce premium and a bureaucratic “command and control” mindset was a market advantage, but less so in more networked and service-oriented societies that need real-world leaders and problem solvers who are not wedded to convention. When even the simple task of creating departmental letterhead can take months of meetings, review sessions, and calls for bids, one begins to understand why a deep structural reorientation toward sustainability is often a painfully slow process in many colleges and universities.

Ecovillages are physical and social “laboratories,” experimenting with new technologies, social structures, and worldviews. They tend to have a trial and error mentality and are quick to adjust to changing conditions, challenges, and opportunities. At Sirius Community, a small ecovillage in western Massachusetts, a 1,000-square-foot greenhouse was built onto the community center using timber frame construction. This may seem odd as the thick timbers block sunlight, but these were the resources and skills available at that time, and after a few experiments and calculations, it was discovered they could build an effective (and beautiful!) greenhouse using this method. In addition, they used (literally) tons of stones held together by chicken wire as thermal mass and a low-watt fan that continually circulates air through the stones, thus heating them in the day and drawing heat out at night. This greenhouse provides about one-third of the heating needs for the community center. The best part is that above the stones is a dining space, which is particularly appreciated in the colder months of New England. Living Routes now runs a green building course at Sirius, and students benefit from these experiments by learning how to design and construct a greenhouse using timber frame, cob, and strawbale. The future is not fixed, and nimble minds will be required to effectively respond to coming challenges and opportunities.

2. Hierarchical versus Heterarchical

The power structure of universities is very top-down, with power emanating from the president down to the provosts, deans, faculty – and, at the bottom rung, students. While students often call for change, administrators know they can often wait out the activists, as they generally graduate in a year or two. This hierarchical system also supports the idea of a fixed curriculum that must be determined, filtered, and disseminated by the academic elite. The hidden agenda is one of “power over” and submission to authority, which is consistent with the conventional attitude that humans are meant to dominate and subdue nature.

In ecovillages, there is a wide diversity of relationships, and members tend to interact on a more or less equal footing. Living Routes programs try to model the ancient Indian *gurukula* model of education, where the teachers live and learn alongside students. In addition to leading seminars, research projects, and field visits, faculty, students, and community members might find themselves cooking a meal, playing sports, music, or a game, or planting trees or harvesting vegetables together. Living Routes also works with authentic and peer-based assessments, where students are given training and opportunities to reflect on and critique their own and each other's portfolios of work. These interdependent sets of relationships are more bottom-up than top-down; they help members get to know each other on many levels and better understand the complexity of living systems.

3. *Competitive versus Cooperative*

Universities are competitive on all levels – among students for the best grades; among faculty for grants, tenure, and recognition; and among schools for prestige and endowments. Rather than encouraging individuals to follow their inner guidance, this system reinforces extrinsic motivations and a scarcity mentality that often leads to a tragedy of the commons, as individuals race to “get theirs” first. Ironically, this can even be seen within the field of sustainability, as departments occasionally compete for the right to claim the term as their own and be seen as the “green” department on campus.

While competition certainly exists within ecovillages, the norm tends toward cooperation, with members assuming as much responsibility as they are willing to handle. The success of individuals is typically viewed as inherently tied to the success of the community as a whole. Students in Living Routes programs often collaborate on group projects and rotate responsibilities such as health monitor, meal prep/cleanup, and community meeting facilitator. This support of each other naturally leads to a sense of competency, confidence, and agency in the world.

In a well-functioning ecovillage, or any other form of community, for that matter, one almost gets a sense of being an ant in an anthill, going about one's business, but also serving a greater whole. A question that begs to be asked is, does a single ant – *can* a single ant – have any awareness of the intelligence that exists on the level of the anthill? Similarly, is it possible there is a collective consciousness present within communities – indeed the planet – that we, as individuals, are only dimly aware of? If so, then perhaps our highest goal is to become the best “ants” we can by finding that place where, as Frederick Buechner said, “our deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet” (1973: 95). Communities of purpose, such as ecovillages, aim to support this level of cooperation with each other and the planet.

4. *Fragmented Knowledge versus Transdisciplinary Knowledge*

Universities have responded to the exponentially increasing rate of knowledge generation with ever more subspecializations within disciplines. Knowledge is continually stockpiled within discreet containers that are functionally isolated from each other. This is no small problem when, for example, atmospheric chemists, oceanographers, biologists, and ecologists are not sharing information about climate change. Turf wars and lack of incentives for faculty to collaborate across departments further reinforce this segregation.

This “silo” mentality is the core reason why “sustainability” is often such a challenging issue within academia. It’s not a question of importance. The question is, “Where do we put *that*?” A common response is to add content within existing majors, to help students learn about sustainability through their own disciplinary lens. While valuable, in some ways this strategy is reminiscent of Ptolemy adding epicycles onto planetary orbits in an effort to maintain his geocentric model of the heavens. We now need a Copernican, heliocentric revolution within academia that recognizes that these are not fringe issues. Cornell president David Skorton nailed it when he said that “[s]ustainability is no longer an elective” (Underwood 2007: 60). Unfortunately, as Robert Costanza, director of the Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices at Portland State University, has observed, “universities in the U.S. have not yet risen to this challenge and many sustainability initiatives have dissolved into fragmented, tinkering reforms that fail to address the underlying workings of our complex socio-ecological systems” (n.d.: 1).

Ecovillages recognize that real-life issues rarely exist within the boundaries of disciplines. For example, the decision to put up a windmill requires knowledge within the fields of appropriate technology, engineering, regional and community planning, governance, and even sociology and anthropology. Creating an organic farm crosses disciplines of agriculture, nutrition, philosophy and ethics, business, education, and communications, among others. Living Routes courses such as sustainable community development, applied sustainability, ecological design, leadership for social change, and worldview development can often be cross-listed in multiple departments, because they do not fit neatly within academia’s disciplinary structure. While able to train specialists, ecovillages are uniquely positioned and equipped to train much-needed *generalists* who possess a “lateral” rigor across disciplines to complement a more traditional “vertical” rigor within disciplines.

5. Academic Community versus Living Community

Many students claim that gaining a sense of community is a primary motivation to attend college. While this is certainly available and valuable, it is also true that most relationships in academia are compartmentalized within age groups and mediated by specific, rather narrow roles, such as student/teacher, fellow researcher, classmate, etc. It is amazing that for between twelve and twenty years of our lives, we are grouped among peers typically not more than six months older or younger than we are, but this is seldom true outside of school.

If a sense of community is a goal, ecovillages may be even more fulfilling, as they offer a “living” community where members have a wide range of relationships, hold a common vision, and are committed to each other’s long-term growth and development. Growing up in “mainstream” settings, youth rarely have relationships with adults who aren’t their parents, friends’ parents, or teachers. In communities and ecovillages, however, such relationships are the norm. And while children and young adults may occasionally long for the anonymity available in a large school or city, they also benefit from having early, frequent, and enduring relationships with other children and adults that are often quite diverse in age and personality.

A sense of being in community with all life is fundamental to sustainable lifestyles. And it is not a new invention. Many anthropologists have pointed out that most of human history has

taken place in small social groups. Robin Dunbar, a British evolutionary biologist, claimed that humans have a built-in cognitive limit of being able to maintain stable relationships with only approximately 150 individuals (Gladwell 2002: 179). It seems humans are hard-wired to “belong” within human-scale communities in which they can both know and be known by others. Tragically, many people in modern, “developed” countries have lost this sense of community so thoroughly that their closest acquaintances are characters on TV shows. This lack of connection is likely at the source of our unsustainable and often violent cultures.

Immersing students within ecovillages allows them to rekindle this sense of community and interdependence. Furthermore, small class sizes, the use of authentic assessment methods, and the creation of “learning communities” within these “living communities” in which students have opportunities to deeply reflect on and share about their experiences further support their learning and development. The sense of belonging that Living Routes students experience within ecovillages both awakens and fulfills a need that many did not even know they had. And once nourished, this sense of belonging tends to expand to include ever-broader communities – both human and nonhuman.

6. Theoretical versus Applied

University professors are often critiqued as “armchair theoreticians” who like to be in their heads and maintain a detached, abstract perspective of the world. From this point of view, knowledge appears decontextualized and passive and best transmitted through didactic lectures, dry textbooks, and multiple-choice exams. As a consequence, academia often creates knowledge, but rarely wisdom.

There is a belief within academia that it is possible to keep one’s own values, opinions, and feelings separate from the object of study, but this is itself more fiction than fact. No research is value-free. The problems we choose to explore, how we observe, extract, and order information in the natural world, and how we present what we find are all reflections of who we are. As Rollo May put it, “We don’t study nature, we investigate the investigator’s relationship to nature” (May 1975). This is not meant to imply that science is a futile endeavor – only that the researcher is an integral part of the scientific equation.

This is true on at least two counts. First, the hard sciences have led the way in proving that whatever is observed is affected simply through the act of being observed. Second, whatever is observed is then filtered through the particular lens of the observer. Such filters are likely even more pervasive and profound in the social sciences, where our “objective” measures are so easily colored by our cultural contexts and personal experiences. As Gregory Bateson once wrote, “The probe we stick into human material always has another end which sticks into us” (cited in Haley 1972: 26).

While fundamental science and research is invaluable, it is very easy within academia to get lost down a rabbit hole, pursuing topics that are so esoteric and abstract that it becomes hard to imagine ever making a difference in the “real” world. Today’s emerging young leaders face a changing and challenging world in which technological advances are outpacing our collective wisdom and maturity. Of course we need to train scientists. But also, and perhaps more importantly, we need to train community builders – applied scientists – with the

knowledge, skills, and commitment to create sustainable models of living and working together in peaceful and productive ways.

Ecovillages, in order to survive and prosper, must focus on practical knowledge and wisdom that can be applied in real-world settings. Theory is in the service of “what works,” rather than the other way around. Ecovillages are inherently participatory, discovery-based, and experiential, and ecovillage educators tend to value multiple intelligences and individualized learning. Living Routes students have helped regenerate the tropical dry evergreen forest in Tamil Nadu, India, and the Caledonian Forest of northern Scotland; they assisted in creating the first written fairtrade contract in Peru; they have built recycling centers in Mexico and the United States using local natural materials; and they have designed permaculture gardens for schools in Brazil. And it is clear that they learned more real-world knowledge and skills through these internships and service learning opportunities than in even the best seminars.

7. Secular versus Spiritual

Not only are most universities rather hands-off, most also separate our heads from our hearts – and typically only care about our heads. Consequently, they tend to support a Newtonian/Cartesian view of the universe as a soulless machine to be manipulated and controlled by humans. From physics to chemistry, from biology to psychology, if there is anything the past century has taught us, it’s that John Muir was right: “When we try to pick anything out by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe” (1911: 110). It is time we recognize that humanity is inextricably embedded within and dependent upon a web of relationships that we are not “in control” of. This paradigm of the world as “other” inherently discounts ecological relations and provided the basic rationale behind the industrial revolution. It is unlikely we could do what we do to the planet or other humans if we recognized our fundamental interdependence with each other and our environment.

While some are explicitly religious, most ecovillages embrace a larger, more eclectic spiritual container in which members are supported to be “in process” and engaged with large life questions such as: What do I believe? How did I come to believe it? And, perhaps most importantly, what are my options? At the very center of Auroville ecovillage’s fourteensquare-kilometer expanse in India sits the Matrimandir, a large meditation sanctuary. This is not a place for religion or dogma. It is not even a place for groups. It is a place for individuals to go and be silent and seek inner peace and wisdom. Various types of yoga, meditation, and silent practices are common features of many ecovillages that Living Routes students participate in.

Where might this all lead? Thich Nhat Hanh, the Buddhist monk, teacher, and author, once proposed that the next enlightened being might not come in the form of an individual, but come rather in the form of a community (2008). What would an enlightened community look like? Could it be an ecovillage?

8. Large Footprint versus Small Footprint

Universities are beginning to recognize, measure, and reduce their footprints. For example, the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) developed by the

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is helping colleges and universities gauge their progress toward sustainability (AASHE n.d.). For the most part, however, universities are still incredibly resource-intensive institutions and not very attuned to their impact on their region or the world. Recycling and compact fluorescents are recent phenomena on many campuses, and few campuses even attempt to buy local and organic food.

As previously noted (and hopefully implied by the word itself), ecovillages strive to live well, yet lightly. Through sharing resources, conscious consumption, local food production, and renewable energy systems, ecovillages offer worthy models of low-impact lifestyles. For example, a study conducted in 2006 by the Sustainable Development Research Centre reported that the Findhorn Foundation, perhaps the world's premier ecovillage, with around 450 residents on the north coast of Scotland, has an average ecological footprint of 2.71 hectares per person (Tinsley and George 2006). According to a Findhorn press release, this is "the lowest ecological footprint recorded for any permanent community ever measured in the industrialized world ... The average resident in the community consumes just one half of the resources and generates one half of the waste of the average citizen of the UK" (Dawson 2007: 1). While certainly a noble achievement, it should also be noted that the 2.71 hectares appropriated per Findhorn resident is just about the average global per capita footprint of 2.70 hectares, and quite a bit above the 1.8 hectares per capita of available world biocapacity (WWF 2010: 34). While ecovillages are advancing toward Gilman's definition of "integrating harmlessly into the natural world," they still have a long way to go.

Many assume ecovillages aspire to self-sufficiency; however, this is rarely accurate. Most look to their bioregion or watershed as the unit of land and culture that should strive to become more self-reliant. Ecovillages often serve as regional catalysts for reducing ecological impacts by supporting local initiatives such as organic agriculture and local distribution networks so resources do not have to be shipped great distances.

If, as many experts predict, we are on the downslope of global oil – and energy – production, we can also reasonably predict this will lead to widespread re-localization efforts due to rising transportation costs. Communities will increasingly need to concentrate more on local production of food, energy, and goods, as well as the development of local governance, currencies, and cooperative cultures. Sound familiar? There is already a quickly growing global movement of Transition Towns, which are "community-led response[s] to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and ... economic contraction" (Transition Network n.d.). Essentially, Transition Initiatives are striving to create ecovillages in existing communities!

9. Cross-Cultural versus Cultural Immersion

Most campuses enroll students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Yet typically these lifestyles and traditions are subsumed under the melting pot of the academic culture, with few opportunities for cultural expression or exchange. How many students have taken *years* of language courses, but can barely negotiate buying fruit in a local marketplace using that native tongue? How many universities have cultural literacy requirements but few opportunities to

experience other lifestyles firsthand? How many campus-based cultural festivals are superficial or, worse, caricatures of the customs they are meant to promote?

Perhaps because ecovillages are “living” rather than “academic” communities, there tend to be fuller expressions of ecovillage members’ cultural backgrounds through festivals, rituals, language, and food. Even further, in traditional, indigenous ecovillages in the Global South, students have the opportunity to truly immerse themselves in vivid and fullfeatured cultures that both honor the past and are consciously reaching toward the future. For example, during Living Routes’ programs in Senegal, US and Senegalese students joined together to explore sustainable community development within indigenous ecovillages. Through crosscultural exchange and understanding, students can experiment with and adopt wholly new ways of being and thinking.

10. Problem Oriented versus Solution Focused

Last, but far from least, universities tend to primarily focus on dissecting and understanding “problems.” Introductory courses on environmental studies, conservation, and natural resources are often litanies of negative human impacts on species, communities, and ecosystems. It is of course essential that we continue to study and better understand the serious local and global issues facing us, but there comes a point when students “get it” and then need to either *do* something about it or risk becoming overwhelmed with negativity and despair. Worse, some students may even go numb emotionally in an unconscious effort to defend their hearts against the seemingly insurmountable social and environmental problems facing humanity and the earth.

Ecovillages give students powerful opportunities to be a part of the solution and learn how they can make a positive difference in the world. Using energy generated from local windmills or photovoltaics, eating organic vegetables harvested from the land, living in homes built from local, natural materials, participating in communal celebrations, economies, and decision-making processes; these are all chapters within larger stories that ecovillages are writing about how we can live well and lightly together. They are far from complete utopias, but after spending time living and learning in an ecovillage, students can never again say, “It can’t be done,” because they see people wholly devoted to right livelihood and creating a sustainable future. It then comes back to students to ask themselves, “What am *I* going to do? How can *I* make a difference in my own life and in my own community?”

Why Ecovillages Need Academia

The above comparisons may seem like an argument to *run*, not walk, away from traditional academia, but that is not the point. Yes, ecovillages offer integrated campuses in which to teach about sustainable community development, but we also *absolutely* need to be teaching about sustainability within all college and university settings. The point is that while doing so, we need to recognize and make explicit to our students that what academia “says” and what it “does” are often quite different matters. Otherwise, we risk students experiencing significant cognitive dissonance that can lead to confusion, anger, or, even worse, apathy.

Just as academia is well served by reaching out to ecovillages as model campuses, ecovillages also need to reach out more to colleges and universities. There are at least four important reasons to build bridges and work together. First, academia is changing. With an increasing internationalization of the curriculum, interest in community partnerships, and recognition of the need for ecological design and interdisciplinary research, universities are beginning to see ecovillages as natural collaborators. For example, the previously mentioned AASHE is a wonderful source for knowledge, inspiration, and networking around these issues within academia. In addition, technological changes such as the internet and distance learning are creating new opportunities for collaboration, such as through an online course on ecovillage design offered in collaboration between Gaia Education and the Open University of Catalonia (Torres 2008).

Second, universities are not going away anytime soon. In the United States, higher education is approximately a \$360 billion per year business (Eagan, Kenlry, and Schott 2008). This is not counting the *trillions* of dollars invested in facilities and resources. And universities are where the students are! Over 70 percent of high school graduates in the United States go directly to college (BLS 2010). Nationwide, more than 17 million students are currently enrolled (IES 2006). Worldwide, there are over 150 million college students, and this number continues to rise (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley 2009).

Third, ecovillages need help in order to reach their highest potential. As advanced as ecovillages are in terms of providing campuses for sustainability education, they are still in *kindergarten* in terms of what is truly needed to educate professionals capable of building the institutions and systems required for a sustainable world to be possible. While programs offered through Living Routes and individual ecovillages are a good start, ecovillages need to further collaborate with academia to create “communiversities” where students can spend *years* in ecovillages and other related organizations to gain the background and skills needed to enter the workplace as professionals in fields as diverse as appropriate technology, habitat restoration, sustainable agriculture, group facilitation, holistic health, ecological design, and green building.

The fourth and most important reason for ecovillages to reach out to academia is that college-age students represent a powerful leverage point in the world’s “Great Turning toward a more Ecological Age,” as Joanna Macy refers to it (1998: 17). Many talk about members of the college population as “emerging adults” in that they are mature enough to ask the big questions yet also open to radical alternatives and new life directions. Emerging adults are key to the dissemination of emerging paradigms, and the world desperately needs leaders who are able to think – and act – outside of the box. Building bridges between ecovillages and academia is literally building bridges to a more sustainable future.

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Sharing, Conviviality and Degrowth

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/IsHpjwxdwC8>

Abstract

This paper opens with a familiar critique of the way urban economic growth is narrowly defined and routinely celebrated without reference to what constitutes human happiness and enduring ecological wellbeing. Rather than to suggest ‘limits’ (on energy consumption, for instance), this paper proceeds to call for a radical shift in thinking (about how, why and where people live), to emphasise ways of ‘living together’ (intentionally sharing space and time) as a path out of capitalism. The first part of the paper outlines existing theories of sustainable degrowth. The second part conceptualises sharing and conviviality as the ‘soft’ infrastructures (including proximity and trust) necessary to challenge a work-centred, debt-driven privatised model of social reproduction. This conceptual framework is applied in the remainder of the paper to ethnographic research representing selected intentional communities in South East Australia.

Introduction

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex; it takes a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction. (attributed to Albert Einstein.)

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts, can be counted. (attributed to Albert Einstein.)

We are tired of bigness – big corporations, big factories, big universities, big cities, big government. We want to handle our own affairs in face-to-face encounter with people we know. We want to make our own decisions on matters important to us – our work, our mating, our children, our education, our health. For many of us this means setting up functioning, loving families – extended families, with members approaching a ‘tribe’ or primary group, not just parents and two children as an isolated unit’ (Loomis 1973).

In an urban world, with a population that exceeds 7 billion, questions concerning future housing and infrastructure tend to be answered by a default mantra that ‘big is best’ in the shape of high-density, high-tech cities; even to suggest that major hubs of growth are ‘too big to fail’. This assumed ‘economy of scale’ corresponds with a crude association of human development with overall wealth (Gross Domestic Product or GDP). Promoting GDP growth naturalises a system of household livelihood based on continuous, life-long, maximum employment and a ruthless ‘earn to spend’ cycle that stifles local livelihood practices. This is exacerbated by Western notions of family privacy and the symbolic status of the home as a store of wealth. As Nigel Barley (1989: 51) observes, a Toradjen rice farmer would find Western attitudes to dwelling totally impractical and incomprehensible since, having bought a house, through the loan of an extraordinary sum of money, the purchaser then spends more time elsewhere, trying to earn the money for repayment. An enduring legacy of the 1970s counter-cultural epoch indicated in the quote from Loomis (1973) above, is the post-material

yearning to “downsize possessions, share ownership of land and tools, grow healthy food, share meals, make decisions collaboratively, and create the kind of culture (that cares for children and older people)” (Christian 2003: xviii).

Growth based on consumer debt emphasises conspicuous consumption, waste and the rapid obsolescence of everyday gadgets and appliances. This paradigm also promotes individual rather than collective service provision, including private transport and housing and all the private possessions and storage facilities associated with this lifestyle. Just think of the average residential street and add up the number of garden tools, ladders, leisure equipment and bulky household items that are stored and maintained for infrequent use. This reality of excess stuff results not only from privatised consumption but a lack of interaction between neighbours; a lack of familiarity and trust and, crucially, the absence of mechanisms suited to shared ownership and use: hyper-privatisation reflects a failure to value and invest in the soft infrastructure of civic life (Carroll 2008, Jarvis 2011, 563). While some enlightened architects, planners and politicians recognise many of the negative attendants to unconstrained growth (notably sprawl), the solutions offered are largely cosmetic (transit oriented village-like neighbourhoods) or costly (high tech fantasies) (Weizsäcker et al. 1998: 250).

Arguably, the isolation and excess of individual dwelling can be addressed in transitions to collaborative housing, intentional community, and the localisation of the economy. When Andre Gorz challenges us to: “maximize the number of paths out of capitalism’ in the sense of a biblical Exodus which invents its own ‘promised lands’ as it goes along” (Gorz 1999: 79), this clearly resonates with the pioneers of intentional community who imagine a way of living together against the grain of the planned city.

This paper challenges what is an unhelpful dichotomy between ‘sustainable cities’ and ‘back to the land’ approaches to the current crisis in housing. One aim is to reveal the ‘soft’ infrastructures of sharing and conviviality neglected by conventional growth models. Discussion turns to the case of Australia, where McGuirk and Argent (2011) identify a distinctive pattern of growth, notably a concentration of population in coastal areas and hub city-regions, where urban intentional communities (such as cohousing) are rare in comparison with rural communes and small-town social movements around voluntary simplicity.

The paper is structured in three parts. The first part outlines existing theories of sustainable degrowth. The second part introduces twin concepts of sharing and conviviality and the ‘soft’ infrastructures (including proximity and trust) necessary to challenge a work-centred, debt-driven privatised model of social reproduction. In the final part, this conceptual framework is applied to ethnographic research conducted in selected intentional communities in South East Australia.

Theorising degrowth

There are four discrete contributions to theorising sustainable degrowth (usefully reviewed by Sekulova et al. 2013). First is the ethnodevelopment view that countries from the global south should not be compelled (by the legacy of colonial power) to follow the dominant model of development of the global north. Second is the ‘political ecology/ecological economics’ argument that defends the rights and intrinsic value of an integrated ecosystem, taking a

holistic approach to resource depletion and waste disposal. Third is the social justice argument that degrowth is necessary to break the link observed in neoliberal ‘consumer citizenship’ between democracy and short-term economic interests. This shifts the focus of the ethical dilemma away from individual ‘choice’ (in the supermarket) to emphasise Aristotelian virtues of ‘being’ ethical (rather than doing ethical acts) as a life-long project (Schneider et al. 2010, Marchese et al. 2002). Thus, a fourth contribution to degrowth theory traces this counter-cultural dissatisfaction with the dominant market economy alongside the social movements of down-shifting, voluntary simplicity and intentional community.

According to Joan Tronto (2009) what has been lost with individualism, or consumer citizenship, is a sense of collective responsibility and shared endeavour. For this reason we need to consider the social and material landscape of social interaction. This takes us to the significance of civil society- to the question how we recognise and value a greater range of ‘soft’ as well as ‘hard’ infrastructures including moral conceptions of social wellbeing and environmental stewardship.

Some sense of this recalibration is evident in local efforts to establish and promote the distinctiveness of place – such as with slow food, slow cities and post material social movements in which people express their desire to live more simply. This leads Mattheiu Lietaert (2010) to argue that cohousing is naturally allied to sustainable degrowth because it establishes a holistic environment for learning about and enacting the behaviour changes necessary to reduce consumption and wage-based production.

Crucial to the politics of sustainable de-growth is the goal of sufficiency, rather than unlimited growth, and an understanding that standards of living can be maintained and improved through greater resource efficiency coupled with changes in culture and behaviour. For example, Anders Hayden (1999: 3) contrasts the degrowth path of ‘sufficiency’ with the growth path of ‘efficiency’. Sufficiency focuses on ‘how much is enough’ and adopts a holistic approach that considers, for example, work-time reduction initiatives combined with localized food production and shared alternatives to private property. By contrast, efficiency applies a technological fix to the most damaging environmental impacts of human activity, without abandoning the pursuit of unlimited economic growth (Hayden 1999: 3). Distinctions between sufficiency and efficiency can be illustrated with respect to travel behaviour. Efficiency promotes more energy-efficient automobiles, such as the hybrid car. This reduces the amount of energy consumer per vehicle kilometre travelled, without tackling associated problems of car dependence such as congestion, parking, land-use, and the cultural factors stimulating increased trips and distances travelled. Sufficiency takes a holistic approach to the space-time-use relations of dwelling and mobility. Arguably, it is possible to combine efficiency and sufficiency but the latter is neglected in conventional green economics such as Factor Four (the new report of the Club of Rome) (Weizsäcker et al. 1998).

Degrowth theorists also support an extension of human relations instead of market relations in order to deepen democracy. This resonates with theories of ‘diverse economic practices’ and ‘solidarity economies’ (Reintjas 2003), but with particular emphasis on reducing wage-work to free up time for family, culture and community (Hayden 1999). Nørgård (2013) claims that “reducing paid work time and consumption can help take us toward mitigating environmental

degradation while at the same time improving people's general well-being" (Nørgård 2013: 62). This is not about increasing leisure time. In Western society, leisure is to a large extent bound up with a political project of creating more work through ever-increasing consumption (Nørgård 2013: 64). Rather, the expectation is to return some forms of production to non-monetary 'amateur' (or volunteer) economies. Denying the imperative of growth is not synonymous with turning back the clock to a fictitious pre-industrial, communal past of "beer and skittles – when medical care was poor and life was short" (Nørgård 2013: 63). Instead, sustainable degrowth is about constructing an alternative sustainable future: it is about recognising that the activities of work (craftsmanship and collective endeavour) can provide a source of satisfaction, whether for the production of an output (in a system largely controlled by others), or as an activity that is intrinsically satisfying in itself. Thus, distinctions are made between unplanned degrowth (such as the current crisis in Southern Europe) and a voluntary, smooth and equitable transition to a re-localising of lower (low-carbon) production and consumption (Schneider et al. 2010)

Sharing and conviviality

Three types of sharing are crucial as the foundations of a future transition to sustainable degrowth: physical sharing (space, time etc.) by co-presence; purposeful sharing (collective governance and written goals); and instrumental sharing (reciprocal actions of care and assistance) (Ahrentzen (1996). Each type of sharing involves a complex blend of social and material geographies and a temporal shift – for example from 'fast capitalism' to a movement of 'slow housing' (Steele 2012; see also Jarvis 2011 on social and public time). A similarly complex blend of geographies is implicated in social interaction and what is conceived here as 'conviviality'. A comprehensive review of the literature suggests that there are five discrete approaches to theorising conviviality in relation to shared space and social interaction.

Co-presence

The first approach emphasises a real geography of proximity and embodiment. It begins with reference to Ferdinand Tonnies and his correlation of 'the social' with intimate small-scale community 'gemeinschaft'. Richard Sennett (2012, 37) reminds us that, as a contemporary of Tonnies, George Simmel expanded on this scale of social inclusion and belonging, recognising the need for novelty and innovation. Simmel pointed to the universal occurrence in human development of a sociable pleasure in the physical company (co-presence) of others (what he calls *Geselligkeit*) that could be further deepened through social awareness where this entails a questioning of taken for granted values. This suggests that conviviality is not just *any* social interaction in a bar or café, but a meaningful and challenging dialogue that offers potential for personal growth.

To Simmel, the virtue of sociality is that it can run deep, beyond fleeting impressions (Sennett 2012, 38). This distinguishes the co-present 'habituated affiliation' of intentional community with mainstream village-like housing schemes. As one of my interviewees observed:

(for instance) a lawnmower could do an entire street and someone who is a handy person could be given fifty bucks a year to maintain it...and you haven't got enough money to buy a washing machine and you only use a washing machine three times a week so why not share with your neighbour (Pip, TAS 2)

Not only does the physical design of high density urban development rarely offer the human-scale of clustering required for routine social interaction but there are cultural and institutional barriers to conviviality as an expression of meaningful dialogue and the development of trusting relations necessary for cooperation in shared endeavour.

Community 'glue'

Sharing is socially and spatially constructed and influenced to a considerable extent by the presence or absence of ownership. If we consider a simple classification of the most common forms of shared domestic space we need first to differentiate between dwelling arrangements that are 'community led' (intentional, mutual), those indicating involuntary sharing (lodging, hostels, prisons), and those representing commercially managed common-use facilities. To put this into perspective, although 40% of Australians live in housing with some form of shared facilities or open space, such as with condominium ownership, fewer than 5% engage in any meaningful reciprocity in terms of collective food production, shared meals, collective self-governance, car-pools, or shared social support.

Diane Leafe Christian (2003) explains this distinction in cultures of sharing in terms of what it takes to build and sustain conviviality- what she refers to as community 'glue'. For Christian (2003: 33), "forming a community is not really about your property purchase and development goals, but about – a kind of group well-being in which you've connected with each other emotionally and know each other deeply". She identifies a wide variety of bonding activities, experiences, rituals and dialogue with a strong sense of community: the common denominators are high levels of connection (working together, empathising) and commitment (to an agreed purpose). The most frequently cited manifestation of community glue includes preparing food and eating meals together – whether at the end of a work-day or as an act of celebration. In cohousing, it is widely understood that shared meals that neighbours prepare and eat together in a common house are the 'glue' that binds and endows meaning to community relations (Meltzer 2005). Increasing the frequency of shared meals is suggested to strengthen the community glue in large part because 'breaking bread together' routinely develops interpersonal competence.

Localised production

Ivan Illich (1973, 1978) uses the term conviviality in opposition to industrial productivity and market dependence. He laments the destruction of "innumerable sets of infrastructures in which people coped, played, ate, made friends" (Illich 1978: 27). In his seminal book *Tools for Conviviality*, he proposes greater recognition of the useful activities of 'unemployment' by which people express and satisfy their needs outside wage-employment. He observes that in neo-liberal market economies:

It becomes impossible to seek, even to imagine, unemployment as a condition for autonomous, useful work. The infrastructure of society is so arranged that only the job gives access to the tools of production, and this monopoly of commodity production over the generation of use-values turns even more stringent as the state takes over. Housework, handicrafts, subsistence agriculture, radical technology, learning exchanges and the like are degraded into activities for the idle, the unproductive, the very poor, or the very rich (Illich 1978: 84).

Today, we are witnessing growing awareness of the significant contribution of diverse social enterprises (including community supported agriculture and community land trusts). Illich's (1973, 1978) thesis resonates with transitional theory and appropriate technology, emphasising ethical values in cooperative institutions that guarantee each member access to autonomy and creativity – without depriving another member of the same entitlement.

Civic solidarity

This approach considers the political and cultural force of conviviality as a measure and means of generating civic solidarity beyond the nation-state (Stevenson 2006: 487). It makes the connection between two territorial scales; public space as a site of social interaction, and values and identities forged in civil society through the politics of national and regional citizenship. Mercer and Page (2010) work with the idea of conviviality as a progressive politics of place. They use this to explore the morality of convivial relations in the African diaspora. Similarly, Paul Gilroy (2004, 2006: 27) observes an unruly, convivial mode of interaction in which a degree of differentiation combines with a large measure of recognition, as witnessed in the carnival crowd of popular sporting events. For Gilroy (2006: 40), recognising conviviality does not signal the absence of racism (or social isolation). Instead, it conveys the idea that alongside its institutional and interpersonal dynamics, the means of racism's overcoming have also evolved. It has been further suggested that a new (convivial) politics of place can be witnessed in relationally constituted communities of attachment and resistance, constructed through public debate over particular political programmes or visions of the 'good life' (Amin 2004: 41).

Human-nature interdependency

In the final approach, conviviality is conceived as a non-linear and non-hierarchical way of viewing human-nature interdependency. This is evident within political ecology in the way cultural geographers in particular have begun to reconfigure material and symbolic human-nonhuman entanglements as a politics of conviviality: the aim is to seek a more honest engagement with the ecological co-fabrication of humans with 'more than human' wildlife and the 'messy business of *living together*' (italics in the original) (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006).

This ecological intimacy can be fraught with unexpected and unintended consequences as Power (2005) uncovers in her study of human-nature relations in suburban gardens in northern Sydney. Questioning the extent to which 'nature' can ever be positioned as a passive object of human control and containment (Power 2005: 39) resonates with the motivations expressed by counter-cultural groups and individuals who reject mainstream housing options in favour of 'green' homes constructed out of salvaged and recycled materials; together with those who pull down the fences separating private homes as an alternative to colonising values of containment and control (Pickerill and Maxey 2009; Jarvis 2011). The benefit of thinking through this interdependency is that it opens up the discussion to a more-than-human politics of knowledge which reclaims from 'experts' and 'commerce' the diverse ecological vernaculars that are always present but usually undervalued in everyday practices of home-making (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006:134).

Methodology

The remainder of the paper draws on first hand ethnographic observations, oral histories and conversational interviews from 16 intentional communities (ICs) in south-east Australia (Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland) (12 actually existing, 4 in the process of forming). The sample of ICs shown in overview in **Table 1** were selected on the basis of opportunities to explore the two discrete counter-cultural periods (1970s, since 1990s) through examples of both metropolitan and non-metropolitan eco-village and cohousing development. The comparative dimension serves an expansive purpose, intended to generate a fuller, richer account of culturally nuanced circuits of learning (being and doing), for similar groups in different places. This contrasts with comparative studies which seek to weigh up strengths and limitations in order to highlight a particular model of ‘success’ (see MacFarlane 2010 for similar reasoning).

Visits ranged from one to eight days spent living with each community. Interviews and conversations were recorded and written up only on the basis of informed consent. None of the ICs or the individual interviewees is identified by name. Pseudonyms are attributed to individual interviewees for convenience of identification but no attempt is made to re-name communities (there are so many ICs with such a variety of names that there would be a high risk of inventing a community that already exists). Instead, composite techniques are used to incorporate real situations, quotations and chronology to generalise motives and attributes while masking individual and IC identity. This qualitative method serves a rhetorical purpose allowing not only the communication of findings but also critical thinking and raising awareness of the complexity of the problem in question. This provides an effective means of preserving the rights to anonymity of individual communities in situations where identifying exact locations might cause unwanted attention from ‘community tourists’.

The Northern Rivers ‘Rainbow’ Region

Three of the ICs identified in Table 1 (NSW1, NSW2, NSW) provide selected insights from the Northern Rivers case study area which is located in the north-eastern region of New South Wales. Particular attention is paid to this region because it reflects the legacy of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival of 1973, when hundreds of festival goers remained in the area, inspired to “create ecologically oriented community life through sharing resources and making low cost housing a reality for those on a limited income” (Beth, NSW1). Concentrated IC development in the 1970s coincided with a deep restructuring of the dairy industry and this meant it was possible for groups of young people with very limited assets to collectively purchase cheap farmland. Hundreds of intentional communities sprang up, most with 9-12 homes (tents and geodesic domes before more permanent DIY structures were built out of recycled, low-impact materials and technologies). At first, these forming communities illegally occupied land which was zoned for one dwelling per 40 hectare (100 acres) property. One of the largest MOs to arise from the Aquarius Festival involved the collective purchase (as a cooperative) of one thousand acres of forest and farmland. Today that community accommodates 250 adults and children in 100 small-holdings (Lorna, NSW 1).

'Counter-cultural' Period of origin	Location/ description	Intentional Communities (anonymised by location code)	Subject data collection
1970s	Multiple Occupancy (MO) 'eco-villages' in the vicinity of Nimbin, New South Wales, and in rural Victoria; non-metropolitan counter-culture	<u>4 established communities:</u> NSW 1 (occupied since 1973) 85 unit (clusters) NSW 2 (occupied since 1973) 15 unit NSW 3 (occupied since 1976) 25 unit VIC 1 (occupied since 1975) 33 unit (cluster)	10 in-depth interviews, 4 conversational interviews, 2 expert interviews, 1 focus group, WWOOF participation
1990s /2000	Eco-villages and Cohousing in Queensland, New South Wales (Sydney and Blue Mountains) and Tasmania; non-metropolitan and metropolitan	<u>8 established communities</u> QLD 1 (occupied since 2008) 8 unit CLT cohousing QLD 2 (occupied since 1989) 85 unit (clusters) TAS 1 (1989 to occupation in 2000) 11 unit cohousing TAS 2 (1989 to occupation in 2001) 15 unit MELB 1 (occupied since 1993) 30 unit cohousing MELB 2 (occupied in 2012) 28 unity cohousing SYD 1 (occupied in 2013) 14 unit cohousing <u>4 forming communities</u> SYD 2 (meeting since 2009, site identified) SYD 3 (meeting since 1997, under construction) BM 1 (meeting since 2010) BM 2 (meeting since 2010)	15 in-depth interviews, 7 conversational interviews, 2 expert interviews, 2 focus groups, coop festival participation

Table 1: Intentional Community (IC) sampling frame and research data collection

The Festival itself (modelled on the US Woodstock Music and Art Festival) attracted 5000 Australian students to the small dairy town of Nimbin for an iconic experimental community experience (Hannan 2002). The organisers later published their intentions in 'The May Manifesto' as being to foster a 'concentration of art and artists', 'self-sufficiency' on a 'tribal basis', 'living in harmony with the natural environment', 'participation rather than consumer entertainment' and 'rediscovering the meaning that agricultural fairs once had for the country people' (Dunstan 1975: 20). A monthly Channon Craft Market began in 1976, associated with the growing concentration of ICs. This large (250 stall) not-for-profit market continues to cultivate diverse livelihood practices for local residents (motto, 'make it, bake it, grow it'), and every month, on rotation, a local community charity has the opportunity to fundraise from a community kitchen at the market venue. The tools of localised craft production (indigenous technology, principles of permaculture and sweat equity) are clearly evident in this context whereby 'dirt-cheap expanded hand-built houses, organic gardens and craft industries...replaced full-time life-long employment and long mortgages with material and service costs of less than \$2,000 per household/dwelling' (cited in Irvine 2003, 68: 1, Illich 1973).

In addition to the physical work of constructing community facilities and individual homes, communities developed sophisticated non-hierarchical 'tribal' structures of self-governance and a Pan-Community Council which successfully campaigned in 1980 to legalise Multiple Occupancies (there were a total of 251 MOs in NSW in 1994) (Irvine 2003). While the Festival is generally held to have symbolically launched the rainbow region, several illegal MOs had been previously created on the North Coast near Byron Bay. It was resident opposition to these coastal communities that drove the Aquarius festival organisers to look for a less controversial rural site (Fisher 2002: 2). What distinguishes the Rainbow Region ICs and arguably contributes to their continuing success is that they are clustered in a concentrated area and this not only promotes mutual aid but also helps cultivate a regional culture which is sympathetic to experimentation and this contrasts with the hostility and opposition most ICs experience from local residents in the mainstream (Irvine 2003: 63).

Origins and openings: living together as a path out of capitalism

Intentional communities invariably take shape socially and materially over many years through a complex patchwork of individual effort and collective endeavour. This lengthy process of formation gives rise to a unique history and stock of memories, lessons and experience. Over time this history comes to be represented in new ways both with the loss and addition of new members. The composite stories used to illustrate these intentions below with respect to discrete periods of IC development (1970s and 1990s) piece together fragments of biographical detail from individual interviews and weave these into archive material for the relevant periods of IC development.

Vignette 1: Rainbow Communities from the 1970s

The stories that Lorna, Carly and Beth tell of making their home in post-Aquarius MOs are repeated throughout the oral history data:

What brought me here was great dissatisfaction with mainstream Australia: half way through my last year at University I visited (the IC) and I just knew I was coming back (and) I decided just not to get a job like everyone else was doing and just to come away, find something else. (Beth)

I was drawn to the idea of what a great place this was for children to grow up. I was in a fairly common situation in that I was a part-time single parent and the Dad lived elsewhere in the community...so the children were able to come back and forth between our places. We got on really well so we continued to co-parent. I wanted to be here and I wasn't earning anything; I was on a single parents' pension and I wanted to be with my children and I could eek out my pension to buy a stick of wood a week or whatever and gradually begin to build this house. It's a hard way to do it but I wanted to do it myself and it was the best way I could afford. I was living in a tent for about seven years with my kids. It was a stand up tent with a raised floor and it had another tarp over the top of it and a carpet and it was very comfortable. Later I earned a small income from part-time employment. It needs to be part time to allow time for all the labour intensive work that it takes to live here in community. (Lorna)

I came here 24 years ago with a fella after we'd been travelling for about three years overseas. I was born in the suburbs in Sydney and then lived in the outer suburbs of outer Melbourne and it was beautiful but I didn't want to live that life where you are held down to a mortgage and a big draw here was to buy a share for 23,000 dollars, you know, with a little hut on it, so we could cultivate a good place to live as our own part of a community. The first couple of years when the community was formed and sort of divided up into 12, the way it was, we had to meet the community first before we moved on and I really liked it because everyone was my age and a lot of places if you went to the pub there was no real conversation, just token conversations, but here as a social thing you get very close to people. Even today (after couples have split up) there is a very strong community and it's like we're growing old together. (Carly)

Origin stories illustrate the powerful role that cheap land and low-cost self-built (collectively owned) housing play in supporting an alternative lifestyle for people living on a low income who would otherwise remain locked out of conventional housing. As Carly ruefully observes, "another word for alternative is poor". Yet she acknowledges that she chose freedom over the conditions that would have trapped her and others from undertaking useful (non-commercial) work at the margins of the mainstream, struggling with debt and wage-based employment.

Continuities and change

The three communities where Beth, Lorna and Carly live today have each evolved and changed since these experiments in shared living began nearly 40 years ago. Yet they retain a powerful connection to their original core intentions both through the structures of consensus-governance and in shared stories and collective memory. Lorna explains that when she arrived in 1983, ten years after the community began, the needs and ethos of the community had already evolved through the function of people building their own homes. This way stories about the first person who decided to “put up a tent away from communal living spaces” marked the first in a series of life-stage transitions of the group. A fine balance was struck between autonomy (“the place grew like Topsy, everyone fashioning their own structures”) and collective governance (“we had to meet the community – all serious issues go before the tribe”). The community continues to evolve in the sense that “the need to get away from formal society has changed (and) our age (profile) has changed” (Lorna). At the same time, these origin stories show that deeply held intentions concerning a convivial politics (social interaction and a less work-centred culture of home-making) can be both individual and collective; a personal communion and a shared memory. For example, the combined intentions to ‘not get a job’ and to build a simple, affordable, ‘good place to live’ are co-constituted with freedom to engage in the (unpaid) collective politics of social change and participation in reciprocity and mutual aid. Changes to welfare have eroded this freedom alongside capacity to participate in the work of community. As Lorna remarks, ‘these days, because of the (loss of) social security.....there’s far less energy for community and volunteer work. It used to be when you wanted a house built all your friends would come and help; people had time rather than money; but these days, more than 50% of the adults would be out of the valley working most days’ (Lorna).

This general decline in the social infrastructures that support the social, participatory dimensions of conviviality coincide with increased ecological orientation. The picture of an incremental shift from social to ecological emphasis is complicated by origin stories which reveal enduring attachments to the land (Fisher 2007). This is illustrated in the Terania protest movement which drew on volunteers from ICs across the region to protect a valuable site of old growth forests. Tony explains how the ICs galvanised public opinion to secure the site as a national park: “there was a CB radio network and a camp up on the hill...so anytime they could see there was going to be logging activity, loggers coming in at midnight, an announcement went out over the CB radio and people would be up there in large number”. He goes on to acknowledge that the local political ecology has evolved into a more ‘inward looking’ culture of stewardship (Metcalf 1984: 67).

Vignette 2: Post-material ICs since the 1990s

A ‘new’ counter-cultural epoch of intentional community development can be traced since the 1990s. On the one hand this has been instigated by young people seeking ‘green’ affordable housing. On the other hand, older people (the baby boom generation) also play a significant part by seeking active, autonomous transitions beyond retirement. Thus an upsurge in newly forming intentional communities is increasingly evident in metropolitan areas (as cohousing), as well as in newcomers seeking to join established ICs. This ‘new’ generation of IC differs

from the 1970s movement in a number of significant respects. The absence of a symbolic historical ‘moment’ and evidence of a wider age profile contributes to diverse motivations and a more fragmented ‘movement’. Moreover, there are significant barriers to group formation and project development are arguably for newly forming ICs today. This is reflected in the long time it takes for groups to secure a site and the more ‘pragmatic’ less ‘radical’ pursuit of legal structures that provide shared space but not necessarily collective ownership. The degree of shared space, mutual aid and scope for ‘radical’ challenge to conventional living arrangements is determined (and hugely restricted) by funding constraints, legal and financial barriers and a conservative planning regime.

The ICs to have emerged in NSW, QLD and Victoria in the 1990s do not easily fit the 1970s ‘back-to-the-land’ profile: they lack the geographic concentration of the early ‘illegal’ MOs. In the absence of the equivalent of the lobbying power of the Pan Communities Council, there is a tendency for new eco-villages and cohousing to be constructed as isolated ‘demonstration’ projects. On the one hand, increased barriers to development have imposed a culture of pragmatism and professionalism in the new ICs and this corresponds with a tendency to be more outward looking; many are engaged in lobbying and educational outreach activities. On the other hand, the absence of an umbrella organisation and identity (what Illich 1978 refers to as a commune of communes) limits the scope of the new ICs to engage in a genuinely radical real property transformation. Emphasis on educating and engaging with the mainstream contrasts with the tendency of 1970s ICs to ‘divert’ marginal spaces to alternatives outside the mainstream.

A typical origin story or ‘opening’ among the new generation of ICs is for a core of ‘burning souls’ to organise regular meetings and ‘visioning’ activities, often over several years, building a community of shared intention, as a dislocated congregation, long before the group manage to secure funding to co-locate within a particular site. The following composite of representative issues and motivations (Gary, Pam and Sunil) are drawn from two focus groups of prospective IC residents:

“It’s not a very Australian thing to do to form a club or collective. Everyone wants to build their own property separately”. “People also get caught up with labels and fear of change”. “There is a powerful cultural notion that if you don’t have your own home there’s something un-Australian about you, that you’re financially dead-beat. With this demonstration project we’re saying, look, you want a sense of living in a village, being part of a community, well, you can have that as well as a private space you can shut your door on when you wish”. “We want to really accelerate the transition to alternative housing in a mainstream situation. Those who are interested in (social change), in alternative housing options, are community groups, baby-boomers who like to pull-together, young singles and low and median income families who find themselves squeezed out of owner occupation and private rental markets”. “There were huge levels of interest in (this metropolitan IC) at the Sustainable Living Festival in Melbourne; 400 enquiries for an innovative cohousing scheme that will involve 18 households combining individual low-income dwelling space with communal space and amenities and collective self-governance” (see also Waitt 2008).

While the origin stories are very similar across the ‘new’ groups, the character and trajectory of each group varies quite markedly around an evident tension between ‘more environmental’ and ‘more social’ intentions. Complicating this tension are the prohibitive land and

construction costs associated with conventional housing and the growing frustration driving young people in particular to seek collective alternatives to private single family dwellings. The challenge to create affordable, adaptable housing confronts both eco-villages and cohousing but the obstacles and responses differ. Mia, Ulrike and Pete expand on this point.

I'm frustrated with rental options and I'm looking at the options of doing something different. I'm a single mum and I'm sort of over living in capitalist society and I'm looking for an alternative way of living. I can't afford to buy a home anywhere – not on my own – and it appeals to me to live in a bigger community because I grew up in a big extended family of 3 generations in which everyone supported each other and it's a good system which we don't have in our society anymore and so I'm interested to change that.

Older members of the group (Grace and Maud) also voice frustrations with the failure of conventional housing to offer scope for flexibility, adaptability and dignity through the stage of active to frail old age.

Looking at where we live now, across the road from us is a retirement village and I just think, no way, it used to be a paddock with horses and now it's all concrete with no trees. And I just look at it and think; no that is definitely not what would nourish my being. Maybe (what I'm looking for) is not (where I live now) but it's definitely not that! So I'm looking for an alternative (Grace).

I moved from Victoria to make the change from suburban life to one that was closer to nature and more self-sufficient. I love that concept of community and (living in a multi-generational community) has its advantages in that we help each other in different ways. But it's not an easy path to follow because it requires a lot of loving understanding (Maud).

The wider age profile of newly forming ICs suggests widespread disaffection with mainstream housing and urban planning alongside evidence of deepening generational divisions with respect to the assets and resources needed to gain a foothold in conventional property. This again complicates and splinters the motivations and methods of creating radical alternatives to conventional dwelling. Many wish to pursue a pragmatic, action-oriented approach to “make that happen” or to be “one of these people who might keep dipping their toe in and visiting”. Others, are concerned that without a strong spiritual or ecological intentional ethos: “there's this lazy tendency for (ICs) to head back to sort of suburban urbanism or to just become rural suburbs (to lose) that intentionality, that goal and drive to be alternative”.

This observation is echoed in personal reflections published in *Communities* concerning “social harmony, environmental responsibility, and economic independence” as the guiding sense of collective purpose in the community of Bundagen, NSW. These observations reinforce the findings above that show how networks of reciprocity and support intersect with a crucial sense of purpose. More particularly, it is essential for the surviving IC to build and maintain not only a material environment of shared space but also the social infrastructures of conviviality including social time and community glue.

In Bundagen, social capital, that glue created by the founders and taken up by the next generation, is a fragile concoction and often appears to be held in dynamic tension by internal issues. (In decision making) the proposing, listening, speaking, negotiating, and acceptance of proposals helps develop social capital among the active members of the group. Beyond this, groups in the intense early stages of development, especially when their children take part in the process, however passively, can create a kind of inherited

asset. How this next generation makes use of their legacy is a continuing and unfolding story (Ledgar 2002: 53)

In Bundagen, rituals have emerged over time as a way for community members to make sense of continuity and change, as founding members depart and new members alter the group dynamic. Establishing a space and social fabric of deep engagement resonates with what Kittay (1999) and others have determined as ‘love, care and solidarity’; that these are activities and attitudes that involve ‘work’ as well as availability – as articulated by Ivan Illich (1973) as the tools of conviviality.

Summary and concluding remarks

There is rich evidence of sharing, conviviality and the foundations of sustainable degrowth across the ICs observed. The findings reveal that it takes numerous forms of capital (time, wealth, health, and support networks) to reduce the ‘lock-in’ effects of wage employment, mortgage/debt and a convenience drive lifestyle. From the research it is clear that smaller communities are less able to counter these ‘lock-in’ effects and thus to complete the transition to sustainable degrowth in isolation. Overall, intentional communities appear better able to reduce consumption than to challenge global wage-based production. Communities that cooperate with similarly motivated groups to function as a ‘commune of communes’ (Illich, 1973) demonstrate greater resilience with respect to local livelihood strategies.

From critical scrutiny of ‘growth’ we learn that *social economies of sharing* (which are underdeveloped in competitive ‘economies of scale’) thrive on a highly-localised scale of familiarity and trust. The findings demonstrate the role of co-presence whereby distinctions are made between decentralised ‘clusters’ of dwelling, such as found in collectivised multiple occupation- and dispersed rural settlement. Elsewhere it has been argued that cultures of sharing are influenced to a considerable extent by the presence or absence of a real property market. This is observed in the Northern Rivers case study where we find most promising scope for affordable, sustainable housing in collaborative networks of clustered dwelling based on cooperative ownership combined with do-it-yourself construction. Moreover, it is apparent that the ‘tools of conviviality’ are seriously undermined in rural intentional communities where there has been a tendency for dwelling dispersal. Even where the land is sub-divided into notional ‘clusters’ or hamlets, unless this is held together through permaculture collaboration then community mutuality descends into individual self-reliance and the gains from self-reliant dwelling are diminished.

Since the 1990s, the settlement strategy adopted by the Byron-Shire and Lismore Councils reflects the desire to avoid earlier patterns of scattered rural settlement through a hierarchy of clustering. Many of the small towns in this region have to a varying extent attracted upwardly mobile in-migration (15% of dwellings in NSW are detached houses occupied by one person, of which 35% comprise detached house with 4 bedrooms or more) (ABS 2006). The Byron SLA witnessed a population increase of 30% between 1986 and 1991 and a further 28% from 1991-1996 (Burnley and Murphy 2004; 122). This population ‘turnaround’ was dubbed the ‘sea change’. As the price of land and property rose in the vicinity of the coastal small towns the locus of urban out-migration shifted to inland accessible small towns in a movement dubbed the ‘tree change’. While a rift is apparent today between MOs which formed in the

1970s and those forming in the early 1990s in a climate of high and rising land costs, a small-town culture of community participation in local decision-making distinguishes the social economies of sharing apparent in pan community cooperation from isolated rural communities elsewhere. Arguably there is a key role for the smaller town in mediating this relationship, as part of multi-focal development. For example, the principles of permaculture reduce conflict between land for housing and land for food production. Finally, there are potential gains from closer collaboration between clustered IC living and social movements (small, slow, simple; Transition Towns). There is much we can potentially learn from networks of intentional community but case must be taken: the social scale relations of sharing are complex, fragile and difficult to contrive. In many cases the appropriate role for local government is to get out of the way of newly forming intentional communities to ensure successful organic growth.

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From Me to We to Thee: Ecovillages and the transition to integral community

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Abstract

Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that, rather than emerging as an individual, the next Buddha will take the form of a community. Our efforts in this direction, he adds, may be the most important thing we can do for the wellbeing of humanity and the earth. Such a being would be, in essence, an integral community, integrating every dimension of human experience – the heights and depths, the inner and outer life, and the awakened individuality and collectivity – and placing these at the service of the whole.

Whether or not the Buddhist monk's prognosis is correct, there is strong evidence that the two master agendas of our time, the inner transformation of consciousness and the outer exigencies of justice and sustainability, are converging. Within intentional communities, this convergence takes the form of a heightened sensitivity to the integration of the inner and the outer – the psychological and social, the economic and ecological, the material and spiritual dimensions of life – in service to the larger whole.

This paper draws upon the author's extensive travels to ecovillages around the world, including in-depth interviews with 150 ecovillage residents, to present evidence for such a shift. Using an integral developmental model, she frames these emerging collective experiments as adaptive responses to an unfolding global mega-crisis. At this historic juncture, however, just as the petroleum-based era of hyper-individualism seems to be reaching the end of its tether, 'integral community' should be understood more as an aspiration than a tangible reality.

“The next Buddha may take the form of a community. ~ Thich Nhat Hanh

Homo sapiens is an ecological oddity: the species with the capacity of separating itself from the whole – but only, as it turns out, in our own minds. In 1800, when the human population was one billion and most Europeans never reached their thirtieth birthday, the story of humanity's separation from – and domination of – nature made sense. Today, the dawning Anthropocene signals “the end of nature.” Likewise, the so-called individual, utterly reliant upon a vast web of external ecosystems and internal microbial networks, is exposed as a biological fiction. The ironic denouement of modernity's story of separation, along with its ontological basis in individualism and its epistemological basis in scientific reductionism, is that we are not separate. Yet the unfolding crisis carries within itself the seeds of a new story. If *independence* and *mastery* were the bywords of the old story, *interdependence* and *cooperation* are the bywords of the new. The tapestry of reality turns out to be more

intricately interwoven – in a word, more whole – than the mechanistic mind could ever have imagined. Depending upon the perceived pace of cultural transformation relative to biospheric unraveling, this is either good news or bad. Taking the long view while remaining cognizant of the dangers, integral ecology embraces this pivotal moment as an opportunity for personal and cultural transformation, for “the end of nature” spells the end of a highly circumscribed construction of humanity.

Across their diversity, integral ecologies share three vital commitments which, in turn, raise three vital questions. First, they highlight the subjective and inter-subjective dimensions of so-called environmental problems. In a world where materialistic explanations and solutions prevail, as is the case in both mainstream and sustainability circles, this commitment represents a radical point of departure. On this view, the untenable situation of exponential human population growth coupled with even more rapid exponential growth in consumption on a finite planet poses a crisis of meaning as much as a biophysical crisis. In response, a foundational question of identity emerges: who am I and who are we in relation to this? Second, by framing the current morass in evolutionary terms, integral ecologies call us to new modalities of human beingness. The question, then, becomes, “What are the psychological, cultural and institutional prerequisites to these new ways of being?” Third, integral ecologies share a commitment to integrality, *i.e.*, to the wholeness of creation, both physically and metaphysically. Accepting this foundational unity opens up the possibility that we can consciously access the evolutionary intelligence that animates the cosmos for the simple reason that it also animates ourselves. The third question, then, is, “How do we find our place within this complex wholeness?”

As helpful as integral theory is as a prod to our thinking, the vital questions it raises must ultimately be answered with our lives, for it is our ways of living that are unraveling the very fabric of life. If the integral vision remains conceptual, leaving our social and material lives untouched, then it hardly qualifies as integral. If we take to heart the three vital questions implicit in integral ecologies, we find ourselves confronting the perennial human question: “How, then, shall we live?” This is the question that pressed upon me after nearly twenty years of teaching international environmental politics, watching global conditions go from bad to worse. As much as I enjoyed theorizing about planetary interdependence, it hardly constitutes an integral practice. I wanted to find people who were devising ways of living that could work for the long haul, and were doing this work individually and collectively as well as inwardly and outwardly. In other words, I set out looking for people who were practicing integral ecology – whether or not they used this language.

My search led me on a global journey to ecovillages, intentional communities at the leading edge of sustainable living. Ecovillages are springing up in tropical, temperate, and desert regions; among the rich and the very poor; in cities and the countryside. Their residents espouse beliefs rooted in each of the world’s major religions, paganism, and atheism, as well a spectrum of moral codes and spiritual worldviews. Over the course of nine months, I lived in

fourteen communities and did in-depth interviews with 140 ecovillagers. The smallest, Los Angeles Ecovillage, had 40 members; the largest, Auroville,¹ had a population of about 2,000.

Across this diversity, share the following basic perceptions about the world:

- The web of life is sacred, and humanity is an integral part of that web.
- Global environmental trends are approaching a crisis point.
- Positive change will come primarily from the bottom up.
- Community is an adventure in relational living – ecologically, socially, and psychologically.

As a consequence of these beliefs, ecovillagers are unusually sensitive to the consequences of their actions, both near and far, and unusually open to sharing. If I had to choose one word to express the essence of ecovillage culture, it would be *sharing*.

Because ecovillages share material resources, their per capita consumption and very often their incomes are far lower than their home country averages. Yet their cultural life exudes a sense of abundance, not poverty, rooted in the intangible kinds of sharing – knowledge and skills, joys and sorrows, births and deaths – that are the essence of community. In ecovillages, therefore, social sustainability is the foundation for ecological sustainability. Yet this is also what makes ecovillage living so challenging.

Sustainability, the overarching commitment of ecovillages, is sometimes depicted as a stool with three legs: ecology, economy, and society. While this metaphor is helpful in moving beyond a narrow biophysical understanding, the three-legged stool (or triple bottom line, as it is sometimes called) sidesteps the inner dimension of sustainability, the perennial questions of meaning and cosmological belonging that have informed human existence for ages. Leaving aside the age-old debate between materialism and idealism, few would dispute the fact that our inner lives – our beliefs, feelings, and narratives – strongly condition our actions, policies, and technologies. Perhaps the most significant contribution of integral ecologies is that they highlight this crucial (albeit elusive) subjective and inter-subjective dimension of sustainability: *consciousness*.

Consequently, I prefer to represent sustainability as a house with four windows: **ecology, economics, community, and consciousness – E2C2**. Each window faces a different direction, thereby presenting a distinctive angle while also disclosing a view of the other three windows. In their holistic approach to sustainability, ecovillages are particularly comprehensible through the fourfold lens of E2C2, but it can illuminate any human endeavor. Like cultures everywhere, ecovillages tends to highlight certain elements of E2C2 over others, yet each window affords an essential view into each community.

Given the strongly integrative nature of ecovillage life, E2C2 takes on a dynamic, self-reinforcing character, with the light from one window reflecting and refracting the light from the others. Sieben Linden's ecological focus, for instance, is primary, but members' differences about what that means for everyday life prompted them to take up various

¹ Auroville calls itself a universal township, not an ecovillage. Because of its renowned sustainability practices and its membership in the Global Ecovillage Network, I included it in my study. Auroville's grounding in an integral spiritual practice also makes it a likely candidate as a nascent integral community.

psychological and spiritual practices. And for self-identified spiritual communities like Findhorn, Damanhur and Auroville, consciousness is the very soil from which their ecological, social, and economic practices grow. These communities are of particular interest here because they aspire to be integral communities. In other words, they aspire to the realization and embodiment of a subjective and inter-subjective state of oneness.

E2C2 resembles integral theory's four-quadrant model, but it is distinct. Like the AQAL model, E2C2 recognizes the objective and subjective dimensions and the individual and collective dimensions of life. E2 (ecology and economics) depicts the right-hand quadrants – the objective worlds of ecosystems and material exchange, while C2 (community and consciousness) aligns with the left-hand quadrants of collective and individual interiorities. Yet as the image of a four-windowed house suggests, E2C2 is not so easily disaggregated – particularly in practical matters. In approaching the question, “How shall we live?” E2C2 gives us more traction than the AQAL map because, rather than four abstractions, it offers four substantive windows through which to ask and answer the question. In a very practical way, we can ask how a community lives ecologically, economically, and in the fields of individual and collective consciousness. The fact that ecovillages can be viewed through these four windows, however, does not make them integral communities; even hydraulic fracturing can be viewed in light of E2C2!

In highlighting the interiorities, the AQAL model offers a helpful antidote to the “flatland” materialism. Yet AQAL is a mental construct – albeit a fairly comprehensive one – not an accurate depiction of reality. While the taxonomic mind might lean on the double dichotomies of inner/outer and individual/collective, the larger mind that intuits an implicit wholeness at the heart of things can never be satisfied with a grid-based model of reality. Surely mind and body are not so easily differentiated; nor is the individual, as most social scientists acknowledge, ever distinct from social context. And if we shift our inquiry to everyday experience, the lines separating the quadrants blur even further. In which quadrant, for instance, does commerce fall? Or driving? Or breakfast? An integral theorist might respond that this is precisely the point: every phenomenon can be analyzed in terms of each quadrant. Yet this response itself reveals the truth of the matter. The four quadrants are analytical constructs. In the real world, the quadrants are never distinct; nor can they capture the wholeness of reality. Attending to each of the quadrants might be a helpful practice in moving towards wholeness, but such a practice neither constitutes nor confers integrality.

Drawing from Sri Aurobindo's notion of gnostic community, I see “integral community” as a tremendous developmental achievement encompassing the inner realization and outer embodiment of the oneness at the heart of existence by both a collective and its members. Such a community would function from a unified collective consciousness that transcends and includes the core individuality of those constituting it. This, I believe, is the meaning of Thich Nhat Hanh's statement about the next Buddha. Our efforts towards such a community, he adds, “may be the most important thing we can do for the wellbeing of humanity and the earth.” To my mind, an integral community would synthesize every plane of human experience – the heights and depths, the inner and outer life, and the awakened individuality and collectivity, placing these at the service of the whole. Whether or not the Buddhist monk's

prognosis is correct, there is strong evidence that the two master agendas of our time – the inner transformation of consciousness and the outer exigencies of global justice and sustainability – are converging. Within ecovillages, this convergence takes the form of a heightened sensitivity to the integration of the inner and the outer – the psychological and social, the economic and ecological, the material and spiritual dimensions of life – in service to the larger whole. Yet ‘integrative’ does not necessarily entail ‘integral.’ While ecovillages take an integrative approach to E2C2, most do not aim to become integral communities. By virtue of their intensely integrative approach, however, they are laying the foundation for this possibility.

This essay suggests that ecovillages – particularly those with a collective approach to inner life – can be viewed as embryonic integral communities. This thesis is a sequel to my recent book, which depicts ecovillages as evolutionary laboratories running collective experiments in every realm of life, from agriculture and natural building to interpersonal and even inter-species communication (Litfin 2013). A central claim of that book is that the “scientists” in these laboratories are not disinterested observers. To the contrary: every ecovillager I interviewed reports extraordinary personal growth through their experiments. Their accounts suggest that when people come together to transform their material and social landscape, they simultaneously enrich their inner landscape and, in so doing, spark new material and social possibilities. Whether their language is secular, religious, or spiritual, the journey entails much the same effort: the work of moving from a fragmented me-centered world to an integrated tapestry of social, ecological, and even cosmological relationships. The inner work is absolutely vital to the outer work – which, I believe, is equally true for those of us who may never visit an ecovillage. Whatever our metaphysical beliefs, sustainability turns out to be an inside job.

In the following section, I unpack the concept of integral community before turning to the larger question of how ecovillages could be relevant as forerunners to this possibility.

Stages of community

Drawing upon the work of Susan Cook-Greuter (2002), Terri O’Fallon (2007) offers a developmental typology of communities ranging from pre-modern to postmodern. In traditional communities, conformity to rules and roles subsumes individual preference and belief. As examples, O’Fallon cites the Catholic Church and the rural immigrant farming community of her childhood. In the stage associated with modernity, adherence to tradition gives way to rationality, efficiency, goal orientation, and individual initiative. A modern person might belong to multiple goal-oriented communities: a sports team, a PTA, a company, a sales team, a diet club, a political party, and a self-help group. In each case, individuals’ choices reflect their perceived interests. Over time, as one comes to see that one’s “individuality” actually encompasses many selves and, like others’ beliefs and opinions, is socially constructed, one begins to question goal orientation and even (perhaps) rationality itself. At this stage, post-conventional communities emerge in which people engage with diverse perspectives and therefore reflect more deeply about their own ways of knowing. Here, the emphasis is more on process and insight than interests and goals. Examples might

include therapeutic groups, cross-cultural encounters, and communicative salons like World Café and Nonviolent Communication practice groups. According to O'Fallon, these three types of community – traditional, modern and post-modern – can be found co-existing in many societies today.

O'Fallon suggests that once the capacity to distinguish between and accept these three kinds of community is established, the possibility of integral community emerges. For the first time, people can easily engage with ease with mixed perspectives because “their identity is based on wholeness and integration of individual, collective, subjective and objective perspectives inclusive of the former levels” (2008: 14). Whether or not they are familiar with integral theory, these people have, through their own lived experience, internalized a map of the developmental territory. Seeing that every perspective – including their own – represents some facet of an unfolding wholeness, they embrace paradox and experience conflict as a means to expanded awareness. Individual and collective transformation go hand-in-hand. O'Fallon (drawing from Kegan 1994) cites as examples the relational fields in which the Palestinian discovers her Israeli-ness, the rich man discovers his poverty, and the woman discovers her inner masculinity. While these communities are rare, they are apparently becoming more common.

Rather than integral, I prefer to call these communities integrative because their members do not generally live in a state of integral consciousness. Their focus on integrating the disparate dimensions of reality, however, makes them an intermediary step between post-conventional and integral communities. Despite our different terminology, my research substantiates O'Fallon's central point: what I call the integrative level appears to be at the leading edge of community engagement. Moreover, we can expect this trend to continue as it seems to follow almost inexorably from the post-conventional level.

In the next section, I examine the integrative strategies of ecovillages with a twofold aim. First, I illuminate the synergistic possibilities that emerge with a strongly integrative approach to E2C2. Second, I highlight the all-important and oft-neglected dimension of consciousness in igniting and realizing these possibilities. I have selected seven communities with an eye to these aims. Four are self-identified as spiritual (Auroville, Damanhur, Findhorn, and Konohana); one (Sarvodaya) is culturally inter-religious with a cohesive spiritual worldview; one has an eclectic worldview, with much of the membership shifting over time from a secular to a spiritual worldview (Sieben Linden); and one is primarily secular (Svanholm). Focusing on the spiritual communities enables me to hone in on the interior dimensions of sustainability; including a transitional and a secular community facilitates comparative and developmental analysis. And the extraordinary geographic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity of the seven ecovillages demonstrates the global character of integrative approaches to E2C2.

<u>ECOVILLAGES AT A GLANCE</u>					
<u>Community</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Approximate Population (2012)</u>	<u>Landscape</u>	<u>Founding Date</u>	<u>Primary Worldview</u>
Auroville	India	2,000	Rural	1968	Spiritual
Damanhur	Italy	1,000	Rural	1975	Spiritual
Findhorn	U.K.	600	Rural	1962	Spiritually eclectic
Konohana	Japan	80	Rural	1994	Spiritual
Sarvodaya	Sri Lanka	15,000 traditional villages	Rural	1957	Inter-religious
Sieben Linden	Germany	140	Rural	1997	Eclectic/transitional
Svanholm	Denmark	140	Rural	1979	Secular

Table 1

Ecovillages as Integrative Communities

The term “ecovillage” is a relative newcomer to the popular lexicon, arriving around the same time as the Internet. Yet the concept has deep historical roots in the ideals of self-sufficiency and spiritual inquiry that characterize monasteries and ashrams, the social movements of the 1960s and 70s, and (in the Third World) the participatory development movement (Dawson 2006). While the communitarian impulse is an ancient one, the social alienation and creeping global ecological crisis of the late twentieth century spurred its growth and endowed it with a sense of urgency. In terms of O’Fallon’s typology, ecovillages are almost by definition post-conventional: their members have deliberately walked away from the hyper-individualism associated with consumer society.¹ Equally important, by adopting a lifestyle premised upon self-governance and sharing, they have committed themselves to a high degree of social and psychological process work. This “left-hand quadrant” work can serve as a tremendous developmental catalyst; on the other hand, it can also spell a community’s painful demise. Diana Leafe-Christian, author of several books on communities, estimates that this is fate of perhaps 90% of all intentional community initiatives. My own sense is that the success rate is increasing, thanks in no small part to the smorgasbord of personal and interpersonal skills that has emerged in recent years. In any case, every ecovillage has its own distinctive culture, complete with spoken and unspoken rules, beliefs, practices, celebrations, and patterns of communication.

Beginning in the 1990s, these largely isolated initiatives began to coalesce as a global movement. At a 1991 conference in Denmark, Diane and Robert Gilman (1991) introduced the term *ecovillage*, which they defined as “a human-scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that supports healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future.” In 1995, the first international ecovillage conference was held at Findhorn and the Global

¹ While this is most obvious in affluent countries, traditional villages adopting the ecovillage model also exhibit post-conventional qualities. As I found in Sarvodaya, a participatory development network, engaging issues of gender, ethnicity, and religion inevitably opens up the kinds of diversity conversations and process work that characterize post-conventional communities. Community development, therefore, need not follow a linear path.

Ecovillage Network (GEN) was established. GEN's original vision – that new ecovillages would sprout like mushrooms – did not come about. Instead, the primary impact of ecovillages' global array of educational programs has been to make existing neighborhoods look more like ecovillages. Education is a vital aspect of ecovillages' integrative approach to sustainability and is itself implemented in an integrated fashion: through a learning-infused experience of ecovillage living. When ecovillages offer GEN's most popular course, Ecovillage Design Education, the community literally becomes the classroom.¹

Through ecovillages' integrative approach to E2C2, we can see how the light from the window of consciousness is refracted through the other three windows. We can now catch a few glimpses of ecovillage life with an eye to how their inner work enlivens and magnifies their ecological, economic, and social work towards sustainability. The anecdotes are intended to be suggestive and evocative more so than conclusive.

Ecology

Imagination, the capacity to envision an alternative story, is a powerful impetus for social change. As tempting as it might be to focus on the picturesque qualities of ecovillages – their cob houses, solar panels, rainwater catchment – these are reflections of intangible stories and states of consciousness. Ecovillages are as much story-telling as ecological laboratories, and most are telling some variation of a simple but profound story that conveys both the current human predicament and its resolution. In a nutshell, the story is that, having come directly out of nature and thus being inseparable from it, we can forge a viable future by tapping into the evolutionary intelligence that brought us to our current juncture. While ecovillagers differ in how they describe and access this intelligence, they concur on the basic story line and that we must access a larger intelligence to guide us through these times. Thomas Berry (1999) calls this “the Great Work” of our time; Joanna Macy (2012) calls it “the Great Turning.” *Work* and *turning* describe where the story leads but not the story itself, which I prefer to call “the Great Unfoldment.” The new story is essentially the narrative of cosmological and biological evolution retold in lyrical terms – and with a sense of urgency befitting the times. The Great Unfoldment unifies a range of apparent dichotomies: humanity and nature, biology and geology, and, for some, nature and spirit. Blending ancient wisdom with contemporary science, this story is cropping up all over the world; ecovillages are enacting it in a highly focused and integrated fashion.

Moving from a story of separation to one of belonging entails a transformation of consciousness. As it turns out, five of the communities I visited (Findhorn, Damanhur, Auroville, Sarvodaya and Konohana) are first and foremost spiritual – not ecological – communities. Their spirituality is embodied and relational, aiming not for *liberation from* this world but rather for its *transformation*. Tellingly, the first four of these are also by far the largest communities I visited. Their tremendous dynamism suggests that a primary commitment to the interior dimensions of sustainability is strong galvanizing force.

¹ The EDE curriculum is available as a free download at <http://gaiaeducation.org>.

Because of its size and its age, Findhorn has been called “the mama ecovillage,” but in 1962, its three mystical founders did not have ecology on their minds. Rather, they were “attuning” to divine guidance through prayer and meditation and following this guidance wherever it led. Having never gardened, they were surprised to receive detailed instructions on soil building, planting, and harvesting from what “nature spirits.” By the early 1970s, their astonishing harvests on Scotland’s sandy, windswept soils brought scientists, the media, and thousands of young people to their doorstep. The founders eventually left, but decades later, Findhorn’s residents invoke their basic instruction, “Attune to Spirit, attune to Earth” in their daily meditations and work.

As part of a course called “Experience Week,” I worked on Findhorn’s 7-acre organic farm and experienced “attunement,” as well as another Findhorn motto: “Work is love in action.” During each morning’s “attunement circle,” the farm’s “focalizer” explained the day’s tasks. Attuning to our specific task, the point was to discern not what we *wanted* to do but rather what we felt *called* to do. Somehow there was always the right number of bodies for each task. We were encouraged to work in silence and to feel ourselves as “one body.” As I harvested beans and shoveled compost, I found myself reveling in the companionship of my wordless co-workers. Each day, we were astonished by how much we accomplished.

Half a world away, 15,000 traditional Sri Lankan villages are members of Sarvodaya, a highly successful participatory development network whose full name, Sarvodaya Shramadana, means “the awakening of all through the sharing of labor.” The basic premise is that by collaborating to meet their needs, villagers enhance their material, social and spiritual wellbeing. One of their mottos is, “We build the road, and the road builds us.” The wellspring of this ambitious work is a simple but powerful peace meditation.

One morning at Sarvodaya’s headquarters in the sprawling city of Colombo, I struck up a conversation with their senior meditation instructor. Meditation, he explained, is more than a private matter; it is a dynamic force for progress. For Sarvodaya, social problems – war, poverty, environmental destruction, oppression of women – are rooted not in institutions or even behavior, but consciousness. “Therefore,” he said, “if we want to establish peace among ourselves and with nature, we must first establish peace in our own minds.” Mr. Mahanama offered to teach me the peace meditation.

Arriving at Vishwa Niketan, Sarvodaya’s meditation center, in the afternoon heat, I soon felt worlds away from the noisy city. Mr. Mahanama gave me these instructions:

Sitting in a comfortable position, silently honor your own religion or belief system. Recognize that every religion is a reflection of the truth.

Now become present in the body and notice the mind relax. Gradually become aware of the in and out breath as it moves through your nostrils. Do not change the breath; only observe it. Notice that there is nothing you can call *I* or *mine* in this process. See that this air was and will be breathed by millions of sentient beings. So too are the warmth, the fluidity, and the hardness of the body all part of the universe. Feeling this connection to all life, realize that you cannot harm another without harming yourself.

Watching the mind, notice how sensations, perceptions, volitions, and thoughts arise faster than lightning. Observe the stream of consciousness as it flows. By returning to the breath, notice the mind becoming still.

Understanding that there is neither *me* nor *mine* in the body or in the thoughts, allow the entire world to grow closer to your heart. As loving-kindness and compassion fill your mind, extend these qualities to everyone: people you know and don't know; people you like and don't like; and finally to everyone and all beings. Allow this compassion to extend in all directions, and also to the past, present, and future.

Through these waves of compassion, feel yourself connected to all things. Then quietly return the awareness to your body and your surroundings.

Rather than retreating into an otherworldly bliss, I felt myself embedded in a vibrant web of relationships, both human and nonhuman. In the ensuing days as I visited Sarvodaya's villages, I had a visceral reference point as people described the meditation's impact on their lives. I could only imagine the transformative potential of whole villages engaging in this powerful practice as they dug wells, built schools, and learned organic farming.

Across the Bay of Bengal, Auroville's pioneering ecological work is rooted in Sri Aurobindo's world-affirming spiritual injunction, "All life is yoga." Auroville's Earth Institute, for instance, has invented a hand-operated machine, the Aurum, to build comfortable and sustainable homes from compressed earth bricks. The bricks are made from soil unearthed in digging a building's foundation or its wastewater treatment system. Auroville is dotted with hundreds of compressed-earth buildings. Their graceful domes and arches, often painted white on top to reflect the sun's rays, make them an inexpensive and beautiful solution to south India's scorching temperatures.

Mud bricks might not sound particularly spiritual, but for Sat Prem, director of the Earth Institute, they are. I attended a talk he gave on Auroville's "housing crisis" with the burgeoning influx of newcomers. As he showed gorgeous photos of earthen buildings all over the world, Sat Prem said, "I don't see the Earth as a formless material without consciousness, but as Spirit consciously disguised as matter." His comment echoed a core belief among Aurovilians: that biophysical reality is an evolutionary unfoldment of the Divine.

The notion that ecological problems are, at root, problems of consciousness is a running theme in many ecovillages. While Konohana's fields at the base of Mt. Fuji constitute the basis of this farming community's economic and social life, they serve to an even greater extent as a field of spiritual practice. In each action, word, and thought, members are expected to seek divine guidance. Their motto, "Before cultivating the field, cultivate the mind," infuses their daily work and nightly "harmony meetings." In Japan, a country that imports most of its food and grows less than 1% of it organically, Konohana stands out: it is 100% organic and almost fully food self-sufficient, producing 260 varieties of vegetables and 11 kinds of rice.

One secret to Konohana's success is Konohana-kin (pronounced *keen*), a fermented bacterial brew applied to the soil, fed to livestock, and even ingested by residents each day. Konohana-kin is based on Effective Microorganisms (EM), a technique developed by Teruo Higa, a Japanese agricultural scientist, to maximize the production of beneficial bacteria. Konohana experimented with various proportions of molasses, brown rice, tofu refuse, bamboo leaves,

and pine needles to develop its own formula. Konohana-kin serves simultaneously as a fertilizer, pesticide, cleaning agent, and preventive medicine. Because Konohana-kin is a staple in the diets of the community's goats and chickens, their excrement has no foul odor and antibiotics are unnecessary. Likewise, Konohana members drink this "gift from the Divine," as they call it every day. They informed me that in 14 years, nobody has had a major illness.

I asked the community's founder and spiritual teacher, Furuta Isami (known as Isadon), about how this bacterial brew fits into the community's larger mission. "Our vision is that human beings will learn to live in harmony with nature," Isadon said. "Here in Japan, people wear masks when they are sick and put disinfectants in their toilets to kill the bacteria. The Japanese are a super-hygienic people. It's a violent approach: they are at war with bacteria, but we need bacteria to live. At Konohana, we are finding ways to cooperate with bacteria to make life better."

I asked Isadon to sum up his teachings. "It is simple: forget about yourself and give. This is how all other living things live. Because we have such a high capability, we have been able to disconnect ourselves from the natural way, and so people suffer."

Wendell Berry suggests that spirituality and practical life should be inseparable. "Alone, practicality becomes dangerous; spirituality, alone, becomes feeble and pointless," he writes. "Alone, either becomes dull. Each is the other's discipline, in a sense, and in good work, the two are joined" (1987: 145). Intuitively, I agree, but I imagined that most ecovillages would be so busy shrinking their ecological footprints that they would have little time for contemplation. Instead, I found that they tend to be quite adept at integrating inner and outer reality. I expected, for instance, that Club 99, Sieben Linden's ultra-low consumption neighborhood, would be obsessed with its vegan, zero-fossil fuel agriculture. Yet I had some of the most numinous conversations of my journey in their strawbale common house, which has 5% of the ecological footprint of a comparable German home. Maybe I shouldn't have been surprised: for thousands of years, religious leaders have linked material simplicity with inner growth. Likewise, many ecovillagers experience a synergistic relationship between ecology and spirituality.

Economics

In our economically polarized world, where the average per capita income is roughly \$7,000 but extremes of over-consumption and destitution persist, the down-to-earth prosperity of ecovillages demonstrates the possibility of a globally viable happy medium. In the heart of pricey Germany, for instance, Sieben Linden members subsist with pleasure on \$12,000/year. Frugality underpins prosperity, but it is only one component of ecovillage economics. Equally important, ecovillagers have found creative ways of extricating themselves from the global economy through shared property, collaborative consumption, right livelihood, and a hyper-local approach to the flow of money – all of which rests upon and reinforce a narrative of belonging.

Only two of the ecovillages I visited were communes, and both enjoyed a supportive cultural context. In Japan, where the traditional culture reveres family ties, Konohana is listed as a

family for tax purposes and its members relate to one another as family. They live in close quarters, work side-by-side in the fields, eat their meals at one long table, and discuss the day's activities each night after dinner. Like a close-knit family, Konohana disburses the earnings from its member-owned farm equally. When my translator, Michiyo Furuhashi, came to Konohana, she took an 80% pay cut from her work as an environmental consultant for Unilever Corporation, reducing her annual income to \$7,000 and her living expenses to \$3,000. "Our income is so low that we pay no taxes," Michiyo said. "I have never lived on so little, but I feel so rich!"

Within Denmark's strongly communitarian culture, Svanholm operates as a *kommune*, which means both "community" and, as it sounds, "commune." Unlike in the U.S., where most ecovillages eschew the language of communalism, Svanholm is proud to be one of the last surviving communes. Like Konohana, Svanholm members' assets and earnings go into the common pool. Everybody receives a minimum salary decided at the annual budget meeting. In 2009, it was about \$47,000, making Svanholm the most prosperous ecovillage I visited. I wondered about those who might take advantage of the system. Birgitte Simonsen, a sociology professor and one of the community's founders, assured me that Svanholm's arduous membership process weeds out anyone who might be lazy. "We probably turn down 80% of those who want to join," she said. "People here need to be able to work and relate well. We need a lot of trust to make Svanholm work, so people need to show they're trustworthy." Trust, not ideology, is the key to Svanholm's collective economy. This is a constant theme in ecovillages: trusting, earning trust, discerning when to trust.

Interestingly, it was at Svanholm, which prides itself in having "both feet on the ground," that I encountered the strongest aversion to spirituality. Indeed, several members described themselves as "allergic" to it. When I broached the question of spirituality, René Van Dam, one of Svanholm's chief builders, he was blunt. "*Phhh!* I'm a very skeptical person and I don't want bullshit! Yes, we have love and beauty here, but don't call it spiritual! That makes it sound magical, not real." Later in the conversation, however, he waxed eloquent in describing his sense of the Earth behaves as a living system. "We're like a collection of micro-organisms on this super-organism! But that's biological, not spiritual."

While Svanholm avoids spiritual language, I suspect that some of its experiments in communal living are more effective in softening the boundaries of ego than lofty meditation practices. The community's ability to stay the course over three decades is largely due to the social trust that comes from sharing income and property. Within a global economy that places a premium on looking out for "me and mine," this arena of sharing can serve as a field of practice for moving from a story of separation to one of belonging.

To my surprise, most jobs in ecovillages are quite ordinary: cooks, housecleaners, carpenters, plumbers, web designers, beauticians, farmers, accountants, teachers, etc. Unlike the anonymous relationships that pervade mainstream jobs, however, ecovillage jobs are about real relationships with people and resources. As a corollary, the same money can circulate for quite some time, especially in larger communities. The yoghurt maker, for instance, buys milk from the dairy farmer, who buys vegetables from the crop farmer, who gets her hair cut by the

community hairdresser, who pays a community accountant to keep her books, and so on. Some ecovillages go a step further: they mint their own currency. Damanhur's *credito*, for instance, has been a primary instrument in revitalizing the surrounding economically depressed valley. Spiritually, members refer to the *credito* as "clean money" because it is not based on violence and greed. In a more practical vein, it enables the community to develop its internal economy."

In *Wealth and Nature*, John Greer enumerates three economies. The primary economy comprises Earth's biophysical processes; the secondary economy conjoins these with human labor to generate goods and services; the tertiary economy constitutes the monetary flows that facilitate the exchange of goods and services. In truth, what most of us consider the economy – the secondary and tertiary economies – rests upon a multi-layered gift economy of symbiotic relationships. From the biotic food web of soil to Wikipedia, the modus operandi of a gift economy is "pay it forward" (Hyde 1983; Litfin 2010.) While gift economies are marginalized in today's world, anthropologists consider them to be the bedrock of culture.

Among the ecovillages I visited, I found some intriguing experiments in gift economics. Sarvodaya's foundational premise, for instance, is *shramadana*, the gift of labor. While Auroville, which aspires to an all-for-one-and-one-for-all nonmonetary economy, is very far from this goal, it has spawned some promising innovations. At Indus Valley restaurant, customers pay whatever they wish for their wholesome vegetarian meals, which means that some pay nothing. After four years, the restaurant is still in business. At Pour Tous ("For All" in French) Distribution Service, Auroville residents pay a modest fee for the right to simply take whatever food and household goods they need. Everybody I interviewed praised the new system.

For the vast majority of us who are tied to the market economy, a gift economy may sound quite foreign. But if we pay attention, we see that we are the unwitting beneficiaries of a mind-bogglingly complex gift economy provided by earth's biosphere and the global economy. The question then becomes: How do we offer our own gifts to sustain the flow of gifts from the primary economy? The answer to this question, of course, spans every dimension of E2C2.

Community

As evolutionary laboratories, ecovillages are running a range of relational experiments in seeing others and being seen by them. Consequently, I continually heard that human relationships were both the most challenging and most rewarding aspect of community life.

"Being here is like being in a fire," one ecovillager told me. "Your lack of trust, your anger, your family neuroses – everything that separates you from the rest of the world is going to come out here! Getting over our individualistic culture means remaking ourselves.

"The whole ecological problem is about us," he continued. "We're a whole different order; we're the part of nature that becomes conscious and takes responsibility. We're an unfinished species. I think we have maybe 100 years to prove we deserve to be here."

By standing in the fire of community, ecovillagers are rewriting the story of separation with their own lives. Even if their original intention was to live sustainably, the choice to do so in community throws them into a transformational cauldron.

This is one reason that, among ecovillages, the line between the spiritual and the material seems to be dissolving. Dieter Halbach, a former leader of the German peace movement and the man often credited with starting Sieben Linden, described this transition. The divide between spiritual and political communities, he said, ran deep during the 1970s and 80s. Intent upon transforming society only after attaining enlightenment, spiritual communities were generally hierarchical and lacking in economic transparency. Political communities, on the other hand, were more egalitarian but frequently dissipated their energies on lengthy meetings.

“Because of my bitter experiences in politics and communities, I saw from the outset that we needed someone to help us cultivate our inner culture. So I brought in a friend, a Buddhist psychotherapist and an organic farmer. Now we’ve come to a point where we can accept some hierarchy. We’ve learned that when we find the right person for the job and trust them, things flow better. This frees up time and energy to give back to the larger society. Sieben Linden started out as political, but now we’re bridging the divide. It’s very exciting. We’re now in a position to help spiritual communities, and they’re calling on us.”

Surprisingly, I first encountered the term *collective intelligence* in Germany, a fairly secular culture, where ecovillagers were working with Thomas Hübl. They spoke about learning how to go beyond one’s own conditioning and inhabit the collective field that unites us all. To my ears, it sounded like intensive schooling in how to participate consciously in the Great Unfoldment. Intrigued, I attended one of his workshops. Over a dozen ecovillages were represented, including a sizeable contingent from Findhorn. Thomas suggested that whereas the modern identity is a fixed sense of self, we are more akin to rivers, each residing at a specific “cosmic address” from which we transmit our entire past and future. “In this next level of evolution,” Thomas said, “we are learning that we are not a collection of ‘I’s,’ like a six-pack where the bottles clash together. The contraction of the ‘I’ limits our energy. When we see through our habits and become aware of the space between us, we free up our collective intelligence. Then we can talk *from* life, not *about* it.” He described the shift as “moving from particle consciousness to field consciousness.” Thomas’ perspective echoed the evolutionary story I found percolating through ecovillages, but his ability to convey it experientially through small- group practices was something new for me. (See Hübl 2010.)

As I travelled through ecovillages, I found myself increasingly fascinated by this nebulous yet vital quality called *trust*. What is trust? How is it created – and destroyed? Sharing may well be essential to sustainability, but so long as we have a choice, sharing only makes sense in the context of trust. If we assemble a list of best ecovillage sustainability practices, every one of them is greatly enhanced by trust: car-sharing, co-ownership of property, collaborative consumption, community food production. And if I were to assemble a list of reasons for why communities fail, the breakdown of social trust would surely top the list. So far as I know, no community has ever collapsed for want of composting toilets, but many have been torn asunder when trust wore thin.

Building trust can be a messy process but when we come together authentically, transcending and including our individuality, something is born that is far greater than the sum of its parts – something we seem hardwired to want: a culture of belonging. By virtue of their highly integrative approach to E2C2, ecovillages, are pioneering new stories of belonging – which is none other than the psycho-social counterpart of sustainability. When we relate as integral parts of a greater whole, we automatically experience a greater sense of belonging, but we are powerless to create a culture of belonging alone. For that, we need one another.

In Sum

Using an integral developmental model, we can understand ecovillages as adaptive responses to an unfolding evolutionary crisis. At this historic juncture, just as the petroleum-based era of hyper-individualism seems to be reaching the end of its tether, these emerging collective experiments are enacting a new story of belonging by interweaving the ecological, economic, social and spiritual dimensions of life. Being the ecological oddity that we are, we must now consciously integrate ourselves into the tapestry of life. In this way, ecovillages are laboratories for conscious participation in the Great Unfoldment.

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Ecophilosophy and Communalist Utopian Novels: Do bicycles and biotechnology go together?

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Abstract

The period of social change from the 1960s to the 1980s saw a flowering of utopian novels, from Huxley's *Island* (1962) and Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1964) through to Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975) and Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976). These works were infused with a vision of an ideal world structured as a decentralised network of small villages or precincts. In each novel, local, participatory decision-making was the key to a utopian 'good place' both for people and for ecological communities as a whole. The need to reharmonise with ecological systems saw a rejection of wasteful technologies which cater to consumerism. Instead, these utopias explored 'high-tech, low-tech' societies. 'High technology' (in the sense of sophisticated technology) was particularly encouraged for certain utopian purposes, such as biotechnology to improve ecology and agriculture. Technologies or sciences that might ravage the natural world were excluded, leading to a return to 'low technology' (in the sense of simple, low-impact technology), such as bicycles for transport and manual labour for food production. Each of these utopian works was environmentally thoughtful, if not radical, in its suggested path to a better world. But did these communalist visions sufficiently challenge both the oppositions (nature/society) and the hierarchies (man's interests before others) that have proven so destructive in the current age, or is a further radical shift needed in our vision of a reharmonised planet?

Utopian fictions offer details of a space – whether an otherworld, a society or a shared way of living – depicting an enactment of “a better life for us all”. The term “utopia” was first coined by More, in his 1516 title which famously punned on the Greek words for “no place” (outopia) and “good place” (eutopia). However, utopian imaginings can be traced further back, to classical works such as Plato's *The Republic* (1 BC) and further still in the form of much earlier recorded accounts of golden ages and biblical Edens.

Utopia is reimagined in each era. From the second half of the 20th century, many Western utopian works took an environmentally and socially inclusive turn. These may be seen as “*utopias of reharmonisation*”, as they envisioned an inclusive, egalitarian and often healing approach to the human which embraced difference of various kinds (gender, race, disability, minority cultures), and also extended the notion of “us”, increasingly looking beyond the human to include natural systems and non-human beings and communities. Fictions include Huxley's *Island* (1962), Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1964), Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) and Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990). Utopias of reharmonisation emerged with the social changes of an era where rights of women and

minorities were increasingly recognised, and which saw growing awareness of dwindling resources amid scientific warnings of wide-scale environmental problems. The period also inherited concerns around the alienation of the modern subject within industrialisation (iconically visualised by Blake’s “dark satanic mills“).

Several forms of utopias of reharmonisation can be identified, including primal, arcadian, communalist, medievalist and post-human utopias. Of these, fictional *communalist utopias* have been particularly sophisticated, with a richness of detail concerning education, politics, law, social relations and daily activities. Their world-building offers thoughtfully-drawn alternatives to the centralised modern industrial state.

This form of utopia flowered in that period of intense negotiation of social change that occurred in the West from the 1960s to the 1980s. A social program for the enactment of this form of utopia was also been outlined by several theorists including Bookchin in his various non-fiction works on social ecology from the 1960s to 2002. Additionally, the communitarian literary utopia had been prefigured by William Morris in *News from Nowhere* (1890), an ur-text in which he offered a detailed futuristic account of a localised form of socialism.

Each of these fictional works portrays societies at various stages along the path of attempting to shift from disharmonious divisions to reharmonised, reintegrated relations between nature and culture. All are positioned in deliberate opposition to industrialised modernity with its alienated human subject and devastated natural systems. Each depicts an ideal world based on a decentralised network of small towns or villages organised at every level as a participatory, egalitarian society. Centralised states are avoided as far as possible. The local community is assumed to be the ideal locus of government, firstly because an individual can contribute directly to shaping the social order and be in turn shaped by the social order, and secondly because the individual human and the ecological community can be brought into a more considered relationship. Local production supports a non-exploitative cycle of energy and resource exchange with natural systems (Salleh, 2010). Overconsumption is avoided and scarcity embraced, for both socio-political and environmental reasons (Williams, 1978, p 111; de Geus, 1996, pp 20-21).

Arguably, these works respond to a perceived “metabolic rift” in both human and other-than-human systems brought about by industrialisation (Salleh, 2010, p 206). *Island* illustrates this vividly, depicting its ideal society Pala as resource-rich and vulnerable to invasion by a nearby industrial dictatorship, ultimately failing when its oil reserves bring about its conquest and destruction. These negative impacts of industrialisation are also strongly associated with the unrestrained use of technology, and Piercy’s ideal world is at war with a dystopian technocracy.

Utopias of reharmonisation are shaped in part by their differing responses to the question of the place of technology in an ideal world. Primal utopias, like that of Pandora in James Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009), reject modern technologies entirely; in some post-human utopias (and dystopias), the human is reengineered (as attempted by Crake in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003)) or may be conjoined with technological artefact or machine intelligence. The communalist utopian novels, in seeking to reharmonise both social and

ecological systems, instead explore a “high-tech, low-tech” solution. “High technology” (in the sense of sophisticated technology) operates side by side with “low technology” (in the sense of simple, low-impact technology). Aspects of modernity and subsistence farming coexist. Technologies implicated in dystopic exploitation of natural systems and the destruction of resources and communities are rejected in all the texts. Even in the nineteenth century, Morris was predicting a waste of resources associated with inappropriate use of high technology:

by that time it was as much as – or rather, more than – a man could do to fix an ash pole to a rake by handiwork; so that it would take a machine worth a thousand pounds, a group of workmen, and half a day’s travelling, to do five shillings’ worth of work (p. 185).

Wasteful technologies associated with consumerism are firmly rejected in Huxley’s *Island*, and consumer desire is adjusted:

We don’t feel any need for your speedboats or your television (p. 86).

Recycling is embraced in several works, including Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time*:

Our technology did not develop in a straight line from yours ... We have limited resources ... We can afford to waste . . . nothing (p. 125).

These shifts lead directly to a return to “low technology” or manual labour for many tasks, typically including food production and the crafting of household goods. From a commitment to low-tech production wherever practical and from Morris’s idea of “work-pleasure” comes a renewed commitment to artisanship. Guest observes in *News from Nowhere* that tableware and furniture is often handmade but beautiful despite its lack of a commercial finish:

The glass, crockery, and plate were very beautiful to my eyes, used to the study of mediaeval art; but a nineteenth-century club-haunter would, I daresay, have found them rough and lacking in finish ... (p. 105).

However, modern technology is not eliminated completely as it is in primal utopias, nor is it part of the machinations of dark forces as in many medievalist utopias (for example, Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-5)). Eco-primitivism is not the aim (Bookchin, 2002, p 97). High technology is in fact encouraged for certain utopian purposes, such as ecology and agriculture. Innovation and research that will assist an eco-balanced society are foregrounded, so that in *The Dispossessed*, Takver is playing with the genetics of fish (p. 158); and Luciente in *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a plant geneticist (p. 53). In *Island*, the life-sciences are taught to a sophisticated level, at the same time as technologies or sciences that might ravage biological communities are excluded:

We don’t really have any practical need for that [non-life sciences] kind of research – no heavy industries to be made more competitive, no armaments to be made more diabolical, not the faintest desire to land on the backside of the moon. Only the modest ambition to live as fully human beings in harmony with the rest of life on this island at this latitude on this planet (p. 246).

Even Morris’s quasi-medievalist utopia includes “force barges” and other new technologies (p. 168). Morris is sometimes read as anti-technology, but this is an oversimplification. Rather, as Williams points out (1958, p 28), in *News from Nowhere* workers are to choose when and how technologies are to be employed:

All work which would be irksome to do by hand is done by immensely improved machinery; and in all work which it is a pleasure to do by hand machinery is done without (p. 100).

This position is echoed in *Woman on the Edge of Time*:

Okay, so you can automate a whole factory ... So why do I see people grubbing around broccoli plants picking off caterpillars? Why is everybody running around on foot or bicycles?

We have so much energy from [various sources] ... That's a fixed amount. Manufacturing and mining are better done by machines. Who wants to go deep into the earth and crawl through tunnels ... Who wants to sit in a factory sewing the same four or five comforter patterns? (pp. 129-130)

The juxtaposition between high and low technologies in the twentieth century works in particular is very evident and deliberate. In *Ecotopia*, for example, the train is extraordinarily sophisticated, fast and vibration-free, whereas the knapsacks and skis of the passengers on the train are primitive and homemade, and the carriages “are full of hanging ferns and small plants” (pp. 7-8). This may point to a contradiction in the work, for a train which is so sophisticated must surely be associated with aspects of industrial modes of resource extraction and production. Arguably, each of these novels has an ambivalent stance on technology, as does Western society. Like many peoples, the utopian inhabitants do not want the destructive outcomes of industrialisation but they still *desire* – to avoid onerous labour, or to travel reasonably fast, for example. Restraint is exercised; bicycles are favoured in many of the works, but even bicycles imply extraction of materials, metallurgy and sophisticated machining of parts.

High technology is strongly favoured when associated with ecological innovation and solutions. The works typically envision an *individual* scientist or creative problem-solver – a person embedded in their local communities, both human and other-than-human, who sensitively solves local problems. Yet behind these individual engagements with science and technology must surely lie a larger scale base of research and development, and it is also clear that at the same time as critiquing the detriments of the consumer era, some manufacturing is nevertheless to be retained. Activities such as mining and timber-felling are typically scaled back, but not eliminated, as the passage above from *Woman on the Edge of Time* confirms.

The question of technology is a difficult one, and has been much debated. Technology has been associated with both the goods and the ills of modern life. The positive aspects include oft-cited examples such as labour-saving devices to improve the quality of daily life; the scientific advances in medicine, extending lives and giving women control of reproduction; engineering feats such as bridges, levees, trains and canals; the liberatory impact of the communication technologies such as the printing press or the internet.

The negative impacts of technology are also well understood. Its tendency to instrumentalise was discussed by Heidegger in his essay “The Question Concerning Technology” (1954). He argued that modern technology has an essential quality, which he named enframing, of converting everything into a “standing-reserve”, that is, a resource or energy supply awaiting use. This involves setting upon nature in a “challenging forth” of its energies, using

technology to unlock, command, regulate and secure, not merely for storage or use, but always driving forward with a further intent such as increased profits or productivity. Presciently, he saw that enframing, or the process of setting-upon nature, threatens to turn everything, including man, into standing-reserve.

The role of technology in large-scale and often destructive military enterprises was discussed by Lewis Mumford, who also suggested that machine technology was actually invented in the ancient world through the coercive use of human parts to form a “mega-machine” (1965).

Cudworth (2011) problematises even the positive aspects of technology, pointing out that the benefits and detriments are unequally distributed. Looking beyond the human, our technology has brought extensive detriments and virtually no benefits to any ecological community other than our own. Habitat destruction has occurred at the local level through to the global level and technology is deeply implicated in climate change.

These are just a few of the insights from theorists into the problems of technology, and there are far too many more to discuss here. However, the underlying question is not a dichotomous one of whether technology should be accepted as a given or completely rejected. The latter response is arguably not possible unless advocating a return to the pre-modern primal – and perhaps not even then. Bookchin argues that “humans have been constituted to intervene in nature”. Ecophilosopher Freya Mathews (2011) reflects that “Artefact must be seen as a potential expression of the natural” (p. 266). Now that it has escaped, we cannot put technology back into its box.

Perhaps the fundamental problem is that technologies have developed within the modern era much more rapidly than society could possibly develop ethical, legal and organisational frameworks to moderate their application. By way of comparison, “rights” as an ideal to work towards has taken centuries to develop, from the chivalric codes in the middle ages to the relatively recent emergency of animal rights and even more embryonic articulations of the rights of ecological communities. There are many difficult questions remaining, of how and when technology should be used, at what level, by whom and having regard to which communities (human and other-than-human). These are not un-debated or lacking in understanding, but rather unresolved within broader society on cultural, political, economic and policy levels.

Communist utopian novels attempt (as do many communitarian communities and ecovillages) to model a possible ethical response. They suggest an alternative wherein technology is used for energy storage and use, but where a conversion of all systems into standing-reserve is avoided. Human desire to apply technology is restricted in agreed ways and consumption is reduced to avoid damaging the integrity of natural systems. Partnership and/or harmony with nature is a strong underlying ethos. In *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Luciente explains:

You might say our – you’d say religion? – ideas make us see ourselves as partners with water, air, birds, fish, trees (p. 125).

Communitarian utopian texts suggest better decisions might be made by decentralising both urban and rural life, and placing the human and the other-than-human in closer proximity.

Certainly, as Chakraborty observes, “One need not stop for a moment to consider the right or wrong of any action regarding something to which there is no relatedness.” In an era when questions of scale are increasingly disturbing, and Mumford’s observations of the danger of the mega-machine seem more and more relevant, these novels attempt to scale back the human enterprise to localised, synergistic forms of production and exchange. The hi-tech, low-tech solution offered by communalist utopian novels is a compromise position – one which seeks an ethical point of balance between industrial modernity and premodern modes of living. In this sense, bicycles and biotechnology *do* go together in communalist utopian novels. They represent selective use of technology, and a position of restraint.

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Sustainability and the Evolutionary Ideals of Auroville

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Abstract

Auroville, regarded as the largest intentional community in the world, draws its inspiration from the spiritual vision and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (née Mirra Alfassa). Founded in 1968, Auroville is a growing international town, located in rural south India, and currently comprises about 2000 people from 45 countries. Auroville seeks to participate in the spiritual and evolutionary transformation of the world. As an experimental society, Auroville begs the question as to what would human endeavour (conscious human preoccupation and action) look like in order to be in alignment with the trajectory of evolution? This paper, organised into two distinct parts, is a documentation of Auroville's achievements in promoting sustainability and an examination of its evolutionary ideals.

The first part of the paper examines how Auroville's goals of transformation of the world have led Aurovilians to actively promote environmental and social sustainability. Auroville's multi-pronged outreach activities in community development, health and sanitation, education, environmental regeneration, appropriate building technologies and economic empowerment have had a significant impact not only on the villages surrounding Auroville but on other parts of India as well.

However, it is posited that sustainability is merely a signpost in the evolutionary journey of mankind. Thus, in the second part of the paper, Auroville's achievements and failures are discussed in the context of complexity theory. In its ideals, and to a certain extent, in its development, Auroville is characterised by the processes of self-organization, differentiation, integration, and random fluctuations that are deemed, in complexity theory, as being essential for evolution. The study concludes that Auroville, despite its numerous social and developmental challenges, has the potential to further evolution.

Introduction

Imagine barren land. Red and pockmarked, like the dead surface of the moon. A desolate plateau sloping towards the sea with only a lone banyan standing sentinel. In the old days, one could see the sea shimmering a mile away, for there were no trees blocking one's view.

Imagine the heat and the dust of the open summer skies when the sun blazed over 35 degrees Celsius and parched any remnants of life that still lingered in the soil. The wind gusted free on this denuded land, whirling up dust storms that blinded and choked the people. Imagine monsoons – the torrential rains that lasted for days and bled the earth red as it washed the last of the top-soil into the sea. Imagine a forsaken land ravaged incessantly by the sun, the wind, and the rain.

As for the people, the government wrung its hands in despair and predicted that the few thousand poverty-stricken peasants that were scattered in various villages would soon move away for the land was too tortured to support anyone.

Such were the conditions when Auroville was founded in 1968. Was it ambition, chutzpah, or intuitive knowledge beyond human ken that led Mirra Alfassa, (known simply by those who love her as The Mother) to found Auroville, a UNESCO-supported international town for human unity, on this eroded plateau? And surely it was her charismatic spiritual power that attracted people from different nations to her dream of Auroville as a city that earth needs? There were not many in the beginning – just a handful of long-haired, wild-eyed people who were brave enough to toil in the heat and the rain; to live in huts without electricity or running water, and dream transpersonal dreams of building a city for humanity. Sustainability was not a lifestyle choice for these early pioneers. Sustainability was necessary for survival. The land had to be sustained, the earth had to be healed, if Auroville was to be.

To think of creating an international city under such conditions defies all logic, so it is hardly surprising that, even after four decades, no such city, especially the futuristic city of technological marvels that was portrayed in the early brochures of Auroville, exists. But what is perhaps even more surprising is that Aurovilians¹ have, through massive environmental regeneration efforts, transformed the deforested, barren land into lush green habitable environs and raised the necessary funds to build the infrastructure needed for urban development. Over the years, about 2,000 people from 40 different countries and cultures have made Auroville their home, and in doing so have created a vibrant small town that bustles with various activities.

Underlying the multifaceted growth of Auroville is a spiritual aim: Auroville draws its inspiration from the evolutionary spirituality of the visionary sage Sri Aurobindo. As the Mother, the spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo, declared, “Auroville is a centre of accelerated evolution where man [sic] must begin to change his world by means of the power of inner spirit” (Alfassa, 1978).

As a place, Auroville escapes easy definitions. It describes itself as a “universal city in the making” (Auroville, 2001) and aims to be a city for 50,000 people, but currently, in terms of its population, Auroville is not much bigger than a village. It is at once an intentional community with high spiritual ideals that one can join, and also a secularized society where one can live and work without formally joining the community or subscribing to its ideology. With a significant portion of its population being “white,” Auroville is both Indian and Western in its cultural accoutrements. To try to explain Auroville is, as Butler (2002) reports the situation as described by one Aurovilian, “similar to the proverbial five blind people describing an elephant, when each is holding on to a different part . . . and because Auroville is at the same time growing, evolving, it is a process that continues” (p. 20). This paper by no means seeks to describe all of Auroville. The first part of the paper highlights Auroville’s achievements in promoting environmental and social sustainability. However, positing that sustainability is merely a signpost in the evolutionary journey of mankind, in the second part

¹ Term for a formally accepted resident of Auroville and legally recognized as such by the Government of India. The idiosyncratic spelling with one “I” instead of two was given by the Mother herself (Alfassa, 2000, p. 276).

of the paper, Auroville's achievements and failures as an experiment in social evolution are discussed in the context of complexity theory.

Environmental sustainability: Healing the Earth

Environmental regeneration

Auroville has implemented an integrated environmental regeneration program that includes soil and water conservation, reforestation, and promotion of biodiversity. Auroville is particularly known for its success in reforestation, with the residents having planted over 2 million trees. Currently Auroville focuses on reintroducing the *Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF)*, the indigenous forest of the area, of which only a few small remaining areas survive today. As part of its conservation work, Auroville also maintains a herbarium with over 6,000 accessions from different forest types of India.

In terms of water conservation, Auroville has sought to de-silt and restore the traditional water-catchment ponds in the bioregion. And, to prevent groundwater pollution, Auroville has developed and implemented several decentralised wastewater treatment systems suitable for tropical conditions in Auroville and other parts of India.

Renewable Energy

Auroville has pioneered research and development of renewable energy in India (particularly solar and wind energy). Auroville units have successfully installed renewable energy (solar, wind, and hydro-electric) systems, not only within the township area but also in other parts of India. AV 55, a windmill developed in Auroville is India's best-selling windmill for pumping water from medium depths. A huge parabolic solar concentrator at Auroville's community kitchen produces steam for cooking 1,000 meals a day. Several prototype electric vehicles charged by photovoltaics have also been developed by enterprising Aurovilians.

Appropriate building technology

Auroville utilizes appropriate technologies to create buildings that are cost-effective, energy efficient, climatically appropriate and aesthetically pleasing. The *Auroville Earth Institute* has been chosen the Indian partner for the *UNESCO Chair for Earthen Architecture* for its excellence in the promotion of earth architecture. The unit also developed a wide range of equipment for earth construction, including earth block presses, which are sold worldwide. Adobe, terracotta roofing, rammed earth and compressed earth blocks are the main applications of earthen architecture in Auroville. Other successful innovations are use of ferro-cement technology and more recently use of waste-materials such as Styrofoam.

Social sustainability: Caring for the bio-region.

Given its ideal of human unity, it was only natural for Aurovilians to reach out to help their neighbors – the impoverished villagers in the area. Today, ten specialized Auroville agencies offer rural development programmes that benefit more than 100,000 people in over 80 villages throughout the bioregion.

Empowerment of women and youth through capacity building and people's participatory approaches form the cornerstone of Auroville's rural development work. Auroville has been particularly successful in promoting economic empowerment in the bioregion by providing jobs to thousands of people, and transferring knowledge and skills to even more people to start

their own enterprises. A micro-finance system helps over 4,000 poor and illiterate women organized into a federation to avail loans. Income generation projects benefiting over 200 women have also been recently initiated. High illiteracy (40%) in the surrounding area has prompted Auroville to start seven schools that provide academic and vocational education to over 500 village children.

When Auroville was started, there was no primary health care in the villages. Today, the *Auroville Health Centre* operates 7 rural sub-centres, which attend to the basic health needs of 35,000 people in 26 villages. Additionally, the Auroville Dental Centre operates 12 rural dental sub-centres, run by 22 trained rural dental hygienists who educate the villagers in dental care and offer minor dental services.

Technologies and practices developed in Auroville are widely disseminated in India and in the world. Auroville has become a crucible of applied research and a provider of environmentally and socially sustainable practices. The development of Auroville stands as an example in the industrialized world that urbanization need not necessarily destroy the Earth's fragile ecosystems nor suck the resources of the surrounding bio-region.

Auroville and its evolutionary ideals

For Aurovilians, however, sustainability is not the end but the means to the end. Auroville's aim is to further the evolution of the human species through the growth of consciousness. It is only because the current state of human consciousness has created immense problems of social and environmental justice that threaten the very viability of life, Aurovilians are engaged in sustainability as part of their spiritual journey towards evolution.

But what exactly does evolution mean? Evolution can be defined simply as the emergence of new behaviors or properties in a system. Systems scientists see the emergence of matter, living organisms, human beings and societies as the unfolding of a single evolutionary process. Seeking to define the evolutionary process by delineating the factors that are common to these three worlds of matter, life, and mind, scientists talk of evolution as a self-organizing process from which, over time, a novel and more complex structure arises from a simple form. As the complexity of structures increases over evolutionary time, certain significant thresholds are crossed, leading to a new layer of evolution that follows analogous, but different sets of rules than all the other layers. (Properties of evolution, n.d., n.p.)

A system capable of evolutionary development is essentially a complex system and is characterized by certain basic properties. Complexity theory, or the theory of complex systems, has its roots in the study of dissipative systems in the field of thermodynamics, in the study of weather patterns, in the observations of the natural world with its fractal reality, its cell-structures, and organization of colonies and group behavior. More recently, complexity theory has been used in social sciences to examine the dynamic components and the emergent properties of social systems. In other words, complexity theory can be applied to study any non-linear or dynamic system. Complexity sciences are thus transdisciplinary and by applying them to the physical, the natural, and the social world, one can better understand the dynamics of the evolutionary process.

Complexity theory represents a much-needed paradigm shift on how we view reality. Just as a mechanical conceptualization of the world brought about the industrial revolution, so it is hoped that an understanding complexity will bring about a shift towards conscious evolution. Complexity theory reveals that the astounding diversity of the universe is unified by patterns that are common to all. It is purported that we can seek to guide evolution by adopting the properties of complex systems in our organizations. In the remaining part of this paper, I list the features of a complex system and examine how Auroville, as an organization, meets the requirements of being defined as a complex system.

Features of a complex system and Auroville as an example of such a system

Complexity

The first defining characteristic of a complex system is its complexity. The word, “complex” implies “twisted together,” and the parts of a complex system are interconnected and interdependent in complicated ways. The system as a whole exhibits radically different properties than its constituent parts, and the behavior of the system as a whole cannot be described linearly in terms of cause and effect. Complexity forces us look at the system holistically rather than seeking to understand the system by studying its components.

In social sciences, the complexity of a system is also indicated by the diversity of the participating human agents. Lawrimore (2004) argues that “greater the diversity of agents in teams, the more varied the patterns and solutions which emerge from their interactions. Diversity should include if possible different cultures, ages, genders, backgrounds and personalities for the most creative results.”

The complexity of Auroville is underscored by the fact it comprises 2,000 people from 40 different countries. Unlike most other intentional communities where there is a certain homogeneity in culture, literacy level, and economic privileges, Auroville is extremely heterogeneous. An estimated one-third of the population of Auroville hail from the local villages, and many of them are poor and not highly educated. Such socio-economic differences make for a more complex and challenging social experiment.

Nestedness

Complex systems are composed of nested subsystems. This nested nature is a fundamental characteristic of the universe with galaxies being the largest complex system known to humankind. Matter evolves to form galaxies, stars, and planets including our planet Earth. Life emerges from inanimate Earth. Mind evolves from life. Mind is nested in life is nested in matter. Everything in this world is an autonomous whole that in turn is nested, as a part, in a larger whole.

As with any other society of a certain size, nestedness is definitely a feature of Auroville. In terms of its economy, Auroville’s businesses and services are organized into projects and units that are nested in legal trusts under the Auroville Foundation. Further, there are coordinating bodies that oversee the functioning of individual units. Similarly in terms of governance, Auroville has a number of working groups whose members are chosen by the community through a selection process. While the Government of India has imposed a legal and nested hierarchical structure comprising the Auroville Foundation, for all practical purposes for the

internal working of the community, Aurovilians have a great deal of freedom in the governance of their community.

Networks

While the nested nature of systems gives rise to holoarchy, the network organization of complex systems allow for non-hierarchical flow of information. Networks that constitute a complex system allow for a quicker decentralized flow of information through the system than linear or hierarchic patterns. In such networks, it is often found that each component has multiple functions and each goal is served by multiple components.

Networking in Auroville is achieved due to overlapping of work responsibilities and due to the fact that the same individual can serve in more than one working group. In Auroville, there are two main sources of information sources in the community – the weekly printed journal *News and Notes* and the online forum *Auronet*. Working groups in Auroville share notes of their meetings in both these forums and seek feedback on certain issues such as building applications, joining Auroville, membership of a group etc.

News and Notes, being printed simultaneously in English, French, and Tamil, (the main languages of Auroville) reaches out to the entire community. *Auronet* is an open forum for all members and friends of the community, but being in English, it has a more limited participation. Also, not everyone has fulltime access to internet services to access *Auronet* at their will. There are an estimated 300 people who use *Auronet* regularly, and generally one finds animated discussion on *Auronet* on various topics in Auroville and occasional interesting posts and comments from other events in the world. The asynchronous online medium of *Auronet* facilitates networking and allows for far greater feedback than would be possible in the print medium or face-to-face encounters. One of the community's major criticisms is that the working groups themselves, possibly due to an overload of work, do not sufficiently participate in *Auronet* to make governance in Auroville truly egalitarian and participatory. Nevertheless, through a constant exchange of opinions, beliefs and values and a deeper sharing through personal blogs, there is a sense of an evolving community among *Auronet* users.

Other opportunities for networking in Auroville are general meetings of the Residents' Assembly that are facilitated by the Residents' Assembly Service and informal encounters over meals in cafeterias. Most Aurovilians are deeply invested in the development of the town, and I have often witnessed how through casual conversations, new ideas and proposals flow and new groups and are subsequently implemented into action.

Openness to the environment

Complex systems, also referred to dynamic open systems, by definition are not closed systems but open to dynamic exchanges with the environment. The environment refers to that which is external to the system, but which affects it in some way. Complex systems have fuzzy boundaries that allow for energy, matter, and information to be exchanged with the surrounding environment.

Auroville has porous borders and is open, physically, socio-economically and culturally, to exchanges with the outside world. Auroville's land runs contiguous to land owned privately

by local people. Often there are no clear markers where Auroville land ends and a private plot begins. While one needs to follow certain procedures in order to formally join Auroville, there are hundreds of volunteers and tourists who reside in Auroville and participate in its life, without officially joining it. Besides, an estimated number of 4,000 employees commute to Auroville daily to work. Auroville is also supported by a large network of friends who not only visit Auroville on a regular basis but also participate in online discussions on the *Auronet*. Officially, in India, Auroville is supported by government and non-government institutions and internationally, friends of Auroville have established a number of Auroville-International centers. There is a healthy cultural exchange whereby numerous artistes of national and international stature mount performances in Auroville. Because of such exchanges with the outside world, there are always random fluctuations that, on the one hand, tend to disrupt the stability of Auroville, but on the other hand, push it towards greater growth through the emergence of still more complex systems.

Cybernetics

A complex system interacts with its environment or with itself is through feedback loops. Unlike linear systems that establish linear or causal relationships, complex systems have complex feedback loops established through networks. These feedback loops allow for unpredictable growth or emergence of new properties.

Given its size, both in terms of geographical area and population, there are ample opportunities for networking in Auroville, but there needs to be more consciously designed feedback loops to allow for greater participation of the residents in the day-to-day working of Auroville. In Auroville, sadly, many powerful working groups such as the Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC) and L'avenir, the Planning Office, offer only "token" participation to the residents. As Arnstein (1969) points out, there are gradations of citizens' participation in governance and that "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless" (p. 216). In "token" participation, according to Arnstein, residents' voices are heard but their opinions are not sufficiently heeded. There is no assurance that the residents' opinions will lead to a change in the existing status quo.

There are numerous reasons for this state of affairs in Auroville: Many people serving in these groups have multiple jobs and therefore not enough time to engage in participatory discussions with the residents; discussions in Auroville are often vociferous and dominated by a few disgruntled citizens who are loud in complaining but silent about other possible solutions, and there are not enough tools developed in the community to guide the rambunctious discussion process to a meaningful dialogue; lastly, and most insidiously, there are a few Aurovilians serving in working groups who believe that they know what is best for Auroville or what the Mother wanted and thus do not deem it worthwhile to consult the residents in their decisions. The shadow that lurks over Auroville's life in this context is a shadow issue for all religious and spiritual groups: When one defers authority to a spiritual leader, one by default dismisses any form of participatory citizenry.

Dynamically stable

Complex systems are dynamic systems. Their equilibrium or ordered structure is not in stasis but in dynamic motion. Such systems teeter on the edge of ordered behavior and chaos. Order

and chaos hold each other in check so that the system does not collapse into complete anarchy or freeze into the rigid stasis of structured order. The evolutionary biologist Kauffman (1991) notes that living systems exist on the edge of chaos as it maximizes evolutionary adaptation. Applying this learning to societies, Csikszentmihalyi (1994) points to the necessity of not objectifying goals too rigidly (for that would not allow for change) but to always be in the flow of movement towards a goal.

Auroville exemplifies the criterion of dynamic stability in many different ways. Firstly, it has a certain degree of secularization and openness as a city, and yet unlike most cities that are founded for socio-economic reasons, Auroville is consciously based on spiritual ideals. Unlike many religious communities, however, Aurovilians have a greater deal of freedom in interpreting their spiritual ideals. Thus Auroville's dynamic stability arises from the integrating structure provided by its ideals and the freedom granted to individuals in the implementation of the ideals.

Secondly, as observed earlier, Auroville is not a closed community but open to exchanges with the outside world. Even the population of Auroville fluctuates as new people join or others leave. Many foreign Aurovilians also take the opportunity to go out for a few months in the summer to work in their native countries and/or visit family. This fluctuation in population affects Auroville's working. While most short-term visitors find the dynamics of Auroville's organization to be too confusing, long-term residents are aware that, as with complex systems, Auroville is always in a state of orderly disorder.

Self-organization

Complex systems are dissipative systems that are far from equilibrium, but as a complex system continues to exchange energy and matter with its environment, it suddenly exhibits an ordered pattern. The emergence of spontaneous order in a complex system is known as self-organization. This order in random movement is not imposed from the outside but comes from within the organization. It is believed that self-organization in complex systems arises out of its intricate networks that allow for a quicker decentralized flow of information through the system than linear or hierarchic patterns. A common example of self-organization is the way water gushing down a drain in a random fashion will suddenly assume the shape of a whirlpool.

Auroville implicitly embodies this feature of complex systems in its organizational ideal of "Divine Anarchy". The Mother explains that "the anarchic state is the self-government of each individual, and it will be the perfect government only when each one becomes conscious of the inner Divine and will obey only him and him [sic] alone" (Alfassa, 2000, p. 76). This implies that one lives according to the dictates of one's soul or one's deepest subjective truth. And this in turn entails utmost differentiation of individuals in society. Upholding such differentiation and subjectivity as desirable virtues, the quantum physicist-turned-philosopher Niculescu points out that it is only the subjective self who can comprehend the complexity of "finite realm with its infinite dimensions" (2002, p. 38),

The Mother says that when people are conscious of the inner Divine, they can "organize themselves spontaneously, without fixed rules and laws" (Alfassa, 1980, p. 225). Such an ideal organization, where people are conscious of their psychic beings and live according to

the spiritual truth that is unfolding in life and matter, would automatically lead to a natural harmony where everyone would find their place. It would result in what Nicolescu terms as *transhumanism*, that is, “the maximal actualization of unity in diversity and diversity in unity” (2002, p. 144).

In keeping with complexity theory, spontaneous self-organization also emerges whenever the system is in crisis or threatened by external factors. In Auroville, I have witnessed residents rising to the challenge and organizing themselves spontaneously in a very short period of time in response to environmental crises. A recent example is when cyclone Thane directly hit Auroville and destroyed essential infrastructure such as electricity poles, leaving residents for over three weeks without access to power or water. The community, in a remarkable show of strength and resilience re-organized itself to bring relief to all those affected. Such groups, instead of seeking to hold on to power, then disband when the work or the crisis is over.

Emergence of new properties and structures

One of the paradigmatic shifts that has come about by replacing reductionist Newtonian worldviews with complexity theory is a new way of understanding the process of change. In complexity theory, massive changes in effects are not necessarily due to massive change in the causes. Minute changes that happened to the system in the past can potentially over time produce colossal effects resulting in the emergence of new properties.

The point at which a complex system exhibits new properties or collapses to a simpler system is called a bifurcation point. At the bifurcation point, the behavior of the system and its future pathway is unpredictable. The concept of bifurcation points forces us to have a new perspective on change or evolution. Instead of the gradual change advocated by Darwinism, one realizes that large-scale changes can be sudden and unpredictable due to the presence of bifurcation points.

In Auroville, despite the increasing bureaucracy and ossification of its governing structure, occasionally there emerge new properties and structures in the system. At times, these changes arise from within the system itself: For example, recently, the working groups dealing with Auroville’s economy admitting to stagnation in this sector and their inability to address asked for a study group to come up with a fresh proposal for the economy. At other times, spontaneous self-organization allows for new groups, without any official mandate, to emerge. Examples would be of the collective movement that called themselves *Vision 2012*, the group called *Unity Forum*, and a new socio-economic think-tank that came together to assist the planning office in 2012. The relative ease of the emergence of new groups willing to take responsibility for a task results from the fact that nobody is perceived as being a leader in Auroville. Auroville has a highly creative micro-culture where there is a certain equity of power among all members that allows for the natural emergence of leaders. In effect, Auroville acts like a complex system that can maintain a robust structure for long periods of time but always possesses the potential for radical qualitative change and emergence of new properties or structures.

Unpredictability

Unlike linear systems the behavior of complex systems over time is unpredictable. Scientifically speaking, the unpredictability in nature stems firstly from the fact that open

dissipative systems are highly sensitive to initial conditions. Even slight differences in the initial conditions are hugely amplified as the system evolves over time. It is thus not feasible to predict the outcome of the system as determining all the initial conditions of a system is practically impossible.

Evolution cannot be definitively guaranteed. This being universally true, is true of Auroville as well. There is also no way to guarantee Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's words about evolution in general and Auroville in particular. One can only take them on faith or as truth-claims, and it is only with time that truth would be revealed. Even if evolution were a thing decreed, there are major challenges such as ossification through increasing bureaucracy, regression into religious dogmatism, spiritual bypassing, and capitalistic tendencies that Auroville faces. Whether Auroville will manifest its destiny as being an accelerated center for evolution depends on how successfully it overcomes these challenges.

Complex systems are guided by attractors

By tracking the trajectories of complex systems over time, scientists have discovered that such systems tend to constellate around certain patterns. As a complex system continually adapts to its environment, it seems to gravitate towards a preferred state or pattern of dynamic equilibrium, and over time the whole system converges on that pattern. This pattern is called an *attractor* or *attractor state*. Attractors exist in exist in a temporal dimension transcendent to the system itself, and they seem to guide complex systems in their development by positing a potential future state.

Applying this concept of attractors to organizations, Lawrimore (2004, *Powerful Attractors* para. 7) says, "In human organizations, a desired future state may also be expressed through a *shared vision*." It is thus posited that, similar to attractors in a complex system, the spiritual ideals of Auroville guide its destiny in certain specific directions. Inner and outer life in Auroville does not proceed in a *laissez-faire* manner but takes certain specific pathways as the residents of Auroville, individually and collectively, strive to manifest their ideals. The spiritual vision of Auroville acts as a reference point for Aurovilians to determine whether their individual and collective development is in accordance with its ideals or not.

Also, despite the wide range of complex behavior in life-forms, scientists have discovered that there seem to be only a few attractors. Applying this phenomenon to human societies, one can argue that for a society to be evolutionary, it should just have a few rules, within which people can operate freely. Auroville achieves precisely that: Highly anti-authoritarian in its culture, Auroville's rules are not rigidly applied but taken as flexible guidelines. Auroville's manifestation is not so much an inflexible imposition of rules but a continuous discovery of its ideals, which are open to interpretation by all individuals.

In conclusion, I would like to state that applications of complexity theory in the field of human organizations are currently still very tentative and undeveloped. This is because human beings, as participating agents in a complex system, are significantly more complex than those usually considered by the theory. The volition of individuals, their simultaneous participation in many different complex systems, etc., make it difficult, for researchers to understand human-based systems even through the use of computer simulations. Also, there is still no

consensus on the meaning of concepts such as complexity, differentiation, and integration mean applied to the human realm. This paper, is a pioneering effort to see the intentional community of Auroville, with its evolutionary ideals, as a complex system. It is purported that as a social experiment Auroville exhibits the characteristics of a complex system and is thereby aptly suited to further evolution. However, in order to stay true to Auroville's spiritual ideology, it also needs to be mentioned that rather than growth facilitated by objective factors, Sri Aurobindo's hope was that, with the human species, evolution would proceed "through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness." Ideally, according to Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision, evolution in Auroville and in the world would be spearheaded by the conscious development of the individual, but this individual would naturally be part of a larger collective.

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Working Together, Genders Apart: Women builders in eco-communities

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/JHacOj7gXX4>

Abstract

Eco-building is gendered; it is perceived to be a male domain where men are presumed to be better builders, more men than women actually build, and women find their ideas and contributions to eco-building are often belittled. This is particularly surprising given the otherwise gender-supportive, and attempts at gender-neutral, practices in many eco-villages and intentional communities. The way in which eco-building has been framed as requiring a physical strength and scientific skill that only men possess has undermined what work women actually do on build sites, perpetuates myths about male skills and strengths, excludes female voices from design discussions, and does not acknowledge the history of women-led building. These views and exclusionary practices have important consequences in particular that gender becomes an important marker of difference when it need not be. Building has a lot to do with confidence and skill, but socially constructed notions of gender have determined that strength is the most important attribute required. Examining the gender divide in eco-building also raises questions about the relationship between bodies and building. The ‘doing’ and manual aspect of building is unfamiliar for many (not just women) and many interviewees commented on the need to relearn how to be practical and to understand the physical possibilities (and limitations) of their bodies. Thus exploring gender and eco-building also enables analysis of how eco-communities build *per se* and approach building as a community practice.

Introduction

Gender is a problem in eco-building and in the way in which buildings are constructed in eco-communities. This paper explores how and why gender is a problem in building, the consequences of ignoring gender as an issue, and the ways in which this should be challenged. Women tend to be excluded through a variety of gendered assumptions about female minds, bodies and society’s expectations of what women do (and can do). This has consequences for both genders. While there are many female eco-architects, some notable eco-builders and some women-only projects, that there are not more means there is every possibility that we are excluding a wealth of knowledge and labour from eco-building. It also limits the possibility for more mainstream adoption of eco-building. Furthermore, this exclusion seems counter to many of the ecological approaches adopted by eco-communities elsewhere in their practices. An ecological approach tends to require an holistic understanding and inclusion of all elements relevant to our existence. This holism, tied with an emphasis upon collectivism, would require us to deal openly and honestly with issues of gender.

Empirical material for this paper was collected from March to October 2010. During these eight months 30 eco-communities were visited across five countries: Britain, Spain, Thailand,

Argentina and the USA. It was important to study eco-housing at this micro-scale in order to fully understand the complex choices people make about their homes, to test the reality of whether the houses actually work, and to appreciate the cultural, environmental and political contexts in which they are built. In total 35 interviews were completed with participants, and wherever possible I stayed in the eco-homes themselves. From this larger body of material, seven case studies are specifically drawn upon as examples in this paper and are detailed in Table 1.

Case study	Location	Construction materials	Tenure	Designed and built by	Underlying vision
Ampersand Sustainable Learning Centre	Cerrillos, New Mexico, USA	Straw bale, cob, adobe, wood	Owner-occupied	Owners and volunteers	Autonomous sustainable living
Earthship Biotechture	Taos, New Mexico, USA	Car tyres, waste products, earth	Owner-occupied	Mike Reynolds and owners	Autonomous buildings
Green Hills	Scotland*	Straw bale, tyres, earth	Owner-occupied	Owners and volunteers	Autonomous sustainable living
La Ecoaldea Del Minchal	Andalucía, Spain	Wooden zomes	Land collectively owned	Owners and volunteers	Autonomous sustainable living
Lama Foundation	Taos, New Mexico, USA	Straw bale, cob, adobe, wood	Land owned by trust	Owners and volunteers	Autonomous sustainable and spiritual living
Panya Project	Chiang Mai province, Thailand	Clay, straw, wood (cob and adobe)	Land owned by founder	Residents and volunteers	Permaculture
Tinkers Bubble	Somerset, England	Canvas, wood, thatch	Land collectively owned	Residents and volunteers	Living without fossil fuels

* This is not its true location, but has been moved to protect privacy.

Table 1: Summary of case studies (source: author's fieldwork)

Definitions of eco-building

Advocates of ecological architecture, a design and build process which has only recently started to receive mainstream recognition, have long argued for a closer consideration of the inherent relationships between people, buildings, environment and climate (Harris and Borer, 1998, Ward, 2011). Modern conventional architecture, evident across the world, often displays a dissociation from its context, and as a result has to rely on energy-intensive technologies to operate (such as heating, cooling, waste disposal and water delivery systems), with residents often being oblivious to how these technologies function.

Instead, ecological architecture calls for an understanding of the peculiarities of place, materials, cultural context, climate, solar and wind patterns, people's lifestyles and needs, and existing biodiversity. This can then all be used to design houses that require far less energy to both build and run. The term eco-building can include zero or low carbon houses, low impact developments, sustainable housing, green building, passive houses, zero-net energy housing and energy-plus houses (Borer and Harris, 1998; Pickerill and Maxey, 2009; Broome, 2008;

Williams, 2012; Roaf *et al.*, 2007). However, for the purposes of this paper the term eco-communities will be used to refer to those eco-builds which take place within communities; spaces of collaborative, collective and communal living. A number of different examples will be used in this paper, some intentional communities, others eco-villages, but all involving collaboration in living and working together.

When discussing eco-building it is important to distinguish between the *function* and the *form*. The function refers to the intended outcome of a design choice, whereas the form refers to the process by which that function is to be achieved. Thus the forms of eco-housing vary enormously and include using highly-technological systems or low-tech vernacular natural-build approaches to achieve the same function of low carbon housing. As the form of eco-housing is different from its function, then it is possible to identify certain commonalities in what makes a house an eco-house, without predisposing how that might be achieved. Thus the common functions of an eco-house are for a building across its whole life-cycle to minimise resource use (in materials, in embodied energy, energy requirements and water use), minimise waste (in materials, space, energy and leakage), and maximise use of renewable energy (such as solar, wind and water) and renewable materials (such as straw, sheep's wool, wood and earth).

This separation between function and form also helps explain some of the problems encountered by ecological architecture; a focus on function can limit eco-houses “to checklists of moral responsibility and remedial action” (Wines, 2000, p.68), rather than a broader focus on the aesthetics, a theoretical context, or a concern with developing new ways of connecting eco-housing to its cultural and natural context. However, a focus on materials and aesthetics can preclude adequate consideration of required building performance in terms of durability, comfort and energy supply. There is a well worn and unresolved tension between those build approaches which employ technologies and those which rely on natural materials. Thus eco-building is a diverse and contested array of approaches, designs and methods. In other words, there is plenty to argue about as to what makes a good eco-building, let alone how it should be constructed and by whom.

A brief history of gender in architecture, design and homes

The importance of gender in discussions of architecture and homes has long been acknowledged. Geographers in particular have worked to explore how home space is gendered, such as the kitchen being perceived as a woman's place, and how certain roles within a home (such as cleaning, child care and food production) are considered female domains. In turn academics have sought to challenge the dichotomy within society between private (home) and public (beyond home) space and how this has been gendered, often in restricting women to the private realm. As Blunt and Dowling (2006, p.27) argue, ‘home is neither public nor private but both. Home is not separated from public, political worlds but is constituted through them: the domestic is created through the extra-domestic and vice versa’. Moreover, women become restricted in the home in the kind of identities they can express. The consequence of this dichotomy is in their subsequent valuing; not surprisingly private home space has been de-valued, while what occurs in public space gains greater attention and

credence. Thus academics have sought to make visible what takes place in the private/ home realm and consequently to ensure it is valued. At the same time, they have sought to highlight how home is not a neutral or indeed necessarily a safe place, but can be a site of oppression and violence (Wardhaugh, 1999).

Few academics, however, have explored the disjuncture between how spaces are occupied and who designs those spaces. While geographers have considered space as socially constructed (in other words, that places are made through the everyday practices of those who occupy or live in them), few have examined the material structures of the buildings (and the walls and divisions) themselves as shaping their use. An exception is Dolores Hayden (1978, 1981), an urban planner, who documented an American feminist movement which sought, amongst other aims, to design kitchenless houses, moveable walls and community dining halls as a way to free women from their socially expected roles. This movement identified women as being isolated and confined in homes through their domestic chores (often to a kitchen at the back of the house [Cieraad, 2002]). Their solution was to remove these chores from women's singular responsibility through socialised housework and community services, offering women opportunities to be employed beyond the home and creating a collective and cooperative life. In essence the movement sought to value women's diverse contributions and remove their domestic burdens – something we are still working on achieving today.

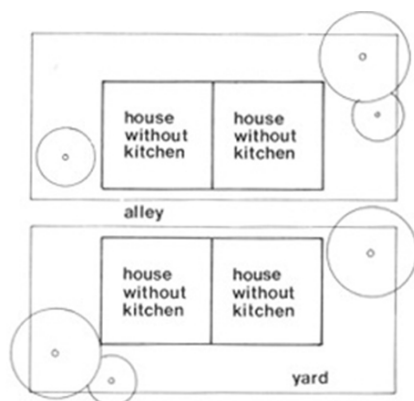
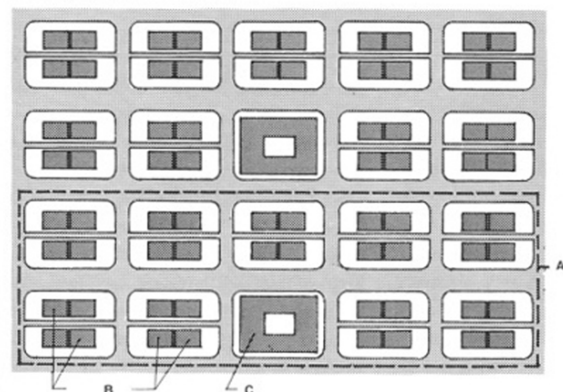


Diagram of block of four kitchenless houses, by Beth Ganister, based on descriptions by Melusina Fay Peirce



Diagrammatic plan of cooperative residential neighborhood (A), thirty-six kitchenless houses (B), and one cooperative housekeeping center (C), drawn by Paul Johnson from descriptions by Melusina Fay Peirce

Figure 1: Kitchenless houses (source: Hayden, 1978)

Hayden's work illustrates the importance of building design in shaping buildings usage and gender practices. When women are empowered to design their own houses they can do so in radically different ways and with significant implications for alternative ways of occupying a house. There are similarities between this movement and attempts to deal with gender issues within intentional communities and eco-villages. Yet similarly, despite extensive attempts to challenge gender dichotomies within such alternative collective spaces, traditional expectations of women (as primarily carers and cooks) often continue and remain as divisive as ever (Jarvis, 2013).

Yet for women physically building houses is not a new concept. Crews (2010) has explored the role of women in the construction of indigenous pueblos (villages) in New Mexico, USA. Prior to the Spanish colonialism of the 1500s, women were in charge of building the houses. Men would provide the timbers and set them in place, but it was women who would erect the walls, plaster them and maintain the physical structure. This changed with arrival of colonialists and missionaries, who forced men to do the women's work of constructing buildings. The Spanish stripped indigenous people of their existing gender roles and thus the women's practice of building was also removed from them. Instead a patriarchy was imposed on a previously quite gender-balanced society. In numerous other worldwide examples of vernacular architecture (self-built structures), it is often women who were the builders.

Feminism and gender

Gender can be a tricky concept to define and is open to ongoing contestation. Indeed use of the concept as a way to discuss differences between men and women is itself challenged by emerging understandings of transgendered and intersexed people who do not fit the rigid binary distinctions of women/ men and thus transgress gender norms (Doan, 2010). Moreover, any focus on gender as a defining identity can be immediately challenged by questions as to why other forms of identity such as race, class, sexuality and so on are not as important, or more important, in discussing diversity and difference. For the purposes of this paper gender, and in particular the experiences of women, have been focused upon primarily because it was a category of contention identified by interviewees throughout my fieldwork. In using gender as a concept, this paper intends to analyse just one form and one category of discrimination within eco-building, but it does so without intending to marginalise or undermine the experiences of those to whom this gender binary does not fit, or of those for whom other forms of exclusion are more prevalent. Instead, this paper seeks to use gender as a way to understand broader discriminatory practices that no doubt have been experienced by many others.

In exploring gender, and in particular experiences of women, there are two main competing ways in which it is understood. The first is biological determinism, recently reignited by academics such as Baron-Cohen (2012) who have argued once again that men and women are biologically different, not just in bodily form but in brain chemistry, cognitive skills, and spatial abilities (Hines, 2004), and that thus it is possible to biologically determine how different genders will behave and what they will excel at (Walters, 2010). In contrast, the predominant feminist understanding of gender is as a socially constructed category to which a variety of stereotypes tend to be associated. This is different from defining ourselves through biological sex. For example, in this context, women are socially constructed (and thus socially educated) to be (or consider themselves as) domestic, feminine, creative, caring, emotional, mothers and homemakers. In contrast, masculinity embodies notions of rationality, scientific, careerist, physically strong and home builders. These are stereotypes because gender is actually a spectrum whereby some of us will identify with aspects from both categories, without necessarily feeling the need to challenge how we identify as men or women. In other words, these stereotypes create gender roles which limit and constrain both genders into certain behaviours deemed acceptable by society (Redfern and Aune, 2010). Ultimately

society’s expectations create inequality for women who are expected to take on more domestic roles and to earn less. As such, feminism asks us to make visible assumptions around gender roles, gender inequalities, and how certain spaces are gendered. This paper explores these by exploring assumptions about women’s bodies, minds and society’s expectations of eco-building.

Gender trouble in eco-building

Few women are involved in eco-building, and there is a stereotype prevalent amongst the case studies examined in this research that ‘men build houses and women make homes’, hence the women are constrained to support roles, internal decorating and childcare while the men do the construction. Examples of women being leaders and full participants in build projects are rare (most were in the USA) and in the main female voices were excluded from design discussions and women’s ideas about eco-building were often ignored, not acknowledged and not listened to. These multiple exclusions can be grouped into assumptions around women’s bodies, minds and inferring and compounding society’s expectations, see Figure 2.

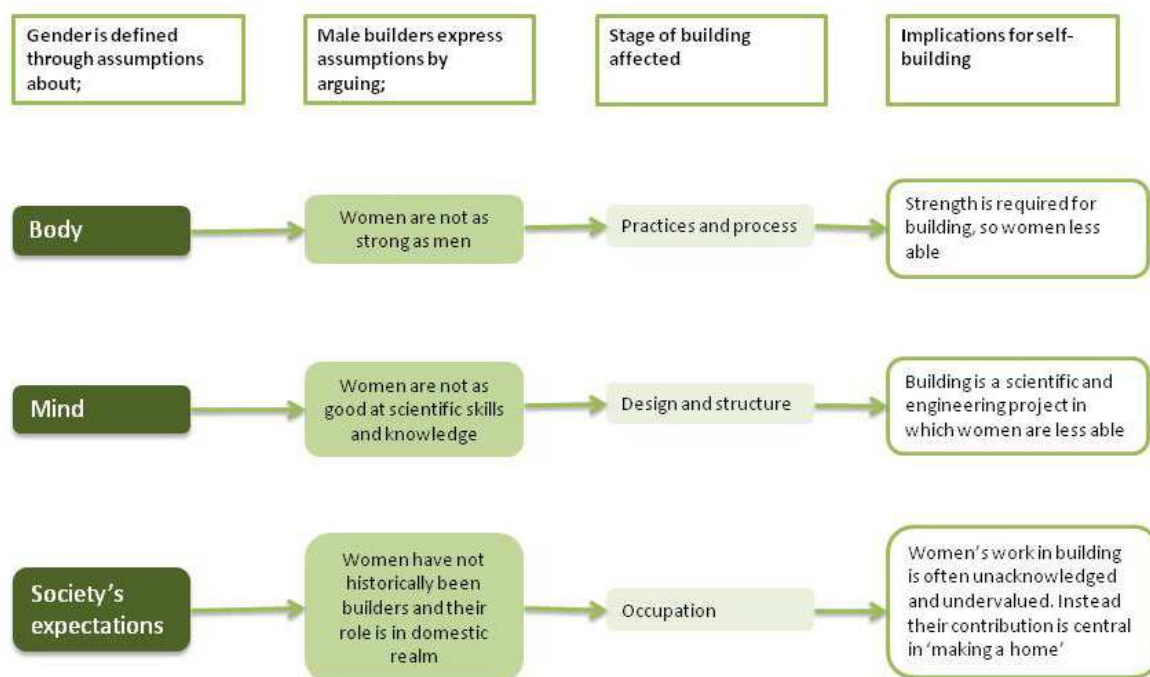


Figure 2: Gender assumptions in eco-building (source: author)

There are multiple assumptions made about women’s bodies. Many male interviewees tended to assume that women were not as strong or physically able as men. As many men equated building as primarily requiring physical strength, then consequently they argued that women were less able to contribute to the practices and processes of building. This belief is self-perpetuating, especially on build sites where women may be actively encouraged to take on less physically demanding jobs. For example, on a build site I had been struggling to learn how to ram earth into tyres to create building blocks and felt intimidated by others’ strength and agility. However I tend to take a while to work out my rhythm for a new skill; I need practice and patience at the beginning. But before long I felt that I was not learning quickly

enough and my decidedly unassertive response was to take myself off and fold cardboard into the bottom of tyres instead. I conformed to the gender stereotype because it was easier, despite actually being quite strong and perfectly practically competent. Moreover, strength is rarely the most important attribute required for building;

The physical aspect of building is to me a small aspect. There's so much you have to do right. You have to really pay attention to what you're doing, and those details or just making things plumb or level, you really have to think ahead in order to integrate what's going to come later and later and later with what you're doing now ... It takes so much more than just your brute force, and it's a lot more important, that thinking stuff. (Amanda Bramble, Ampersand Sustainable Learning Centre, New Mexico, USA).

Thus the assumption that women are not as strong, or that strength is the key attribute required for eco-building can be challenged on both a practical level and in illustrating that such assumptions are a form of biological determinism.



Figure 3: Alix Henry, Amanda Bramble and a volunteer (source: author)

Likewise, assumptions are often made as to women's mental capabilities. Despite plenty of evidence to the contrary, a myth persists that women are not as good at science, maths and engineering as men, and this in turn hinders their ability to design and structure houses. Sometimes this is expressed as blatant discrimination, as Alix Henry has encountered; "Construction and architecture are highly male dominated professions and so to be in it as a woman has its challenges ... there's a huge amount of discrimination against women in the [architecture] profession" (Alix Henry, eco-architect, Earthship Biotecture, New Mexico, USA). At other times it can be more subtle. Gregory Crawford, a builder in the Panya Project, Thailand, argued that more artistic approaches to building were more inclusive, especially to women; "I feel as if it's more accessible to more people if it's not a science but an art, and natural building sometimes, often feels more of an art to me than a science". This inferred deference to women being more creative and artistic was experienced by a fellow female builder in the eco-village, who felt that while artistic contributions were accepted from women, they were rarely allowed to be involved in the practical structural designs:

With gender it's more than just the physicality of it. I don't think that's so much of an issue. I might make the bricks smaller but I can still lift them and I will lift them. It's the communication and it's the way that the feminine approach interacts with the masculine approach and how to merge those two in a productive way. Finding and exploring the power of each approach and harnessing that, this started to happen towards the end with the toilet project. There was definitely a more feminine presence in the creative aspect, men seemed quite happy to let women somewhat direct the artistic side of things, but when it comes to talking practically they're a little bit challenged. There needs to be a bit more of men coming in and being creative. There are a lot of creative men that live here and come through here, and there are a lot of practical women who come through too. It is allowing both sides to acknowledge that. (Shelley, Panya Project, Thailand)

As Shelley articulates, creativity and art are not limited to women and nor should they be perceived as so. Many men are creative, just as many women are good at science and structural design.

Finally, society's expectations are evoked by eco-builders in de-valuing women's contributions and placing them in the home (rather than building it). This is articulated as historically preset, despite examples of women being the builders of the past. The assumption that building is a 'man's job' has all sorts of implications for what a woman's role in these eco-communities, building and society is *per se*. It is often assumed that childcare is a woman's job (which remains highly undervalued), and that the support work such as cooking, collecting build materials, multi-tasking all the other things that need doing, just happens without great effort. It is rarely acknowledged how much work women are doing on site generally, and particularly to support the build process. The result is that finished buildings which draw attention for their innovation and design are often implicitly attributed to the male who spent most time on it. It becomes 'Jim's house' for example, excluding all the work that others, especially women, have put into it. This also has consequences for men. For example, in Green Hills the men had to take over the gardening business for a while as both the women were heavily pregnant. One of the men realised that actually he loved gardening more than building (which he had taken on by default for many years), and has ever since been far more hands-on in the garden. At the same time there are clusters of women eco-builders in certain fields within the movement. For example, Chelsea Lord (Lama Foundation, New Mexico) suggested that there was a concentration of women who advocated natural building methods and materials; "the presence of women in natural building is very strong and I think the men who tend to get into it are more accepting of having women on the job as well". Thus collectives of women might more easily find strength to challenge society's expectations.

These assumptions have consequences, and consequences for both genders, as illustrated by the example of Green Hills. In addition to being inaccurate and thus undervaluing women's existing work, it excludes potentially vital parts of a workforce which would enable more eco-houses to be built. Women may well also design houses in different ways which might be better suited to daily life. Finally, as will be discussed below, it is likely that we will require collaboration and collective work to navigate climate change and all the challenges that this will bring for our housing stock.

Redressing the balance

As we begin to unpack the gender assumptions behind the ways in which women are excluded from eco-building, we are then able to start to identify solutions. Using the same structure of understanding gender assumptions through body, mind and society’s expectations, Figure 4 suggests some ways to challenge these assumptions.

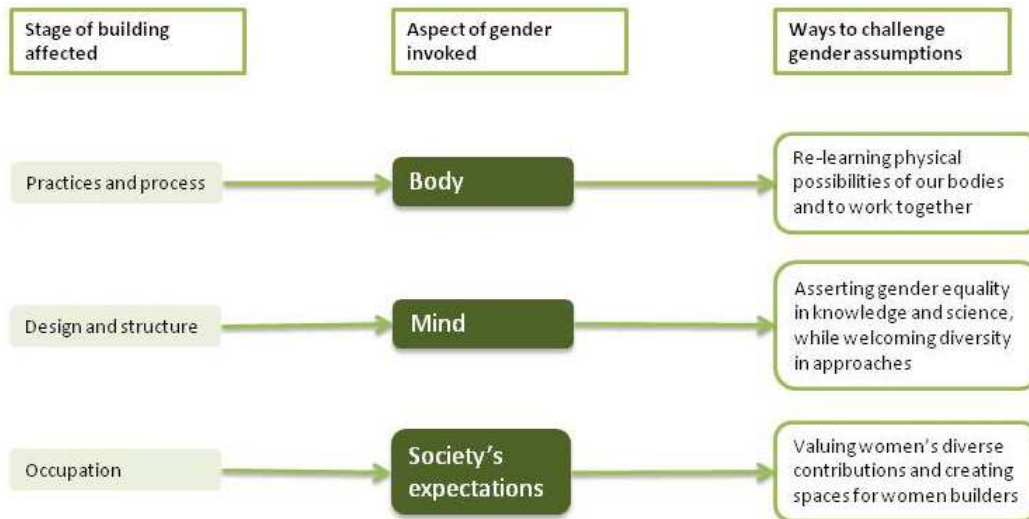


Figure 4: Challenging gender assumptions in eco-building (source: author)

In challenging assumptions about women’s bodies and their suitability for building it is necessary to encourage all potential eco-builders (men, women and beyond) to re-learn how to be practical and build with our bodies. In contemporary society manual labour is minimal for many of us and yet some of the most popular forms of eco-building are natural techniques which can be quite labour intensive (such as straw bale or adobe).

This form of bodily engagement with eco-building for women has been encouraged by training and workshops (for example, see Figure 5, with Paulina Wojciechowska of *Earth Hands and Houses* who runs numerous workshops in clays and making natural plasters). It is through these sorts of workshops and training opportunities that women are able to gain confidence through practice, to embrace new skills and be able to experiment.



Figure 5: Paulina Wojciechowska teaching at Brighton Earthship, 2010, and the Mud Girls building on Salt Spring Island, Canada (source: author and Rosie Graham)

Particular effort was put into overcoming these gender divisions in several places visited. In Argentina (perhaps ironically for a traditionally patriarchal society which still maintains much of its machismo) the Ruizes were first taught natural building by two women. They believe it is about both genders understanding and knowing their own bodies and their limitations. So building becomes about more than physical work, but also about creative judgement, which both genders need to learn and practice.

Builders such as Shay Salomon (USA) and the Mud Girls (Canada) have encouraged women's participation by leading women-only builds. For example, Salomon led a group of women who built the Bear Hermitage in silence at the Lama Foundation, a small straw-bale vault with a cordwood front (Figure 6). Salomon has advocated the building of small spaces for ecological reasons, but this approach also enables more experimental building and is easier for new builders to approach and complete. Builders such as Paulina Wojciechowska also advocate the importance of learning from the past. Those techniques such as the puddled adobe of pueblo communities which were done by women have shaped contemporary techniques. It is through learning to work as a group, building communities of female eco-builders, that women can practically contribute but also share solidarity with each other.

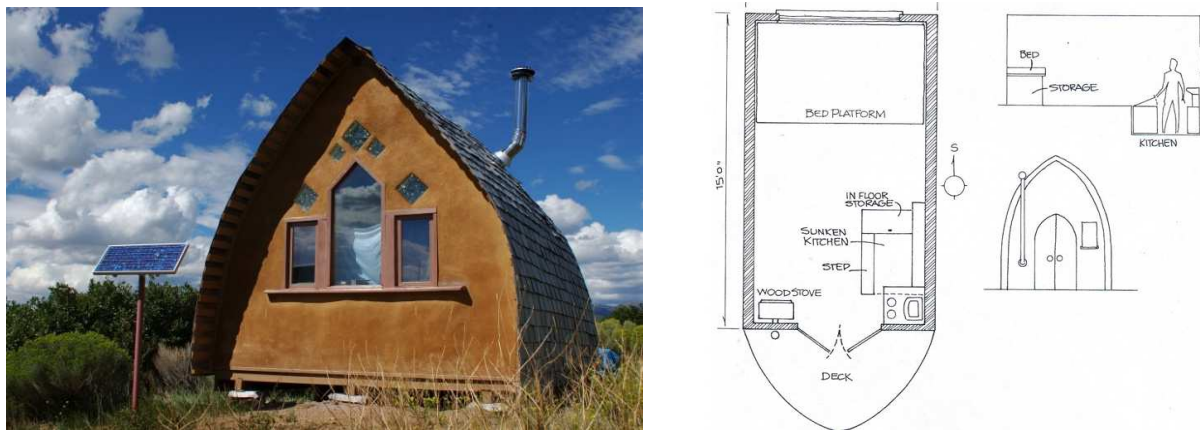


Figure 6: A hermitage small dwelling at The Lama Foundation, New Mexico

Challenging the myths about women's mental capabilities is, of course, part of a much broader and older movement concerned with more than just building. However, there is still much work to be done. This is perhaps one of the hardest areas to challenge because it requires shifts in the subtle judgements others make about women, and about the judgements we make about ourselves. In part, redressing the balance around assumptions of mental skill begins with articulating alternative theories (such that women's minds are no different to men's) and in instilling confidence (following women already in the field) to carry on regardless. There are also plenty of female architects and some notable eco-builders – Barbara Jones (Amazonnails), Brenda Vale (The Autonomous House) and Rachel Shiamh (Quiet Earth) to name just a few, and they could be further supported. Here language and communication are important. As Shelley of Panya Project argued, there is a need for a focus on communication, rather than just the physical doing, in building processes; thus a greater emphasis on listening to each other and taking on board others' opinions, without disregarding their importance based on assumptions about gender. Part of this listening is being open to a

diversity of approaches in building. This is not to say that we should not accept that there are certain engineering principles which are best to follow, but rather that we should acknowledge that there are multiple ways to build a good house.

Finally, as already illustrated, society's expectations can be evoked in devaluing women's contributions to building. This is in part through language and the ways in which women's work gets talked about. Thus the ways in which building or design work is acknowledged needs to be broadened to encompass the work women may have done that is less visible. So instead of 'Jim's house' it becomes 'Jim and Mary's house'. So as women's diverse contributions are made public and become publically valued, their work becomes visible. In this way we can embrace gender as a form of diversity but not as a division of labour. Thus it is not about women taking on male attributes, but rather valuing people's different contributions. At the same time it is necessary to create space for women to build and to build in the way they wish. One of the best houses at Tinkers Bubble (Somerset) was built by a woman – her first house that she built, with no money, and just some advice from others. She has built a beautiful, robust, cosy, building out of natural materials. She acknowledges that it is not perfect, and she would in hindsight have done some things differently. But having the freedom to learn through doing, to explore her own approaches and methods is as important as ensuring women have the skills and knowledge to build.

Broader implications of ignoring gender

MacGregor (2010) laments the lack of gender analysis in understanding the implications of, and adaptation to, climate change. She argues that if we ignore gender then the problem does not go away, rather gender inequalities are likely to get worse and will be compounded by climate change. The problem of gender in eco-building is intertwined with the politics of climate change, and thus the implications of ignoring gender are three fold.

First, we should expect gender supportive and gender neutral practices in eco-communities such as the ones I visited. Most of these eco-communities advocated working together, being inclusive and avoiding assumptions, especially those shaped by mainstream society. However, most communities struggled to practise these gender politics. We are going to require all to participate and have a community, collective, communal response if we are to adequately adapt to climate change. Excluding women from the process reduces our ability to build resilience and the necessary skills for the longer term.

Second, we could focus on the body, our bodies, rather than gender differences. If we were to take as a starting point of difference how big, strong, agile, or quick, we were we would have a better understanding of our physical abilities. But we would still have to understand our different mental strengths, and again these cannot be defined by gender. Thus an understanding of how women have been excluded from building in eco-communities should challenge us to reconsider how we predetermine what roles suit what people *per se* in a community. The fact that there is no easy alternative for determining suitability for particular roles (such as through bodily ability) signifies how complex gender is and how limited the assumptions made about gender are.

Finally, an analysis of gender in eco-building in communities requires us to understand that eco-building is about much more than the physical structure and technology – the materials – of the building. A building is imbued with politics, assumptions, a non-materiality, and as Hayden has shown, gender assumptions. We need a social understanding of how houses are constructed if we are to truly understand what makes a building work. A gender analysis begins to open up the complexity of the ways in which buildings are constructed and lived in.

Conclusions

This paper has outlined the ways in which gender is problematic in building in eco-communities. By examining gendered assumptions about women's bodies, minds and society's expectations, I have identified both the problems and some of the ways in which people are seeking to redress the balance. This is a work in progress and many questions remain. I have argued throughout that gender is no barrier to being a builder, but this is not the same as suggesting that gender should be ignored. Rather it is important to bring gender forward in order to explore its implications. Identifying gender as a category of importance immediately triggers further questions such as how would a gender neutral eco-community operate, or should we allow gender to define the differences between us? Purely on a practical level there are many reasons to argue that we are wasting the resources of women by not encouraging more to be builders. An ecological approach requires an holistic understanding and inclusion of all elements of relevance to our existence. This holism, tied with an emphasis upon collectivism, would require us to deal openly and honestly with issues of gender. At the very least I hope that this paper will challenge us to begin to explore why gender matters in eco-building.

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Reflections on Grassroots and Governance Approaches to Sustainable Development in Current Europe

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/o5B-85dtIZs>

Abstract

This paper presents the results of my empirical qualitative doctoral research, analysing sustainability-related rhetoric and practices of three rapidly growing civil initiative networks (Global Ecovillage Network, Transition Town Network, and the Let's do it! Network) in comparison to current governmental approaches to sustainability in Europe.

Concern about the environmental crisis coupled with communication possibilities offered by the new media have accelerated the formation and development of civil initiative networks willing to search for local answers instead of waiting for the global answers to be provided by national or international governance. Grassroots initiatives have contributed greatly to rising environmental awareness in the North, emphasising also the importance of cultural and social considerations in moving towards sustainable development – considerations often neglected by governance levels in favour of tackling economic and ecological aspects.

The first decade of the 21st Century saw the stakeholders seemingly agree that significant changes on different levels of society are necessary to ensure a liveable tomorrow and achieve sustainable development. However, the views on what sustainable development means (and if development can be sustainable at all), how it could be achieved and where it should lead us, varies greatly depending on the worldviews of interested parties, thus hindering closer cooperation. Different interpretations of the relationship between man and nature seem to lie at the core of this difference.

Similarly to my colleagues in the section “Sustainable Development in the North”, this paper looks at the issues of communal living and community maintenance, but on a broader scale. It looks at different approaches to human-inflicted crisis and traces survival strategies used under the shared label of ‘sustainable development’ in Europe. Rather than results, I'd like to discuss some major inconsistencies I encountered in my research into the attempts of civil society networks as well as international and national political power structures to bring about a change in the current unsustainable patterns. Tracing the reasons for the presently prevalent fragmentation, lack of awareness and cooperation, this paper outlines some practical consequences that different perceptions of sustainability can have on societal change. Due to the brevity of this text only the general trends are outlined.

The discussion is based on my empirical qualitative doctoral research, analysing how sustainable development is understood and practiced by governmental and civil society actors with different natural, historical, economic and socio-cultural backgrounds in contemporary

Europe. From the governance side, the European Union (EU) as international and Estonia, Germany and Portugal as national policymakers are chosen as case studies, and from civil society networks, the approaches of Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), Let's do it! World Network (LDIW) and Transition Town Network (TT) are analysed on both European-wide level and as case studies in each of the selected countries¹. Data was collected over 3 years doing fieldwork, interviews and analysing documents.

When talking about sustainable development in the North, many ask if this is the right focus, if the efforts should not be focused on the South instead, where there is more suffering and the consequences of unsustainable human behavioural patterns are more obvious. I argue that this widespread approach hides serious pitfalls. Firstly, because it carries the somewhat smug attitude that we in the North know better than the locals in the South what needs to change to create more sustainable lifestyles. So far this has resulted in perpetuated cultural colonialism worldwide, which has yielded little improvements in local conditions or empowerment of the local people. Secondly, when the North concentrates on teaching others, it can easily neglect its own sustainability issues, which are far from being solved. It might forget to recognize its practical responsibility in transforming its unsustainable economic patterns that continue to undermine the ecological and social sustainability attempts both in the South and the North. Unless the roots of unsustainable behavioural patterns in the North are recognized and cut, there will be little significant change in global circulation processes and in reaching one of the main aims of sustainable development: inter- and intragenerational equality. All the more so that according to a recent survey (GEO-5 2012), the EU shows particularly unsustainable levels of consumption, which is driving many of the global problems.

This calls for a closer study of the situation in the EU, the self-proclaimed champion of the sustainable development agenda. The focus on Europe has three main reasons. First of all, sustainable development as the umbrella concept has largely been conceived in and pioneered by Europe. Secondly, all three international civil society networks working for sustainable future under study stem from Europe and are still strongly represented here. And thirdly, the strategy of projecting developmental and environmental concerns to third countries, often used by European power structures to date, diverts attention from relevant shortcomings and vast diversity of contexts and ways sustainable development is understood and practiced in Europe itself. Europe has been at the forefront of promoting sustainable development ideas for over 25 years, but recently it has taken a bold, semi-official position that sustainable development is already mainstreamed in the EU². Formally, looking at how many documents have been created by the EU and the member states, this might be true. However, taking a closer look at the status quo beyond rhetoric, the vast diversity of positions is revealed.

¹ More specifically the GEN case studies include Lilleoru ecovillage in Estonia, Sieben Linden in Germany and Tamera in Portugal. TT case studies include Paide in Estonia, Freiburg in Germany and Talheiras district in Lisbon, Portugal. As the LDIW movement is spacially less fixed, there were several meetings in different locations in each country.

² Source: interviews with expert officials in the EU and in the three case study countries.

Misleading consensus

The sustainable development model was developed in the mid-1980s with the intention of reconciling two contradicting aspirations: environmental protection and economic growth (cf. Sachs 1997). It aimed to reduce environmental degradation caused by unchecked industrialisation and development, while advocating intra- and intergenerational equity and growing well-being worldwide. In less than a quarter of a century, talking about sustainable development has become an inevitable part of rhetoric when planning the future.

However, the definition of sustainable development has been very vague since the beginning and in the process of becoming more popular, the initial scope of meanings has become ever wider. This has given ground for calling sustainable development an empty concept, semantic gold-dust signifying everything that could be seen as politically, economically, socially desirable (Bachmann 2008, Grabe 2010). Many researchers note that this process has caused a lot of confusion and different interpretations of the term. Some, like Frederick Buttel, advocate its demise as a useless concept (Buttel 2000: 61-62), while others, like Mark Roseland, protect its ambiguity as it lends the concept flexibility and allows for more freedom to adapt it to different local settings (Roseland 1998:22).

One of the main problems with this concept is that it is often implicitly assumed that parties agreeing with the relevance of the concept also agree on its meaning and purpose. However, the views on what sustainable development means (and if development can be sustainable at all), how it could be reached and where it should lead us, vary greatly. Thus the broad rhetorical consensus around sustainable development issues rests largely on the all-encompassing, open and dynamic nature of the definition. The positive result is that sustainable development is accepted by almost all societal actors as a necessary goal, and has sparked an unprecedented amount of cooperation and debate between previously confrontational actors around development goals (Endl 2012: 5).

However vague, following the changes in values and understandings of socio-environmental relationships over the last decades, the concept has undergone a continuous process of change (Bagheri and Hjorth 2007). A good example in this respect is the way the European Union has altered its sustainable development definition over the years. The change in wording is subtle, but has significant consequences: from “meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of futures generations to meet their own needs” to “meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The word “compromising” was used in the original WCED definition in 1987¹ and infers that the needs of the present generation should be met without reducing the value of the resources available for future generations. However, the word “jeopardizing” indicates that compromises can be made as long as the resources for the future are not entirely depleted. The significant alteration of the word “compromising” to “jeopardizing” provides the EU with a certain degree of flexibility when making choices that threaten to reduce the

¹ As defined in the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report „Our Common Future“ from 1987 (also known as the Brundtland report): „Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.“ (2004:62).

quality of environmental inheritance passed on to future generations. This modification in definition clearly favors economic growth over social improvements and social improvements over environmental protection, indicating that the EU has stepped away from the original WCED triple bottom line model which saw the equal importance of these three pillars as a precondition for sustainable development.

Contemporary metanarratives of change

In 1960 sociologist Daniel Bell wrote about the exhaustion of political ideas in the postmodern era, suggesting that the time of fighting over the values was over, as wellbeing, economic growth and capitalist values had become a widely accepted consensus, and politics dealt more with technical questions than competing ideologies and models of good society (Bell 1988). Jean-Francois Lyotard later described this change as the end of metanarratives as legitimising all-encompassing stories of reality (Lyotard 1979). However, in the light of current sustainable development debate discussions around better and more sustainable societal models are well on their way. As the legitimising and meaning inducing function of narrative power is still as relevant as ever, talking about the end of ideologies and metanarratives seems premature.

In the context of this analysis metanarrative(s) are understood as basic text(s) of certain culture(s), giving direction to the way humans understand their role and identity, and make sense of the world around them (Bruner 1987, White 1980). Thus the concept of metanarratives is used here to explicate the different competing models attempting to legitimize their approach for creating a better, more sustainable and equal society, influencing significantly the ways societies are developing. Two dominant storylines on ways to achieve sustainable development and reasons for doing so emerged when analysing the data. To provide a concise overview of the two approaches, Table 1 presents six attitudes of the actors in relevant categories.

The governance narrative is further characterized by an overall tendency to value objectivity, general applicability and representativity, quantitative measuring tools are preferred over qualitative. Progress and development are understood in terms of linear improvement. There is an emphasis on predictability and the ability to know, control and fix. If something is broken, it can be repaired. Humans are seen as a unique natural phenomenon, separated from the rest of the world by the power of their intelligence. The ability to specialise and succeed as an individual in a competing society is esteemed. Utility, short-term profits and convenience are among the central criteria, and the yardstick is human interest. Rationality is valued over emotions, material aspects over cultural.

For the civil society narrative, being subjective and local are acceptable options and qualitative measurements are preferred as producing more in-depth knowledge. Progress and development are understood in terms of cyclical processes. Humans are seen as an intimate part of the whole. When something is out of order, it can be healed. There is an emphasis on accepting uncertainty, ignorance and diversity without losing courage to keep experimenting. The ability to recognise and take care of interconnectedness and communality are valued along with long-term responsibility and a sense of sacredness – if life wins, there are no losers

(Duhm 2011). Rationality and emotions are seen as equally important, culture is seen as the shaper of material and social aspects of life.

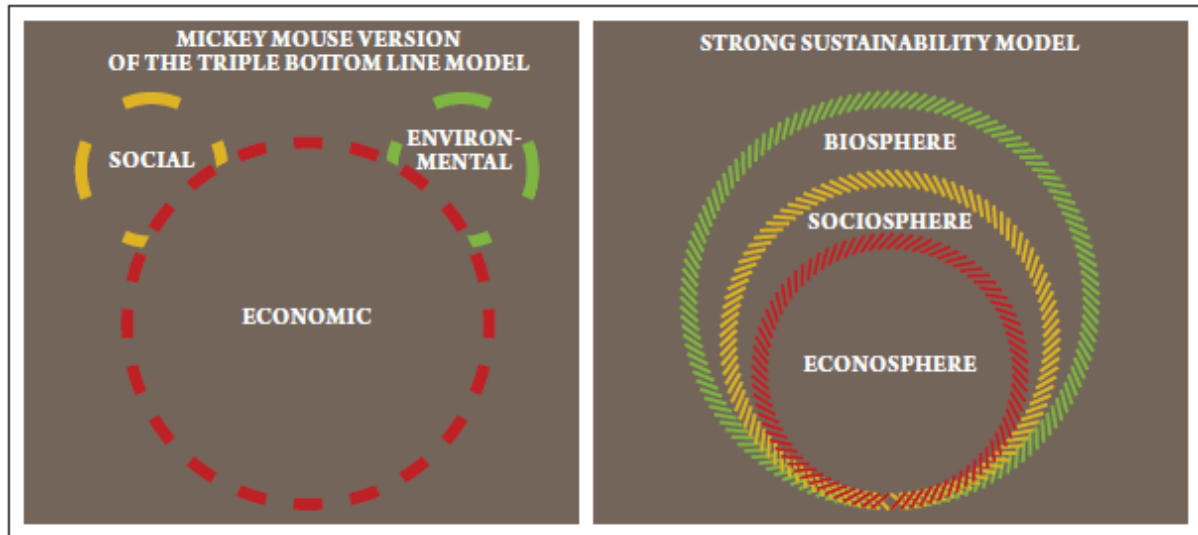
Aspect/Actor	Civil society perspective	Governance perspective
Earth is...	..a self-organizing living system/organism	..a complex mechanism; a spaceship
Humanity is...	..one equally important species in the web of life, able to consciously design harmonious systems	..a unique species with the ability to understand, change and control the world
Our main role is...	..to lessen our impact on the planetary ecosystems; to restore responsible and respectful relationships among people and with other forms of life	..to ensure human well-being; the value of everything is measured according to its value to (certain) humans
SD means...	..learning to respect and live in balance with natural systems, not taking more than we need; changing cultural norms to accept economic degrowth and localization as positive changes; focusing more on qualitative growth & social sustainability	..providing for present and future human needs; keeping the course on economic growth with minimum harm to the ecosystem services to ensure continuing well-being; decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation
What is needed for SD?	Combination of different approaches ensures resilient system. Multiple centers of initiative & decentralization of power. Preparing for degrowth and low energy future now to avoid collapse. Fundamental system change is needed.	Stronger international governance structures and continuing technical progress/innovation. Moderate adjustments to the system needed, i.e. decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation to achieve green growth.
How to change?	Society needs to adopt a systemic, holistic understanding of the nature of current problems & solutions. Allowing local actors more freedom in decision-making.	International and national centralized governance structures will supervise the change in cooperation with other stakeholders, participation via consultations.

Table 1. Condensed approaches to the status quo, sustainable development (SD) challenges and solutions of civil society and governance actors.

Different interest groups have described these dichotomous approaches with varying names and metaphors. The proponents of deep ecology movement call these perspectives shallow and deep ecology (Naess 1973), in this context the governance approach would be described as shallow and civil society approach as deep. In sustainable economics these positions are described as strong and weak sustainability (Rao 2000), with the governance approach being weak and the civil society approach strong. In political studies these have been described as modernist with reductionist/atomist ontology and postmodernist with holistic ontology (Liften 2009), indicating the governmental and civil society approach respectively. In sociology the worldviews represented by governance narrative have been characterised as the first

modernity and that of civil society networks as reflexive modernity, second age of modernity (Beck 2000, 2003; Gross 2010) or high modernity (Giddens 2000).

Visually the governance and civil society approaches can be depicted as the Mickey Mouse model and the Nested sustainability model:¹



Both models are derived from the original WCED triple bottom line definition of sustainability, but neither sees the three pillars as equally important. Each model assigns different weight to different aspects. The Nested model represents the interconnected approach of the strong sustainability model. It reasons that without a functioning biosphere there can be no society, and without a sociosphere there can be no societal functions, including economy. The Mickey Mouse model represents weak sustainability where the economic aspect is dominant and ecological and social aspects are seen as subservient to economic interests.

These models serve different developmental aims and provide different results. Whereas one narrative tends to evoke proactive attitudes along with willingness to cooperate, experiment and take responsibility,² the other appears to generate feelings of being disconnected, overpowered and passive. Despite focusing on human well-being in rhetorics, the governance story does not seem to be able to sustain the already critically overburdened biosphere in conditions which would be convenient for the future generations. From the perspective of surviving the current crisis, the more interrelated and cooperative approach appears more reasonable.

Shared sense of urgency as a catalyst?

In rhetoric, cooperation has been a relevant aspect in sustainability discourse. What could bring about more cooperation and integration of the two strands in practice? All the stakeholders are part of the same natural systems – regardless of whether they call it spaceship

¹ Source: Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand Incorporated (SANZ) and Nakedize Limited 2009, Strong Sustainability for New Zealand Principles and scenarios, page 8. Accessed via: www.phase2.org (June 2013).

² In fact, it sees itself rather as a YIMBY (yes in my back yard) movement than NIMBY movement (Current 2010).

Earth or mother Gaia. There is a general consensus among academia that we as humanity are living in increasingly unpredictable and dangerous conditions, at least partially caused by our current lifestyle patterns. Its bottom line is that although humans have been changing the world for millennia, the scale and pace of change has accelerated dramatically in the recent centuries, giving ground for a sense of urgency and a need to act together to ensure the survival of our species. This approach can be seen as a storyline about living in danger which seems to have the potential for bridging the gaps for the sake of common good.

Already in the 1940s Vladimir Vernadsky and his followers called the sphere of increased influence of human consciousness and activities on the biogeochemical environment the noosphere (cf. Jäger 2008) and about 60 years later this process marking the emergence of humans as the Earth's major geological force regained momentum when it received a new name – the anthropocene (cf. Crutzen 2011). A group of environmental scientists observed a period of unprecedentedly rapid and intensified transformation of human relationship with the natural world since 1950s and called it the “Great Acceleration” (Steffen et al 2004). Looking through the sociological lense in mid-1980s, Ulrich Beck articulated the world risk society model of the current era characterised by unprecedented possibility of control over life on earth, including the possibility of human self-destruction and anthropological self-transformation via genome manipulation, while the emerging social formation lends the emerging risks and uncertainties its culturally, socially and politically explosive character (Beck 1999). All these models tell a story about human development from an anthropocentric perspective, stressing the urgency of the situation and sharing a broader perspective of interconnectedness which seems to have the potential to bridge the epistemological gap between human cultural world and natural world by acknowledging the interdependency of ecosystems and species.

However, it seems that the story of environmental crisis that threatens the well-being and survival of all life on Earth has not had the unifying effect that it might have been expected to have. Respecting or discarding natural limits seems to have connections to having or not having a higher perspective to that of the human eye level. The majority of people active in the selected civil society networks share some sense of sacredness – be it in the form of planet Earth (Gaia), Self or God. In the case of civil society narrative it takes the form of talking about healing and how healing ourselves & our communities will consequently heal the world. Thus, according to civil society perspective, sustainable development begins within us, as illustrated by slogans from ecovillages: “change yourself, and the world around you changes” (Lilleoru, Estonia); “be the change you want to see in the world” (Tamera, Portugal). However, in the case of governance approach, the usefulness to humans is the central argument and value criteria whereas the ultimate trust is given to human resourcefulness and ingenuity. Having a higher perspective seems to support a systematic understanding of interdependence and interconnectedness of all elements of life on Earth and the human community's place in relation to the whole. It also seems to support a more self-reflexive viewpoint endorsing a sense of personal responsibility.

The main obstacles impeding synergy

Both the governance level and the civil society networks see that the most significant changes will have to happen in communities. The importance of communities has been connected to the sustainable development agenda since its emergence and it is addressed in many policy documents on sustainable development. However, the scale of local communities they are addressing is often different. For the governance level, local communities are primarily the local managers of commonly agreed principles and practices, and in certain contexts, the whole EU is considered a local community. In fact, until 1993 the unit known as the European Union today was called the European Community. The European Union's renewed sustainable development strategy from 2006 also stresses the relevance of sustainable communities. Paragraph 5 states:

The overall aim of the renewed EU SDS is to identify and develop actions to enable the EU to achieve continuous improvement of quality of life both for current and future generations, through the creation of sustainable communities able to manage and use resources efficiently and tap the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy, ensuring prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion. (EC 2006: 3).

For the civil society initiatives however, "local" means primarily a bioregion: "a neighbourhood, or area of like natural phenomena and climate, linked by water, culture, ridges and valleys, or local recognition, the perceived neighbourhood" (Mollison 2009: 566). The understanding of the direction of change also differs. According to the governance approach, the change would be managed and coordinated by the governance representatives from top-to-bottom, whereas the civil society networks see it initiated and facilitated by smaller, locally-based decision-making loops.

Despite the apparently greater feasibility of the more cooperative and interrelated civil society approach for tackling the current crisis, it also has some deficiencies. Although the selected networks describe themselves as complementary, not opposing models, there are still some rudimentary oppositional characteristics in their practices. Many network members see themselves as being right and doing the better thing in comparison to the mainstream. Thus they seem to be taking a superior role towards their peers resembling the position that the EU takes in relation to the South. This has two consequences: first of all, the complacency with being on the right track can be accompanied by reluctance to learn from others and secondly, there is less energy for noticing and tackling internal problems. For example, all the studied ecovillages describe themselves as unique – in several ways they are, but the referred practices are also often used by other similar initiatives. Reasons for this lack of awareness include more compelling local activities, and limited resources in terms of manpower and finances. Thus, despite the attempts to look and act beyond opposition, some patterns still hinder the open approach, most of all intra-sectorally.

Cross-sectorally speaking, fear has emerged as the main obstacle for cooperation for both the civil society and the governance levels. From the governance side, the fear for cooperation is mostly caused by fear of losing control over the situation. Cooperation decreases the level of freedom and can potentially "make things more difficult". The control issue is accompanied by the unwillingness to exit the comfort zone of doing things in conventional ways, as well as

the reluctance of being criticised and having to be transparent and ready to explain all the details in the decision-making process. From the civil initiatives side, the fear has to do primarily with losing their identity and integrity. Political actors are often seen as liminal players without high ideals or strong principles. Being mixed up with them is perceived as dangerous and possibly degrading by being perceived as part of a greenwashing scheme. Also the fear of losing too much energy doing something which does not guarantee any good results in comparison to doing things in the habitual way hinders closer communication and cooperation.

The role of culture and normativity in sustainable development

Postmodernity has witnessed a development of values from material interests to self-expression. In the context of the global crisis, a development from self-expression to considering collective well-being seems unavoidable. Reaching a significant change towards sustainable development requires normative agreements. Such agreements in turn require the negotiation of different interests and values, which are always culturally dependent.

In the civil society metanarrative of change towards sustainability cultural transformation is assigned the primary importance, while in the governmental metanarrative culture is not being explicitly addressed as a prerequisite of change. The fact that cultural and worldview-related aspects are not explicitly included in governance rhetoric and action plans has to do with the way that the progress on sustainable development is measured – in quantitative terms. Human well-being too, seen as the primary goal of sustainable development in governance rhetoric, is measured according to economic yardsticks. Culture is featured in the sustainable development documents in the form of agri-, aqua-, or silviculture or in the context of indigenous groups and migrants as cultural diversity. Thus, the fact that the current crisis is not only economic, ecological, and social, but also a crisis in culture and meaning, is largely ignored. The reasons for ignoring can be different in different cases and on different levels. The macrolevel is doing it consistently, whereas the mesolevel recognizes the importance of culture in some cases, i.e. in the cases of Estonian and German governmental sustainable development strategies. On the microlevel, the governance is more open to including cultural aspects.

The arguments explaining omitting the cultural aspects are nowhere to be found in official documents, but the high-ranking officials explain that it would be too difficult and time-consuming to reach agreements on socio-cultural issues and goals of sustainable development and thus these aspects are not included. However, this also excludes the possibility to question the ability of current systems to foster sustainable development beyond mitigating some of the most devastating impacts.

The relevant question of whether it is realistic to bring contemporary democratic, capitalist systems in line with the requirements posed by the sustainable living agenda has been discussed since the 1960s and 1970s (Pelinka 1978) and it is still an open-ended question today (Doherty et al 1996). This perspective is based on assumptions that liberal democracy can handle the crisis, that human inventions can substitute for depleted natural resources for peers and future generations, and that growth equals better life and more happiness. It has

become clear that after a certain level of well-being is reached, economic growth does not bring about more happiness (cf. Hamilton 2004). Thus it is difficult to make the sustainable development agenda meet eye to eye with the principles of growth oriented *laissez-faire* economics. From the other hand it is equally unclear how effective the sustainability education approach is providing living examples, and winning people over “one heart at the time”, as practiced by the civil society networks. However, this discussion is too comprehensive for this short article.

Considering the spiritual and cultural approaches to sustainability irrational and biased makes it easier to continue in the old way, without having to consider the new, alternative ways seriously. So far, the attempts to bring about significant changes while taking the mainstream assumptions as implicitly given and without addressing cultural aspects, have not been fruitful. I argue that it cannot be fruitful because sustainable development is a highly normative concept. Normativity is culture-dependent, based on values and agreements. Attempting to make sense of the current polycrisis, it seems appropriate to return to narrativity as a deeply rooted way of human meaning-making. Hayden White has argued that the impulse to narrate is so natural and inevitable for any report of the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in some domains of contemporary Western culture, where it is programmatically refused (1980: 5). It seems that in the case of sustainable development the logical, quantifiable thinking has excluded the narrative thinking along with cultural aspects on the governance level. Jerome Bruner has argued that precisely this marginalised activity of imaginary world making undergirds human science, literature, philosophy, as well as everyday thinking, and even our sense of self (1987). Reflecting on the status quo the eco-philosopher Thomas Berry has written that we lack a proper metanarrative giving us a sense of direction and purpose: “It's all a question of story. We are in trouble now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective.” (2012). We need stories, because they, similarly to belonging to a community, give us some sense of security, values and knowledge of how things (should) function. Thereby they free us from the sometimes paralyzing fear for uncertainty.

The unpredictability and uncontrollability of the modern world have made it a “runaway world” (Giddens 2000). Achieving a sense of empowerment and responsible action is easier on a smaller communal scale. Perhaps this can explain the popularity of such civil society networks as the GEN, TTN and LDIW actively recreating the urban and rural communities, providing a sense of purpose and belonging in the midst of the general uncertainty. Community-building can be a way for overcoming alienation by engaging the public in change-making. Fostering active trust relationships plays a key role in well functioning relationships between the wider society and expert systems. It seems that local communities have a good potential as the laboratories of mankind feeding from local contexts for becoming recognised expert groups in the emerging knowledge-society. Gross argues for the relevance of publicly supported experiments in tackling the many uncertainties of contemporary societies (2010). He maintains that acknowledgment of the unintended consequences of modernity appears to be necessary for social change and the active participation of citizens in

experimental on-the-ground experiments of change-making (2010: 168). If the world of objects and relations is the product of not just the human interpretation of the world, but of the active interaction with it, then the procedural remedy for habit and routine is routine experimentation (Dorf 1998). The value of grassroots networks is also in showing that the uncertainty and experimenting with possible solutions is perfectly acceptable. And from that innovative solutions can emerge. Living in emerging knowledge society such open and sharing attitude fosters change. More honesty about the limits of knowledge can be used as a strategy for fostering public trust which paves the way for the willingness to participate more in public experiments (Gross 2010: 165-66). This also holds good potential for overcoming the fear for competition and the pressure of having to be right, thus facilitating cooperation from both sides.

Bridging as a way to accelerate change-making?

There are desperate calls that all is lost as well as opinions that sustainable development is already achieved and the cooperative-participative approach is already in use. However, based on my empirical research in different countries among different stakeholder groups in current Europe, it is difficult to agree with either opinion. There are some inspiring intra- and cross-sectional cooperation projects and there seems to be a general trend towards more information exchange and cooperation. However, looking beyond the surface, the cooperation is best described as pertaining to certain groups and occurring randomly between different social segments.

It is unclear whether all the stakeholders actively using the concept of sustainable development to describe their goals are actually interested in its long-term objectives, which would mean substantive restructuring in order to reach an equal and sustainable use of resources. From a competitive viewpoint this would mean loss, not profit. Also among groups interested in bringing about major systems-change, there are doubts and hesitations hindering cooperation on shared goals. Besides being overburdened with work on local projects, it is primarily the fear to be seen as part of the greenwashing machine that has so far blocked the civil society networks from cooperating more actively with businesses and policymakers. And from the governance side it has been primarily the fear for complication, competition and criticism. The EU governance level has helped to foster participation culture in many member states, but the road is only halfway travelled. Consultations are a good tool, but there are other tools which could be used to foster closer partnership and cooperation. Among the reasons for the present lack of cooperation are also unwillingness to exit the comfort zone and accept that things can or should be done differently, as well as lack of information and contentment with doing the right thing and being unique. Such pulverization of energy and efforts weakens the possible good impacts – (re)inventing the wheel requires much more effort and energy than learning from those who already know how to build it.

In semiotics of culture (cf. Lotman 1999) the borderline between different phenomena is seen as a highly productive and innovative sphere. The principle that multi-layered systems are

more resilient resonates well with permaculture¹ principles. In this vein, respecting the differences while openly discussing shared interests and ways to cooperate on them brings good potential for synergetic and innovative solutions. Fragmentation – too many too small interest groups – is pointed out by the governance level as the main reason for not knowing about the good practices on the ground. Thus, from the governance side, more cooperation requires that the civil society networks would become more consolidated which would enable them to have a stronger voice. This in turn requires a greater internal consolidation of the networks. At this point there is a surprising amount of ignorance about the other initiatives belonging to the same networks. So far the initiatives have been too isolated which has caused overall weakness. Recently, effort has been made by networks to overcome this by using mapping tools and collecting good practices. More information exchange is the key for overcoming the fear and the need to reinvent the wheel. More information exchange and cooperation inter-sectionally would also help to divide the workload, freeing more time and energy for new, innovative ideas and actions. Using the benefits of not being single unique entities and tapping into the collective wisdom and power of networks would strengthen the movements and give them stronger voices as cooperation partners and stakeholders to be taken seriously.

Making normative agreements is seen unrealistic on the macrolevel of the EU at this point. However, the crisis is real and due to the unsustainable nature of the current practices, sooner or later normative agreements are needed to change the current ways. If the values underlying these changes are not openly discussed as cultural norms, they are simply taken for granted. A turn towards smaller scales and local solutions for discussing and agreeing on the norms seems the realistic solution here. Strengthening cooperation is more readily achievable on micro- and mesolevels, where both actors are more willing to openly discuss cultural changes needed for a change towards sustainable lifestyles and find normative consensus. Building and testing alternative systems in smaller scales and using them on the larger scale thereafter is a good way to enter macro-scales.

Cultures as meaning-making systems are powerful tools as the civil society networks readily acknowledge. Along with material and non-verbal aspects, cultures are being passed on via narratives. Hayden White has described narrative as a solution to the problem of how to translate knowing into telling – how to fashion human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culture-specific (1980). Thus non-opposing narratives about shared values have good chances to accelerate change towards sustainability. Stories touch people everywhere and on every level – in civil society, in policy-making, in businesses. People base their everyday actions at least as much on emotions as on rational choices and when deciding what is important to them, values have a significant impact. One of the reasons why governance regulations on sustainability have received a lukewarm reception is that they put too much stress on quantifiable thinking. Accelerating the change can be facilitated by bridging the qualitative and quantitative approaches. In order to

¹ Permaculture is an ecological design system for sustainability in all aspects of human endeavor (definition via: <http://www.permaculture.org/>). It has informed the founders and participants in all three civil society networks, most prominently the GEN and the Transition Town network.

prevent severe suffering, the change has to happen with a much faster pace than over the past 25 years.

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Ecovillages: Cradles for a culture of sustainability?

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/xRIW8XUNAQY>

Abstract

Based on my PhD dissertation, this paper focuses on the attempts of ecovillages to create a 'culture of sustainability', which is a collectively realized way of living sustainably on all levels. The term 'culture' refers to a societal reality that is dynamically reinforcing itself, shaping its members and being shaped by them at the same time. The purpose of the research was to discover commonalities and distinctions in the endeavours of various ecovillages. Investigation of a criteria-based selection of ecovillages was conducted at: Ecovillage at Ithaca, Twin Oaks Community, Earthaven Ecovillage, Ecovillage Sieben Linden, Federation of Damanhur, Findhorn Foundation and Healing Biotope Tamera. A schema of psychological descriptors of a culture of sustainability was established to represent complementary dimensions within an integral approach (inner reality, outer reality, individual and collective). Findings and results of the case studies will be presented as well as their implications for the central concept of 'connection'. Connection refers to the state of mind of individuals on three different levels: first, their connection to themselves in terms of identity and needs; second, their connection with the physical and social environment and the third level concerns the connection to something 'beyond' which could be expressed through spirituality or through the feeling of belonging to 'something bigger than us'. Finally, assumptions for transferring insights about creating a culture of sustainability to wider social contexts will be discussed.

Paper: Not Available



Felix Wagner is a PhD student living in Freiberg, Germany. Over the last two years, he has conducted fieldwork in intentional communities in Europe, the USA and Australia – searching for clues about how a 'culture of sustainability' is created and how this knowledge and expertise can be transferred to society at large. Felix is part of *Lebensdorf (Village of Life)*, an ecovillage project forming in Germany and co-founder of *Research in Community (RIC)*, an organisation fostering links between intentional communities and academia.

PART FOUR

**KIBBUTZ: ICONIC COMMUNAL
MODEL IN TRANSITION**

Social Change and Organizational Culture at 'Newplast' – a Kibbutz Factory

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Abstract

Cultural changes in the 'Newplast'¹ factory have been influenced by the privatisation process that has engulfed the majority of Israeli kibbutzim. In the wake of organisational difficulties and economic losses, kibbutz management (the factory owner) appointed as factory manager someone from the outside to oversee changes, a person without commitment to current factory workers who were kibbutz members as well. This change of management accelerated the inevitable processes of change; the collectivist culture that had previously favoured kibbutz members and assigned primary importance to them, evolved into a far more capitalistic one. Today the factory is managed along purely business lines that leave no room for any obligations towards individuals. Nevertheless, the new management has adopted a dual value system: on the one hand, it supports a materialist and capitalistic approach to the worker, but on the other, it fosters the image of the factory as a 'home' which both preserves classic collectivist values and expects its workers to feel a primary and familial obligation to 'Newplast'.

Introduction

The aim of this research is to describe the changes in organizational culture that befell the "Newplast" factory in kibbutz 'Sadot'.

Theoretical Frame: Organizational culture

For some of the scholars, organizational culture is a system of beliefs shared by the workers of any organization (Schein, 1985). It includes: basic assumptions, values and norms, shared language and symbols as well as rituals, myths of the organization's heroes and shared behavior patterns (Pettigrew, 1979, 2002; Esmore, 2002; Raz, 2004).

Other scholars states that managers generally manipulate organizational culture by means of normative supervision, while workers generally identify with and internalize the culture (Kunda, 2000).

Changes in organizational culture may stem from a variety of *environmental factors* (as for instance, change in technology)(Awel et al., 2006) or from *internal factors* as management style (Moskovich, 2012) and workers behavior (Samuel, 2012). The existing culture can support or reject these changes. Changes like these can upset the delicate balance that exists in

¹ Not the factory's real name.

the organization and create conflicts between those who wish to preserve the culture and those who support change (Awel et al., 2006).

Some of the scholars [Hofstede (1992), Trompenaars (1993), Schwartz, (1994) and Hoecklin (1995)] examined the core values of a range of work group and found different dominant cultural orientations :

A. Individualism as opposed to collectivism in the organization – Does the organization emphasize personal or collective values?

B. Universalism as opposed to particularism – Does the organization reflect universal principles of egalitarian relations between peers, or conversely, do personal contacts and special relationships confer privileges and extra rights on preferred persons?

C. General relations as opposed to limited relations – This refers to levels of involvement and personal acquaintance. Do personal relationships within the organization tend towards being intimate and primary or alienated and secondary?

D. Relations based on achievement or attribution – What is the organizational power system based on: achievement or nepotism?

Organizational Culture in Kibbutz factory

In the past, the kibbutz factory fell between two worlds with differing cultural underpinnings. As part of the wider Israeli economy, it needed to adhere to capitalistic principles, including price competitiveness and quality. But it was also subordinate to an internal system whose principles included equality and participation.

The kibbutz factory, like every organization, is an open system, and environmental influences force it to adapt to new conditions. So, in the aftermath of the severe financial crisis that hit the Israeli economy and the kibbutz system in the mid-1980s, the collective movement embarked on a process of reform (Ben-Rafael, 1997). Two profound changes stand out:

- The change from distribution of the budget among members according to the needs of families and individuals to the distribution of salaries that reflected the member's contribution to the kibbutz economy.
- The change from collective ownership of kibbutz assets, such as housing and industrial enterprises, to private ownership with inheritance rights.

By 2010, close to 75% of the kibbutzim had adopted a wage system together with a system of assignment of assets [so called privatization] (Getz, 2010).

Background to the 'Newplast' factory

Kibbutz Sadot was founded in 1940 by European refugees and the factory was built in 1947. Today it produces essentially current pipe system solutions for buildings. By 2003 it had followed other kibbutzim into privatization, revoking the collective budget method and adopting the differential salary method. The global financial crisis of 2007-2009 undermined the factory's stability, culminating in losses for the year 2008 and the replacement of the manager at the end of the same year. For the first time in the annals of the factory, a manager, who was not a member of Sadot was appointed. Currently the factory has 120 workers, only half of whom are kibbutz members.

The research questions

From the above review, a number of questions arose that shaped the study.

1. How has the new general manager affected the "Newplast" factory's organizational culture?
2. How has the culture changed?

Methodology

A case study methodology was adopted, in which ethnographic interviews were held and different documents produced by the factory were collected. About 30 interviews were held between 2009 and 2011. An important resource was the monthly newsletter that described central events in the life of the factory.

Results

The analysis revealed a number of topics that were central to the change of values and the attempt to create a new culture.

Innovation versus conservation

If the former general manager was described as conservative, the new one implemented a number of innovations on taking up his position. These ranged from drawing up a vision statement, to establishing a seven-man managing body and modernizing product lines, production machinery and computer equipment. He established a task force for creating innovative ideas, which resulted in the initiation of the production of grey water management systems (*Newplast*, 1.3.2009).

Transparency versus opacity

In contrast to the past, the new managerial style is open and transparent. Monthly workers' meetings are forums for disseminating information, commending outstanding workers and thanking those retiring.

A monthly newsletter records the contents of the meetings in words and pictures.

In contrast to such encouraging signs, several workers distanced themselves from the new style of management and claimed that the general manager was hypocritical and manipulative, merely creating an illusion of openness. This would appear to be one of the reasons why a considerable number of workers did not attend the monthly meetings.

Human change, new generation management and role assignment

Under the old system, there was no official or standard retirement age, and kibbutz members worked as long as they wanted. Over the years, a number of veteran kibbutz members had entrenched themselves in management roles, creating an atmosphere of stagnation. The new general manager decided to enforce retirement according to age by the end of 2010. The general manager also involved in a policy to recruit a new generation of workers from among the young generation of the kibbutz.

Appointments based on universally recognized criteria rather than on attribution and particularism

The old managerial style was familial and primary: kibbutz members received preferential appointments to employment positions, and once appointed were seldom fired. In contrast,

the trend today is not to discriminate in favor of kibbutz members. The factory has been clearly separated from the kibbutz and is today an economic business with "equality" among workers.

The new appointment slogan is "The right person in the right place". The factory is far more selective than in the past and members are given preference over an outside candidate only if both have identical qualifications for the job

'Newplast' as a family or home

Many of the workers we interviewed spoke of the factory as 'home' or 'family'. This familial approach is also reflected in the factory's vision statement: "Newplast will create a stable, dependable and familial framework for its staff which will make them feel involved and committed to caring about their work" (Newplast journal, December 2008).

One of the central familial values is maintaining the aesthetic appearance of the home for family relaxation and enjoyment. Accordingly, it was decided to upgrade the factory's appearance and create a warm and cozy place.

The familial approach is further promoted through the publication in the newsletter of personal stories, birthday congratulations, and citation of outstanding workers. The message is that the factory is not merely a workplace but rather a primary familial framework, a place in which to feel solidarity and kinship.

The tenuous meaning of 'home' among the Newplast workers

Although many workers used terms such as "home" and "family" with reference to the factory, not all gave the same connotation to these expressions:

- **Management** views the factory paternalistically, believing that its role is to educate the workers to assimilate norms such as "integrity" and "honest reporting". For instance, swiping a worker's time card for a friend is punishable by being fired. These views reflect the dominant culture in the factory – that of the management (ten managers altogether) – which clashes with the perceptions of other groups who see the factory-as-home in a different light.
- **Hired workers who are members of the Israeli labor federation** (the Histadrut) belong to a group of veteran workers for whom "home" means a place of mutual obligation; a place where previous commitments are honored and workers' jobs are secure, even when they are not protected by formal contracts. In the past hired workers could rely on informal agreements with the then-general manager, but the new general manager felt no such commitment. The chairman of the hired workers' committee (a formal organization of labor federation members in the factory) said that under the new management it became necessary to anchor the work conditions in formal contracts, which would be approved by the Union/Histadrut and which would be binding on any general manager. One can infer that *this group feels less "at home" than previously*.
- **The kibbutz members working in junior positions** (thirty in production and five office workers) want to preserve the old collective norms, which reflect different interests from those of management. This group sees Newplast as the home that it was in the past:

egalitarian, fair, and responsible for all, as well as being the home that belongs to all. They criticize the new lack of equality between management and workers, and the waste of kibbutz funds on power symbols such as luxury cars for management. *The prevalent feeling among this group is that their house has been stolen from under them.*

Discussion

in opposite to the scholars [Hofstede (1992), Trompenaars (1993), and Hoecklin (1997)] who showed that worker groups in organizations generally adhere to a shared set of values, whether individualistic or collectivist, universal or particular, attributive or achievement-oriented. We have found that the management of Newplast adopts a dual set of values which varies according to management needs. On the one hand, the factory no longer bows to collectivism, staff is chosen on the basis of profitability. On the other, workers are expected to feel a sense of collective commitment toward the factory. Management's ethical codes are based on the capitalist world's values of universalism and materialism, but at the same time management expects staff to adhere to the old familial-particular-collective values

The organization's rituals disseminate symbols of cohesiveness and harmony that may give the mistaken impression of unity (Smircich, 1983):

- The monthly newsletters function as a mechanism to strengthen social cohesiveness and loyalty to the factory and the manager. It is a selective source of information, in line with the new management's world view, and guides staff members towards internalizing the "correct" Newplast culture.
- The monthly meeting as organizational ceremonies that the new manager institutionalized, in which outstanding workers are applauded and organizational events are reported. These are not meetings for thrashing out issues raised by disgruntled workers, and as a result the monthly meeting has become an empty ceremony which many do not bother to attend. In fact, *the monthly assembly* in the factory has lost its democratic significance and has become *a mechanism for normative assimilation of the general manager's new cultural values.*

The conflict approach is relevant to an explanation of the cultural changes at Newplast (Kunda, 2000; Samuel, 2005; Morgan 2010). Backed by the kibbutz management in carrying out manpower changes in the factory, the new general manager is convinced that he can create an organizational culture to suit the factory's needs (Samuel, 2005; Morgan, 2010). But the group of production employees resists the new culture of individualization in the relationship between management and workers and reacts to this policy by the collective step of unionizing.

This approach highlights the existence of organizational sub-cultures (Kunda, 2000), as indeed in Newplast there exist different groups of workers cohering around shared interests, values, and norms, and forming distinct sub-cultures:

- **Management** (middle and senior) accentuates the positive. These staff members identify with the general manager's new capitalistic norms.
- **Veteran production employees** constitute a different subculture that does not view the changes in a positive light, especially as some suffered in the wake of the changes. These

workers, active in the workers' committee, recently joined the Histadrut and forced the general manager to sign a collective work agreement.

- **Kibbutz members in junior positions** criticize the uncertainty and the "waste" of resource in the new organizational culture of Newplast. Being kibbutz members means that by law there can be no employer-employee labor agreements between them and the kibbutz branch they work in, and the Histadrut and the workers' committee cannot represent them. They are the weakest link, totally without power vis-à-vis the management.

The factory-as-home policy promotes a pleasant work environment in a highly competitive business. However, it may also be seen as a managerial strategy to restrict organized activity in the factory. The question of labor relationships does not only apply to Newplast but has become a burning issue across the kibbutz movement. Evidence of this can be seen in a recent conference held by the kibbutz federation (Takats) on the theme "Labor relations in kibbutz industry", which was attended by more than a hundred human resource managers from kibbutz factories. In his opening address, the chairman said, "In the past, the legal system did not enter the kibbutz gates, and we managed to resolve issues relatively well by ourselves. Today the picture is quite different and extremely sensitive." Another speaker, a kibbutz factory general manager, said that financial market sources have predicted a possible 20% drop in value for a factory with a collective agreement compared to a parallel non-unionized factory (Ofek, 2011).

Conclusion

The organizational change in the Newplast kibbutz factory was successful from the economic point of view. However, the economic goals, were not achieved without social costs, such as damaging the kibbutz solidarity, multiplying internal conflicts in the factory and preventing of unionism. A change in the spirit of a neo-liberal economy.



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Yaffa Moskowich, PhD is a senior lecturer and head of the Department of Sociology at Kinneret College in Israel. She received her PhD from Bar Ilan University. Her expertise is in the field of political and organisational sociology. Yaffa is the author of articles and a book about the Israeli Likud Party, *Disunity in Unity: Power Struggles inside the Likud Party from 1972–2002*. Her work also involves leadership in political parties, unions, and other organisations. She is currently researching leadership in a kibbutz factory.

The Archives of the Kibbutz Movement as Agent of Memory

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/t2JNeaCVsa0>

Abstract

The kibbutz, as an iconic form of intentional community, has existed for more than a century. Cooperative life in the kibbutzim began in communes during the early decades of the twentieth century. Since then, the Kibbutz Movement has been one of unique and multifaceted cooperative communities. The uniqueness of the kibbutz was its aspiration to build a social alternative aligned with principles influenced by socialist ideas, modernism, and the Zionist doctrine of building a new society. Ideals of cooperation, fraternity, and equality were reflected in an attempt to combine common (cooperative) means of production, communal consumption and education, and the social activity of direct democracy.

The history of settlement in pre-state Israel and in the State of Israel in the economic, agricultural, and industrial spheres, in culture and the arts, education, security, and so forth, is preserved and documented in some 300 settlement archives, and also in regional, movement, and subject archives. The sweeping changes taking place in rural society and in the kibbutz sector suggest an urgent need to preserve such documentation for future generations. At the same time we must devote much thought to the most suitable ways of making these treasures accessible to the general public. A special national effort is called for in order to advance the preservation and accessibility of archival material.

In my presentation I shall review the various types of archive, the state of preservation of the material, and the challenges we face along the road toward making the collections accessible to specialists and to the general public alike.

Paper: Not available



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Kibbutz Landscape as a Reflection of Communal Life and its Recent Changes¹

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/n8_2Ga8lfpw

Abstract

The landscape of the first kibbutz (Deganya) was based on a model of a German farm. It included two avenues of cypress trees; one leading from the main road to the farm (which later became a common landscape element in the kibbutz landscape) and one from the farm to the Jordan River. The group of workers that settled this farm decided to establish a new order – communal life based on equality in all aspects of life including salary and self-governance i.e. no outside involvement in running the farm and the community. The first flower garden in Deganya was established on the cook's own initiative in her spare time after work. Gradually kibbutz landscape and its management became more formalized. The communal areas, mainly those associated with the common dining hall, got most care and attention; they became the show case of the community. The communal landscape, dominated by the central lawn in front of the dining hall, continued all the way to every house with its apartment units. Each unit had a small private garden open to the surrounding common landscape. With time, the ideology of the kibbutz crystalized and landscape/garden models followed in accordance with an internalized kibbutz communal life. Following the economic crisis of the 1980s many kibbutzim went through various degrees of privatization and communal life changed in many. The dining hall lost its centrality and the community became more extroverted – outwardly focused. Privacy, reflected also in the size and character of the private garden is increasing. The presentation will deal with the changes in kibbutz ideology and the resultant changes in the landscape.

Introduction

The term 'kibbutz landscape' refers in this paper to the combination of buildings, structures and open spaces such as public and private gardens, roads and walkways within the kibbutz settlement. The first kibbutz was Deganya established in 1910 (later, after another Deganya was established nearby, the first kibbutz was named Deganya Alef and the second one Deganya Bet – after the first and second letters in the Hebrew alphabet.) During the 100 years since the establishment of the first kibbutz 270 kibbutzim were established, about half of them around 1948 – the year when the State of Israel was established. Table 1 presents the changes in the number of kibbutzim, in their population, and in their percentage of the total population in Israel. The distribution of kibbutzim in Israel is presented in Figure 1. Before the state was established the location of kibbutzim was mainly determined by availability of land. With time, security and political considerations were also involved.

¹ This paper is based on the recent book "The Changing Landscape of a Utopia: The Landscape and Gardens of the Kibbutz Past and Present" by S. Burmil, R. Enis, 2011, published by Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft. The figures are taken from this book.

The Year	Number of Kibbutzim	Population	% of the Total pop.
1910	1	12	
1920	12	805	
1930	29	3,877	
1940	82	26,554	
1950*	214	60,708	
1960	229	77,955	3.5**
1970	229	85,100	
1980	255	111,200	
1990	270	125,100	
2000	268	115,700	1.8
2006	267	119,800	1.7

Table 1: Changes in the numbers of kibbutzim, the population in the kibbutzim and in the percentage of the total population.

*The state of Israel was established in 1948.

**Datum for 1961.



Figure 1: Distribution of kibbutzim in Israel (Courtesy of the Kibbutz Movement).

During the 100 years of kibbutz existence many changes have taken place in the ideology, the level of communality, and in kibbutz landscape. The paper will emphasize mainly three general periods in kibbutz landscape changes: a. the formative years (1912 – 1940s); b. the years of formalization (1940s – 1980s); c. The years of change in ideology, economy, and kibbutz landscape (1980s – present).

The Formative Years (1912 – 1940s)

During these years various attempts were made by architects, engineers and landscape designers to develop a specific character to the kibbutz landscape. **Deganya** was the first kibbutz, established in 1910; in 1912 the establishing group moved to the final present location on a flat terrain in the Jordan Valley above the Jordan River; the new complex was specially designed/copied for them following a plan of a German farm. The group differed from other farming groups in its communal life based on equality in salary, self-governance and democracy. The built area had clear zoning: a farm yard with a dovecote in the center and nearby a two story house for dwelling and a separate building with the dining hall, kitchen, and shower (Figure 2). The existing landscape was later described by some of the group members as desolate, exposed and dry (Deganya Alef, 1961); only by the river was there low and dense vegetation (Figure 3). Therefore, the yearning for shade, beauty, and fruits was strong.

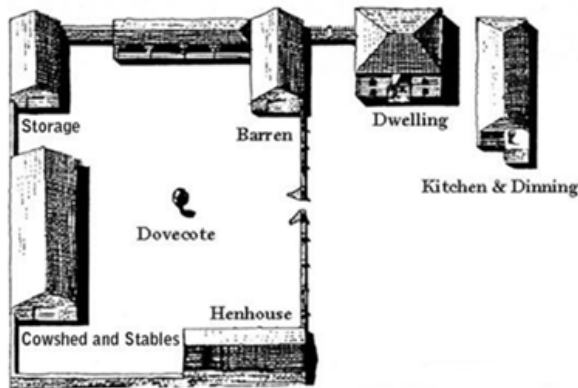


Figure 2: The plan for Deganya based on a German farm



Figure 3: View of Deganya from across the Jordan River. From left: the dining hall and kitchen, the two story house for living, and the buildings in the farm yard.

Shortly after moving to the site two avenues of cypress trees were planted: a wide one leading from the farm to the main road (Figure 4) and a narrow one for pedestrians from the two stories house to the river (Figure 5). Remnants of both avenues can still be seen today.



Figure 4: The wide avenue of trees leading from the main road to the farm



Figure 6: Deganya (Alef), the Strolling Garden



Figure 5: The narrow avenue leading from the two stories house to the river

Gardening was considered non-productive and a luxury. At one point Haya, the woman in charge of the cooking (who later became the kibbutz gardener), started on her own initiative, a flower garden in front of the kitchen. She did the work in the garden in her free time after

finishing her work in the kitchen. The flower garden justified itself as a ‘productive’ branch – Haya cut the flowers and arranged them to be taken for sale in the city. Some years later the Strolling Garden with trees (some shade trees, flowering trees), shrubs and a circular water pool was established near the two story house (Figure 6).

Kibbutz **Deganya Bet** was established in 1922 near the first Deganya. The plan (Figure 7) was prepared by the architect Kornberg specific for the site and the group that followed the principles of the first Deganya. The professional plan is also based on zoning; a farm yard subdivided into two units with a dovecote in the center of each. The large building at the bottom is the cowshed, the stables are next to it, and the rest are for chicken. The Second yard is subdivided again into a general yard attached to a large building on the boundary of the farm yard that contains the dining hall and kitchen and the center and other services on the sides. In the upper part, is another large building with apartments on the side and a central hall in the center. This plan is unique in the specific use of trees as space defining elements; it also has a garden element – gazebo, with two trees on its sides. Figure 8 shows the members of the kibbutz during the construction of the gazebo. As common with many plans, not all the parts were executed at all or executed not according to the original plan. Today when one visits Deganya Bet one can still see the cowshed (remodeled and in a different use), the deserted stables, the dining hall and kitchen (not in use anymore), and the two story apartment buildings remodeled and used as guest houses (Figure 9. Note: The photograph is taken from the old dining hall and the path leads to the location of the gazebo.). A metal gazebo stands in the site of the original timber one.

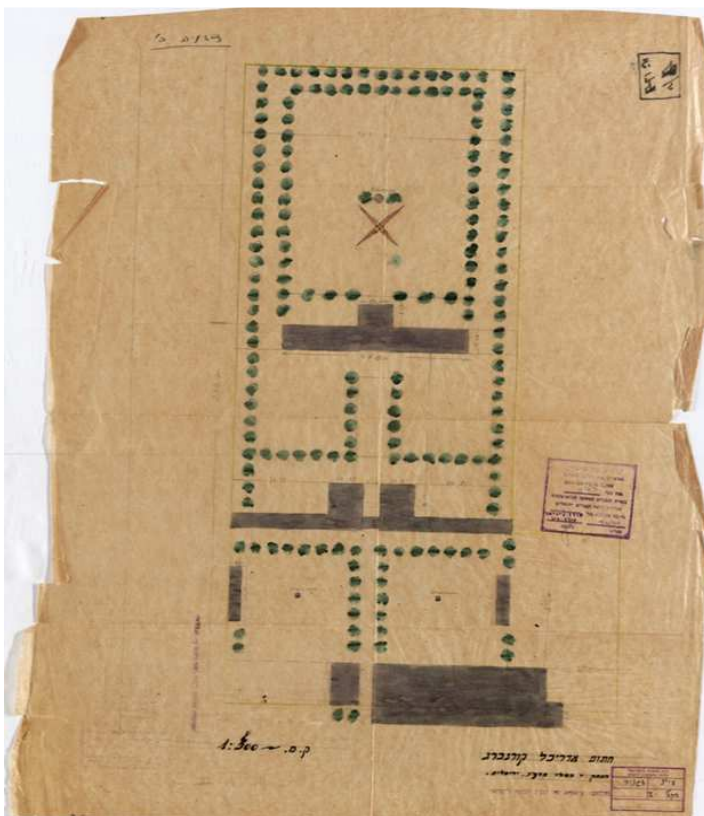


Figure 7: Korenberg's plan for Deganya Bet, 1922



Figure 8: the gazebo in Deganya Bet



Figure 9: Two first houses built in Deganya Bet.

The plan for Kibbutz **En Harod** (later became En Harod Meuhad) in its final present location was prepared by the architect Richard Kauffmann in 1926 as part of the plan for En Hrod and the neighbor kibbutz Tel Yosef. The site is on a slope in the Harod Valley and the zoning is expressed in one yard with the upper part dedicated to the children houses, the dining hall (with commanding views of the valley) and kitchen, and houses, and the lower part dedicated to the farm buildings including the stables, the cowshed and the chicken coops, with the cowsheds and a small dairy building in the center. In this plan (Figure 10) that was executed almost exactly as planned trees are also used as space defining elements. At an early point in time a grove of trees was planted between the upper part – the living area, and the lower part – the farm yard.



Figure 10: the plan for Kibbutz En Harod with the children's houses and the dining hall at the top of the central axis, the farm part at the bottom.

In the case of En Harod a professional detailed plan for the upper part was developed by Kauffmann with the involvement of the landscape gardener Shlomo Weinberg (later Oren – Weinberg). The plan includes two double rows of canary palms, a lawn, a water fountain and running water, trees, shrubs and flowers, as well as sitting areas. It is not clear if the plan that enhances the importance of the central area by the dining hall was fully executed. The avenues of the palm trees and the central lawn can be seen today (Figure 11: Landscape plan for the central area with the dining hall in the center, a garden on the upper part by the children's houses and a garden below sloping down between the six housing units.) The area sloping down from the dining hall as of 2011 is seen in Figure 12.

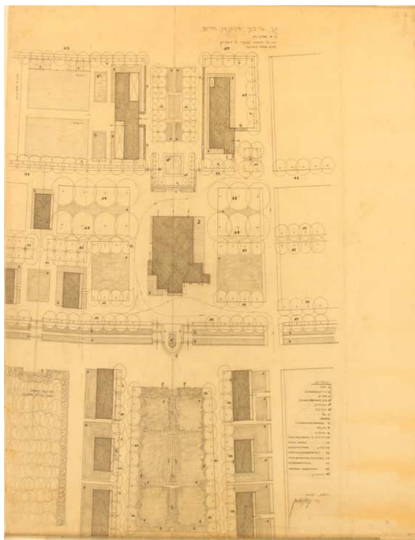


Figure 11: Landscape plan for the central area



Figure 12: The area in front of the dining hall as seen from the dining hall downhill.

The detailed plan for Kibbutz **Bet Zera** in the Jordan Valley close by the two Deganyas was also prepared by R. Kauffmann in 1928, probably with the involvement of S. Weinberg. Here too the members referred to the heat, exposed and dry landscape, and they yearned for shade and green, but they wanted a plan first (Yoshu, 1980). The plan (Figure 13) for the final present location of the kibbutz on a mostly flat area on the steep bank of the Jordan River is probably the first landscape plan for a whole kibbutz. The plan, titled in Hebrew 'the garden in Bet Zera' as earlier plans discussed, is formal; it is based on two yards, the farm yard and the housing yard with the dining hall at the corner of the farm yard and close to the housing yard. The garden area excludes the farm yard. It is in German, has a mostly shaded playground in the center, each house has a garden in front and a vegetable garden at the back. A citrus grove surrounds the housing yard and rows of trees surround the whole settlement. There are sitting areas and a viewing area overlooking the river on top of the cliff.

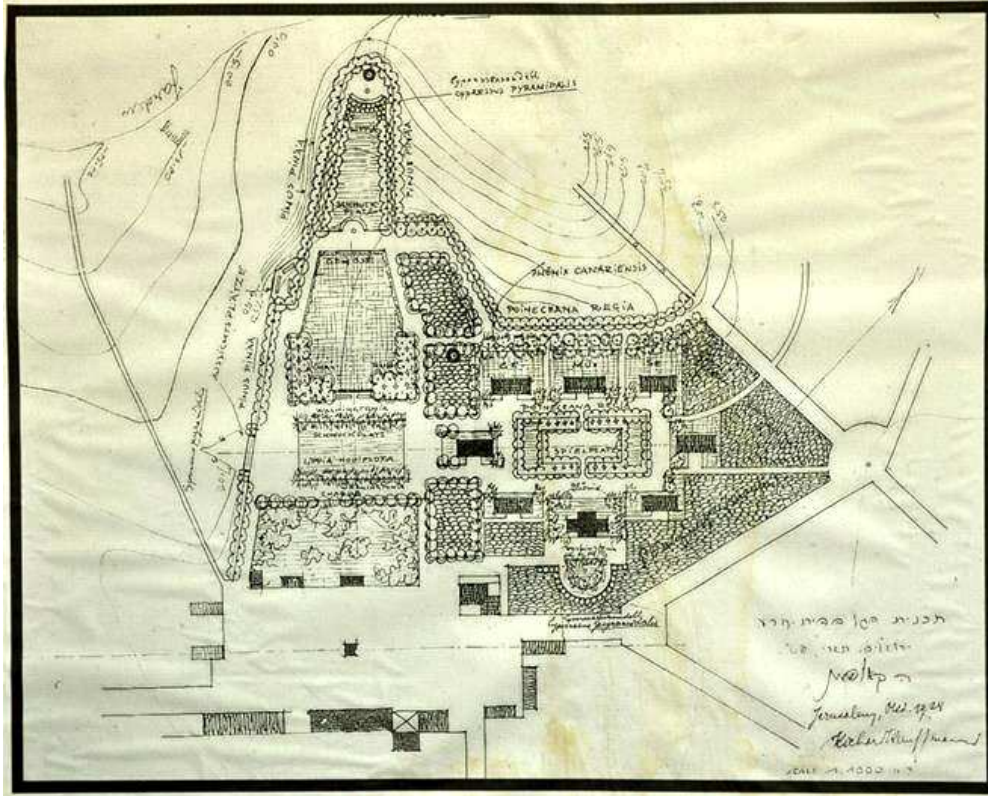


Figure 13: The plan for Kibbutz Bet Zera, 1928

Here too, not all of the plan was executed and changes were made during construction. Instead of the playground, the common bath – a known kibbutz institution in each kibbutz during its early days – was built. The garden around it was a four part garden (Figure 14) common in Islamic and monastic gardens. A view of part of this garden within the housing yard with formal planting is shown in Figure 15. While the two Deganyas were intended for small groups (up to 25 families) and En Harod for a large group (hundreds of families and a constantly growing group), Bet Zera was intended for a medium size group (up to 75 families).



Figure 14: Kibbutz Bet Zera from the air with the common bath and the four gardens at the left lower corner



Figure 15: Inside the housing yard with the formal planting

The Formalization of Kibbutz Landscape (1940s – 1980s)

By the 1950s and even the late 1940s, kibbutz planning had crystalized and formalized. A few similar schemes or models for the layout of a kibbutz were developed and used by planners. One such model or diagram was proposed by Feinmesser in 1958 (Figure 16).

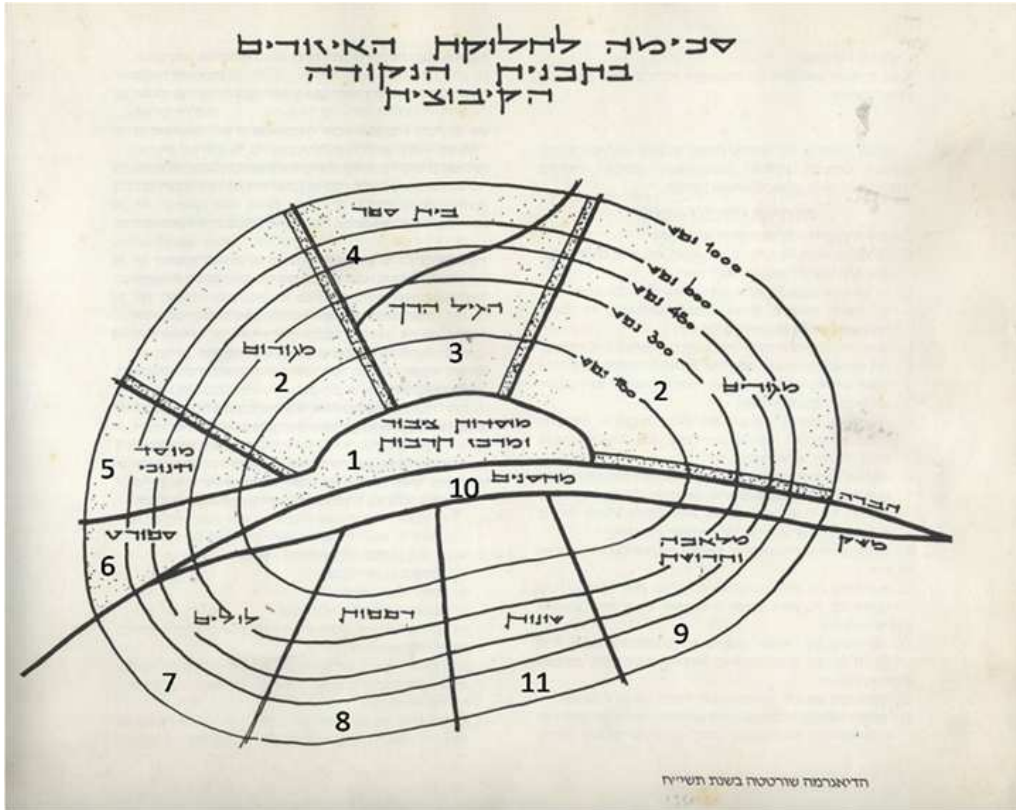


Figure 16: Feinmesser's diagram for a kibbutz with a concentric growth pattern:
1. Central area with public buildings; 2. Housing; 3. Toddlers; 4. Elementary school; 5. High school; 6. Sporting and farm areas (excluding fields and orchards that are outside the settled boundaries); 7. Chicken coops; 8. Cowsheds; 9. Workshops; 10. Storage; 11. Various uses

The diagram shows how the zoning expands radially with the growth of the population in the kibbutz from 200 to 1000.

From Architectonic/geometric plan to the “English Landscape”/Free Plan

During the first four decades of kibbutz planning the formal architectonic design was dominant in the kibbutz landscape. It probably originated in the dominant German tradition of the time (to which most of kibbutz planners were exposed while being educated in Germany) that considered the informal ‘English Garden’ tradition to be bourgeois. In the 1940s the same kibbutz planners and designers started to claim that the landscape developed in the kibbutz does not reflect and fit the way of life of kibbutz members (e.g., Kauffmann, 1942; Oren-Weinberg, 1943). With some transition time and mixed plans, the informal landscape style started to dominate the kibbutz landscape. The landscape in Kibbutz En Harod (Figure 17) that was planned in 1926 serves as a good example to the old formal/architectonic style; the

landscape in Kibbutz Hama'pil (Figure 18) that was established much later is a good example to the “more fit” free ‘English Garden’ style that dominated the landscape in the kibbutzim since the 1950s.



Figure 17: A view of Kibbutz En Harod established in 1926 with a formal-architectonic landscape style.



Figure 18: A view of Kibbutz Hama'pil, established in 1945, with a free ‘English garden’ landscape style

Kibbutz Landscape as a Response to and Reflection of the Ideology and Way of Life

While the existence of some kind of zoning (different zones) started already in the first kibbutz (Deganya) with mainly two zones (farm and members areas) after the formalization of the kibbutz landscape, **zoning** became much more elaborate and serves as a functional means of enhancing communal life. As seen in the diagram in Figure 16, about 11 areas or zones are common. The most important one is the central area dominated by the dining hall. This area is usually the one that, on entry to the kibbutz, one is led to; being the showcase too, it is the one that gets the most attention in architecture and garden design. The lawn became a dominant element in this area and in other areas as an element that provides a frame to the buildings as well as a green stage for formal and informal activities (Figures 19, 20). In some ways the lawn continues the lawn from the central area into other areas; it carries it almost to the doorstep of every building and apartment. This was enabled by the development of the water and irrigation systems (no more need to carry water from a spring, a river or a small water tank) since the late 1930s in many kibbutzim. The introduction of mechanization such as lawnmowers also into the gardening section of the kibbutz made the cultivation of large lawn areas much easier and less labor intensive. The kibbutz landscape is made of separate garden units created at different times, yet in most kibbutzim a sense of **continuity and unity** in the landscape is achieved. The lawn together with the avenues of trees and the clarity in the path system leading from all areas and every apartment to the central area and the dining hall, help

to create this sense. For many years (probably until the 1960s) **simplicity and modesty** were guiding lines in the kibbutz landscape. Guide lines like “avoid showy and decorative elements” and use “simplicity of form with good and clear proportions” as well as “avoid luxurious planting that need much care” were suggested by garden designers/landscape architects who work in kibbutzim. The landscape was also a reflection of the **democratic** processes in the kibbutz as many decisions were made by the community. Overall, the landscape in the kibbutz reflected the **dominance of the community** over the individual, the public areas and gardens over the private ones.



Figure 19: The lawn in the central area used for many community celebrations such as a festive meal



Figure 20: A concert held on the central lawn

Was a new and unique kibbutz landscape created?

This issue was widely discussed by kibbutz planners, designers, and gardeners already in the 1940s and in later years. Oren-Weinberg (1946) declared that we do not yet have a distinctive kibbutz style and a garden best suited to the needs of the kibbutz community. Ben-Arav was a kibbutz gardener who wrote extensively about the landscape in Israel and the kibbutz. He tried to be more accurate and careful when claiming that it was already possible to trace many characteristic features of the kibbutz garden/landscape although it is impossible to claim that a definite kibbutz garden style has emerged (Ben-Arav, 1953). It seems that once the kibbutz landscape got formalized (as described earlier), the sense that a unique kibbutz landscape has emerged gets stronger. Bickels, one of the kibbutz planners, suggested that the kibbutz has achieved a complete expression as a special creation of a specific garden design (Bickels, 1960). At the same time Shur, a kibbutz gardener and design ideologist, claimed that kibbutz gardens are the result of adjustment to and acceptance of layout plans that lack daring and stature (Shur, 1960). Apparently the answer to the question is yes. When one looks at the kibbutz landscape from the air, when approaching a kibbutz, and when entering one and walking around, it is easy to recognize that it is a kibbutz and not any other farming community. From the air at least part of the zoning is recognized in the landscape (figure 21): the clear un-vegetated area with the farm buildings and the industry compared to the very green other areas. The main entrance road leads to the central area dominant in its architecture and the wide lawn and garden. From the center the paths radiate to the other zones.



Figure 21: Areal view of Kibbutz Daliyya and surrounding landscape

Change in ideology, economy, and kibbutz landscape (1980s – present).

In 1977 the result of the general elections in Israel caused a dramatic political change. The right wing Likud party took control of the government for the first time in the history of the state. The outcome was a new capitalistic economy with financial loans easy to obtain and investment in the stock exchange and spending reached new levels. Many of the kibbutzim took part in this speculative activity. Inflation at the time also reached new heights, and in the early 1980s went up to a few hundred percent. With the collapse of the stock exchange in 1983, many kibbutzim (as many other organizations and individuals) found themselves with heavy debts that they were not able to pay back. To bail out the kibbutzim in debt, the government and the banks signed a financial arrangement in 1989 (and followed with another in 1996). This arrangement forced the involved kibbutzim to enforce economic changes leading to many (particularly younger) members leaving. The arrangement caused dramatic changes in the relations between the kibbutz and its members. Life in those kibbutzim became less communal, less equal and based only on limited mutual guarantees. The individual and the family replaced the community as the unit of reference. The situation of available apartments as a result in the reduction in population with more people commuting and a need for cash opened up the kibbutzim to non-members renting the empty apartments. In many kibbutzim the modest life style that was part of the ideology and enforced by communal regulations was replaced (sometimes and for some families) by a more extravagant life style with high level of individual expression. The kibbutz in general turned from an introverted community to an extroverted one, with more people are commuting in and out for work; many services are now provided outside the community. Since the changes started to take place, about a quarter of the kibbutzim remain cooperative and communal as the traditional kibbutz was, about two thirds of the kibbutzim became new kibbutzim with differential income among the members, and the rest remain somewhere in between. In 2007, almost 100 years after the

first kibbutz, Deganya, was established, members of the kibbutz voted to adopt privatization and to change from a commune of equal members to one with differential salaries. In many kibbutzim such changes were enacted almost two decades earlier.

Some of the practical changes in the way of life in kibbutzim that deviate from the original ideology of providing for all needs and each member contributing as much as he can, are presented in table 2.

Changes	% of Kibbutzim
Payment for meals	72
Dining hall closed	9
Pay for electricity	82
Pay for laundry	43
Privatization of health services	32
Rent of empty apartments	84
New houses for non-members	26
Differential salaries	27
Link between personal budget and hours worked	23
Payment for overtime	36

Table 2: Some of the Changes in Kibbutzim and the percentage of kibbutzim that went through these changes as of the year 2002.

As a result of the changes in the services provided by the dining hall, less and less individuals use it for dining and the central area starts to lose its centrality in kibbutz life. Four situations exist at present in relation to the function of the dining hall: a. the dining hall is used as (or almost as) before; b. the dining hall is in partial use by part of the community and/or only part of the daily meals are provided; c. the dining hall is not in use at all for dining and stands empty; d. the dining hall was rented out for profit. In most cases the landscape around the dining hall is still maintained, though the level of maintenance might be different from the level maintained in the past were the dining hall was fully and regularly used (figures 22, 23, 24). There was one case that we observed where the vegetation by the empty dining hall was maintained but repairs needed in stone walls were not done (figure 25).



Figure 22: The central area with a dining hall that is in full use (Kibbutz Sede Eliyahu, 2010)



Figure 23: The central area with a dining hall in use part of the time by a small part of the community (Kibbutz Sha’ar Haamaqim, 2010)



Figure 24: The central area with a dining hall that not in use at all – empty (Kibbutz Haogen, 2011)



Figure 25: The central area with a dining hall not in use; repairs needed in the retaining wall are delayed (Kibbutz Tel-Yosef, 2010)

The landscape in the housing area is undergoing transformation too. In addition to the changes associated with the car, it has become common to build two unit houses instead of four unit houses, and the relation between the public and private areas is turning towards the private garden by each housing unit – from the situation of a dominant public garden area with a small private garden (figure 26) to a dominant private garden to a small/narrow public garden area (figure 27).



Figure 26: The traditional landscape in the housing area with a large public area and small private gardens



Figure 27: The new landscape in the housing area with large private gardens and a small/narrow public area – to the right of the rocks

The tendency for individualistic expression and increase in privacy is starting to dominate the housing area. Changes and addition made by individuals break the former uniformity (figure 28), and more high hedges can be found as a mean to clearly mark the ‘private territory’ and increase the privacy in it (figure 29).



Figure 28: Breaking from conformity with an addition of a room built of timber and a new side entrance (Kibbutz Bet Zera, 2010)



Figure 29: High hedges used to mark the private property on each side of the path and provide privacy inside the property (Kibbutz Yagur, 2010)

If the bailout agreement continues as planned, the landscape of the housing area will be very different in the future. Ownership of the apartment and the attached open area will be transferred to the individual, and the housing area will change from the situation in the plan in figure 30 to the situation seen in the plan in figure 31, which is much more like the situation in a suburban area.

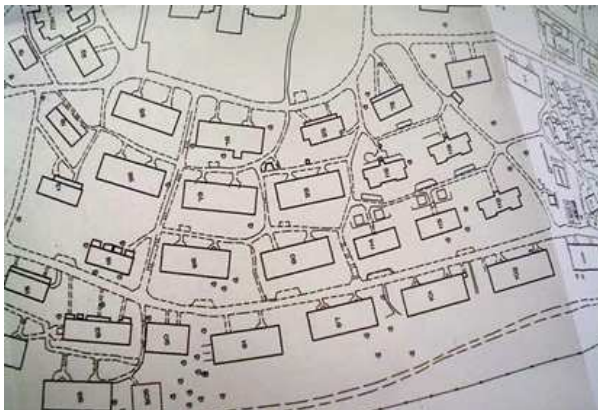


Figure 30: A plan of a present situation in the housing area with four unit houses located within a matrix of the public area (Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet)

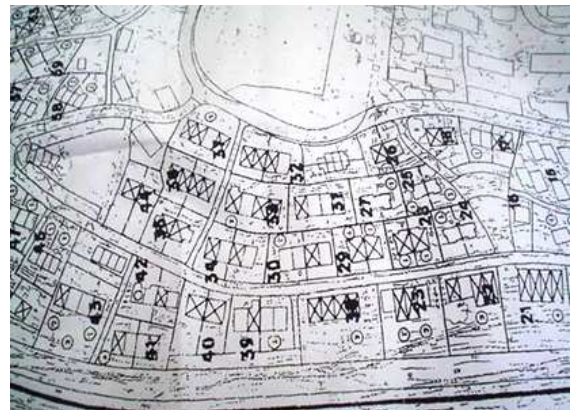


Figure 31: A plan showing future changes of the housing area by transforming the four unit houses into two unit houses (larger units) and division of the public area into private areas attached to the dwelling units. Only the paths remain as public areas (Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet)

The car in the kibbutz landscape

The car is becoming more and more a noticeable element in the kibbutz landscape and garden areas are taken over by roads and parking (Figures 32, 33, 34). It is a result of many members

commuting for work outside the kibbutz, non-members coming to work in the kibbutz or to use some of its services. At the same time members have to go out for many services that were provided by and in the kibbutz in the past. The traffic in and out has increased, the use of cars has increased, and the need for inside roads and parking is much higher than before. Due to the reduction in the sense of community in many kibbutzim, car parking does not always respect the public landscape (Figures 35).



Figure 32: Cars parked in unauthorized parking in the center of the kibbutz



Figure 33: Parking developed on a garden in the housing area



Figure 34: Parking by the door



Figure 35: parking on the public lawn

The sense of suburbia in parts of the kibbutzim is already there with the new neighborhoods built mainly for non-members. In these neighborhoods private houses on small land units dominate. In some kibbutzim some unity in the houses is maintained, in others a much more room for individual choice and taste is allowed (figures 36).



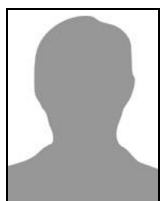
Figure 36: A plan with small lots in a new neighborhood attached to a kibbutz(upper part), and three photographs of such neighborhoods

Conclusions

Kibbutz landscape was first partially based on imported elements and concepts. With time, it has been developed by professionals into a unique native Israeli concept that reflects the unique kibbutz ideology of communal life and responds to the barren surrounding landscape. Recent ideological and economic changes in most kibbutzim caused changes in communal life that are reflected in changes in the kibbutz landscape. The paper discusses some of the major changes, but not all of them. In some aspects the 'new kibbutz' is starting to look more like suburbia. The population is increasing and some kibbutz born individuals and families are returning. These might be hints that the pendulum that has moved from one extreme to the other might move towards a more balanced center. The changes in the kibbutz and its landscape cannot be separated from changes in national politics, economy and ideology. An example of such a national change may be the fact that in 1949 twenty-nine Knesset (parliament) members were from kibbutzim. At present, there is only one.

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Relevance of Kibbutz Education for a Theory of Institutionalised Childhood in Education and Care?

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Abstract

Education of young children (also infants and toddlers) in pedagogical institutions (instead of the families) is steadily growing in western industrial societies. Until some years ago in (Western) Germany, education of children below three was seen as the responsibility of the family. In the kindergarten (from three to six years) the children usually were cared for only in the morning; the kindergarten was regarded as a family-supplement. Now, more and more, infants and toddlers are educated and supervised in a nursery, very often more than 6 hours per day. Many toddlers and elder children also participate in extra-curricular programmes involving sport, music etc. in the afternoon – that means, in additional institutionalised activities.

Politicians support the increase of an institutionalized childhood for different reasons: e.g. better education and support for disadvantaged children and the needs of female employees for the labour market. But also, the desire of women for employment caused the demand for more pedagogical institutions for small children. But until now there has been no conceptual theory, in which the significance of caring and education of small children in different institutions is reflected and, in which the relationship between parents' home and the educational institutions is theoretically justified. Therefore the German educational scientist, Honig, calls for a "theory of institutionalised childhood in education and care". Bernfeld, a Jewish educator in Vienna, in the beginning of the 20th century called for an "instituetik" – which means, how institutions educate by themselves, independently, the kind of educational goals teachers realise.

From the 1940s, the kibbutzim devised a theoretical framework of an institutionalised education ('kibbutz education'), which legitimised collective education in the children's houses (including collective sleeping arrangements). The theory of kibbutz education was reasoned by psychoanalysis, by a socialist theory of society (Marxism), and by a pedagogical theory of an independent children's and youth culture ('New education'). With its concept of 'multiple mothering', kibbutz education had provided theoretically grounded answers to the question of what function and role the most important people (particularly the parents and the caregiver [metapelet], and now the informal education teachers in the day care centres) should have and play in the education of the next generation, and where their particular advantages, specifics and, at the same time, limits lie. Meanwhile, there were fundamental changes in the educational system of the kibbutzim. The collective sleeping arrangement was abandoned; instead of 'kibbutz education' (as education for life in the kibbutz) there is now 'education in the kibbutz'. But important ideas of its former educational system are still relevant, and all

children who grow up in the kibbutzim (and often also many children from outside) are cared for in the children's house during the day – starting from an infant's age. This is comparable to German day crèches or kindergarten, and therefore especially after the changes kibbutz education could be of unique significance for education in pedagogical institutions. In the lecture I will analyse how far the concept of kibbutz education (or: education in the kibbutz) could be relevant as a theoretical framework for a theory of institutionalised childhood in education and care.

Introduction: The institutionalization of early childhood in Germany (a short review)

Up until a few decades ago, early childhood in (West) Germany was seen as a “family-oriented childhood.” After giving birth, mothers usually left their jobs for at least 3 years; fathers provided for their families (male-breadwinner-model) (see Kränzl-Nagl & Mierendorff 2007). During the last decade, the non-familial care of small children has, however, undergone rapid changes. This is particularly the case for children aged from 3 and up. In 1992, only 31% of 3-year-old children attended a kindergarten, but in 2009, this had already increased to 81 % (Rauschenbach 2011).

A more notable increase is apparent for children aged from 1-3 years. While in 2009 only 12% of the 1-year-olds and 30% of the 2-year-olds were in daycare, the outlook for 2013 is that 42% of parents of 1-year-olds and 68% of the parents of 2-year-olds are trying to secure a place in a daycare facility. From 1.8.2013, all children aged from 1-3 years will have a legal right to a place in a daycare facility.

In communist East Germany (GDR), the institutionalized care of children in a day nursery (or even a week nursery) from infancy onwards was viewed differently: besides keeping women in the workforce, it was part of the political agenda.

In addition to the increased time spent in daycare facilities and kindergarten, young children are increasingly taking part in a wide range of other educational and leisure activities such as physical education, swimming, music lessons etc. Therefore the current developments have been described as tending towards de-familization and a forced institutionalization of childhood. This development should not be viewed as a victory for the communist ideology, but is rather the result of different societal changes in the reunified Germany.

Two developments have pushed this trend, and they shape the scholarly and public discussions on early childhood:

- The considerable decline in the birthrate means that the well-educated young women are needed in the labor market. Therefore players from politics and industry demand and support the accelerated expansion of daycare places. This trend is also supported by the increased desire of women to be able to combine family and work (no longer either-or, or consecutively, as has long been the case).
- Since the PISA studies (2000 and further), politicians have been calling for a more cognitive approach to working with toddlers and preschool children – especially for disadvantaged children and children with a migration background.

The current discussions revolve around, on the one side, pedagogical and psychological aspects – the cognitive and verbal development of children – and, on the other, local politics, because there are fears that there will not be enough daycare-places for small children by August 2013.

However the impact of an increasing institutionalization process for society and socialization and with it, less family life, (in Germany, sociologists and educationalists refer to an increasing de-familization of childhood), is only very rarely discussed (see Honig, 2002, 2011, 2012). Honig therefore calls for a “theory of institutionalized childhood in education and care.”¹

Different roles in families and in public institutions; developmental tasks

In contrast to families, daycare centers and kindergartens are public institutions, and, therefore, they are representative of social systems in which participants take on roles different to those found in families. In his theory, the American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951, pp. 58-67) contrasts the roles of children at school (as a public institution) with their roles in the family (as a private institution). He identifies contrastive attributes – he calls them “pattern variables” – in these two institutions. According to Parsons, role-definition in the family is mainly characterized by affectivity, particularism, diffuseness, ascription, and self-orientation (p. 67). The roles are insofar particularistic as they apply to the individual child and specific situations in the family. In addition, the roles are diffuse, i.e., they differ depending on the different relationships and roles (e.g., son/daughter, grandchild, sister/brother or position in the line of siblings), and they are ascribed, which means they are determined at birth and not acquired during the process of socialization.

At school, however, there are another set of rules. According to Parsons, the role-definitions are: “affective-neutrality, specificity, collectivity-orientation, universalism, and achievement” (p. 67). The teacher pays (nearly) the same amount of attention to all children; therefore it is – compared to the parents – affective neutral. The demands made on the pupils are related to specific contents – namely to the contents of the lessons, and these have to be executed adequately. The pupils secure their position at school as a result of their efforts, and they are expected to meet the learning objectives of the school. According to Parsons, these socializing processes serve as preparation for adult life (see Fölling-Albers & Heinzel 2007). In addition to this, the peers play a significant role in the socialization process. The children have to discern and accept the rules in the group and work out what their role is; often they have to fight for their position in the group. The peer-group plays an important role in the socialization of children (see Krappmann & Oswald 1995).

Even though not all of the attributes ascribed by Parsons to the school apply to crèches and kindergartens – e.g. the attribute of academic performance in the different lessons –, the others do apply to small children (toddlers). The American educational researcher Havighurst (1953) defined specific developmental tasks for the different age-groups.

¹ Honig (2012): “Theorie betreuter Kindheit”. Honig (2002, 2011, 2012) argues on the basis of Siegfried Bernfelds concept „Institutik“, which he designed in his book „Sisyphos oder die Grenzen der Erziehung“ (1925). In this article I cannot consider Honigs approach.

Following Havighurst, developmental tasks concerning the socializing roles of the daycare centers and kindergarten can be defined:

- Separation from the mother/parents and attachment to the nursery teacher (this is especially true for very small children), and accepting a second “home”;
- “Sharing” the adult with other children – letting go of the idea of an exclusive relationship to one adult;
- Acceptance of the rules and norms “for all” (Parsons: universalistic), e.g.: being considerate to others, not being loud, aggression control (temper tantrums), social behavior;
- Discerning own position and social role in the group.

In a theory of institutionalized childhood in education and care, the roles and tasks mentioned should be important components. At this point I would like to ask if the concept of collective kibbutz education has anything to contribute to the discussion.

Until now, there has been no research carried out on this topic. This is all the more remarkable as in the last century, the kibbutzim realized a comprehensive practice of an institutionalized childhood, and later also developed a theoretical concept for the societal role of childhood (relevance of the children’s house with its independent children’s culture and the relevance of the family) in the kibbutz (Dror 2001). In this concept, the roles and functions of the different persons in the institutions (the children’s house, and the family) for the community/kibbutz were defined (care-giver, in hebr.: metapelet; peers in the children’s house; parents and siblings in the parents’ home).

However in the kibbutzim, there has been a trend in the opposite direction to that being experienced in Germany: from a radical practice of de-familization to re-familization. When looking at this development, it could be asked whether the kibbutzim might provide some evidence to help answer some questions concerning an increasing institutionalized childhood.

Childhood in kibbutz education

In the first half of the last century, the Israeli kibbutzim developed an education and care system in which the focus was on the societal role of education. By placing the children in children’s houses, in which they lived and slept (collective sleeping arrangement), they were to be educated for life in the kibbutz.

The children’s houses were characterized by two at first glance seemingly opposing, features: on the one hand, they were relatively independent institutions (creation of an independent, own children’s culture); on the other hand, they were seen as models to prepare the children for adult society: They were to guarantee a “seamless” socialization into the kibbutz. The aim was to educate a “new man” for a “new society.”

The theory of collective education in the children’s houses (and also its theoretical legitimization) was only developed 20 years later, in the 1940ies, mainly by Shmuel Golan (1959) and from Golan & Lavi (1961, 1965). This theory was mainly developed based on the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud (particularly some aspects of his developmental and neurosis theory), which was adapted to the aims of kibbutz education. Golan’s

interpretation of Freud's theory: a too close mother-child-relationship could jeopardize the development of the child (keywords: psychoneuroses, Oedipus-conflict).

The specific and different roles the children's house and the parents' house play in the socialization of the children were highlighted. The children belonged not only to their parents but to the whole kibbutz. Therefore the collective – namely, the whole kibbutz – was to be responsible for their development. The education and development of the children wasn't to be dependent on the educational and care capacities of their parents. All children were to have the same developmental chances (principal of equality in the adult society). Child rearing was seen as the equivalent of a job; it was to be performed by a trained person (see Liegle 1971; Fölling-Albers 1977; Fölling & Fölling-Albers 1999; Fölling-Albers & Fölling 2000; Dror 2001). The children had 2 “emotional centers” – the children's house and the parents' house; Miryam Rot: “One should not try to compare these two focuses, or ask which one is more important. They are *different*; there are different tasks and different rules. The life of a child in the kibbutz is whole when *both* these centers function well, when *each* fulfils its own role.” (1965, p. 79)

The children's house: The metapelet, a person of trust who had been selected by the members, was responsible for what happened in the children's house. Her role and that of the parents was distinguished clearly. The metapelet, who cared for the children during day until the evening (except for few hours in the afternoon when the children were together with their parents), was responsible for those educational duties that often cause conflicts, such as potty training, eating habits, social education. She was also responsible for introducing the children to duties that were part of kibbutz life: e.g. working in the garden and farm, which were especially prepared for the children, visiting the parents at their place of work.

The metapelet weren't to be a mother substitute, but more of a mother supplement (see Lewin 1965, p. 71). The main task of the metapelet was to educate the children for kibbutz life – they were seen as prospective members. If one looks at individualization and socialization as two complementary processes in the development of the children, the function of the children's house was, above all else, socialization. The metapelet was responsible for the whole group in the same way (“divided attention”; following Parsons, she was “neutral affective”).

In addition, the peer group had an important socializing task. The children (and youth) were to (under the care and supervision of adults) live a relatively independent life (in their activities, regulating their conflicts etc.). The children's collective was seen as a likeness of the adult society, where the children could become acquainted with, for example, equality and conformity to kibbutz values. The peer group was to contribute to the collective identity (see. Dar 1995; Fölling-Albers 1977; Dror 2001).

The parents' home: The parents' role was, above all, of an emotional nature. They were responsible for giving individual attention to their child (following Parsons: “affective” and “particularistic”). In the afternoon hours, when the parents were together with their children, they were excused from household chores (cooking, laundry etc. were organized collectively), and they could exclusively look after their children. Keeping in mind the distinction between socialization and individualization, the parents' main task was the individualization – but the

very few hours spent together meant that its realization was restricted. The splitting of the educational responsibility into two institutions and groups of adults was called „multiple mothering“. (See Neubauer 1965; Dror 2001, p. 52ff.)

Even though the division of the two tasks (metapelet and parents) was difficult to realize in practice, this (ideal) concept guided the metaplot and the parents during the first decades.

As it is well-known, this concept was not retained during the now more than hundred year history of the kibbutz movement. The past decades have seen many, at times fundamental, changes. – Along with economic and social changes (more privatization in the “New Kibbutzim”); there have also been changes in the concept of collective education. I would like to now mention some aspects that are relevant to my topic:

- Parents (especially those of the second generation who were educated collectively) voted for the abolishment of the collective sleeping arrangement. Since the 1990ies, (first Iraq-war) all children have slept in their parents’ house. The results of studies on attachment that showed that many of the kibbutz children who had grown up sleeping collectively had a less secure attachment to their parents than those who had slept at their parents’ house also helped pave the way for the abolishment of collective sleeping.
- Alongside the kibbutz-specific interpretation of psychoanalysis, different theories that put the focus on the individual child have also been adapted (e.g. Ego-psychology, Piaget’s theory of cognitive development, attachment theory). As a result, the role of the peers has been reduced. The strong emphasis on collective values had previously often led to a pressure to conform, and often allowed less freedom (and sometimes also understanding) for outsiders and for children with individual and specific interests and ideas (different to the mainstream), or also for children with developmental delays (see Dar 1995, 1998; Dror 2001; a literary example: Oz 2012, S. 99-122).
- Not only children from the kibbutz are educated and cared for in the children’s houses (now called daycare centers), but also children from outside (associated members or neighborhood) whose parents have to pay. For many young parents, the quality of the education in the kibbutz is reason enough to become a member or an associate member.
- As in most kibbutzim, only a low percentage of the young adults aspire to be members; the educational goal is no longer “education for the kibbutz” but “education in the kibbutz” (see Fölling-Albers & Fölling 2010; Fölling-Albers 2013).

Relevance of kibbutz education for a “theory of an institutionalized childhood in education and care”?

Can the experiences gained throughout the (history and development) of kibbutz education contribute to a theory of institutionalized childhood in education and care? – And if so, how?

It is difficult to recognize a connection between today’s societies and the kibbutz of the first decades of the movement, with its individual background situation (colonization of Palestine, rural settlements, Zionist ideology etc.) and it would be almost impossible to transfer the concept (as a whole) to other liberal-capitalistic societies. Nevertheless, the question arises of whether there are some aspects that could be relevant for a theory of an institutionalized childhood in education and care. I want to focus on 3 topics:

1. Public responsibility for education:

Until the 1980ies, in most kibbutzim the responsibility for nearly all areas of education was almost exclusively carried by the community. Following the abolition of the collective sleeping arrangement, it became the shared, i.e., common and mutual, responsibility of the family and the commune (this was not without conflicts in the beginning, see Plotnik 1998). In the kibbutz, all children have the right to education and care in the daycare centers – which is in keeping with the earlier demand for equality.

The opening up of the daycare centers to children outside should lead to more public control of the work going on in the daycare centers – and in turn to a better quality (because external parents have to pay and expect a certain quality). The daycare centers are located in the center of the kibbutzim. This emphasizes their meaning for the community and means that a large part of the kibbutz members and not just the parents and relatives play an active part in the development of the children.

In Germany, the responsibility for the education of infants, toddlers, and preschool children is in the hands of the family (see GG § 6). Only recently has the German government begun to stress the common responsibility of the family and the community for the education of small children (referring also to the constitutional law; see Bundesministerium, 14. Kinder- und Jugendbericht 2013, S. 4 ff.). Nevertheless daycare centers and kindergarten come with costs (and for infants and toddlers, the costs are considerably high).

But common responsibility is not just a question of costs, but also (or: more) a matter of community involvement. In his book (*The Asymmetric society*, 1986), the American sociologist James Coleman asks how structures can be established for better education in modern societies. These structures should act as a link between the (more) impersonal institutions and personal, familial relationships and responsibilities.

The German neuro-scientist Gerald Hüther (2013) sees in communities a great potential for the education of the next generation – he calls it „Community Education“. Children and youth would be given the space they need to develop and grow into capable adults.

Both approaches (from the sociological and neuro-scientific perspectives) show the relevance of communal structures for the (social) development of the individual and the society. It seems that today's kibbutzim (and the neighborhood-kibbutzim, which are inspired by the ideas of the kibbutz movement, see Greenberg 2011) realize the ideas of Coleman and Hüther quite well. On the one hand, the community is taking on more of the responsibility for child-rearing, while on the other hand, the individual potential of each child is being developed with the help of different educational and developmental programs.

2. Multiple mothering and the role of nursery and kindergarten teachers:

In the kibbutzim, the educational roles of parents and metaplot were different. As yet there have been no (theoretical) discussions in Germany on the socializing roles of the

nursery and kindergarten teachers. The American educational researcher Robert Havighurst defined specific developmental tasks for the different age-stages.

Following Havighurst, the temporary separation from the mother (or parents) and the development of a specific attachment to the nursery teacher as well as the acceptance of the adult in the daycare center being responsible for all children in the same way, can be seen as an essential developmental task at this age. Exactly what these tasks mean for the educators and their actions is yet to be a topic of a theoretical discussion or empirical research.

In the first decades, the importance of the child care worker (metapelet) for the community can be seen in that they were selected by the members of the kibbutz (and therefore their status was very high). Together with the teachers, they were the first to have the chance to get a formal education (at teacher training centers). The prestigious status did not last, but the social relevance of socialization in the children's house did. It is of great importance that there is awareness of the socializing role of the child care workers in Germany because the percentage of children with a migration background is continuously increasing, and there are often differing perceptions of the roles of parents and child care workers.

3. Role of the peer-group; childhood as a relatively independent phase of life:

In the kibbutzim, the peer-group (children and youth culture) had a strong socializing role. Though it diminished after the abolition of the collective sleeping arrangement, the role of the peers as a socializing agent cannot be ignored. This is true (also in relation to Havighurst's developmental tasks) for the development of the sexual identity, finding one's own position in the group (identity and boundaries), and the development of social relations and friendship.

In German discussions on the increasing institutionalization of childhood in education and care, the topic of the socializing role of the peer-group is yet to be broached. In international childhood research concepts, childhood is (as in the kibbutzim of the first decades) explicitly seen as an independent stage of life (and not just as a phase of transition to youth and adulthood), in which they create their own culture. But a transfer of this theoretical concept into the day care centers (as has been done in the kibbutz) is yet to happen.

These three points, which are indispensable for a theory of institutional education and care, were important aspects in kibbutz education right from the start – even though they became less extreme over the years of development.

The psychologist Amia Lieblich (not member of a kibbutz) interviewed members of the kibbutz Beit Hashita three times – the first time in 1978, the second time in 1993, and the third time in 2003. In 2008, when the kibbutz celebrated its 80th anniversary, she was asked to summarize her experiences. She described the changes in the kibbutzim through the eyes of the members as follows: In the beginning, the kibbutz was a way (of life) – the founders had made a conscious decision for that way of life. At the second interview, during the economic

crisis, it was above all a place (to live). At the last interview, after the kibbutz had undergone a lot of privatization (“New Kibbutz”), the interviewees described their kibbutz as “home.” The opening up of the kibbutzim to “new neighborhoods” accelerated this opening-up process. At the end of her analysis, she wrote: “It is perhaps a paradox that by giving up the major aspects of its character and mission, Beit-Hashita voted for life as a vibrant community” (P. 131).

It seems that the contemporary kibbutzim – not just the New Kibbutzim like Beit Hashita, but also those who have held on to original central values like “no private property” and “equal pay for all”, and the “Urban Kibbutzim”, which were established in the last decade –, are practicing what Coleman and Hüther deemed should be a priority for education in post-modern societies.

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How to Tell the Collective Story of a Kibbutz? The case of the novel, *Home*, by Assaf Inbari

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/xos2Xk9w82g>

Abstract

Assaf Inbari's novel, *Home*, was published in 2009, a year before the Kibbutz Movement celebrated its centenary, and immediately entered Israel's best seller list where it stayed for more than 30 weeks. The book restores the pioneering generation to centre stage with the story of Kibbutz Afikim, whose founders were members of the fourth Aliya. *Home* is both a history book and a research study, but it is also a literary work of art. Inbari continues a tradition dominant in kibbutz literature. All the first kibbutz novels were based upon documentary plots. Inbari addresses the pioneers' authentic stories as stories that contain the power and vitality of those of the Jewish Sages, or of a Hasidic story. Eighty years have passed since the beginning of Kibbutz Afikim and Inbari's novel has to also relate to the sadness of missed opportunities, the bereavement, the silencing and repression, and describe the paradoxes created by this unique way of life in order to protect itself against the encounter between a too-great a dream and reality.

My presentation will focus on the tension between the 'true story' and fiction, between the personal and collective voices, and will expose the techniques adopted by the narrator to incorporate the personal into the collective in order to create a work of art.

Introduction

I believe that the sustainability of a commune is based not only on economical or sociological stability. It is based also on the ability to create and maintain communal culture. ICSA conferences related many times to religion as a unifying factor, not much research has been done on communal secular culture, especially concerning forms of communal art. I was glad to discover in this conference presentations and workshops touching on this subject in various ways: collective rituals, festivals, communal dances, storytelling in community, etc.

The Kibbutz movement has created, from the beginning, a cultural empire in many fields: music, dance, theatre, and especially literature. Most Hebrew prose writers until the seventies started their career on the kibbutz or were connected with kibbutz life as members of youth movements. Amos Oz is only one of the more famous examples. More than hundred writers and poets were living on kibbutzim in the "good old days". In a survey done about 15 years ago Reuven and Ori Kritz counted hundreds of stories, more than 90 novels and about 20 plays that were created by kibbutz writers between the years 1920 to 1995.¹ All genres were present, including children's literature. Many of those works were influenced by kibbutz life.

¹ Reuven and Ori Kritz, *The Kibbutz Tales* (Tel Aviv: Pura Books, 1997) (Hebrew)

My research on kibbutz literature is focused, among other issues, on the avant-gard models of writing which are compatible with the experience of this special way of life.

The main feature of kibbutz literature can be identified with a strong urge towards the documentary. Ever since the early kibbutz settlement of the Jordan and Jezreel Valleys, the kibbutz concept has been perceived by many as the principal innovation of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael. The utopian lifestyle, which was realized in everyday life, was set in the collective consciousness as a symbolic site that represented pioneering Israeliness at its best. The revolutionary way of kibbutz life was the "big story", bigger than any imaginary fiction. All the first novels written in kibbutz society by kibbutz members of the pioneer's generation were based upon documentary plots. The novel *Begining* by Shlomo Reichnstein (1943) tells the story of the beginning of kibbutz Tel Yosef and Ein Harod, *Time of Tents* by Emma Levin-Talmi (1949), tells of the early days of Hasomer Hatzair building-groups on the roads, and *Land Without Shade* (1951) by Yonat and Alexander Sened, members of kibbutz Revivim, describes the outpost enterprise in the Negev before the War of Independence. All of them, though written by individual writers, put the communal group at the center of their novel.¹

The second trend in these avant-gard experiments was based on models of collective and semi-collective writing. In the early days, this trend encouraged the writing of collective anthologies that documented the experiences, troubles and dreams of groups of pioneers. Some groups had a collective note-book put in a public place where members of the commune could write and describe their feelings and reactions. Many times writing in the note-book was a more intimate way to express things you didn't dare speak about in the general assembly. The anthologies were based on the contributions of many people, like a mosaic, or a chorus of many voices. A few of these collective books were published and gained public recognition, some of them can be found only in kibbuzim's archives.²

The diffuse zone between fiction and reality, and the tension between the personal artistic voice and the collective voice, caused sometimes serious problems concerning the reception of the works. I will demonstrate this problem going back to one of my former examples. Alexander Sened, one of the co-writers of the novel *Land Without Shade*, told me in an interview (in 1990) that he was almost expelled from his kibbutz after writing the book. The novel 'Land without Shade' was actually commissioned by the kibbutz. Nine out of the 39 members who settled at the Revivim outpost fell in the War of Independence, and the group wanted to publish a booklet in their memory. The Seneds were given permission by their comrades to write the story of the founding of Revivim as a fitting way to tell their story. In a prior agreement between the Seneds and the book's commissioners, it was decided that the characters of the fallen would appear under their real names, while the other members would be given fictitious ones. When it became clear that the "documentary" book also sought literary freedom the kibbutz general assembly demanded the expulsion of Alexander Sened from the Kibbutz. The official

¹ See: Shula Keshet, *Underground Soul, Ideological Literature: The Case of the Early Kibbutz Novel* (Tel Aviv University- Hakibbutz Hamehuad, 1995), pp. 85-107. (Hebrew)

² See: Aviva Ofaz, *Sefer Hakvutza – Kvuzat hasharon* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1996 (Hebrew); Aviva Ofaz, *The Book of Life: The Diary of Kiriati Anavim* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2001), (Hebrew)

reason, said Sened, was that “I was given work days by the kibbutz to write a commemorative booklet, or the story of the members who were killed, and I had written a novel to which I had put our names. The members claimed: This is our book; we provided the means and the ‘material’, namely the historical events. Can the poultry man, for instance, put his personal stamp on each egg?” (I will address this problem later on in regard to the novel *Home*). This is not the only danger when you use documentary materials in a literary work.

It reminds me the famous story about the American writer Thomas Wolfe. Wolfe wrote an autobiographical novel named: *Look Homewarde, Angel* (1929), based strongly on the story of his family and his home town in Asheville, North Carolina. The novel received a very angry reaction by his family and his community. The people in his home town were insulted by the way he described them in his book. Wolfe resided in England and didn't dare come home. His book became, as you know, one of the best novels of American literature. He came home for the first time only about ten years later. By then everyone that was not included in the book – was insulted... The use of documentary materials created a few juicy scandals referring to the reception of kibbutz novels by kibbutz audience, and even a few cases of censorship by leaders and editors on which I wrote in my first book on kibbutz literature.¹ At least two of the critical-provocative works, including this novel, *Home*, were not published by the kibbutzim movement publishing houses... Inbari, the author of the novel *Home* left the kibbutz he was born in but settled not far away, first in kibbutz Gesher and than in Degania, both are in a few miles distance from Afikim.

In 2009, a year before the Kibbutz Movement celebrated its centenary, Assaf Inbari's novel *Home* was published and entered immediately Israel's bestseller list, where it stayed for more than 30 weeks. Assaf Inbari is 45 years old, third generation of kibbutz Afikim in the Jordan Valley, one of the 4 biggest kibbutzim in Israel. The book restores the pioneering generation to center stage with the story of Kibbutz Afikim, whose founders came to Israel from Russia after the revolution. The brief description of the plot that appears on the book's back-cover states: “This is the story of people who left their home to come home. They left their parents, their language, and Mother Russia for a land of their own, and attempted to give up their longing for privacy and property in order to create a better society, as they understood it. Some were fortunate enough to die before their life's work was shattered. Some are still here.”

“A True Story”

This modern new novel continues in many ways the main literal traditions that were dominant in kibbutz literature during the pioneering stage. According to Inbari he spent more than seven years collecting materials from archives, protocols, personal diaries and personal letters, and memorial booklets, before he started on his mission: to tell the collective story of the kibbutz he was born in. He relates to the authentic stories of the pioneers as stories that contain the strength and vitality of biblical and Hasidic stories, and he actually defines himself not as a writer but as a "treasurer of memories"². According to his definition the task of the "treasurer of memories" is to pass on, like the implied author of the Bible the "true story" to the next

¹ See *Underground Soul*, pp. pp. 200-209; 231-240.

² See: Assaf inbari, "Buber and the Art of Jewish Story Telling", *Odissea* 18, January 2013, pp. 78-85

generations. His writing style is based on action. The Hebrew language likes verbs rather than adjectives, and the novel moves fast forward, without probing into the heroes feelings, conflicts or inner thoughts. The people in this novel are "doing" things, rather than pondering on them, and as one of the protagonists declares: "I came to Eretz Israel not in order to settle down but in order to make History".

The first reviews of the book, especially those written in the kibbutzim's periodicals were quite ambivalent. Even Inbari's mentor Muki Zur, one of the kibbutz movement known leaders, wrote a critical, somewhat angry review, and of course there were members of kibbutz Afikim who had something to say about the way Inbari related the story of "their" life. Inbari was blamed of being distant, ironic, if not cynical, and even disrespectful towards the founders. Eighty years have passed since the beginning of kibbutz afikim, and Inbari's novel had to relate the sadness of missed opportunities, the silencing and repression, and also describe the paradoxes created by this unique way of life in order to protect itself against the impossible encounter between a too-great dream and reality. It took some time to realize that this novel is a very interesting work of art, especially in regard to the voice of the implied story-teller.

A Collective Book

The first association that came to my mind regarding the narrative technique adopted by Inbari was the excellent Iranian film *Gabbeh*, directed by Mohsen Makhmalbaf I saw many years ago. A 'gabbeh' is a type of a Persian rug woven by the nomadic tribes of southwestern Iran, and is inspired by their life. The rug presents the history of the tribe; its colors are taken from those of the region – the sky, the mountains, and the vegetation. And the symbolic visuality woven into the rug, unfolds the film's plot. I want you to keep in mind this metaphorical picture.

Similar to the weaving of a rug, Inbari weaves the threads of the collective plot. There are seven principal characters through which the main story is depicted. These seven main characters are introduced shortly on the first page of the novel (like figures in a play) in their real names. Their actions create the main plot, the 'big' figure in the carpet. Many other minor characters enter and exit the book after a few sentences, concluding sometimes all their life in one or two sentences, and it is they who form the background of the carpet. Assaf Inbari, who was born on the kibbutz, knows all its hidden secrets and all its local small and big mythologies, and the 'carpet', its rich texture, is created from all these small local anecdotes and legends, thread after thread, assembled beautifully to each other. And - as in many hand-made rugs, if you reverse it, you can see the hidden side in which the knots are visible, namely, all the things that were repressed by kibbutz society. Most of the time we hear the voice of the collective implied writer telling the story of the establishment, building, and decline of the kibbutz. The members are described mainly through their actions, through their part in the historical plot.

The Personal and the Collective

I was curious about the writer's place in the "big story". I took particular note of the techniques adopted by the narrator to incorporate his personal voice into the collective picture.

This is done using two main techniques: “close-up” scenes and direct quotations from private letters, diaries, namely to the authentic materials he chose to bring before us from the individual memories. It's very important to listen to these places because there you can expose the personal voice of the author,

Inbari frequently does this through women's voices (I would argue that the novel's space can be divided into “rigid male voices”, and “female”, softer voices, that had not been eradicated by the suppression of emotion in the name of ideology. Klara is one of these people that Inbari moves closer to. Klara's letters to her husband Lasia Galili, the founding leader, are provided in direct quotation (e.g., pp. 66-67, 88, 97). We have Lasia Galili who is always “on the road”, on the horizon, in the domain of the “big dream”, and there is Klara, who is constantly guarding reality, the home, the family. The family mixture from whence Klara came is an assurance at a stance of ideological flexibility: “My mother believes in Jesus, my sister in reincarnation, and my brother believes in Stalin.” Klara's is the sane voice safeguarding the proper balance in an ardently ideological society. She holds for instance that the children of the kibbutz are being raised as in an orphanage, and she frequently recalls her grandmother laying her down on a couch, surrounding her with cushions, and turning the couch to the wall to create a small, protected world for her granddaughter (p. 179); it is Klara who springs to the defense of “the others” in the group, those incapable of complying with all the rules of the enlisted society.

Till Death

Inbari adopts an opposing technique when he projects the general onto the personal, notable mainly in the numerous cases of deaths that occurred during the building of the kibbutz. Kibbutz pioneering life was based on sacrifice and self denial, and Death appears as an integral, inseparable part of the general narrative.

In the course of my reading I began noticing a type of paragraph I term “the Inbari paragraph”. It is constructed of descriptive-objective sentences, seemingly from the outside. And then a concluding sentence appears like a bridge over a chasm.

I will give only one example: the final scene in the life of Miriam Wilder (Assaf Inbari's grandmother), an émigré who continued to speak German, and who calls her kibbutz room “the Bunker”:

Miriam Wilder, for instance, was transferred to assisted living after somebody climbed up the feed silo and changed the angle of the satellite dish. Instead of the German channel there was suddenly a music channel, if it can be called music (all kinds of baboons shouting in English and making disgusting gestures), and instead of the Austrian channel suddenly there was a football channel. She simply became ill from it. They moved her into assisted living, her daughter emptied the Bunker's kitchen cupboards of the hundreds of cheese container lids (lids without containers; she did not collect containers) and the thousands of rubber bands, **and she got used to assisted living and died within a month** (p. 269).

And Yet: Home

It is hard to convey the taste and aroma of a novel not yet translated into English. I would like to conclude this short presentation reading for you one of the concluding paragraphs of 'Home'. Home is not always the Land of Israel. The early pioneers miss the home that remained 'there', in Russia, but toward the end of the novel it still transpires, even when it seems that this entire home is built on sand, that no less than a paradise on earth was built here. Whereas one might think that Inbari's descriptions are somewhat detached, the following are written entirely in musical, poetical language:

The kibbutz that was built next to the biblical Garden of Eden – or perhaps even on the soil of the Garden itself [...] was no less beautiful than the biblical Garden of Eden [...]

The citrus, dates, bananas, and avocados, the productive orchards that encircle the kibbutz that was treeless in Mitya Krichman's time, now surround a kibbutz forested with conifers, ficuses, and other trees bearing no fruit. The hard, unvarying light that in Mitya Krichman's time blasted the exposed buildings and the open expanses between them, now filters through the treetops and drips patches of green shade onto the paths, and in the tops of the non-fruit-bearing trees, passing birds have settled, birds that in Mitya Krichman's time were neither seen nor heard. Doves cooed and rustled, woodpeckers pecked, bulbuls gossiped, blackbirds blurted a clarinet-like "oh-oh", and hoopoes landed on the lawn with a murmuring quiver. Here and there, between the trees, idle benches have been scattered for sitting idly in the shade. Who sat down in Mitya Krichman's time, just sat on just an unproductive bench, and just enjoyed filling his eyes and ears with the verdant chirping of birds? (p. 195).

What, then, is the picture obtained in the end? It is one of a crowded world. The people active in it cling to each other like the threads in the rug. It is a world that seems to be flat. The repression and the pain are not raised to the surface. The true internality peeping between the lines must be reached through locating the conscious and emotional place of the narrator. This place, Assaf Inbari's place, can be identified through the composition, the oppositional structure he has created, and especially through moving closer to or moving away from characters. What we as readers must do is not to stop on the surface, but activate the literary mechanism, and fill the gaps with content of emotion and consciousness. Most readers did exactly that, otherwise we would not kept the novel more than 30 weeks in the best-seller list. The collective story of the beginning and decline of kibbutz Afikim was not a singular story of one kibbutz. It became the story of general interest among Israelis, not only kibbutzniks, because in many ways it relates the sad and complex story of pioneering Israeliness.



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Greening the ‘Burbs: What can intentional communities teach suburbia? And what can the suburbs teach about community?

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/4uwonKhpRr4>

Abstract

North American suburbs are often criticised as the antithesis of sustainable, intentional communities: gated subdivisions dedicated to a philosophy of cars over people, privacy over neighbourliness and the accumulation of wealth over the common good. Yet both the original suburb and the communal movement were born out of visions of utopia – visions that have led our planet in very different directions.

If kibbutzim, ecovillages, cohousing and other forms of intentional community are to become anything more than isolated arks (and historical footnotes) amid a rising tide of climate change and urban sprawl, then our suburbs and cities need to change – and so do attitudes about the places where much of the Western world lives. The American Dream needs a reboot.

How can 65 years of suburban evolution be remade into a more communal and environmentally aware architecture? The lessons and layouts, successes and failures of the kibbutz movement and other intentional communities can help suburban citizens to rediscover and strengthen their own local networks of sharing and resilience. Pocket neighbourhoods, complete streets policies, car-sharing, pop-up piazzas, third places, micro-media, and other tools are the first steps toward reducing the huge ecological footprint of suburbia and creating a more intentional future for North America’s edge cities.

Thank you so much. I’m pleased to be here to talk about “Kibbutzing the ‘Burbs”, in which I want to ask, “Can sustainable community be scaled up for suburbia?” This may seem like an odd question at a conference about communal life. Isn’t the classic North American subdivision the opposite of the communal ideal. Isn’t the suburb an *un*-intentional community? Isn’t suburbia, in other words, the enemy?

Many of us likely agree with James Howard Kunstler’s claim that, in contrast to an ecovillage, our modern suburbs are “perhaps the greatest misallocation of resources in the history of the world.”¹ I’m not going to argue against that viewpoint – not entirely. But I do want to complicate it, so that we can see the social complexity of suburbia and the urgency of tackling its ecological problems. I want to do so for two reasons, which are designed to provoke. We need to repair suburbia:

¹ Kunstler, James Howard. “A Reflection on Cities in the Future.”
http://www.kunstler.com/mags_cities_of_the_future.html n.d.

1. because the suburbs were born out of a similar utopian impulse as many ecovillages and sustainable communities — as an escape from the toxic claustrophobia and lonely crowds of the industrial city — and it's time to help them reclaim these original ideals. And...
2. because the utopian goals of the ecovillage network and the communal movement are doomed to fail when faced with the global threat of climate change. Unless we find a way to connect the wisdom of sustainable communities with the neighbourhoods in which the vast majority of the developed world now lives, intentional communities will remain scenic enclaves or self-contained arks bobbing in a rising tide of resource depletion.

Before we begin, though, we need to define the nature of the suburbs – to think of their real shape and not their media caricature. Let me confess now, I'm a child of the suburbs. I grew up in what was likely the most middle-class neighbourhood, in the most middle-class city, in the most middle-class country in the world. A place that looked a lot like Levittown, the original commuter suburb. I assumed this was how everybody lived – or aspired to.

As permaculture pioneer David Holmgren has noted: “By the 1950s and 60s the suburbs had become the default or even the natural human environment in English-speaking countries.... the environment in which most of us were raised and in turn raised our children.”¹ By 2000, according to suburb historian Dolores Hayden, “more Americans lived in suburbs than in central cities and rural areas combined.”²

Finally, as geographer Richard Harris has cautioned: “In the United States today, no place seems more familiar than the suburb. To appreciate the strange particularity of this place, we need to establish some imaginative distance.”³ I only got imaginative distance on my suburban world-view when, at the age of 20, I ran away from home to volunteer on a kibbutz. After eight months on Kibbutz Shamir, I returned to Canada. While I never joined a commune or an ecovillage, my time on the kibbutz opened my eyes to the power of what's known as “environmental psychology”: how the design of a physical space and place can shape emotional states, social relations, and ecological consequences.

Back home, when I tell people back I lived on a commune in Israel, they often reply: “Oh, you went *kibitzing*. You lived on a *kibitz*. You were a *kibitznik*.”

I correct them, but there's an accidental truth in their linguistic confusion.

Kibitz is Yiddish, from a German root that meant “being an annoying observer at a card game”. *Kibitz* now refers to idle chit-chat or casual gossip. Shooting the breeze.

Kibbutz, of course, comes from the Hebrew for “a gathering”. It has that sense of being both a noun and a verb. It's a reminder that community is an action and not just an area code. A pattern of behaviour that a place encourages or discourages. An ongoing conversation. To be part of a community is to *kibitz*. That's what binds us together.

1 Holmgren, David. “Retrofitting the Suburbs for the Energy Descent Future.” Simplicity Institute Report 12i, 2012. <http://permaculturenews.org/2012/07/31/david-holmgren-on-retrofitting-the-suburbs-for-the-energy-descent-future/>

2 Hayden, Dolores. *Building Suburbia*, Vintage Books: New York, 2003, 10.

3 Qtd. in *ibid*, xi.

But kibitzing occurs best on a human scale at a human pace. It is, quite literally, a pedestrian activity. We walk and we talk. Those are our two most fundamental traits as a savannah species, as an upright ape with language.

The genius of the kibbutz, and most other intentional communities, was an architectural design that promoted kibitzing, that encouraged both walking and talking. Typically, a ring road pushes cars to the periphery. A work district for factories, farm buildings and offices allows residents to walk to their jobs. A retirement home and a daycare, a sports hall and cultural centre, a pub, a library, and a general store bring people together. Everything is centered around an open grassy area and a dining room for eating, meetings and public celebrations – an outdoor and an indoor commons. These communal hubs are then linked by a network of sidewalks, like the spokes of a wheel, so that the centre should never be more than a 15-minute stroll away.

They created what I like to call a “Slow Foot Movement” – which, of course, is a play on the “Slow Food” movement. But food, social life and sustainability are intrinsically linked in healthy communities. That’s why many of the kibbutzes that have privatized in the last decade or so often began by closing their dining halls out of austerity. When they stopped breaking bread together they broke their longstanding social bond. It’s why the common kitchen is so vital to ecovillages and cohousing communities. And it’s also part of the reduced ecological footprint of such places.

Charles Durrett, the architect and author who helped bring cohousing to North America, told me not long ago as we toured an ecovillage in Canada: “Cooking one big pot of spaghetti is more ecological than cooking 30 pots.”¹ Eating together opens up an ethic of sharing in other elements of community life, too. Durrett told me he lives in a neighbourhood with 34 houses and one lawnmower – an unheard of ratio in any North American suburb!

In fact, it’s how many Silicon Valley companies, from Google to Apple, have designed their corporate campuses to promote the exchange of ideas and development of innovation: free food, places to eat together, bike sharing, and open spaces that encourage walking and talking and deeper social connection.

Ecologically and socially, the failure of the traditional suburb is in large part a failure to accommodate our natural urge to kibitz. In the suburbs, we often know more about reality-TV stars than our own neighbours. We kibitz over our iPhones rather than with the people down our street.

It wasn’t meant to be this way. One of the most influential visions of suburban utopia was the “Garden City” by British social reformer Ebenezer Howard – a marriage of the best of country life and urban life. The Garden City inspired designs of both the kibbutz in Israel and the North American suburb. And yet from this same blueprint, the kibbutz and the suburb took very different paths.

The developers of the world’s first commuter suburb in Levittown, New York, tried to promote kibitzing by banning fences, so that kids and parents could roam freely. (That

¹ Durrett, Charles. In conversation. November 12, 2011.

“freedom” had racist limitations, though, as Levittown sold only to Caucasian families until 1960.) The fenceless freedom of the original suburb didn’t last. Homeowners demanded privacy and ignored or overturned the bylaws. New subdivisions marketed boxed-in backyards as a selling point. Suburbia turned its back on its neighbours. As Dolores Hayden observes in her book *Building Suburbia*: “Unlike every other affluent civilization, Americans have idealized the house and the yard rather than the model neighbourhood or the ideal town.”¹ Personal privacy trumped social sharing.

This new enclosure movement only emphasized the suburb’s reliance on the automobile. For me, growing up in the suburbs, the only store we could walk to was a car dealership – an ironic symbol of how dependent we’d become on the infernal combustion engine. Ebenezer Howard’s pre-automotive Garden City model imagined self-contained communities in a natural surrounding, connected like nodes in a network. Zoning laws in the sprawling suburbs and “edge cities” like Levittown instead disconnected work life from domestic life, and domestic life from social life. They turned a village of kibitzers into a bedroom community of commuters, all striving to make mortgage and car payments, to drive their kids from one appointment to the next, to get ahead or simply keep up with the Jones. As William Leavitt, the founder of Levittown, once said: “No man who has a house and a lot can be a Communist. He has too much to do.”²

In Canada, ecovillages like Yarrow and O.U.R. have been forced to cut through red tape and bureaucracy to be “allowed” to locate agriculture, housing, commerce, education and wilderness conservation all on one property in a sustainable union. Shared and mixed-use spaces, though, can have powerful social effects, even in suburbia. Another personal example: As an adult, when my own family moved into our new house, our backyard had a hot tub but no side fence. The natural solution was to keep the tub and add a fence for privacy. Instead we did the opposite: got rid the tub and left the yard open. A funny thing happened: We got to know our neighbours. My son started to crawl into their strawberry patch. Our neighbour taught him to garden and gave him seeds to plant his own patch. For his first kindergarten Show and Tell, he brought in the string beans and kale he had learned how to grow.

Our neighbour became his friend, his garden mentor, his “shirt-tail aunt”. She is as close to him as many of his blood relatives. And we are close to her. We drop off our newspaper when we’re done with it. She lets us borrow her car – which means, combined with a local car-share co-op, we haven’t owned one in a dozen years. None of this would have happened if a fence had stood between us.

Seattle architect and planner Ross Chapin describes several American communities where homeowners have “defenced” their backyards.³ They removed traditional barriers and returned to an open commons through which neighbours and children can once again flow, can walk and talk. Other communities have done the same with shared back lanes, turning them from car-first avenues into communal gathering spots. Chapin has designed many so-

¹ Hayden, Dolores. *Building Suburbia*, Vintage Books: New York, 2003, 5-6.

² Ibid.

³ Chapin, Ross. *Pocket Neighborhoods*. Taunton Press: 2011.

called “pocket neighbourhoods” that integrate a central green space and a common building for shared meals and gatherings. He retools the conventional suburban blueprint with the vital commons contained in almost every ecovillage, kibbutz, cohousing and intentional community.

These green spaces can then be reclaimed for both social use and community gardening. Farming and suburbia often seem at odds, given how new subdivisions tend to gobble up productive agricultural land in North America, Israel and elsewhere. But as David Holmgren has argued: “the retrofitting of our existing suburban landscapes to make them more agriculturally and economically productive places ... has always been central to the permaculture agenda.”¹ He, too, urges politicians and policy-makers to reduce legal barriers to suburban home-owners growing and selling food, renting out spare rooms, and operating businesses within residentially zoned neighbourhoods – as a way of building genuine social networks, food security and community resilience, of reducing sprawl, car use and carbon emissions.

Now, I want to propose a way to measure the social and sustainable health that looks past the superficial exteriors and ideological differences between intentional and unintentional communities, that dichotomy of “good” ecovillages versus “bad” suburbs. I call it K.Q. or Kibitz Quotient: How much positive gossip happens while walking a community’s streets or stopping in its communal facilities? How connected do we become to a place through walking and talking?

So, if M equals the number of meetings with both strangers and neighbours, and C, the conversations or acts of cooperation that result, then $K = M C$ squared. That’s your Kibitz Quotient. The higher the better.

There are other ways of measuring community connection and kibitzing potential. If you go to WalkScore.com², the website will calculate you neighbourhood’s “Walkability Index” via data from Google Maps. That has some flaws, of course, because it relies on digital information that assumes facilities are separated: So Kibbutz Shamir, where I lived, scores a zero, because the algorithm doesn’t recognize the many services assumed within a typical kibbutz: a store, a sports club, car-share, a dining hall for lunch all exist on Shamir. Findhorn gets a marginal score of 40, for the same reasons – the program believes you need to drive most places to meet your needs. I doubt that’s true. And my neighbourhood in Victoria gets a very respectable 88 – which is accurate, to a point, but only because in a city, these social facilities are more easily mapped by Google. But it’s a start.

Another example is the Popsicle Index, from Catherine Austin Fitts³. The Popsicle Index asks: “What percentage of residents in your community believe a child can leave their home, walk to the nearest store to buy a snack and return safely?” Again, it’s a subtle gauge of both community trust and walkability. I’m sure in this case, kibbutzes and ecovillages would likely

¹ Holmgren, David.

² <http://www.walkscore.com/>

³ Fitts, Catherine Austin. “The Popsicle Index.” http://solari.com/articles/popsicle_index/

score high compared with your average suburban neighbourhood with its remote facilities and parental concerns about “stranger danger”.

Which brings me back to intentional design: The original kibbutz was obsessed with maintaining its Kibitz Quotient with every decision and design – to extreme degrees. Most infamous was the Battle of the Tea Kettle, in which kibbutzniks worried that private ownership of tea kettles — and later radios and TVs – would break the social bond that happened when members had to go to the dining room to use the kettle or watch TV together.

It seems ridiculous now. And yet they had a point. Especially if we consider the kettle a metaphor for what sociologist Ray Oldenburg calls a “third place”. He defines a third place as a physical site that’s neither work nor home. An in-between place. A gathering place. A place like a coffee shop or a pub, a hair salon or a barber shop, a library or a community centre. A place that, as Oldenburg, says: “serves the human need for communion” as a “centre of informal public life”.¹

The parable of the Tea Kettle reminds us that the failure of suburbia is in part due to the failure of many developers to accommodate such Third Places where community can grow. If there is anything that the communal movement has to teach the rest of the world, it’s the importance of allowing for the richness of a diverse and self-contained community, so that our home life, our work life and our social life aren’t kept so separate and reliant on the automobile (and now the Internet) for connection.

So what’s the point of all this kibitzing? How does it become something bigger? How does it affect sustainability?

I think gossip is good, rather than socially corrosive, when it helps us tell a story about our community. When it becomes myth.

That’s what the kibbutz did. As the late Henry Near noted in his history of the movement: “Pioneers created a history and a series of legends, which gave them strength in the present and confidence in the future.”² Kibbutzniks gave their communities names, much as ecovillagers and cohousing founders do. They preserved their collective memories in archives, songs, stories and celebrations. They shared a common vision through newspapers, bulletin boards and closed circuit TV. These myths sustained the kibbutz movement for a hundred years – a remarkable achievement.

More than an ideology, what suburbia lacks is such a narrative, a defining story. It has let its story be controlled by developers and profiteers, who have labelled these subdivisions with green-sounding and nature-based names and yet leave out the social infrastructure to make the suburbs truly sustainable and meaningful places to live. Suburban developers enticed homeowners with the promise of paradise. One editorial writer for the *National Real Estate Journal* in 1921 claimed that the Garden of Eden was the “first subdivision”³. But then developers privatized the profits and socialized the risks, leaving municipalities to worry

¹ Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place*. Paragon House: 1989, 20.

² Near, Henry. *The Kibbutz Movement: Origins and Growth, 1909-1939*. Littman Library of Jewish Civilization: 2008.

³ Qtd. in Hayden, 6.

about schools and streets and sewage treatment, leaving citizens in monocultural landscapes that lacked a defining story or collective purpose.

One way to create a collective identity for suburbia is through the power of “micro-media” – the tools of desktop publishing and social networking. I once lived in a district of Toronto that seemed like an unremarkable corner of the mega-city. It was hemmed in by a busy road, a subway yard, and a railway track. But neighbours there turned these geographical constraints to their advantage by christening it “The Pocket”, a micro-neighbourhood that didn’t exist on any official map.¹ Then they published a newsletter and an Internet site to share stories about The Pocket: its history, its ecology, its personalities, its up and downs. The myth of the Pocket grew. And that myth brought neighbours together.

The founders of the kibbutz movement believed that “utopia” could be more than a work of fiction. They dreamed of creating a new society of absolute equality. They even imagined the whole world would become one giant kibbutz, living in peace and harmony.

That dream hasn’t exactly come true.

The kibbutz wanted to change the world. Instead the world changed the kibbutz. That tends to be the story of utopia. Of most intentional communities.

Kibbutz Shamir had been founded by Romanian socialists. Now, it’s a privatized subdivision of paper millionaires thanks to a lens factory that went public on the Nasdaq Stock Exchange.

And yet for all these changes, I think the kibbutz movement and its architecture of hope can help us evolve suburbia into the greener future that the entire planet needs. The most important lessons are these:

Be bold and dream big. Give every community a name and a means through which to broadcast its myth to the world. Turn every neighbourhood from an area code into a gathering. Build “third places” and remove barriers to kibbitzing. We might not make Utopia overnight. But we can cultivate our own small good places. One less fence and one more story at a time.



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¹ “The Pocket.” <http://www.pocket.ca>

Kibbutz as Sustainable Community: What happened during the last generation? An overview by a participant-observer¹

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/reZ_Xa4uesg

Abstract

The kibbutz was the largest and most successful movement of intentional community of the 20th Century. Historically, the kibbutz was an integral part of the Zionist movement – the modern movement for the renewal of the Jewish people in its ancient home. It seldom constituted more than 3% of the Jewish population in Palestine and later in Israel. In its own eyes and in the eyes of much of the surrounding society it was the Zionist aristocracy, the elite.

As a movement of intentional community, the kibbutz perceived itself as realising a value-oriented community way of life in ‘micro’, oriented to shaping the ‘macro’ of surrounding society.

From the 1970s on, the kibbutz began to founder because of a complex and fascinating interplay between internal dynamics and forces from without – the latter both from within Israel and from the West in general. In the last decades four questions have arisen regarding the sustainability of the kibbutz framework.

1. Can the kibbutz survive as a community?
2. Can the kibbutz survive as an intentional community?
3. Can the kibbutz survive as a movement of intentional community committed to impacting on surrounding society?

This presentation will outline the factors from within and without that have impacted on the kibbutzim in the last generation as well as the varied responses generated as a result. Are there tentative lessons to be gleaned from the kibbutz experience during the last generation (still very much in process) with regard to sustainable intentional community?

Introduction

After 50 years on kibbutz I use the term “participant-observer” deliberately. Before making aliya (migrating to Israel) I trained in medical and social, sciences.

The two kibbutzim with which I have been intimately involved, *Gesher Haziv* and *Lotan*, have followed diametrically opposite paths. *Gesher Haziv*, has privatized. My three sons are members of *Gesher Haziv*. My six grandchildren are children of the kibbutz.

¹ This paper has been adapted and abridged from a series, *Whither Kibbutz* (2011) – online on the author’s website www.michael-livni.org (See home page – left margin).

Over the years I have also been active within the kibbutz movement, particularly in informal education and the interface of kibbutz with youth movements. For the last twenty-six years I have lived on Kibbutz Lotan in Israel's Southern Arava desert. Kibbutz Lotan is part of the minority collective stream within the Kibbutz organization.

The kibbutz was the largest and most successful movement of intentional community of the 20th Century. Historically, the kibbutz was an integral part of the Zionist movement – the modern movement for the renewal of the Jewish people in its ancient home. In its own eyes and in the eyes of much of the surrounding society it was the Zionist aristocracy, the elite.

From the 1970's on, the kibbutz, as an intentional community, began to founder. A complex and fascinating interplay between internal dynamics and forces from without was involved in what has been perceived as the crisis in the kibbutz movement. In the last decades four questions have arisen regarding the sustainability of the kibbutz framework.

1. Is the kibbutz sustainable as a community?
2. Is the kibbutz sustainable as an intentional community?
3. Is the kibbutz sustainable as a movement of intentional community committed to impacting on surrounding society?

Is the Kibbutz Sustainable as Community?

The question of kibbutz sustainability as a community has to be viewed against the backdrop of statistics. The latest *Kibbutz Movement Annual*, No. 10, summarizes the growth of the Kibbutz Movement (*Hatnua Hakibbutzit*) over the past 50 years (p. 9). Figures are in thousands.

1961	1972	1983	1995	2006	2010	2011
77.1	89.7	115.5	118.9	119.8	140.9	149.1

These figures include the orthodox Zionist kibbutz movement, *Hakibbutz Hadati*. The 19 kibbutzim of *Hakibbutz Hadati* have a population of 12,000.

The kibbutz population resides in 278 kibbutzim. It constitutes 1.5% of the population in Israel. Historically, the kibbutz generally averaged 3% of the population.

The period of demographic stagnation evidenced by the figures from 1983 to 2006 has clearly ended. A significant element in the population increase is attributable to residents and their families as distinct from those who are members of the kibbutz within the framework of the Cooperative Societies Regulations as defined by Israeli law. It is to be noted that many kibbutz children have chosen to be residents rather than members. Residents and their families already number 20% of the kibbutz population.

The *Kibbutz Annual* further informs us (p.28) that the cumulative equity (*Hon Atzmi*) of the Kibbutzim increased fourfold in real terms between 2001 and 2011 – from 4.6 Billion Israeli Shekel to 20 Billion Israeli Shekel.

The foregoing statistical facts surely support a tentative conclusion that the kibbutz as 'community' is sustainable.

From personal acquaintance, I have no doubt that a major force behind kibbutz population growth is the desire to live in non-urban community as distinct from urban mass society.

Specifically, for many sons and daughters of the kibbutz the return to the kibbutz is to kibbutz as a home. It is a place where they have affordable housing, extended family (grandparents as 'built-in' babysitters), life together with their age mates and a return to the landscape to which they feel an emotional attachment.¹ Together with others, they ensure the sustainability of a multi-generational community.

However, the fact that the kibbutz, as a framework of community, is sustainable *does not relate to its survival and sustainability as an intentional community*. The ultimate question is: Can the kibbutz survive as a movement of intentional community committed to impacting and having a formative influence on surrounding society?

Kibbutz as Intentional Community

The term 'intentional community' was coined by the Fellowship for Intentional Communities (FIC) of North America in the 1980's. The late Geoff Kozeny, a leader in the FIC, defined intentional community as "a group of people who have chosen to live together with a common purpose, working cooperatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values."

This minimalist definition of intentional community does not adequately describe the intentional nature of the kibbutz movement when it was at the epicenter of the Zionist endeavor.

Zionism and the Kibbutz

There were two quite different dynamics which propelled Zionism. *Political Zionism* whose founder was Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) strove for a State for the Jews, "like all the nations". The trigger was rising anti-Semitism and the physical and economic threat to Jewish existence at the end of the 19th Century. It was the *threat from without* that propelled political Zionism. Political Zionism sought to save Jews

Cultural Zionism, associated with the name of Achad Ha'am (1856-1927) was motivated by the *threat from within* resulting from the breakdown of traditional Jewish society. It sought a Jewish state in order to counter the threat of physical and cultural assimilation and to ensure the continued *creative* survival of Judaism in the post-traditional world.

The kibbutz was involved in both of these dynamics and in sense, represented a synthesis of them.

The tension between the two dynamics within Zionism was one of priorities. History proved Herzl to be tragically correct in emphasizing an immediate necessity for a political solution to the plight of the Jews.

¹ Amia Lieblich, "Kibbutz 2008: A Way, A Place or a Home," in Michal Palgi and Shulamit Reinharz, ed, *One Hundred Years of Kibbutz Life*, Transaction Publishers, 2011, p. 130.

However, 80 years ago the Labor Zionist leader, Berl Katzenelson pointed out that:

We are now in a period wherein we are engaged only in constructing the frame of the building. Our thoughts have not yet turned to furnishing the house, to its interior decoration.... We do not yet have the leisure for profound spiritual life, but the day will come...Some day there will be many Jews in the country and they will give us no rest...in time to come they will struggle with questions of our cultural fate.¹

In fact, Katzenelson, made out a promissory note – to be redeemed someday by the Zionist labor movement, including the kibbutzim. He implied that without providing some meaningful content for the edifice that was being built, the Zionist movement (and in particular its labor wing) would bankrupt itself.

As a movement of intentional community the kibbutz perceived itself as realizing a value-oriented community way of life in ‘micro’, seeking to impact on and even shaping the surrounding society in ‘macro’. There is no parallel elsewhere to that level of ‘intention’ in other communal networks.

The real question with regard to the sustainability of the kibbutz framework relates to its relevance as a framework for renewing its formative influence on the values of the surrounding society. This is also the question posed by the current leadership within the kibbutz movement itself.

What are the factors, from within and without that brought the kibbutz as intentional community to preeminence? What factors caused its decline as intentional community?

A ‘Marriage of Convenience’

The kibbutz movement arose within the Zionist movement as result of the needs of political Zionism and the desires and needs of young socialist-Zionist pioneers (*chalutzim*) to realize a particular kind of cultural Zionism – Hebrew land, Hebrew labor, Hebrew language, social justice and Jewish life freed from orthodox rabbinic authority. In groping with the harsh reality of pre-World War One and immediate post war reality, they sought to realize a particular (prophetic) socio-cultural vision of what a Jewish state should be.

Degania, founded in 1910, and other collectives that followed were the result of a ‘marriage of convenience’ between the needs of the Zionist and the aspirations of young socialist- Zionist pioneers.

The Zionist establishment needed an economic way to settle the land and to provide the agricultural infrastructure for urban settlement. Later, in the 1930’s, the social structure of the kibbutz made it an ideal framework for settling isolated areas in order to ensure the future borders of the Jewish state. Kibbutz members and the kibbutz framework also proved themselves suited to underground activity such as military training and facilitating ‘illegal’ immigration of refugees fleeing the Nazis into Palestine.

¹ Berl Katzenelson in his Eulogy for Chaim Nachman Bialik, (1934) quoted from “Whither Kibbutz”(First in a Series –Footnote 1. Bialik was Zionism’s outstanding poet.

The State Pre-Empts the Kibbutz

In the wake of the establishment of the State, in 1948, the marriage of convenience came into question. The government was confronted by unprecedented challenges with which the kibbutzim were unable and/or unwilling to cope. The outstanding example was the absorption of the mass immigration immediately after the establishment of the State. New *moshavim* (smallholders settlements), more suitable to the social structure of the new immigrants, partially replaced the kibbutzim in agriculture. In addition, after a large number of kibbutzim were founded immediately after the establishment of the state, the kibbutz was no longer as necessary for securing borders and unsettled areas. The kibbutz based militia, the *Palmach*, was disbanded.

In pursuing national aims, the government did not necessarily take the long-term needs of the kibbutzim into consideration. The decision to integrate Labor Zionist schools into the general system of education, while allowing orthodox religious schools to continue was to have a long term effect on Israeli society in general very much in evidence today. However, the dismantling of Labor Zionist schools in 1953 was to impact negatively on both the quality and quantity of future recruits to the kibbutz as intentional community.

Within the kibbutzim, the realization of political Zionism, i.e. the establishment of the state, constituted a rationale for many to leave the kibbutz. This meant that those who saw the kibbutz as intentional community mainly for purposes of settlement and security no longer felt obligated. Many took positions in government or in the army. Many felt it was now time to make their own individual way.

Nevertheless, until 1977 the Government was a Labor government. It would be an exaggeration to say that the government was socialist but Israel was a mixed economy welfare state. There was always a significant group of kibbutz members in the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and a number of kibbutz members were ministers in the government.

All in all, in the first three decades of statehood the kibbutzim achieved a degree of economic consolidation and became a (modest) consumer society. However, the Zionist purpose (intention) of the kibbutzim came into question in the eyes of Israel society in general and in the eyes of kibbutz members as well.

The Political Turnabout and the Marginalization of the Kibbutz

The political reversal of 1977 brought a government to power that represented immigrants, the 'other Israel' of the previous generation who had felt patronized and exploited by the Labor 'aristocracy'. They demonized the kibbutzim as the ultimate symbol of that Israel from which they felt socially and ideologically alienated. They rejected the kibbutz as a role model for society. They were repelled by what they felt to be a rejection of Jewish tradition evinced by the kibbutzim.

The political turnabout and the years following also marked the emergence of political sectors in the Israeli polity. Sectors had always existed and there had sometimes been bitter differences with regard to national policies to be pursued. But now, the sectors began prioritizing their particular interest and national interest became secondary. To form a

government it was necessary to 'buy' sectors. A particularly ominous development was the increasing demands made by ultra-orthodox religious sectors as conditions for joining a given coalition government. Although residing in Israel, the ultra-orthodox had no commitment to the Zionist state. They did not (and do not) recognize its symbols such as the flag and the national anthem. Most of them do not join the army. On the other hand, the orthodox Zionists see the State as the beginning of redemption.

The kibbutzim became a marginal group within a minority sector of the Israel polity. They were soon to be engulfed in economic-financial crisis. However, even though the implications were hardly understood at the time, the political turnabout of 1977 marked the point at which the kibbutz was no longer sustainable as a movement of intentional community committed to impacting on the various sectors of surrounding society.

End of the marriage. Not only were the kibbutz marginalized, they were now on their own!

The impact of society's estrangement from kibbutz ideals was heightened by disarray and 'ideological anemia' within the kibbutz movement itself.

The Decline Within - The Waning of Kibbutz Ideology

Already in the late 1970's, Stanley Maron of Kibbutz Maayan Tzvi, bemoaned the 'ideological anemia' that had developed in the kibbutz movement. However, those sounding the alarm were in a very small minority. On the kibbutz, the political turnabout of 1977 which brought neo-liberalism and a new generation of Israelis to power was seen by most as a temporary aberration.

Behind Stanley Maron's term, 'ideological anemia', loomed a somber implication. Ideology implies a map of ideas and ideals as well as an action program for their realization. 'Ideological anemia' really meant the loss of Zionist ideological purpose in the individual kibbutz and in the kibbutz movement as a whole. By the late 1970's kibbutzim were still *collective* communities. However, in retrospect they had largely ceased to be *intentional* communities.

What were the internal dynamics that contributed to this loss of intention, the loss of ideological purpose?

The Generations of the Kibbutz

By the end of the 1970's most kibbutzim were multi-generational communities. However, the critical differences between the generations are vital to an understanding of the erosion of kibbutz community as intentional community and the challenges it faces at present.

The paradigm of the mythic Biblical patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – provides a useful description of kibbutz generations.

The founding generation, the **Generation of Abraham**, *Dor Avraham*, (think: David Ben Gurion, Berl Katzenelson, A. D. Gordon) made a deliberate and radical break from its surroundings in order to start anew. They heard 'the call'.

The Abraham generation on the kibbutz was a tiny, purposeful self-selected elite of a few hundred before the World War I and a few thousand in the immediate years after that war. They chose a particular pioneering Zionist path after contending with alternatives – personal careers, emigration to America, the international socialist movement in its many versions, or even life in Palestine within the parameters of life in the Diaspora. They were rooted in and conversant with the Jewish heritage and committed to it. They rejected the social injustice innate in capitalism. They rejected the norms of Judaism as interpreted by the orthodox rabbis. They identified as ‘free Jews’ – free of the yoke of orthodox Jewish law.

The poet, Avraham Shlonsky (1900-1970), expressed cultural Zionist purpose of the Abraham generation when he wrote:

At the crossroads of the generations between night and dawn

We dared to create a new beginning, for we came here to continue the way.¹

The Isaac generation, *Dor Yitzchak* – think: Moshe Dayan, Yigal Alon, Yitzchak Rabin - did not have to contend with ideological challenges stemming from major alternatives within its immediate environment. It came to maturity before and during Israel’s War of Independence. Many of this generation were sacrificed on the altar of statehood in the War of Independence.

The practical Zionist tasks of the state in embryo were settlement, defense, and illegal immigration. The Isaac generation did not have to deal with ideological challenges of the kind faced by their parents nor with the challenges of personal identity that were to face their children and grandchildren..

The Dilemma of the Jacob Generation²

In the Biblical narrative and in the contemporary context, the generation of Jacob faced a crisis of identity. The pivotal event symbolizing Jacob grappling with his identity occurred on his way back to Canaan from Haran at the ford of the River Yabbok.

Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn...Then (the man) said: ‘Let me go for dawn is breaking’. But (Jacob) answered, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ Said the other...’Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings Divine and human, and have prevailed’.³

The generation of Jacob in the kibbutzim matured against the backdrop of sea changes taking place in the society around them at the end of the 1960’s and the 1970’s. The Six Day War. Economic development (in part because of the occupied territories). Television (introduced in 1968). Young volunteers from the West inundating the kibbutzim. The Yom Kippur War. The political reversal that ended Labor hegemony. The generation of Abraham had passed from the scene.

The educators of the Isaac generation were not equipped to inculcate a comprehensive, cognitive world view of values and norms to the Generation of Jacob, *Dor Yaakov*.

¹ Avraham Shlonsky, “These and These” (1930), *Poems*, Sifriat Hapoalim, Tel Aviv, 1954, Vol.1, p.306.

² Michael Livni, The Generation of Jacob on the Kibbutz”, *Jewish Spectator*, Fall 1990, pp. 44-45.

³ Gen. 32: 25 – 28.

The Jacob generation was set adrift without a map, without the ability and (more important) without the motivation to synthesize an ideological transformation that might contend with the far-reaching changes in its surroundings. In terms of Jewish-Zionist identity – ‘free Judaism’ of the Abraham generation became ‘no Judaism’ of the Jacob generation.

Think of that son of the kibbutz, one of the Jacob generation: Ehud Barak.

It was precisely the Jacob generation, graduates of the youth movements and kibbutz born young adults in their thirties and forties who were to contend with the economic crisis that struck the kibbutz in the 1980’s.

At that time, what was less apparent was the fact that Israel and the kibbutz within it had become a part of the process of that aspect of cultural globalization reflected in the term ‘post-modernity’. The generation of Jacob on the kibbutz (and in the Labor movement) had to contend not only with economic crisis. It was faced by the challenge to any and all ideologies posed by post-modernity.

From Modernity to Post-Modernity: Implications for Zionism and the Kibbutz

In general, post-modernity expressed itself (expresses itself) in Israel as the process of ‘Americanization’. In this context what do we mean by ‘modernity’ and ‘post-modernity’ – in particular as it relates to Zionism and the kibbutz?

Modernity is a product of the enlightenment. Modernity assumes that humans, as rational beings, have the capability of determining what is desirable (vision) and can formulate an action program to further wanted ends. Movements are a phenomenon of modernity. The strategic aims of a movement are determined by its ideological vision. Tactics, not vision, are dictated by an analysis of reality.

“Without vision the people become unruly,” Proverbs 29:18.

Zionism was (is) is a modern movement – whether in its political or cultural manifestation. “If you will it, it is no fairy tale,” wrote Theodor Herzl 1860-1904, the founder of political Zionism. The political Zionist movement strove to achieve a state for the Jews. Different streams of cultural Zionism, the kibbutz among them, sought to realize different visions of what the social and cultural character of the state should be.

Post-modernity rejects ideology. It utilizes social sciences and public opinion surveys to ascertain what is realistic and this determines both its aims and its tactics. Eliezer Schweid, the Israeli historian-philosopher, pointed out that the post-modern consumer society is based on the assumption that individual needs are to be nurtured and satisfied. The ultimate aim is a homogeneous global mass of individuals all members of a global mass culture served by trans-national corporations.¹

Perforce, a movement for comprehensive change can never be post-modern. Zionism can never be post-modern

¹ Eliezer Schweid, “Humanism, Globalization, Post-modernism and the People of Israel”, New Gordonian Essays, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Tel Aviv, 2005, p.14. (Hebrew)

The latter part of the 1970's witnessed the triumph of post-modernism in Western society as embodied in the socio-economic philosophy of neo-liberalism. This view was not compatible with kibbutz ideals in their classic expression. The tide of neo-liberalism engulfed Israel. One cannot ignore the international context: The late 1970's witnessed the ascendancy of neo-liberalism in the West. Reagan in America. Thatcher in the U.K. Kohl in Germany. Israel was not isolated from these trends.

This happened at the very time when the kibbutz movement, suffering from 'ideological anemia', had lost its ability to contend ideologically with new realities. An additional factor in the inability of the kibbutz to relate to new reality was its leadership or lack thereof.

Leadership in the Kibbutz Movement

In two of the three original kibbutz movements, the *Kibbutz Hameuchad* and in particular in the *Kibbutz Haartzi -Hashomer Hartzit*, leadership was based on a 'historic leadership' of its Abraham generation. Its authority was akin to that of the rabbis in Eastern Europe. It had an emasculating effect on the internal development of alternative leadership in those movements. As distinct from the above movements, the third movement, *Ichud Hakvutzot Vehakibbutzim* (*the Ichud*) had no historic leadership. In general, it was associated with the left-center *Mapai* party led by David Ben-Gurion. The pragmatism of the *Ichud* (as distinct from dogmatism of the other movements) reflected the pragmatism of *Mapai*.

The *Ichud* gave institutional support to the quarterly, *Shdemot*, ('agricultural fields'), initiated by young kibbutz intellectuals from all the movements. The circle emerged in the early 1960's. *Shdemot* continued publication for 30 years but disappeared as a result of the financial crisis of the 1980's.

Great hopes were pinned on *Shdemot* activists as a source of future leadership. However, they were too introspective and thus their potential remained unfulfilled. Muki Tzur, a *Shdemot* activist did become Secretary of the United Kibbutz Movement (*Takam*) in the late 1980's. Some members of this group (Muki Tzur, Yariv Ben Aharon¹) had significant influence on the 21st Century renaissance of communal groups of which later.

Moshe (Musa) Charif

It was no coincidence that it was in the *Ichud* that a young charismatic personality emerged that might have had a decisive effect on the kibbutz movement – Musa Charif of Kibbutz Tzora, graphic artist and architect.

In 1976, Charif became General Secretary of the *Ichud*. Charif was a rising star in the Labor party. In the wake of the Labor reversal in 1977, he realized immediately that the Labor movement in general and the kibbutz movement in particular would have to develop a proactive policy in the development towns representing the 'other Israel' in their regions.

¹ In the late 1970's, Yariv Ben Aharon edited a series of articles for the Israeli youth movements which sought to synthesize between all the sources within the Jewish heritage and the Zionist pioneers. Published as *Shorshei Yenika* ("Roots of Sustenance") it became a staple of the communal movement which emerged during the last generation. Yariv is the son of the veteran Labor leader, Itzhak Ben Aharon (1908 – 2007).

Musa Charif was killed in a traffic accident in January 1982. Could he have made a difference? We will never know. It is similar to the question of what might have been if Yitzchak Rabin had not been assassinated. What is certain is that no leadership emerged to contend with the economic crisis that unfolded shortly after Charif's death.

The Crisis and the Exceptions

In Israel, the processes engendered by post-modernism were catalyzed by neo-liberalism and attendant economic deregulation and financial speculation. The result was a financial and economic implosion similar to that which hit the United States in 2008 with its world-wide ripples and waves.¹

A number of kibbutzim were not lured into the world of financial speculation. If they did it was with only a percentage of their profits. Those kibbutzim weathered the financial storm. Unfortunately, the central financial and economic institutions of the movements, one of whose purposes was mutual help, had become involved in speculation. They were no longer there to help weaker kibbutzim. The movement structure of mutual aid between kibbutzim collapsed. Each kibbutz was now on its own.

Without money and without motivation, the managerial elites of the Jacob generation, with the support of their age cohort, initiated the dismantling of collective mutual responsibility. Not only were the kibbutzim on their own. In more and more kibbutzim, the individual member was on his/her own. Differential salaries were introduced based on the individual's market value. On many kibbutzim, older members suffered severely as a result.

Only the *Hakibbutz Hadati* movement of Orthodox kibbutzim made a movement decision (albeit by a narrow vote) based on ideology, not to involve themselves in speculation. In the main, the financial crisis did not affect the *Kibbutz Hadati*. The example of the *Kibbutz Hadati* shows that a firm ideological decision based on their vision and principles of religious socialism enabled their movement to weather the storm. This showed that the financial crisis was a proximate cause but not the underlying cause of the crisis that hit the kibbutz movement as a whole in the 1980's.

Kibbutz Redefined²

In 2002, In the wake of the changes taking place in the kibbutzim, the government appointed a Public Committee for Classification of Kibbutzim (the Ben-Rafael committee) in order to review the definition of 'kibbutz' within the framework of the Cooperative Societies Regulations. The committee concludes that there are now three different categories of kibbutz:

- a. Collective kibbutz (*kibbutz shitufi*) – a settlement society, which is a separate village, organized on the basis of *communal ownership* of property...
- b. New kibbutz (*kibbutz mitchadesh*) – a settlement society, which is a separate village, organized on the basis of *communal participation* in the ownership of property... which

¹ For further details see Livni, Whither Kibbutz, Footnote 1. Various aspects of this crisis have been dealt with in *One Hundred Years of Kibbutz Life*, pp. 15-57

² See also: "Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Menachem Topel, "Redefining the Kibbutz", in *One Hundred Years of Kibbutz Life*, pp. 249-258.

maintains mutual responsibility for its members in accordance ...with the *regulations for Mutual Responsibility in the New Kibbutz...*

- c. Urban kibbutz (*kibbutz ironi*) – a cooperative society that functions *for social contribution to and participation in Israeli society...*¹ (Emphases in bold – M.L.)

In 2005 the recommendations of the Ben Rafael committee became part of the Cooperative Societies Regulations of Israel. However, the interpretation of ‘mutual responsibility’ on the new kibbutz has yet to be finalized.

Only the urban kibbutzim are recognized as intentional communities seeking to impact on the surrounding society.

The Emergence of Urban Intentional Communities²

In the last thirty years, there have been two paths by which urban intentional communities emerged.

The first path was initiated by small groups of kibbutz children who as young adults sought to return to their grandparents’ ideals within a framework that contends directly with the ‘other Israel’. This led to the formation of these urban kibbutzim in the social and geographic periphery of Israel in so-called ‘development towns’. Currently, the total membership in five such urban kibbutzim is a fluid 150. Their establishment has had considerable influence. They are organized as ‘The Circle of Groups’ (*Ma’agal Hakvutzot*). One of their initiatives has been the founding of a social-democratic bimonthly journal, *Chevra* (‘society’).

The second path has been the result of a revolution in the youth movements. The ideological crisis and loss of intention in the kibbutz movement led the youth movements’ leadership to the conclusion that the social-communal ethos to which they were educating could no longer be realized in the existing kibbutz framework. Communes of young adult graduates of the youth movement were established all over Israel. The first educational kibbutz, established by the *Hanoar Haoved Vehalomed* movement, Ravid, was founded in 1994 on the physical basis of a failed classical kibbutz. A number of others have followed. They serve as ideological and educational centers for the youth movement in their area. In 2006 the ‘*Dror-Israel*’ movement of youth movement graduates was established. The movement was a major player in the social protest that engulfed Israel in the summer of 2011,

The economic basis of both the *Ma’agal Hakvutzot* as well as the *Dror- Israel* communes and educational kibbutzim has been supplying educational and social services to municipal governments, the kibbutz movement and the Ministry of Education. There are also members who are self-employed. Some 40 communes and educational kibbutzim have a (fluid) membership of some 1,500 members.

¹ These definitions are abridged excerpts from the English translation of the revised Cooperative Societies Act. by A.G. Publications, Haifa, 2007. *Italic* emphases are mine (M.L.)

² See also: Yuval Dror, “The New Communal in Israel: Urban Kibbutzim and Groups of Youth Movement Graduates”, *One Hundred Years of Kibbutz Life*, pp. 315-324

The relationship of *Dror-Israel* to the kibbutz movement is ambivalent. In reality, the kibbutz movement partially funds youth movements which now educate to self-realization in frameworks other than kibbutz – be it new or collective.

The Question Remains...

Against the backdrop of all the foregoing, the major question remains open: Can the federation of kibbutzim, the kibbutz ‘movement’, reinvent itself as a *sustainable movement of intentional community*.

The tentative answer has to be guarded. Given the dynamics of the nationally and traditionally oriented sectors currently ascendant in Israeli society, the kibbutzim will have to develop a comprehensive cultural Zionist action program. That program will have to include not only an action program for social and environmental justice but also a proactive ideology for alternative Jewish-Zionist identity and commitment. The latter would have to express itself in institutions of ‘free’ Judaism as an alternative to the monopoly of Orthodox Judaism – e.g. marriage according to a flexible kibbutz Jewish-Zionist format. It would also mean realizing a life-style which relates to Jewish symbols and ritual. While some initiatives in this direction already exist, the kibbutz movement as such is still far from being ready to prioritize this issue. It is a tall order for the post-Jacob generations on the kibbutz.

The potential for ideological innovation with an action program to give it credibility probably lies with the urban kibbutzim. They are free from the existential constraints of the classic kibbutz framework. However, the young adults who make up the urban intentional communities are also the products of post-modernity. A major cognitive effort on their part will be necessary to create an alternative (or alternatives) for cultural Zionist realization.

The saga of the kibbutz is not over. Stay tuned. The jury of history is still out.



Dr Michael Livni was born in Vienna (in 1935) but grew up in Vancouver, Canada. He graduated as an MD in 1959 – his doctoral thesis was in Social Psychiatry. Michael has been a kibbutz member since 1963. In 1986 he moved to Kibbutz Lotan, an ecological kibbutz in Israel’s far South. He has worked in agriculture, economics and education – particularly, education in the youth movement. Latterly, his interests focus on the interface between kibbutz, Judaism and ecology. He is an active member of ICSA, having presented at many conferences.

Urban Kibbutz: Kibbutz Mish'ol and the new Kibbutz Movement

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/eBxdnAkZLJY>

Abstract

The 100 year old kibbutz movement is a known entity throughout the world. From the glorious years of creating a new socialist/anarchist society spearheading just under 300 intentional communities, to the malaise that confronts the movement today. What is less known to international observers, is the phenomenon which is the new kibbutz movement. There are today roughly 100 intentional communities, totalling around 3000 members, who see the legacy of the classic kibbutz movement as their responsibility. This movement is growing at a rapid pace, and is increasingly influencing the face of Israeli society. Activist in nature, these communities see education as the foundation on which a new, more just society must be built. We are working with youth - both disaffected and normative, Jewish and Arab, refugees and working youth - in schools, youth clubs, educational centres, community centres, the army and youth movements, in order to further the goal of empowering the next generation to be players in challenging the pernicious norms of late-capitalist society.

Paper: Not available



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The Photographer on Kibbutz as an Observer: Case study of photographer on Kibbutz

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/r8Vf2mpBpEg>

Abstract

This study will present the work of a photographer on kibbutz and will analyse his visual forms of ideological photographic documentation, which coincided with visions of kibbutz utopia. Eliezer Skarz (1905-1995), from Kibbutz Bet Alfa, was a photographer who documented a society that was self-governed by an egalitarian socialist ideology. Sklarz channelled his photographic efforts and creative energies in the direction of his ideological beliefs. His devotion and commitment to kibbutz life influenced his work, to the point that his work could be defined as ideological work. He is known on kibbutz for his iconic images of Bet Alfa's hard toiling pioneers, alongside captions of the everyday of kibbutz life.

Sklarz's ability to function as an active and devout kibbutz member and to observe kibbutz life simultaneously created a duality which formed a visual complexity in his work. Photography was considered a middle-class bourgeois profession, which clashed in essence with the ideology of kibbutz life. Sklarz functioned and created between two worlds, that of the socialist kibbutz member and that of the middle class observer, who observed his own working class life. This duality of participating and observing influenced the style of his images, which depict the everyday practices of kibbutz life and of the individual people who carried out its mundane tasks. The presentation will demonstrate that Sklarz maintained a personal outlook and individual form of expression and style, albeit, under the social pressure of kibbutz society and ideology. The presentation will analyse the photographs, the visual content, use of form and style, the signs and codes of presentation existing in his work. The study involves a comparative analysis to other photographic work created during his period, dealing with issues of social observation, iconic ideological imagery, working class stereotypes and gender.

The aim of this study¹ is to gain an understanding regarding the practices and form of image construction that developed in kibbutz in Israel, a society that was self-governed by an egalitarian socialist ideology, by means of analyzing the work of one photographer on one kibbutz, in the Jezreel Valley, Eliezer Skarz (1905-1994) from Kibbutz Bet Alfa. The time frame of this study focuses on the formative years of the kibbutz². During this time frame, kibbutz ideology maintained a stronghold on the lifestyle on kibbutz. The ideological framing of kibbutz lifestyle during this 1 period generated a form and style of photography created by

¹ Study in process

² The time frame relates to the years before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the years immediately after that.

kibbutz photographers, in respect to forms of portraiture and general documentation¹. This study explores Sklarz's visual forms of ideological photographic documentation, which coincided with visions of kibbutz utopia. Sklarz channeled his photographic efforts and creative energies in the direction of his ideological beliefs. His devotion and commitment to kibbutz life influenced his work, to the point that his work could be defined as ideological work.

Documentation was acknowledged as having value to kibbutz society, which made efforts to document its actions and to create a visual inventory of evidence of its pioneering struggles and challenges. It attempted to create its own visual generic form of presentation of kibbutz Zionism and Socialist Jewish pioneers. Analysis of the visual form and content of the photographs of Sklarz, of his images of kibbutz pioneering and of the everyday of kibbutz life, alongside an understanding of the identity of the photographer, provide an opportunity to unravel and decode the internal codes of behavior in kibbutz society in relation to practices and conventions of photography.

The study explores the role the kibbutz archive played in promoting his work and in constructing kibbutz identity, as a mechanism for creating its own Zionist kibbutz historiography. The kibbutz archive created and collected its photographs of pioneers as a designated action of projecting into the future, at constructing a future heritage of kibbutz society by means of creating a visual inventory of images of kibbutz utopia. This is where Sklarz fit in and why his documentation and the efforts of the archive worked in accordance.



Photographs by Sklarz depicting kibbutz life in Bet Alfa.

¹ Barromi Perlman, 2007, 2012.



Photograph by author

Part of collection of photographs kept in the photographic archive. The kibbutz archive, employed different methods of categorizing his work.

Sklarz's status as a photographer created a dual status for him, in his own society: functioning as an active and devout kibbutz member on the one hand, while being able at the same time to observe his life and that of his fellow members, simultaneously. He functioned and created between two worlds, that of the socialist kibbutz member and that of the middle class observer, who observed his own working class life. This duality of participating and observing influenced the style of his images, which depict the everyday practices of kibbutz life and of the individual people who carried out its mundane tasks. The study analyzes his portraits of the workers on kibbutz Bet Alfa, explores their visual content, use of form, structure and style, use of signs and codes of presentation existing in his work.

The study addresses the prevailing conflicted approach of kibbutz society towards photography: promoting documentation through the function of the archive on the one hand, while maintaining a dismissive role towards the practice itself and to its' perception as a highbrow, middle class practice, on the other. Photography as a practice was dismissed on kibbutz in the sense that it was considered a middle-class bourgeois profession, which clashed in essence with the ideology of kibbutz life. The conflicting approach to photographers originated from an approach derived from class struggles and the perception of photography as a potential highbrow practice. Kibbutz society viewed photography as a bourgeois luxury; photography ought only to be manufactured and consumed in a practical form, so as not to encourage bourgeois habits. Bourdieu writes that photography is an urban activity, the prerogative of the bourgeois and the city-dweller¹. In spite of the fact that kibbutz society appreciated the importance of documenting its actions and its lifestyle, it expected the photographers to create functional work, which would serve their society on a practical level, rather than indulging in bourgeois practices of photography.

Examining Sklarz's photographs and forms of portrayal of kibbutz life, including his practices of photography on kibbutz, unravel the larger phenomenon of being a photographer on kibbutz during that time period, in a society which endorsed conflicting messages towards the role and tasks photographers and their work. The relevance of the photographs of Sklarz lies in the way his material served the community and was used by the archive as a representation of kibbutz life.

¹ Bourdieu, 1990: 9

Kibbutz photographers remain largely unacknowledged in present day Israeli society, with the exception of a few prominent and memorable ones. Uncovering Sklarz's work invites acknowledgment of the work of many other kibbutz photographers whose labors should be appreciated over time.

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PART FIVE
RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY
IN COMMUNAL LIFE

Spirituality in the Camphill Villages

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/shaIJ24o_AE

Abstract

The presentation begins by looking briefly at Camphill's beginnings as a study group in Vienna pre-WW2. The first school was established in 1940, and there was a gradual development in Britain and then Europe and the USA during the 1950s and 60s. The presentation goes on to describe the structure of Camphill communities – how co-workers share their working and domestic lives with people who have special needs. The economic fellowship is covered – how wages are not paid for work, but needs are met by sharing the available money.

The Bible Evening, the regular gathering of the house communities, is described, including a short account of its origins and development. The presentation covers Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy and how it inspired the founders of Camphill, especially with regard to their community structure.

The core of the presentation consists of looking at spirituality in the Camphill communities, the role of Christianity and of universal values, both as starting points, and how they have developed over time. The presentation looks at Camphill as a spiritual organism, and how it might develop into the future.

The presentation concludes by looking at the questions which are raised when a largely Christian inspired community movement accepts its first non-Christian member, the Peaceful Bamboo Family in Vietnam, where Buddhist roots are openly acknowledged. This will hopefully stimulate a discussion about how universal values in one specific religion can lead to a fruitful and dynamic dialogue between different religions.

Camphill Villages, a short history

During the 1930s a group of intellectuals began meeting regularly in Vienna. They were inspired by Anthroposophy, the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, and how these could be put into practice in the fields of health and education. They were joined by Dr. Karl König, Viennese by birth, originally Jewish, but in his teens he stopped attending the local synagogue and began attending a Catholic Church. Later he became deeply inspired by Anthroposophy. As the political situation became more threatening, they decided they had to move. After the Anschluss in 1938, when Nazi Germany invaded Austria, they dispersed throughout Europe. Many of them came together again at Kirkton Manse in rural Aberdeenshire in Scotland in the beginning of 1939, where they found an already very well established and connected British anthroposophical network.

They opened a curative educational institute and began taking in children with special needs. When the Second World War started some months later, the group was registered as enemy

aliens, the married men were interned on the Isle of Man and the single men were transported to Canada. The women carried on working with the children and a larger house was found, and they moved there to Camphill House on June 1st 1940. When the men returned the community then comprised of some 30 people of which just less than half were children with special needs. The group saw themselves as political refugees working with social refugees.

During the 1940s, the community grew and by taking over other houses and estates, created a movement. During the next few decades the Camphill network expanded and developed, reaching out to England, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Norway, South Africa and the United States. In the early 1950s, König began to think about village communities, where adults with special needs could live together with co-workers in extended family situations. This was first put into practice at the Botton Estate in 1955, and the first Camphill Village as we know it today was established. Botton created a model which has been the basis for Camphill for over half a century. The village now contains well over 300 residents in four clusters spread throughout a valley leading up to the North York Moors in northern England.

Throughout the world today there are more than 100 Camphill Communities in over 20 countries. They are organized into seven regions, and a number of magazines and newsletters keep information flowing between them. There is a strong element of internationalism, and regular meetings are held within the regions. There is a good deal of internal movement of co-workers and residents from one community to another. In addition to the communities that are formal members of Camphill, there are many similar communities and institutions, also inspired by Anthroposophy and working with people with special needs.

Camphill villages, what are they?

Within Camphill villages most people live in large extended families, co-workers (both long term people with their families, and young temporary volunteers) and villagers (adults with special needs), sharing their lives, their meals, their living rooms and bathrooms. There may be as many as fifteen people or more gathered round the dining table three times a day. Each house has its own budget, and is run more or less autonomously by a team of responsible co-workers. In the morning and the afternoon everyone goes to work, in a variety of workplaces. A typical Camphill village might have a biodynamic farm, extensive vegetable gardens, a bakery, a weavery, herb growing and drying, and a large forest for timber and firewood.

Other villages have workshops which produce pottery, candles, dolls or wooden toys. It is possible to eat meals in Camphill houses where the table and chairs came from the carpentry shop, the table-cloth from the weavery, the plates and cups from the pottery, the candles (which are lit at every meal) from the candle shop, and virtually all the food could be produced by the village: bread, milk products, jams, vegetables, herb teas, honey, and meat. This self sufficiency is not an end in itself, but rather a way of ensuring that each person is employed doing something that is useful to the village. In many cases in mainstream society, people with special needs are peripheralised and “looked after” and so denied an active and useful role. In the world of Camphill, every person has something to contribute, and feels self-worth even when fetching the milk or laying the table.

In addition to the work branches, there are the houses to be run; washing, cooking and cleaning. This is considered work, just as important as production, and the occupation of “housewife”, “house mother” or “homemaker” is as vital to the well being of the community as any other profession. Everyone has a workplace, and contributes something useful to the running of the village, according to his or her capability. Within this sphere no money changes hands and work is seen to be something that is freely given within the fellowship, recognizing that some people have higher capabilities than others. In recent years, more and more Camphill communities are experiencing a need to employ people for specific tasks, introducing a new group of salaried employees. However, Camphill still strives to create fellowship in the economic life, and a flexible equality in the social sphere.

The farms and gardens in Camphill villages are usually biodynamic, producing food of the highest quality while nurturing both soil and wildlife. Generally the organic waste from the kitchens is composted, usually by a village compost set-up. Horse transport is quite common, being very efficient and low cost at a village scale. Villages in England have pioneered waste water treatment using ponds, reedbeds and «Flow Form» water cascades. These are now standard in the Norwegian villages and throughout Camphill worldwide. Buildings, both communal halls and chapels, and the large residential houses, are largely constructed out of natural materials, and avoid the use of poisons and plastics as much as possible. However, there is still much to be done in the raising of consciousness, and in building, transport, recycling and energy use.

Bible Evening

One of the things that created a special atmosphere within Camphill is the gathering held on Saturday evenings called the Bible Evening. Originally this was for co-workers without the children or residents with special needs. Later this gathering was held less formally in households in the villages, and everyone was made welcome, and in some places it came to be called the Bible Supper. Today the more formal Bible Evening, for co-workers only, has virtually disappeared, and has given its name to the less formal household gathering, but even this is now becoming less widely practised. .

For the less formal Bible Evening, or Bible Supper, everyone from the household meets in the living room dressed in their best clothes and sit in silence around a lit candle for ten to fifteen minutes. Some of the younger co-workers sit cross legged with closed eyes and in deep concentration. Older co-workers tell me that they picture to themselves co-workers who have passed away, bringing them back for their support and help for the present. Personally I go around the room, making myself aware of each person present, and picture their spiritual qualities. I then picture the spiritual quality of the household, a symbol of our little house community present at that place and in that time.

The founder of the Camphill communities, Karl König, called this part spiritual recollection. This sets the scene, creating an atmosphere quite different from other household gatherings. It is not often that we sit in silence together. It can be a powerful tool for reflection, and for togetherness. By being together in silence, we invite everyone in. Silence can speak louder than words.

At a signal, someone who has agreed to do this beforehand gets up, lights the candle at the dining table, extinguishes the one in the sitting room, and invites everyone to the table.

A simple meal has been prepared beforehand; rolls with a variety of spreads, often with sprigs of salad or a dash of mayonnaise. Juice made from our own berries or fruit is already poured into glasses. There is a tablecloth, and next to the candle a vase of flowers, a crystal and a piece of driftwood. These represent important things. The crystal is a mystery from the mineral world, something very basic to our physical existence. The driftwood is a reminder of the plant world, the organic element upon our table, as is the living flower. The candle is something alive, it has an archetypal quality, bringing us back tens of thousands of years. For most of our existence as human beings upon this planet, we have gathered around the fire in the evening to talk, to partake in rituals, to sit in silence.

Before we bless the food we recite a short verse:

Let the peace of Christ rest upon everything we see,
 Upon the food we are about to eat,
 Upon my body which comes from the earth,
 Upon my soul which comes from the spiritual world.
 Bless the food!

Other verses may be read instead of this one. As we eat we try to focus the conversation on the events of the last week. Personally I favour small groups for these gatherings, so that we can easily have one conversation round the table. More than eight or ten people tend to split up into two or three individual conversations.

“How was your week?”
 “Can you remember something special from this week?”
 “What happened this week?”

We try to remember birthdays, changes in our work, new people, others leaving or travelling. I expand from those present to what happened in the village. Was there a festival? Some special event? What happened in the country, in the world? Often there is someone at the table who listens to the news or reads newspapers. We try to go through the week, winding it up, putting it away, the good times with the hard times. It's important to allow people to say what they think, and not make value judgements. What is important to one person may not resonate with everyone else, it's completely subjective.

König considered this part of the Bible Evening to be spiritual reflection. We concentrate on what has happened since we last sat together and make sure each individual around the table is included by asking questions.

When we have finished the food, we clear away the plates and glasses, hand out Bibles to those who want them, and read the verses selected for that week. Every year, someone within the wider Camphill Community network takes it upon themselves to select readings for every week and this gets circulated to every village. Mostly they are from one of the four Gospels, but occasionally something from an Epistle or the Revelations of St. John appears. I usually stick to the designated readings, but if the passage is too obscure or difficult for me, I choose something else. Most Bibles have cross referencing notes, and the first thing I do is to check any Old Testament references. These often open up new readings which may be easier to deal

with. Whatever the text, we read it, and then use the text as a starting point for a conversation. It could be a phrase, a word, the story we just read, or whatever is suggested to us by the reading. Again, the challenge is to get everyone involved, asking questions, telling anecdotes, eliciting comments.

König suggests that this part of the evening can be used to gain spiritual insight. This need not be the exclusive domain of intelligent co-workers. In fact, I see the over-intellectualisation of the conversation as a dangerous pitfall. For me, it's vitally important that villagers, people with special needs, be encouraged to participate as much as possible. Images and stories are much more powerful tools to use than intellectual ideas. Pictures speak louder than clever thoughts.

Eventually it's time to finish, the Bibles are closed, and a verse is said, always the same, and often several of the villagers join in.

The stars spake once to man.
It is World-destiny
That they are silent now.
To be aware of the silence
Can become pain for earthly Man.
But in the deepening silence
There grows and ripens
What Man speaks to the Stars.
To be aware of the speaking
Can become strength for Spirit-Man.

This is the traditional Camphill Bible Evening. There can be variations, we can choose different texts and different verses, and sometimes young co-workers arrange for completely different activities, going to the cinema, taking a walk, teaming up with another house, or painting together.

Anthroposophy – the inspiration

The group that established itself at Camphill House in 1940 was attempting to put the ideals of Anthroposophy into practice. This is a spiritual science based on the books and lectures given by Rudolf Steiner from about 1900 until his death in 1925. Anthroposophy proposes the physical world as a development and outgrowth of the spiritual world, and presents a scientific method of analyzing this spiritual world. Anthroposophy was in turn inspired by Theosophy, eastern mysticism and the traditions of Gnosticism, the Rosicrucians, the alchemists and the world view expressed by Johan Wolfgang von Goethe.

Steiner's lectures and books had encouraged people in many professions to develop their fields according to the anthroposophical world view. The most well known today are probably the Waldorf Steiner schools in the educational field and biodynamic agriculture. These concern themselves with the soul development of the child, and the spiritual aspects of soil and plant growth respectively. In addition, a great deal of work has been done in the fields of architecture, art, music, dance, health through anthroposophical medicine and therapies, health products such as Weleda and Wala, nutrition, and such technical developments as waste water

treatment and food quality analysis. The Camphill network specializes in curative education and social therapy, both directly inspired by the lectures and writings of Rudolf Steiner.

Anthroposophy is based on two Greek words which mean the study or the wisdom about human beings. It recognizes each individual's humanity, not just as a product of biology and environment, but as a productive and creative spiritual creature. It places humanity in the centre, regardless of sex, culture, religion or other grouping.

Anthroposophy regards the earth as a living organism and that humanity has a responsibility to care for it. Because of this Anthroposophy encourages the creation of humane social structures which find their expression in kindergartens and schools throughout the world, biodynamic farms, anthroposophical medical practice, curative education, ethical banking and many other initiatives.

Anthroposophy regards art, science and religion to be of equal value in our understanding of reality. It tries to combine these three aspects into a holistic perspective. Every individual can develop the means to be in touch with the spiritual world through meditative practices. Anthroposophy tries to develop independent thinking and avoids dogmatism and sectarianism.

Steiner had his own thoughts about community, and how the evolution of human consciousness had moved from community based on blood ties and tradition, through the fragmentation of pursuing individual freedom, and into to a new and transcendent form of universal community, this time out of free choice.

The evolution of individuality is such that the human being passes out of a condition in which he is part of the community, subservient to it and dependant on it, through the processes whereby the ego emancipates itself from the community, and thence into a condition in which the independent ego either goes off on its own, or recreates human community out of its own. Quoted in Rudolf Steiner Economist. Christopher Boughton Hudd. New Economy Publications, 1996.)

Steiner connects the freedom of the individual with the impulse to create community:

This is an important characteristic of spiritual life: it has its springs in freedom, in the individual initiative of the single human being, and yet it draws men together, and forms communities out of what they have in common. (The inner aspect of the Social Question. Rudolf Steiner. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1974.)

The Camphill Movement is a community building initiative composed of many individuals working together. Each individual brings a unique contribution, and together these individuals create the character of Camphill life. This in turn reflects back onto the individual in a feedback loop, reinforcing the Camphill impulse. Anthroposophy is embedded in this process and contributes to the social renewal which is such an important feature of the Camphill ideals.

Spirituality in Camphill

The celebration of the Bible evening was originally undertaken by those who entered into what König established as the Camphill Community. This was a group of core co-workers, who committed themselves to spiritual self development with regular study meetings, and a strong connection to the Christian Community, the church established by anthroposophically

inspired religious people, with its own structure of priests and rituals. The Camphill Community has a clear membership process, regular local, regional and international meetings, but very few archives, no real statutes as such, and no financial or legal existence. To quote from a letter written after a recent international meeting: “We do not want to give a report as this could fix what is living and fluid.” Members of Camphill Community keep the spiritual aspect of community alive by being aware of it, studying it, and letting it permeate the outer, everyday work they carry out in their community.

For the members of Camphill Community, it is important to gain an insight into one’s own personal situation. The founders of Camphill met powerful spiritual forces, and paid a great deal of attention to their inner lives. There was always a danger that the outer life would dominate, and that the inner schooling would be overshadowed. What happens around an individual is the result of that person’s inner life. The events of our daily lives are mirrors of internal events. Today Camphill Community is an international network combining esoteric inner work with external social strivings.

Christianity in Camphill

Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700 – 1760), the founder of the Moravian Church, and regarded by Karl König as one of the ideological and spiritual guiding stars of Camphill, wrote in his day that “there is no Christianity without Community”. König turned this around to say that “there is no Community without Christianity”. This might be disturbing to all those people who live communally in thriving, healthy communities, but don’t adhere to any Christian faith. However, König develops his idea in a more flexible way:

For the Camphill Movement, Christianity is an indispensable part of its life and work; it works out of Christianity, not for Christianity. Just as the Movement is not an anthroposophical group or society, it is equally little a Christian sect or congregation. Those who work in and for the Movement are entirely free to be members of any Christian church as well as of any group or society if they so wish. (The Camphill Movement. Karl König. Camphill Books, 1993.)

This was written decades after Steiner welded anthroposophy firmly to the Christian impulse. He wrote in his book about the festivals:

If you accept the spirit of Anthroposophia in reality, then you will find that it opens up the human ear, the human heart and the whole soul of man for the Mystery of Christ. The whole destiny of Anthroposophia intends to be the destiny of Christianity. (The Festivals and their Meaning. Rudolf Steiner. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1981.)

From its beginning Camphill has been inspired by the Christian ideals articulated by Rudolf Steiner and on the acceptance of the spiritual uniqueness of each human being, regardless of disability or religious or racial background. Christian ideals, practices and attitudes lie at the heart of Camphill’s cultural, religious and spiritual life.

Even though many of the founders, the youth group that met in Vienna in the 1930’s, were Jewish or atheist, there were a number of Christian influences which became important for them. They studied and performed the Oberufer Christmas plays, which gave them a good deal of comfort during the chaotic days in Vienna just before the Anschluss. König was strongly influenced by the Herrnhutter communities of the Moravian Church. His wife Tilla

came from the Gnadenfrei Moravian community in Silesia (today Poland). The importance of this last influence is reinforced by König regarding Zinzendorf as one of the guiding stars of the Camphill movement together with Robert Owen (1771 – 1858) and Amos Comenius (1592 – 1670).

Another strong influence was embedded in their study of Anthroposophy. Steiner regarded the Christ impulse as fundamental to understanding how humanity is evolving and developing. The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ is the leverage point for humanity, often referred to by Steiner as “The Golgotha Event”. The founders of Camphill combined study sessions with Bible Evenings, Christian Community services and the celebration of festivals such as Christmas, Easter, St. John’s and Michaelmass throughout the year. This Christian calendar gave Camphill inspiration, hope and the strength to establish new communities on several continents.

This is a Christianity which focuses on a universal Christ figure rather than on the human Jesus. This elevates the Christ to a cosmic spiritual force relevant to all cultures and traditions. Love and respect for each individual is fundamental, as is the urge to carry out good actions, “loving your neighbor as yourself”. When practiced in the context of Camphill village life this becomes a universal code of behavior, rooted in Christianity, but no doubt not much different from Buddhist, Islamic or any other religion’s code of behavior.

For its first 70 years, these Christian ideals gave Camphill its special character, defining it as a movement, and giving it an identity. But Camphill lives in the world, and the world around it is changing, is regaining the sense of the spiritual, not only going back to embrace the traditional established religions, but reaching out to a more universal spiritual awareness. In this process, established religious practices are often lumped together with the older ways of thought and action, and become less attractive. So the Bible Evening is increasingly neglected, Services and festivals are not celebrated, study groups are less well attended and Camphill Community meetings are no longer held regularly.

Universal values in Camphill

Since the time of Steiner and of König, albeit from small beginnings but gaining ground throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s, there has emerged in the world a new idea of major world religions having a respectful dialogue, accepting each other’s differences and likenesses, listening and trying to understand each other without attempting any kind of missionary activity. The spread of Inter-Faith Dialogue is a departure in human consciousness that gives an enormous sense of hope for the future.

Today in the 21st century an increasing number of people are not satisfied with what they perceive as old and restrictive forms of regulated religion. This may be one of the reasons co-workers hesitate to engage the traditional religious life of Camphill, such as the Christian Community Services and the Bible Evenings. They are often more interested in a spirituality that respects differences of understanding, that is open to diversity, and which recognizes the universal spiritual reality in all religions and cultures. The question “What is Camphill?” is an ongoing debate, and as society struggles to emerge from centuries of thought dominated by a

hierarchical and dogmatic world view, there is no doubt that Camphill reflects that struggle within itself.

Interestingly enough, the traditional Camphill forms of spiritual life are often stronger in the pioneering communities, while well established villages experience the weakening of familiar forms of services and the Bible Evening. It may be that a truly mature community has the flexibility to experiment with new forms, while pioneering groups need the strong structures which carried the earlier Camphill communities through their formative years.

With new initiatives emerging in Vietnam, Pakistan and India, embedded in Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu cultures, a new debate is emerging within the Camphill Movement. One school of thought regards the original Christian framework as an integral and necessary part of the Camphill definition. Others take a more universal approach and as long as the spiritual essence of every individual is safeguarded will happily welcome new initiatives into the Camphill fold. The interesting irony of this particular debate revolves around the ideas of karma and reincarnation, ideas which Steiner elaborated on with much detail, and which are more at home within the Hindu and Buddhist cultures than the Western European Christian tradition. Acceptance of a more universalist approach does not necessarily imply that the essence of Christian tradition would disappear, rather that there would emerge an openness to what other cultures and religions have to offer the spiritual life within the community.

Such a change would take time, thought and reflection to emerge within Camphill, but would constitute a growing strength and relevance to the movement. The fact that the Camphill form is seen to be manifesting itself in other cultural and religious matrices shows that it still has a part to play in a world that is inevitably becoming global.

Karl König's guiding star Zinzendorf is quoted as having said:

Nature is full of different creatures of different inclinations, and it is the same in the spiritual world. We must learn to regard various ways of thinking as something beautiful. There are as many religious ideas as there are believing souls, so we cannot force everyone to measure up to the same yard stick. Only God, according to his infinite wisdom, knows how to deal with every soul. (Count Zinzendorf. Janet and Geoff Bengé. Ywam publishing. 1958.)

Zinzendorf was talking here about different Christian traditions, but it might equally apply to the many different religions rubbing shoulders in today's globalised world. Rudolf Steiner formulated a similar idea in a slightly different way:

Spiritual Science, when considering individual religions, does not look at outer rites and ceremonies, but at the way in which the age old universal core of wisdom is contained/manifest in it. The religions are so and so many channels which allow that which was once poured out evenly over the whole of humanity to shine out in single rays.....and if we really search this essence/kernel of truth in all religions than this leads to peace. No religion, when truly recognized in the light of spiritual science, wants to impose its own special ray of truth on another religion.....All nations and religions on earth can belong to Buddha, the great teacher of the highest truth. And all nations and religions on earth can belong to Christ, the divine power of the highest truth. And this mutual understanding means peace on earth. And this peace, this is the soul of the new world. (Quoted by Angelika Monteux in A Portrait of Camphill. Ed. Jan Martin Bang. Floris Books 2010.)

Addressing universal human spiritual forms can create a dialogue which crosses cultural boundaries. The individual needs to link up to others, linking up beyond individual initiatives, linking together whole communities and whole movements. Margarete van den Brink sees organisations as passing through seven stages of development, the ultimate one summed up as follows:

“In Phase 7, the organisation aims in particular at the contribution it wants to make to the development of the greater whole. Here again we see that spiritual development in people always continues. While the emphasis on the development of awareness lay on the personal in phase 5 and on relationships with others in phase 6, we see that awareness and effort of organisations in phase 7 are aimed at care for, and further development of, the greater whole of which we are part: society, mankind, nature, the earth, the world, the cosmos.” (Transforming People and Organisations. Margarete van den Brink. Temple Lodge publishers, 2004.)

Camphill as a spiritual organism

All communities are at heart spiritual creations. They are held together by a web of relationships that spring from the spirit. The material forms, the buildings, the fields, the technology and the economy are all dependent upon these subtle relationships between the individuals that make up that community. If these relationships fall apart the community will also fall apart. We can keep community artificially alive, the buildings can still stand, the fields can still be cultivated, and people can seem to go about their daily tasks. But without that subtle web of relationships that builds community, the spirit of community will cease to function.

In Camphill there are two parallel impulses. One consists of working with people who need help, based upon meeting people and recognising that they have physical, psychological and spiritual aspects, each contributing to create the unique individual that we come face to face with. This can be considered an “inner” work, and co-workers are encouraged to spend time studying, both on their own and in groups.

The other impulse consists of creating an alternative society, based upon the idea of threefolding. This idea was presented by Rudolf Steiner in lectures during the last part of the First World War and the years that followed. He traced how the three great ideals of the French Revolution, Fraternity, Equality and Liberty, had been corrupted by the rise of nationalism and the development of the centralised nation state. Threefolding was presented by Steiner as a way of rebuilding Europe after the disaster of the First World War, but his ideas did not gain credence, and were largely dormant until taken up by Karl Konig in building up the Camphill communities in the 1940s and 50s. Konig based his thoughts on his study of the development of European society over the preceding centuries. In England, he saw the industrial revolution as the modernisation of economic life, leading to demands for fraternity, the development of trade unionism and labour party politics. In France under the French Revolution he saw a change in the legal life leading to demands for equality, and in Middle Europe (later unified to become Germany) changes in the spiritual life leading to

demands for liberty. Konig further traced how a failure to integrate these three ideas led to the insanity of Nazism, fascism and state communism after Steiner's death.

We worship and philosophise, educate, create music and art in the **spiritual sphere**. Here we need our freedom to develop ourselves.

We decide amongst ourselves, regulate our lives together, in the **sphere of laws** and rights, and here we need to regard ourselves as equals, with equal rights.

We work, produce, buy and sell in the **economic sphere**, and need the fellowship (brotherhood and sisterhood) of looking after each other, not necessarily as equals, for clearly, some have more capacity and some have greater needs.

These three spheres are always with us, they are not determinants of how we should or might behave, but an attempt to make sense of our everyday lives and how we come together as human beings.

There are a few other community movements which combine these two impulses of working with people who have special needs and creating an alternative society, but Camphill is by far the largest and most widely spread. This combination has given Camphill the strength and motivation which has enabled it to spread to over 20 countries and kept it alive and healthy for 70 years.

Many communities are focussed around some higher ideal of improving society or encouraging greater environmental awareness. This may be a collective task that the individual can, to a certain extent, lose him or herself in.

Many new ideas are introduced into the social realm through community and live on after the community phase of the idea is over. The communal manifestation of these ideas are often an initial "ephemeral" period in the life of the idea. We can see this in Christianity, Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Mormons, Robert Owen and Fourier, all of whom introduced new ideas that went through a communal phase which faded away, leaving the ideas themselves to establish themselves throughout society. Communal living could be seen as a vehicle rather than a destination, and the widely viewed failure of communities to last beyond a few decades may be a completely misleading interpretation. The whole idea of measuring the success or failure of community should be directed at how much the idea behind the communal impulse penetrates the wider society. It would be fitting to enquire whether this idea is relevant to the Camphill, a movement that is now 70 years old, including communities in over 20 countries spanning several continents,

A hint of this idea can be found in a book by Friedrich Glasl, writing about corporate development:

I am convinced that the social forms which will occupy us intensively over the next decades already exist in embryonic form. (The Enterprise of the Future. Friedrich Glasl. Hawthorn Press, 1994.)

The future of Camphill

In 2003, Michael and Jane Luxford, two seasoned Camphill co-workers, published the results of several years visiting Camphill communities around the world. Their conclusion was:

In 50 years very few Camphill places may remain; but by then there will be new ways of working together out of an impulse through which you learn to practice the reality of empathy. In the future our present working and thinking will be useless, but through Camphill life we will have learnt something about human love, human discipline and human involvement. (A Sense for Community. Michael and Jane Luxford. Directions for Change publishers, 2003.)

Whether few or many Camphill communities will still be functioning 50 years from now may be unimportant. What is certain is that the ideas and practices that have been developed within the Camphill network will be found as the seeds of the social forms of the future. In this way the spirit of Camphill will live on, regardless of the physical form.

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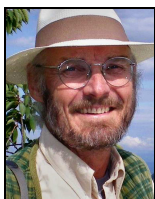
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Christian and Messianic Jews' Communes in Israel: Past, Present and Future¹

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Abstract

The life style of the first Christian community of Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem, led by Jacob, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, became a model for Christians across the globe. Based on the New Testament and Christian tradition, this community, as well as others outside the Holy Land, lived as communes.

From the beginning of the twentieth century onward various types of Jewish communes and cooperatives were established by the Zionist movement in Palestine/Israel, as Kibbutzim, Moshavim and other unique modes of settlement. The Holy Land, home of the first Christian commune, saw a renewal of Christian communal settlement, only after close to two millennia, the first being the two Jaffa American Colonies and the American-Swedish Colony in Jerusalem from the mid-nineteenth century. The establishment of the State of Israel brought about both successful and failed attempts to build new Christian communes.

Our paper, based on the analysis of primary sources of the communes, fieldwork and interviews, focuses on several of the new Christian settlements in Israel that evolved from the model of communal life of the first Christians. We discuss each commune individually and also compare between them, taking account of their leaders' initial vision and motivation, their past history, present demographic and economic condition, longevity of the commune, and the future long-term prospects of communes that persisted. Among the settlements considered are: Kibbutz Tel Gamliel, Moshav Nes Amim, Kibbutz Ir Ovot, Moshav Yad-Hashmona, the Beth-El commune in Zichron, the Community of the Beatitudes in Emmaus, and the Jesus Brotherhood in Latrun.

Introduction: Historical Background and Sources

The lifestyle of the first century Christian community of Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem, under Jacob, the first Bishop of Jerusalem (Acts 2,44-47; 4, 32-37), became a life model for succeeding generations of Christians throughout the globe. According to the New Testament and Christian tradition, the earliest Christian community, as well as others outside the Holy Land, lived communally. (Degani, 2007; Oved, 1988).

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From the beginning of the twentieth century onward various types of Jewish communes and cooperatives were established by the Zionist movement in Palestine/ Israel, as Kibbutzim, Moshavim and other unique modes of settlement. While the Jewish communes were not created with any connection to a Christian tradition their model and nomenclature was sometimes adopted by Christians who moved to the Holy Land and wished to live communally.

The Holy Land, home of the first Christian commune in the first century AD, saw renewal of Christian communal settlement after close to two millennia. The first examples of these new attempts at Christian communal living consist of two very short-lived Jaffa American Colonies and the long-lived American-Swedish Colony in Jerusalem founded in the mid-nineteenth century. (Kark, 1984; Kark, fieldwork; Ariel and Kark, 1996). Of these, three were millenarian in their beliefs but only the Spaffords' American colony practiced true communal ownership of property and celibacy. The Adams colony and Clorinda Minor's activities in Jaffa were abject failures and they should be viewed in that light as well. Only the American-Swedish colony in Jerusalem had staying power. This was partly due to the charismatic nature of its leaders, improved health prevalent at the time of foundation, overseas contacts and contributions, and productivity of the American colony in Jerusalem. In addition this colony grew at a slower rate, beginning with a small group of individuals and attracting members and increasing in size over time. (Frantzman and Kark, 2008), but after fifty years, in the 1930s – during the age of the third generation – the colony comes to an end.

The process of settlement of small Christian groups in Palestine/Israel continued during the twentieth century. There are numerous published reports on those settlement phenomena in the Holy Land/Palestine in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. However, it is difficult to find reference in the research literature to Christian settlement and communes during the period of British Mandatory rule in Palestine (1918–1948) or that of the State of Israel (1948 onwards) (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008). For this reason the topic has been generally neglected by scholars.

The establishment of the State of Israel brought about attempts to build new communal settlements, based on Christian faith. Most of them failed, but some of the initiatives to establish kibbutz style cooperative Moshav communes in the State of Israel were successful and persist to this day.

Our paper is based on the analysis of primary sources of the communes, fieldwork and interviews. It focuses on six of the new Christian and Messianic Jews' settlements in Israel, which evolved from the model of communal life of the first Christians. We include the following communes: "Kibbutz" Tel Gamliel, Moshav Nes Ammim, "Kibbutz" Ir Ovot, Moshav Yad-Hashmona, the Bethel commune in Zichron Yaakov, and The Community of the Beatitudes in Emmaus. (See Figure 1). We discuss each commune individually and also compare between them, taking account of their origin, leaders' initial vision and theology and their motivation, their past history, present demographic and economic condition, longevity of the commune, and the future long term prospects of communes that persisted. The paper will not discuss monastic life or families who live communal lives in urban "communes",

belonging to Christian, usually monastic, orders and organizations like Chemin Neuf, Opus Dei & Jesus Brotherhood.

Christian and Messianic Jew's Communes in Israel

"Kibbutz" Tel Gamliel

Origin

Tel Gamliel Kibbutz was established in the Judean Hills, south of the Salesian Monastery of Beit Jimal, in 1975. It was named after Gamliel the Elder (Rabban Gamliel), who according to Christian tradition had embraced the Christian faith.

Leaders' initial vision and motivation

The founder and leader was Father Isaac (Henry) Jacob, a Benedictine monk born in 1929 in Pittsburg, in the US, to a Jewish father and Catholic mother. He did a Ph.D. in theology and Church law, and studied Hebrew law as well. When he first came to Israel he spent some time in Kibbutz Sh'ar Ha-Emeqim. Afterward he worked with the nascent Hebrew-Catholic community from 1970 to 1975. He developed the idea of cooperation between Christians and Jews with special focus on the Regula (rule book) of St. Benedict, the founder of Western Christian monastic tradition, as a bridge between the two religions. Father Jacob initiated a translation of the Regula into Hebrew in 1980 (Grossman, 1994; Isaac, 1993). In a paper he published in 1974 on "A Christian Visitor to Israel and Ecumenism", he held, *Lavra (Laura)* Netofa a hermitage near Dier Hanna in the Galilee in which a few monks (today sisters) lived in the eastern Christian commune style, as an exemplary model for Christian life.

Past history

In 1975 Father Jacob managed to get 200 dunams (1 dunam = 1000 square meters) from the lands of the Beit Jimal monastery, from the Salesian order, to establish a Christian Kibbutz, based on his ideology, and the ancient *laura* model. This Kibbutz was initially intended to promote contacts between Christians and Jews. Four ruined buildings were renovated and caravans were installed for the volunteers who came to work in the commune. The attempt to assimilate certain aspects of Israeli society included the use of Hebrew biblical texts, such as Psalms, in the commune's prayers, and in their meals and weekly discussions. (Isaac, 1990).

Father Jacob also established in Tel Gamliel "The Gamliel research Institute into Monotheistic Law" in which research was done on Jewish Halacha and Church Law. He also focused on comparing important Jewish and Christian texts, such as those by Maimonides (Rabbi Moses Ben-Maimon) and Gratian (Johannes Geratious) and other studies and publications.

Past and Present demographic and economic condition

During most of the period between 1975-1995, there was a high degree of turnover, as most of the people were volunteers. The longest period of stay for any one member was about three years. The total membership ranged from 5-20. For example in March 1993, ten members, whose ages ranged from 21 to 48 were registered in the local member's register (four from Ireland, three from the USA, one from France, one from Australia, one from The Netherlands). They were employed in maintenance, developing and preserving the place, and

agriculture (beehive and growing grapes for wine). Livelihood was an issue. The Kibbutz attempted to raise income from donations from individuals, including Jews, in the US via the Friends of Tel Gamliel NGO, but the success was limited. (Degani Field work, 1992-3, 2011).

Longevity of the commune

The Kibbutz was deserted after the death of father Jacob in 1995. In the year 2000 the place was repopulated by monks from the order: Famille monastique de Bethléem, de l'Assomption de la Vierge et de Saint Bruno, joining nuns from this Order who settled next to the Beit Jimal Monastery. The fifteen monks who live there today in a *laura* style, preserved the name Tel Gamliel, and developed the place immensely.

Moshav Nes Ammim

Origins

Moshav Nes Ammim is a cooperative Moshav (village) in the western Galilee. The was established in 1963, by a group of Christians headed by Dr. Johan Pilon a Dutch physician (1917-1975) and his wife Stijn Pilon.

The name of the settlement is based on the Biblical verse: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people (Nes Ammim, i.e. a sign to the nations); to it shall the nations seek: and his rest shall be glorious." (Isaiah, XI, 10). The emblem of the settlement combines a fish and an ear of corn, the fish being a symbol of Christ, and the wheat symbolizing bread and agriculture.

Leader's initial vision and motivation

The founders were led by the ideology that it is the duty of the Christian Europeans who caused suffering to the Jewish people throughout history, have to replace it with good deeds, and renew and strengthen the connection with the Jewish nation. The Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel were the two events that led to a change of attitude among thinkers in the Christians world. Instead of replacement theology & the New Israel in which Christianity is the true replacement of Israel, a new theology suggested replacing that mission with dialogue.

Dr. Pilon, who worked in the Scottish Hospital in Tiberias beginning in 1950, thought of the idea of establishing a Christian settlement in Israel. He partnered with Shlomo Bazak, also of Dutch origin, from Kibbutz Ayelet Ha-Shahar, the Swiss born Dr. Barnard, from the Scottish Hospital in Nazareth, and Stijn Pilon, his wife (who died on Holocaust memorial day in 2002). By building this settlement near Jewish communities they aimed to promote solidarity and dialogue between the two religions and cultures, and to contribute to Israel's economy. Volunteers came to Nes Ammim then and now mostly from the Netherlands, Germany, USA and Switzerland. (Degani, Field work and interviews).

Past History

In 1960-61 the Nes Ammim Association, consisted of four equal parts of four Associations in The Netherland's, Switzerland, Germany and the US was registered in Israel after submitting a memorandum to the Government of Israel, and purchasing 1,180 dunams of land from

Abdalla Hir, a Druze from the village Abu Snein. The settlement is run by the International Association. New friend's associations were established during the years in Canada, Britain and Sweden. (Nes Ammim, 1970).

Opposition to the settlement rose from numerous sectors at the beginning, from Jewish religious organizations and parties who were afraid of missionary activity, and from the surrounding settlements who feared competition over water and land quotas. This happened in spite of the fact that each volunteer signed a affidavit that he or she would not be involved in missionary activity. The controversy went all the way to the Knesset where Levi Eshkol, Finance Minister and later PM, supported its establishment. A young Swiss couple the Vetterli and after a month the Swiss Robert family were the first to settle in an old bus (which later became a museum) in Nes Ammim in April 1963, and the Knesset authorized the settlement in 1964.

At first the settlers lived in temporary wood houses. In 1965 a master plan was authorized and a road built. Other houses were added and funded by support from the World Association and from churches in Germany and the Netherlands. A central community house was built in 1975, and a conference center in 1990. The church was constructed on the model of the Byzantine remains of the Tabgha church with an atrium. It has no crosses or Christian symbols, but contains a menorah, mezuzah, hamsa, and an art exhibition on the Holocaust.

The people of Nes Ammim make a big effort to cooperate with other settlements in their region. The children study in the kindergardens and schools of the cooperative Moshav Regba and Kibbutz Cabri. They celebrate the Jewish and Israeli holidays together with Regba, hold common seminars on the holocaust with Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot, and contribute to their neighboring Arab village Mazraa.

Past and Present demographic and economic condition

Nes Ammim view themselves as an international Christian ecumenical community and a recognize settlement – a full member in the Regional Council of *Matte Asher*. The settlement is run as a communal Moshav, with common economic activities. For several years Nes Ammim abstained from accepting members and volunteers from Germany. In 1971 the German family of Ema and Otte Busse (who is one of the righteous among the nations), settled there and opened the door for other Germans to come.

The initial plan was to develop an agricultural and industrial (optics and clocks) settlement. After the industry plan failed they switched to the export of flowers, and other agricultural crops. The outcomes were not very successful and they switched to tourism and opened a hostel in 1982.

At present there are about seventy people in Nes Ammim. Most of them are temporary volunteers who come for two years. This does not contribute to the building of a sound economic basis. Therefore every year the Moshav seeks out new volunteers. In many cases they also have to advertise abroad to fill management positions as well. In 2011 they issued a tender in the Netherlands and Germany for posts of CEO, maintenance director, and chief gardener for a period of at least two years.

Their main activity today is based on the guest house, running seminars on Judaism, Zionism, Holocaust, Israel, Islam, Middle East and especially Jewish-Christians relations. They also host a drug addiction treatment center, and have some agricultural activity (mainly growing avocado), a carpentry shop, and a botanical garden.

Longevity of the commune

The long term future of the settlement is not certain.

The population of the settlement peaked at the beginning of the 1980s when it numbered 220 people. However the majority of the residents did not view Nes Ammim as their final home. Most of the youngsters came for two years and the families for 5 to 7 years. (Greenberg, 1999). The numbers of permanent settlers also dwindled due to their sorry economic situation.

The Arab-Israeli conflict led to a decline in the contribution of funds especially after the outbreak of the Second Intifada, and in the number of volunteers who come to help run the settlement. All these problems, as well as the obligation not to accept Israelis to the settlement, excluded a potential source of manpower which could promise a more stable and permanent population.

"Kibbutz" Ir Ovot

Origins

Kibbutz Ir Ovot (the town of Ovot) was established in the Arava in Southern Israel in 1967, by a group of Messianic Jews from the US led by Simcha Pearlmuter. It was named after Biblical Ovot, one of the Old Testament localities mentioned on the way from Egypt to the Land of Israel (Numbers XXI, 10). Today the site is identified as Biblical Tamar (Kings I, IX, 18).

Leader's initial vision and motivation

Simcha Pearlmuter was born to a Jewish family in Miami, Florida. At the beginning of the 1960s, inspired by some ideas of the late Rabbi Shlomo Carlibach, he created a small Orthodox community. He and his family and disciples later became Messianic Jews, believing in the near coming of the messiah, and settling in Israel for that reason. He published a book: "Behohalei Ha-Shem" (*In the Tents of God*), writing about his belief, the role of Jesus in the restoration of Israel, and the End of Days. Over time they started to believe that the Messiah will arrive first from Mt. Edom which is opposite Ir Ovot.

Past History

In 1966, rejected by the Jewish communities in Florida, Pearlmuter began negotiations with the Jewish Agency to settle in Israel. In 1967 he immigrated to Israel with his two wives (Rachel and Yehudit), his three children and three other members. Their first attempts to join a Hebrew "ulpan", or a kibbutz, were rejected. At the end of 1968 they settled, with the support of General Yashaayahu Gavish, the IDF's Southern Regional commander, at a deserted army base in the Arava, which they named Ir Ovot. Several years after, they received official recognition from the state for their settlement.

Past and Present demographic and economic condition

The demographic situation of the settlement was fragile from the beginning. Its population in 1969 reached twenty-five adults, and ten children. In 1982 the population reached seventeen families and twenty children. In end of 1982 a crisis began when one of the wives (Yehudit) left with her five children, and other families left as well. In the 1990s only ten people were left. They lived communal life as a Kibbutz with a common dining room, laundry, children's house and school, and central work planning and institutions. The Supreme Court approved their Kibbutz status. Rabbi Ami Katz who was evacuated from the Sinai Jewish settlement of Yamit moved to Ir Ovot and at that time the original commune hid their messianic ideology. Chief Rabbi Goren explored in 1982 the option of the conversion of eleven members to Judaism. This began the disintegration of the settlement which worsened as Pearlmutter joined the Satmar Hasidim in order to get economic and political support, and the commune became ultra-orthodox. Shortly after newspaper articles and rumours as to its being a settlement of messianic Jews led to the Rabbi Katz's departure as well as Simha's wife Yehudit, and other members. As a result Pearlmutter renewed the name: Ir Ovot: the community of Jesus the messiah.

In 1975 they joined the *Ichud Chaklai*, the Israeli Agricultural Union, which is a non-political settlement body, a step which helped them get land and water quotas, and development loans. This ended in 1986 when the *Ichud Chaklai* ended its relationship with the commune.

The economy that at the first stages was based on agricultural crops such palm trees, tomatoes and eggplants, and Jojoba (a shrub used for oil), suffered due to the limited land and water quotas in this dry area. They tried to open a wooden toy factory, a truck company for transport, and bottled spring drinking water. The Kibbutz fell into debt, and after that, its survival came to depend on donations.

Longevity of the commune

The establishment and spiritual and economic existence of Kibbutz Ir Ovot is based on its charismatic leader Pearlmutter. The ups and downs of the settlement were related to the non-stable core of members, changes in faith, and in the attitude of the Israeli establishment. Thus after the death of its leader in 2003, the community declined to such an extent that it can no longer be considered a commune because it only consists of a few family members and people.

At present there are four groups in Ir Ovot: Pearlmutter's wife and a German family who host volunteers from Germany and the Netherlands who work on the 40 dunams family plot, an Evangelist organization from the US, called Blossoming Rose, who work with Rochester College near Detroit, Michigan opened an archeological park and educational center at the ancient Tel of Tamar, an extended Swiss family, and the extended Danish Larsen family, who arrived with religious visions, and is active with rehabilitating Arab, and Jewish youth in trouble.

Moshav Yad-Hashmona

Origins

Yad Hashmona, is a Finnish-Israeli cooperative Moshav (village) located in the Judean Hills just a few kilometers west of Jerusalem. The founders of Yad Hashmona were Bible believing Protestant pioneers from Finland. During the 1960's, they had worked as volunteers in different Israeli Kibbutzim, where they learned about the communal lifestyle which they later adapted at Yad Hashmona. The Moshav was established in spring 1974 by friends of Israel from Finland; later, Israelis joined them. The name of the village commemorates the names of eight Jewish refugees that expected to find asylum in Finland but were handed over to the Nazis. This historical event was an atypical act, and the founders of the Moshav wished to remember their names, thereby expressing public regret. This act of commemoration was done not only for themselves but also in the name of the entire Finnish people, to cherish the heritage, the people and the State of Israel. (Nerel and Ely Schiller in Nerel, 2006)

Leader's initial vision and motivation

The founders of the settlement were members of Carmel, a non-missionary Christian association in Finland, which preached for the restoration of the nation of Israel to its homeland as part of the End of Days vision. Carmel was founded by Pastor Per Faye-Hansen, and the Theologian and Archeologist Aelli Saarilalo. In 1960s some of its members who came to Israel as volunteers to Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim, decided to establish a Finnish Kibbutz in Israel, and actively participate in participating in the Jewish prophetic tradition, including the restoration of Israel. Rauhala Seppo was one of the Finish leaders of the core group. (Degani Fiels work and Interviews).

The principal spiritual vision and common denominator for the members lies in a combination of personal faith and communal activity, based on biblical principles. Currently, the majority of Yad Hashmona's population are Israelis who believe in Jesus as as their personal redeemer and as the Messiah of both Jews and Gentiles. Moshav members observe the Hebraic calendar and accept the validity of the Old Testament because Jesus himself declared that he did not come to abolish it, but rather to fulfill the Torah and the Prophets (Matthew 5: 17-19). (Nerel, 2006).

Past History

In 1971 they registered as a legal association in Israel. Three years later the seven Finish founding members moved to the site near Moshav Neve Ilan, to begin building and developing the stony area of 210 dunams that they were allocated. The initial finance for preparing the infrastructure and importing wooden houses, and sauna, from Finland was given by Rauhala Seppo who sold his farm in Finland. It was recognized by the Government as a settlement only in 1981. (Degani, and Kark, Fieldwork and Interviews). The Moshav is a full member of the *Matte Yehudah* regional council. Additionally, Yad Hashmona is also affiliated with the "Ichud Chaklai," the Israeli Agricultural Union.

The Moshav is run by two committees: a five-member secretarial committee and a seven-member business committee. Major issues are brought to the general assembly of the Moshav members for voting. The non-profit society (Amuta) Yad Hashmona Foundation was incorporated with the Israeli authorities in 2002. The major aims of the foundation are as follows: to establish, maintain and to act in Moshav Yad Hashmona for the development of mutual relations between Jews and Christians in the Land of Israel and worldwide, within the frameworks of research, religious, educational and cultural institutions. Such activities enable the study, teaching and education. (Nerel, 2006). Most Finnish tourists that come to Israel feel an obligation to visit the Moshav, their “legacy in the Holy Land.” Among them are many pilgrims, state officials, and U.N. staff. Moshav members and friends of Yad Hashmona in Finland publish a small quarterly in Finnish. (Nerel, 2006).

Past and Present demographic and economic condition

In the first years of the Moshav's existence, it was an exclusive Finnish community. From 1978 they were gradually joined by Israeli Messianic Jews, (i.e. a denomination based on evangelical elements, that receive Jesus as the messiah of Israel described in the Bible and as 'the Son of God', and reference to the Bible and New Testament as the Holy Scripture, and see themselves as a continuation of the Circumcision Church). (Degany, 2007)

The approximately 200 residents currently living in Yad Hashmona consist of about fifteen families, six singles, thirty-one children, volunteers and students of the IBEX (Israel Bible Extension) project. Some of the Moshav's elderly founders, who formed the initial Finnish group, still live here. Some of the families include the volunteers, who rotate constantly, come from all over the world. (Ely Schiller in Nerel, and Nerel, 2006, and 2011).

The economic life of Yad Hashmona is based mainly on the Guest House, the Biblical Village, tour guiding, agriculture (beehive and orchard), and those who work outside the Moshav. Following the footsteps of the Finnish founders, the Guest House is the largest economic enterprise at Yad Hashmona. The Moshav built a high-quality furniture factory that produces all-pine, rural-Scandinavian-style furniture. A beautiful “Biblical Village” (Garden) was dedicated at Yad-Hashmona in the year 2000, in collaboration with the Swiss Beit Shalom Society and the Israel Antiquities Authority. A few years ago a new Tour (Guiding) Center was opened. (Ely Schiller in Nerel, 2006)

Longevity of the commune

In the year 1979 the community consisted of twenty-two inhabitants including five children (all of them with permanent residency visas in Israel) and three other families who applied for membership. Today (2011) in Yad Hashmona there are, **200** inhabitants, fifteen families with children, while the community's master plan is for only thirty families. Currently the Moshav promotes plans to enlarge the site by adding a new neighborhood - located at the entrance to the village - with **38** new units (for families and singles with the same persuasion). De facto, this means an addition of about (at least) 60 persons - within the future of the next 4-6 years. (Nerel 2011; Degani field work). Despite the changes over the years, including the community's decision to focus on tourism, the commune has maintained its central characteristics and been successful.

Beth-El commune in Zichron Yaakov

Origin

The Bethel Society (BS) was founded by members of religious groups from Swabia, Germany, and members of the Emma Berger Society (Bethel – The House of God). After BS was established in Germany in 1958 they began to settle in Israel around 1963. They initially came to Zichron Yaakov (a Jewish community established in 1882 as an independent smallholders agricultural settlement). (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

Leaders' initial vision and motivation

The founder and director of Bethel Society until her death in 1984 was Emma Berger (1919–1984). She was the charismatic "mother of the community" who led the society abroad and the group who settled in Israel with the help of her sister Elsa Berger (1918–1993). The main motivation for the settling of Emma Berger and her group in Zichron Yaakov was their deep identification with Israel and its fate. "We feel that we are all of the seed of Abraham, and an invisible hand has led us to Israel", said Emma Berger, expressing the over-all feeling of the group. (Loth, 1980). Emma Berger also believed that the rapture, or second coming, was an imminent event and she wanted her group to be in the Holy Land when it occurred. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

Ideology

The Bethel Society is best described as an Evangelical, Pentecostal holiness group, with a strong emphasis on eschatology, love for Israel, divine healing, and communal living. We shall briefly relate to its main religious characteristics and principles.

Evangelical: Bethel Society is Evangelical in that it subscribes to a trinitarian theology with a high view of Scripture and a strong emphasis on personal salvation ("being born again").

Pentecostal: The "Pfingstjubil"-songbook of the Bethel Society is the standard worship hymnal of most German Pentecostal groups since 1911. Its services are more reminiscent of worship among pietistic circles. Prophecies and visions, usually by the leaders play an important role during the services.

Holiness movement: much emphasis is placed on the aspect of holiness in the community and the lives of the individuals. The children of the members of the community participate in "Bible courses", the main emphasis of which is to detect "sin" and be cleansed of it by means of confession and prayer. It is relatively simple to spot the members of the group because of their modest dress.

Eschatology: BS teaches a typical Evangelical premillennialist theology, that places the rapture at the beginning of the tribulation. The immediacy of the rapture was, however, overemphasized at times.

Love for Israel: Like many other Evangelical groups, from its inception BS held a great love for the Land and the People of Israel. With the beginning of their settlement in Zichron Yaakov this relationship was intensified. Particularly in Israel, BS has chosen to refrain from all missionary activities after some negative encounters with members of the Orthodox

religious community. The group sees its presence in Israel as a ministry of intercession and reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18ff.). Daily prayer for the Land and help – especially in times of crises, like wars – are the only activities of the group at this point. There is, however, the hope that at the End of Days the Messiah will come to the Land for the rapture of the saints and the salvation of the Jewish nation.

Divine Healing: According to BS, the victory of Jesus over disease can already be appropriated now. One ex-member asserts that “divine healings have actually happened”. Should someone not have been healed, however, this was interpreted as a lack of faith on the part of the sick person. Members who went to consult a physician were frowned upon. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

Past history

The Bethel Society, or Berger Society, named after its founder Emma Berger, has grown since 1958 from a group of small home-fellowships into an organization with approximately 1,500 members that established and developed a “kibbutz” (a communal settlement organized along collectivist principles) in Zichron Yaakov, Israel with about three dozen homes for families and a dozen community buildings. Many of the community’s members who live abroad have visited over the years, totaling about 10,000 by 1987. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

Present demographic and economic condition

BS is run like a Kibbutz. Families eat breakfast and supper in their homes. For lunch, however, everyone comes together in the community centre. Since the death of Emma Elsa Berger, a group of ‘Elders’ were responsible for the affairs of the society. All financial matters since the beginning of the settlement have been under the oversight of Emma’s sister Elsa Berger (1918-1993). She was also the leader of the movement from 1984 to 1993. Members were informed concerning financial transactions by Elsa “by way of testimony”, a practice that at times caused people to doubt her financial integrity. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

According to one of their Elders, in 2008 their number was about 500 persons – 350 adults and 150 children. They have a huge factory, a farm, and an ABC (Atomic, Bacteriological and Chemical) shelter. The economy of Bethel Society in Israel is best described under the following headings: homes, community buildings, industrial centres, and agricultural plants. All property was registered in the name of Emma Berger, but is registered in Israel under the name of the society. Property of members living abroad (Germany, Ghana, Canada, the Netherlands, Hungary, Rumania, and Switzerland) is private. Members from abroad that join the Bethel Society in Israel transfer all their assets to the Society. Several of the members who joined had sold everything in Germany and usually would bring with them about 400,000–800,000 Euros. This is the main reason for the Society’s prosperity. Anyone wishing to leave BS later on does not get back the assets he had earlier made over to the Society. Members from abroad pay tithes and visit Israel in order to help to build up the BS. Children of members who are not “believers” may inherit their parents who are members of the Society. All extra assets are to be used to build up the ministry in Israel. The Society in Israel is successful and prosperous. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

The society, which has assets of over \$100 million, has worked hard to have a perfect record and maintain a reputation for financial transparency. Today all assets are registered in the name of the Bethel Society and should the Society disband, everything will be bequeathed to the State of Israel. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

The society has several important features, including its numerous homes and gardens. The communities members have also constructed a dining hall, bakery, spacious religious building, kindergarten, school and, since the 1970s, an industrial area. The society produces some of its own food and carries out much of its own carpentry, construction and repairs. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

Because of their apocalyptic outlook on history and their expectation of the war of Gog and Magog in which, weapons of mass destruction would be used, many BS members decided to come to Israel, which they believed would then be the safest place in the world. To prepare for this final showdown, in 1978 the group already began developing filters for bomb shelters called ABC filters. In 1982 BS began actual production of this filter. Prior to the gulf crisis in 1991, most experts were sceptical of them, but during the first Gulf War the BS factory worked day and night to meet the demand. The new filter system is called “Tewat Noah” (Noah's Ark), reflecting BS belief that their filter would enable them to successfully survive the final cataclysm. Before the production of the filter began, BS had been subsidized up to 80 percent by its German brethren, and even after the first Gulf War it was far from being a Kibbutz that could stand on its own feet economically. In the 1990s they began supplying their products to Israel Defence Forces bases and its Merkava tank, Israeli nuclear reactors, and hospital emergency rooms. The Society also has small but technologically advanced industrial plants and the "Beth-El/Magen Shaul" training center that opened in 2009, in their daughter village in Magen Shaul in the Ta'anakh Region, in the Golan Heights near Kursi, and in the Shahak Industrial Region near Shaked in the West Bank. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

Agricultural Industries: During the time of the struggle in Zichron Yaakov, beginning in 1968, BS looked for “safer” territory. From the 1970s they developed a dairy farm in Binyamina and later grew vegetables and fruit trees and vines on their lands. Altogether, BS owns only about 445 dunams of farm land in the following breakdown: Zichron Yaakov – 70 dunams; Pardes Hanna – 170 dunams; Binyamina - 203.5 dunams, Haifa – 1.5 dunams. They also own some property east of the Sea of Galilee. (Schmidgal and Kark, 2008).

Longevity of the commune

During the transition from the founding stage to second-generation leadership in the Bethel Society the group of Elders still maintains a cohesive community. BS appears to be more cooperative with the community of Zichron Yaakov (including employment of local workers) and has also channelled its expansion efforts to a less hostile location (east of the Sea of Galilee). The crucial test for the Bethel Society will be its mode of transition to second-generation leadership. This could also lead either to decline and disintegration, or, alternatively, it will provide the group with an opportunity to divest itself of theological

peculiarities and to further escape from its relative isolation. However, at the same time, integration may lead to its decline.

The Community of the Beatitudes in Emmaus

Origin

The Beatitude Community is located north of the Trappist monastery at Latrun, not far from Park Canada, and is part of the Byzantine era town Emmaus-Nicopolis archeological site. The land was purchased in 1878 by the Carmelite Order, and in 1930 a monastery named "House of Peace" (Beth Hashalom) was built there by the Fathers of Betharram. Being in no man's land on the Israel-Jordanian border, it was deserted by them in 1948, and served as a UN soldier's base. Several attempts to settle the site were attempted after the 1967 war. First it was renovated in 1967-70, and the French Center for the Study of the Prehistory of the land of Israel opened next to it. In 1993 the Beatitude community was allowed to settle there. (Degany, 2007)

Leaders' initial vision and motivation

The Community of the Lion of Judah and the Slain Lamb was founded by Deacon Ephraim, his wife Jo Croissant, and another couple in Montpellier France in 1973. Its name was changed in 1991 to The Community of the Beatitudes. The community is part of the "New Communities" that started after the Second Vatican Council as part of the charismatic renewal and the Pentecostal movement in the Catholic Church. It brought together people from all backgrounds (families, singles persons, priests, monks, nuns etc.). Father Ephraim who was the ideologue of the movement, focused on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), the adoration of Mary, and the Eucharistia. The community of the Beatitude vision is to live in celibacy, and according to the model of the first Christian Communities as described in the book of Acts (Archive Emmaus, Beth Shalom)

History

The first community in the Holy land was founded in Jerusalem in the Year 1975, but as they looked for a place in the rural country, they got permission from the Fathers of Betharram to settle in Emmaus a site connected to the appearance of Jesus after his resurrection (Luke 24, 13-27). According to their ideology they rebuilt the place, with a beautiful garden, restored the Chapel and started an initiative to continue the excavation of historical Emmaus.

Present demographic and economic condition

Most of the members are from France, but there are also members from other nationalities, including local Catholic Hebrew. Unlike Catholic monastic orders, the Emmaus Community as all the other communes around the world is open to all types of Catholics, including married people with their children, single people, priests and monastic persons- people that permanently in the community share their life and form an integral part of a "Family". At its height the community included forty people including five families with children. During the Second Intifada in the 2000s the families left and today there are only twenty Brothers, Sisters and Lay members(In the spring of 2011 two families from France were planning to join them), (Degany, Fieldwork, 2011).

When a person is permanently committed to the community he/she put all their goods in common renouncing any type of personal property or savings. A great deal of their work covers their current expenses, but they also rely on donations from abroad. Their main income comes from maintaining the site, including the archeological site, holding seminars on Judaism and Christianity, and from donations. The community elects its own leaders who it calls a 'Shepherd'.

One of their main spiritual beliefs is the Love of Israel – based on the Declaration of *Notra Aetate* and the call by Pope John Paul II in which he described the Jewish people as our elder brothers. The community's focuses on the Jewish roots of Catholic faith, giving a specific place for prayer for and with the Jewish people. . "The Community prays intensely for this day when God will be all in all, Jews and non-Jews together". (Emmaus- Beth Shalom Archive).

Longevity of the commune

The Beatitudes Community was recognized by the Vatican in January 2003 as an "International Private Association of Faithful of Pontifical Right with Juridical Personality" (Vatican decree, 2003), a classification that means that although they are a Catholic organization they are different from a regular monastic order. There are an increasing number of Beatitudes Communities around the world – today numbering 1,500 members (120 families; 550 consecrated sisters and brothers (of whom 100 are seminarians); fifty priests; 550 celibates) in seventy of the communities on five continents. (Degani, La Salle Interview, 2011).

Conclusion (See Summary Table)

From the beginning of the twentieth century onward various types of communes and cooperatives were established in Palestine/ Israel. These included the more well-known Jewish Zionist Kibbutzim, Moshavim and other unique modes of settlement. As illustrated in this unique study, there were also numerous attempts to establish Christian communes in the Holy Land based on ideals associated with the earliest Christian believers.

In an introduction to a book series on communes in the world, Eliyahu Regev examined four types of communes. He based his classification on certain factors, among them on their being open and mixed or enclosed, being run authoritatively or communally, sharing or not sharing property, and serving the society's unprivileged. (Regev, 2000). The Christian and Messianic Jews communes we studied can be categorized by these parameters as well. In Bethell the property is communal and it is run in an authoritative and enclosed mode. Nes Ammim is run communally, with partial ownership of the common property. In Yad Hashmona the management is communal, and the production means are held communally while members also have private property. The Community of the Beatitudes in Emmaus is run communally and is a closed community with common property. Ir Ovot, and Tel Gamliel were closed communities, run authoritatively, with common property.

The new Christian and messianic Jews' communes were established after the founding of the State of Israel. In spite of the uniqueness of each commune, there were several common denominators to all of them:

All communes subscribe to conservative evangelical theology with emphasis on eschatology, and a belief in the Biblical prophecies, and the literal meaning of the Old and New Testament.

Most of them chose as an ideal the model of the early Christians; thus they aspired to create a communal settlement (Kibbutz or cooperative Moshav), and live communal life.

Their ideology included a great love for Israel, and belief in the restoration of Israel, support of Zionism, and a wish to have a dialogue with Jews and Israelis, and with other religions such as Islam. They stressed the Jewish sources of Christianity. Most communes identify with the sufferings of Israel, and for some the Holocaust is a central issue related to their ideologies and activities.

In terms of leadership, volunteerism, background of membership and financing the communes had much in common. All the groups had charismatic leaders who struggled for many years to establish the settlement and led their groups for many years. Most of the groups had an international background. The communes depend or supplement their economy by donations from abroad. Most of them are also supported by volunteers from abroad who come to work in Israel for a year or two, but are not settling permanently due to personal decisions, or governmental regulations re foreign citizens, that prevent their long term stay.

Because of their Christian origins and fears of missionary activity most of the communes faced strong opposition in the initial stages, which in some cases continued through the present. The main cause was the suspicion of their motivations and ends by Jewish anti missionary religious bodies such as Yad Le-Achim, and other Israeli local or political sectors.

Analyzing the future long term prospects of communes that persisted, and those that failed, we see that from the six communes discussed in detail in the paper, two no longer exist – Tel Gamliel and Ir Ovot. Two communes, Beth-El and Yad Hashmaona are thriving and seem to have a long term future, and the others struggle to survive. Tel Gamliel and Ir Ovot are good examples of communes in which the group depended ideologically and economically on a charismatic leader. A vacuum was created after their death and the settlement did not go on. The continuity of a core of second and third generations, and the economic independence issues, seems to be central in the longevity and success of the communes we examined. The communes of Beth-El, Yad Hashmaona and Nes Ammim managed to create an alternative leadership that followed in the steps of the founding leaders and generations. Moreover Yad Hashmaona absorbed Israeli families who settled there. These are the main reasons why Beth-El and Yad Hashmaona survived and have a future, while Nes Ammim, and the Community of the Beatitudes in Emmaus have difficulties and depend mainly on diminishing donations from abroad.

One of the central questions is why, in a country that produced over 500 successful communal settlements (more than 270 Kibbutzim and over 254 Moshavim), only a handful of Christian communes were established and even less succeeded. The answer to this question is complex.

Demographically, all the communities had to rely on immigrants from abroad, as the local Christian community did not produce any communes. Furthermore, since 93% of the land in Israel is State- or public-owned, the societies had to face a further hurdle of locating parcels of land they could develop and receiving permission from the state to do so. In most cases the communities opted to search for scarce private or Church-owned land by themselves, rather than waiting for the state, to help them locate public land.

It should be noted that with the passing decades, the sympathy for Israel and especially of the "miracle" of the restoration of Israel decreased in Europe, in the countries of origin of the communes established. The process of secularization that occurred and continues in Europe, together with the Arab-Israeli conflict, were among the main reasons for the decrease in the attractiveness of communal Christian settlements in the Holy Land.

Other factors contributing to the decline in the demand to join and live in those communes are the cultural gap between Europe and Israel and the need for economic and social security for families with children and for those about to retire, in contrast with the multiple options available in the European countries of origin.

Another issue facing the communal Christian organizations has been political and religious opposition by orthodox Jewish activists in Israel. Israeli Jewish religious organizations fear the missionary aspects associated with Christians, especially evangelicals, and they have tended to shun these types of groups. Because some of the organizations included messianic Jews or Hebrew-speaking converts this was perceived as the realization of a threat to the Jewish character of the state and led to opposition. The currently perceived antagonism of Europe towards Israel and the overt anti-Israel and anti-Zionist position of many of the churches, raises broad opposition. The inevitable conclusion is that in the current situation we see little future for the development of new Christian communities in the Holy Land/Israel.

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Figure 1. Christian and Messianic Jews' Communes in Israel



Community	Founding Year	Founder	Population - Peak (year)	Economy	Remarks
Beth El (House of God) (Protestant-Evangelist)	1963	Emma Berger (& Elsa Berger) Germany	500 Approximately (2010) in Zichron Yakov, Binyamina & Magen Shaul	Beth El Group (sophisticated) Beth El Industries, Beth El Food, Carmel Natural Products, Aunt Berta's etc.)	
Nes ammim (Banner to the nations) (Protestant)	1963	Johan Pilon Netherlands	220 (1983)	Guest House, Avocado, carpentry & Donations	
Ir Ovot (Messianic Jews)	1968	Simcha Pearlmuter USA	54 (1984)	Tourism, Agriculture & Donations	Demise 2003

Community	Founding Year	Founder	Population- Peak (year)	Economy	Remarks
Yad Ha-Shmona (Monument to the Eight) (Protestant / Messianic Jews)	1974	A group from Finland headed by Rauhala Sepo (most formerly volunteers in Kibbutzim)	220 (2010)	Guest House, Restaurant & Biblical Garden, Furniture Factory, Working out of Moshav	
Tel Gamliel (Site of ...) (Catholic)	1975	Isaac Jacob USA	20 (1993)	Vineyards, Beehives, Donations	Demise 1995
Emmaus-Comm of the Beatitude (Catholic)	1993	A Catholic community France	30 (2000)	Tourism, Vineyards, Jam & Honey, Donations	

The Communities – Summary Table



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Ruth Kark, PhD, Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has written and edited 24 books and 200 articles on the history and historical geography of Palestine/Israel. Her research interests include: concepts of land, patterns of land ownership; settlement processes; and Western interactions with the local populations in the Holy Land. Recent publications focus on Christian communes, churches and missions in Palestine/Israel; global indigenous and Bedouin land rights; women and gender; and entrepreneurship in Palestine/Israel.

Worlds in Collision: Time, space and the roles of women in Hutterite society

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Video of conference presentation: Not available

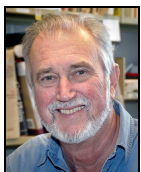
Abstract

Hutterites are pacifist Anabaptist Christians who practise communal living as an expression of their faith. The Hutterite church was founded in 16th Century Europe, organised in accordance with the patriarchal social mores of the day. Today there are almost 500 Hutterite colonies scattered over the Canadian prairies and the northern plains of the United States. Hutterites seek separation from the world and resist social change, although they eagerly embrace technological innovation in agriculture. Colony organisation and gender roles within Hutterite society have changed little since the sixteenth century. Women exert influence in colony governance in traditional informal ways, founded in conceptions of women as the subordinate sex. Recent penetration of the secular values of the outside into the colonies have rendered Hutterite attitudes to the role and rights of women increasingly anachronistic. Time, economics, and spatial separation from the outside are crucial factors in driving reappraisal of power and gender in this deeply traditional society.

Paper: Not available



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The Brahma Kumaris and Gyan Sarovar: Cult of spirituality and ecological equilibrium

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Video of conference presentation: Not available

Abstract

The culture of women may be identified as specific to women, in that it embodies conformity, resistance and an innate love for peace and harmony. Documented and oral accounts of mythology, history and literature the world over, reflect in various ways, these aspects of women's culture. This paper attempts to trace the culture of inquiry, resistance and a quest for equilibrium experienced within and without, associated with and initiated by women in various ways and specifically the contribution of the Brahma Kumaris to the movement towards spiritual growth and sustainable development. Women's felt need (and from time to time, men's) to create alternatives to stereotyped institutions for survival within systems of conventional, patriarchal and religious controls have manifested themselves in cults, to create or re-create self-generating systems for a way of life which rests on the principles of equality and a sense of belonging. The paper is structured around three sections. The first part looks at icons of resistance to re-creating new space. The second part traces the Spiritual Movement of the Brahma Kumaris (daughters/followers of the Lord), which re-created social and spiritual space for women in 19th Century India. The third part studies the concept, design and function of Gyan Sarovar (Pond/Pool/Lake of Knowledge) located at Mount Abu in Northwest India. The conclusion traces the integrated experience of spirituality and sustainable communes, structured around the belief of oneness. The sect which grew in the 19th Century continued to flourish regardless of some vicissitudes and remains vigorous today. The sect can be broadly described as a collective of women who have been initiated into 'The Road not Taken' to create new paths for inculcating the importance of world peace, spiritual renewal and practical meditation.

History

Re-examining the history of a movement is important because it invariably throws up fresh dimensions which may lend an important bearing on individual and general understanding. The movement can be traced back to the mid 1930s and to an isolated community of 400 people in Karachi in the Sindh region of pre-partitioned India-Pakistan-Bangla Desh through an impetuous decision of Lekhraj Kriplani (1876-1969) a Sindhi businessman. It is reported that Lekhraj Kriplani, whose name is respectfully prefixed with the term 'Dada' implying 'big brother' experienced an epiphany, soon after he took a conscious decision to use his personal, accumulated wealth for a socially beneficial cause. Today one would like to know the immediate provocation. Apparently the change of values and habits from *satavik* meaning pure to adulterated, degraded or eroded patterns of inter-personal behaviour impelled Dada to share his discomfort at the social scenario surrounding him. One of his observations was that

people continued to perform their traditional worship but the ceremonies became empty of their once exalted meaning. Men's minds were filled with the greed for money, the hunger for status. Trickery became the order of the day in business dealings, angry reactions and exchanges were commonplace, speech shifted from subjects of goodness and spirituality to talk about worldly desires. New customs of buying useless and expensive items purely for show and of holding costly but meaningless celebrations became visibly acceptable. These customs began to erode as a society acknowledged to be previously full of ancient cultural wisdom. This was taken as a sign that the world was entering its final upheaval of unrest before the process of renewal could begin. Understanding the sign has always proved to be a historic moment in the histories of people. The singular concern became an overwhelming compulsion to find a path. Who was there to guide the people back to the path of wholesomeness? Neither the politicians nor the British rulers of the time; neither the native royalty nor the sincere, limited political reformers who strove for the political freedom of the country, but had little to offer by way of achieving freedom from corruption and vice.

In the case of religious leaders, priests, pundits and preachers, there was little imparting of knowledge that could bring peace of mind, good character or pure life to families who looked for guidance. Rather they had become mere readers of scriptures, performing empty ceremonies and taking money from people. Many even passed themselves off as God, or convinced other gullible followers that God was everywhere. Such doctrines destroyed the intellect of the people, banishing all higher purpose in life. Such thinking was the outcome of the corruption of spirituality, and so the life of the people, though outwardly prosperous lacked a sense of peace and order.

The position of women was particularly degraded, especially after marriage. Mothers and wives were reduced to domestic servants, subservient to the interests and desires of the men in their families. The husband was supposed to be *pati parmashwar*, husband is God, and divorce was out of the question. Women were excluded from getting an education. A wife had to cover her face with a veil, living her life imprisoned within the four walls of her husband's home, a lifelong servant in his family's midst, her time taken up the drudgery of cooking, cleaning, washing clothes for the clan to whom she was in bondage. An absence of articulation perpetuated their suffering. Moreover, women had no right to engage in religious preaching, nor were they entitled to become *sannyasis*, renunciates, and remain in celibacy. For them there was no escape from the life sentence of marriage. Dada Lekhraj Kriplani's moment of epiphany envisioned an alternative culture in which women would occupy a pioneering role and space as Brahma Kumaris. Right from its inception, the movement was vested with providing an alternative to the institution of marriage, which in its existing form was unequal, discriminatory and oppressive for women. Thus, while re-visiting the history of the movement, the feminist perspective adds to a new understanding of the ethos and milieu in which the movement took root.

Once Dada heard the voice of God, he began sharing his knowledge with his friends. The basic truth of life according to Dada was that "We are all souls." This concept of the self-reinforced a philosophy of simplicity and orderliness guided by a spirit of mutual accommodation. So an institution was created, out of the love of souls for God: an institution

of purification, a sacrificial fire called a *Yagya*. (This institution was often referred to as the Yagya of Knowledge. The conception was that World War III, the war against self-centred consumerism was to be fought.

Many women who listened to Dada's (known as Brahma, Om , Shiv Baba) liberating message found the courage to adopt reforms in their lives as women. Overnight they changed their outlook radically and sent shock waves through their families by displaying sufficient power over their personal lives. By submitting themselves to the spiritual culture, they were able to give meaning to their lives. The people of Sindh were amazed at the results and a general feeling of respect for *Om Mandali* grew in the community. Habits and social customs which were recognised to be bad – but which one had not been able to change – were overturned by this spiritual knowledge. The fame of the Mandali spread and many families began to send their daughters there for the *satsang*. Thus grew a cult which rapidly spread as Movement creating a new form and space for the self-expression of many women and their being. With this growth a formal structure was needed to organize classes aimed at different levels of spiritual development. In 1937, Radha, one of the devotees, who had internalized the teachings, re-named Om Radhe and eight other women were given the responsibility of creating a Trust for the new institution. *Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishva Vidyalaya* Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University came into being with branches all over the world and the apex body, *Gyan Sarovar* located in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.

Mount Abu and Gyan Sarovar

In 1950, after the partition, Om Mandali was spiritually compelled to serve India . Despite much dissuasion from Muslim followers, the Mandali of nearly four hundred Brahma Kumaris and Kumaris set sail from Karachi to the port of Okha and thereon to Mount Abu. The mountain where *Prajapita's* (father of the world) temple of *Dilwara* (the one who steals your heart) is located and has been a pilgrimage place for saints and sages. The two statues of *Adi Dev* (the first created deity) one in black and the other in white represent the transformation from imperfection to perfection. In the temple's inner walls are one hundred and eight niches, each containing a statue of a *yogi* in meditation amidst an atmosphere of solitude and silence. The naked bodies symbolize the state of soul-consciousness. A large diamond placed in each one's heart represents the unwavering love for Shiv Baba. Each has an open third eye symbolizing the possession of supreme knowledge. The number , one hundred and eight is based on the belief that of all the souls in the world only that number will fully destroy body-consciousness and thus conquer death. Mount Abu is famed in the scriptures as the site where God *Shiva* descended and thus *Om Mandali* decided to settle there for its final phase of work to promote harmony. A poetic encapsulation of the time, meeting and place is rendered by Shuklaji:

*So much praise there is for Mt. Abu!
How beautiful a place.
The light of knowledge burns there,
And illusion is destroyed.
For Shiva descends at Mt. Abu with a gift
For every soul.*

*At the end of every cycle,
The Gita is re-sung.
Through the Knowledge of the Bodiless Father,
One rises rung by rung.
One who does not know Shiva,
Cannot know himself;
One who does not understand,
What can his life be worth?
This is my own experience.
Whatever I have heard,
I make you hear.
What I have seen,
I write.*

At Mount Abu, the yogis were ready to carry their spiritual knowledge forward raising India and the world once more towards understanding. They sang in joy of the challenge ahead:

*We are the transformers of the world
And we teach Raj Yoga
Once our palaces were made of gold.
We had one kingdom, one religion.
A world of happiness.
Join us in building that world again.
We are the transformers of the self,
And we teach Raja Yoga.*

Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga is the transformation of the soul from the state of impurity to a state of perfection. The change is described as the change of a human being into a divine being, a deity. So, Raja Yoga, the highest of all yogas, is that yoga which is union with the Supreme Being, that yoga which makes one a sovereign with knowledge about the soul. It imparts to the practitioner the experience of being master of one's own mind but further allowing the sovereign qualities of divinity to develop within the self for elevation of the self.

As the soul practises Raja Yoga, it experiences each of the qualities of God, more and more and it becomes an instrument to radiate these qualities into the world so that there is only purification of the individual soul but the vibrations of the highest yoga travel out. They reach out into the universe and eventually there is purification of the very elements of matter, so that peace, purity, love and harmony are brought about within the world also. In one's personal life one becomes a yogi in everything that is said or done because one has imbibed during meditation, the qualities of the Supreme Being. Harmony is thus ensured and established between man and man, man and woman, woman and woman and human beings and the environment.

[The different stages of Raja Yoga can be viewed as well as demonstrated.]

The Concept of Time, Mythology and the Self

Time is cyclic, like an endlessly repeating loop of a film. Each showing of the film lasts 5000 years. Each individual is a soul who is both actor and spectator. The film script itself has four

distinct parts and moves from a story of great joy to one of real sorrow. The world begins as a wonderland, the fulfillment of every dream is a reality in the midst of abundance and joy. Camelot and Xanadu were real systems in which harmony prevailed. The **golden age** is believed to be a period in which pure human beings live, innocent of disharmony and vice. The small population enjoys a life lived till the age of one hundred and fifty years and when it is time to leave the bodies a vision leads the soul to the next life.

Gradually the world gets older, the population increases and a new dynasty takes over from the dynasty of the Sun. Replacing Lakshmi and Narayan, Ram and Sita ascend the throne. After eight generations and a thousand and two hundred and fifty years, the golden age concludes peacefully and then begins the dynasty of the Moon, the **silver age**. The world still enjoys peace and loyalty, though the population grows comparatively. Time passes in a stately dance, one generation following another, until twelve succeeding births have taken place and one thousand two hundred and fifty years have passed on the cosmic clock.

Something untoward happens then. Souls begin to lose their sparkle and their divinity, become aware of their physical selves, forgetting that they are immortal souls and fall into vices. The Cosmic cycle moves into the **copper age**. Penance for the wrongdoings begin by building temples and practising rituals, customs begin to harden and even though the sannyasi (renunciation) cult keeps alive the tradition and value of purity, the knowledge of God is lost.

During the destruction following the end of the silver age, the continents split apart and many tribes begin to develop, each with knowledge of a little piece of the puzzle of the world cycle. The continent of North America rises from beneath the oceans and waits for its own Indians to come and settle there.

The first great prophet, Abraham, came at this time. He saw the people of India worshipping deities and he knew that this was wrong, that only God the Father should be worshipped. So he headed west towards a promised land of his own and began what became both the Jewish and Islamic religions. He built a temple to *Shiva* in Mecca, where Mohammed later worshipped. And he established sovereignty over Canaan, which became the home of the Jews. The deities had been called 'the Elohim', but now that plural word began to refer to God alone.

Egyptian culture also recalled the dynasties of the ancient deities. In fact, they too called themselves the gods of the Sun. Their pyramids were representations in stone of a point of light radiating downward from the sky.

The city states of Greece began to appear and great thinkers there discussed the nature of reality. The belief that there had been deities at one time ruling the earth remained unshaken. The Greeks began to worship them as well and they wove many stories about those elevated ones, whom they called the gods of Olympus. The Greek philosophers developed many theories regarding the soul, the cosmos, and God. The value of purity was widely recognized though by the time of Plato, it was conceded that only a rare and wise person would attain that state.

The power of the souls declined steadily. The Greeks fell and Romans took their place. The Hebrews had produced many great prophets and a short-lived kingdom of significant spiritual power. But decline set in there as well and wars increased. Their religion began to harden into legalism.

Another prophet, Christ, descended. He galvanized many into a new manifestation of spirituality. In time, this religion took hold of the failing Roman Empire and eventually spread its domination over Europe. Though this religion mistook a bodily being for God, just as the people of India had mistaken the deities for the Supreme Father, their belief in the Day of Judgment and the Kingdom of Heaven was notable. However, they did not realise that the part of ‘the son of God’ was over but the part of God Himself was yet to come.

In time peoples of the world had all received their prophets. Populations began to increase dramatically, as did wars and other vicious actions. Under the guise of religion, people forced each other to submit to domination. Whole nations were pillaged and people were lost.

Thus began the **iron age**. There were seemingly auspicious moments, such as a Renaissance in Europe when art and science began to flourish along with an exploration of the world. But the intention was profit and, as greed mounted, so did arrogance and intolerance. Science began its triumphant movement. The knowledge of the soul was lost almost entirely but the knowledge of the physical world expanded to enable tremendous growth of empires. Firearms and other weaponry advanced, urbanization followed industrialization; corrupt rulers were being replaced by democratic rule, the rule of subjects over subjects. India was conquered first by the Muslims and later by the British. Finally that ancient land began to wake up to new realities. Mahatma Gandhi led the Indians to independence from foreign rule but not to independence from vices. That task, it was believed, would require the intervention of God. In the meantime wars became even more widespread and brutal. At the same time there was a belief in the illusion of progress and evolution to some higher level. The truth, according to the understanding of the Brahma kumari cult is that the world had been on the decline for nearly two and a half thousand years and was leading towards burning down the entire earth. Nuclear weapons were developed and the nations of the world became obsessed with possessing destructive devices. Imminent destruction of the world was paralleled with an attempt to burn down the *Om Mandali* Institution in Hyderabad where Baba’s *satsang* (collective pursuit of truth) was held regularly. Women present at the time were instrumental in warding off the attack. “The boat of truth may shake but it does not sink.” Inspiration and practical detachment strengthened the Movement to accomplish the work of spiritual renewal. Resistance to antagonism was consistently being initiated and led by women through their songs improvised on various occasions. When confronted one of the earliest songs (7 August 1938) is worth recounting:

*O Man, what are you doing with your time?
Where do you want to go?
From which country have you come?
Where were you before coming to this earth?
Your childhood is over, youth slips away so fast.
Old age brings you to the end—*

*After that, what happens? Do you know?
 Do you know where you are going?
 Do you know from where you came?
 What are you thinking while you stand there?
 You who do not know even a little of the truth,
 Why do you oppose God's Knowledge?
 You are filled with the pride of wealth and power,
 But you do not in fact have either.
 The true path can be shown by the only One.
 So understand the meaning of each act that you perform.
 Don't waste your time.
 O Man, what future are you seeking?
 What income are you making?
 O Man, join your intellect with God,
 Take the endless treasure that your Father offers.
 Don't forfeit bliss for the false allure of Maya.*

As the numbers of sisters and mothers increased being able to identify themselves with the movement which had a special place for them, the number of centres in different cities and countries began to flourish. 'Dadis' and 'Didis' were given the role of heading and opening more centres all over the world.

World Renewal and the Environmental Crisis

The following article is a reproduction and representation of the Gyan Sarovar perception of the environmental crisis.

Planetary Transformation through Personal Transformation

(The spiritual causes of the environmental crisis)

The environmental crisis is no longer imminent. In fact, it has already occurred. Little effort need be spent in convincing perceptive people of this fact. We have polluted our lakes and rivers to the point of suffocation, poisoning our water supplies. We have destroyed our wetland habitats, stripped our forests and spoiled our fertile soils, thereby adulterating our sources of food. We have poisoned the atmosphere with automobile exhaust and industrial pollutants, blackening our lungs and clouding our brains with noxious fumes. We have robbed ourselves of the beauty of the world.

Why? Why with all our technological sophistication, have we been unable to create even a minimally healthy, peaceful world? Why has our garden world become a jungle of thorns, squeezing the joy out of existence at the very moment that we should be able to rejoice?

We have misunderstood the eternal relationship which we have to Nature and to God. In our pride of scientific achievement, we have forgotten that there are laws upon which this Universe is run, laws which we transgress only at our peril. We have broken those laws and now the threat has arrived.

One of the primary laws of cosmic change may be stated in this way: *The outward condition of the world reflects the inward condition of the souls who reside within it.* In other words, as long as souls remain pure and unpolluted, free of any negativity, so nature will remain unpolluted; as long as we are caring, nature will be caring; as long as we are the masters of ourselves, we are the masters of the world we live in. In our endeavour to explore and exploit our physical surroundings, we have, however, lost the knowledge of who and what we are. So, in the headlong rush for material gain, self-mastery has been utterly lost and our problems have slowly, unavoidably mounted, to such an extent that now they really crush us.

In the same way, greed defaces the planet, yet how many are prepared to make the kind of radical transformation necessary to end this crippling psychological disease, thus bring to an end the environmental crisis? How many souls are willing to transcend the body ego in order to act for their true welfare, to save the earth for their own future lives?

Fortunately, it does not take many. A small number of souls who are truly committed to perfection, who act with a deep understanding of the laws of change, can affect the entire universe—especially when the Supreme Soul Himself wishes this change to take place for the sake of His Unhappy children.

Paradise is being built again. Even in this darkest hour, secret forces are at work. Powerful souls, including the Most Powerful of all, are channeling the energy of purity into the material world. Through Raja Yoga, or the union with the Supreme, each one can become such a channel of spiritual light, love, purity and might.

This is not a dream, but revealed reality. It is our birthright as children of the Perfect Being. All we need to do is to become like Him once more. This is Raj Yoga. This is the pure path to world transformation.

Further Reading:

Henry David Thoreau: Walden Pond

Shuklaji: Om Mandli

Jagdish Chander: The First Man: Adi Dev

The Brahma Kumari News Letter



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The Long Lost Lavra: Model for modern intentional communities?

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/3gQYhF64j1k>

Abstract

The relationship within academia between modern intentional communities and traditional monastic communities has been not always clear.¹ As with the debate about co-housing, there has been some reticence by traditional communal studies academics to include monastic communities as a form of intentional community. When links have been suggested, they have sought to draw comparisons between modern intentional communities, especially communes, with the traditional coenobitic forms of monasticism – a common life in a shared house usually led by an abbot, rinpoche, guru, roshi, or some other singular leader. This essay suggests that such analysis is hampered by the assumption that the only traditional forms of monasticism were the dominant coenobitic and eremitic (hermit) models. However, perhaps the most fruitful comparisons for contemporary communities might be a form of monasticism popular in Palestine from the 4th through the 9th centuries CE, the lavra model. This essay hopes to introduce the lavra model to the discourse regarding monasticism and modern communal movements as well as suggest that the lavra model could represent a communal paradigm from which contemporary intentional communities could learn.

Ancient Monasticism and Modern Communal Movements

The degree to which monasticism represents an antecedent to modern communal movements is a debated point.² While the links seem obvious to this researcher, the objectors are plenty and their arguments seem to be largely genetic in form: with the rare exception, very few examples of modern communes or cohousing communities came out of the traditional monastic movement. In fact, modern communal movements, for the most part, developed in reaction to the dominant modes of society, of which Christian (and for that matter, Buddhist and Hinduism in other cultural contexts) monasticism were intimately linked. Likewise, the decidedly ascetic and segregated character of traditional monasticism had only rare resonances within modern communal movements. As a result, with the exception of the “new monasticism” movement in America and a few others, the link between ancient forms of traditional monasticism and modern communal movements has not been widely embraced. The essay argues that the connection is actually quite deep because both the ancient monastic

¹ For those who study the ancient and late-antique world, anything past the Byzantine period or medieval world is modern.

² Very little recent research has explored these potential links with rigor. The most interesting work has been, George A Hillery, Jr and Paula C Morrow, “The Monastery as Commune,” in *International Review of Modern Sociology* Vol 6 (1976) 139-154 and John W. Bennett, “Communes and Communitarianism” in *Theory and Society*, Vol 2 (1975) 63-94.

communities and modern communal movements share a DNA of resistance to the norms of the society.

Perhaps the term that casts the widest net in communal studies is “intentional community.” The determining modifier here is “intentional:” the forging of a particular kind of community was deliberate choice.¹ The members of the community reflected upon customary modes of living, rejected them, and consciously sought an alternative. The meaning behind an intentional community, therefore, is discovered only relative to the norms. A group of unrelated people living in yurts clustered in the countryside is normal in Mongolia, but not in a modern society, even in California. Intentional communities are, by nature, *extra*-ordinary communities, the term most social psychologists prefer. They are truly alternative communities, which by nature beg the question: *alternative to what?*

Two simultaneous processes form the drive behind the formation of an intentional community: an active rejection of the dominant modes of living together with a strident striving toward a newer, higher ideal, a utopia.² Those who found intentional communities say, “no” to the society as they find it and lift up another communal ideal, the world as it “should” be, at least in their mind. Bearing in mind the dual character of the impulse to forge an alternative community is important: for it is driven both by a dark pessimism about the state of the world and a bright optimism for human potential. It is simultaneously world negating and world-embracing, for it believes strongly in the potential of community but just not the forms that have arisen in the prevailing surrounding society. By contrast, the hermit or recluse also rejects the prevailing norms of society, but he or she also rejects the *idea* of society. Hermits have a problem with not only a given society but the notion that people should live in community itself. Not so with the intentional communities and communal forms of monasticism: they have a problem with society as it is found, but not with social connections themselves.

So both monasteries and modern intentional communities represent attempts to create parallel, alternative societies. The bridges to the dominant surrounding society can vary, but normally they are removed from the center of the dominant society, often surrounded by walls or wilderness that form a rigid boundary between the two alternate modes of existence (however, urban-integrated monasteries and communities have always existed and some communities have deliberately sought to overcome their ‘island’ character). As a result, initiation ceremonies become necessary rites of passage from one mode of living to another defined as a higher form of the former. Both traditional communal forms of monasticism and modern intentional communities are thus predicated on the impulse to make a counter-culture.³

¹ For this reason, an indigenous community that might bear striking resemblances to a particular form of intentional living should not be seen as an ‘intentional community’ for it was not deliberate choice to live in that manner.

² Communal Studies has historically over-stressed the positive orientation of the dyad that it has virtually merged with Utopian Studies. There has been no corollary drive to form a Misanthrope Studies or anything similar.

³ See Romila Thapar, “Renunciation: The Making of a Counter-Culture?” in *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, ed. Romila Thapar (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1978) 83.

This dynamic is apparent in the origins of Christian monasticism.¹ Christian monasticism began not with the earliest Christian communities but in the fourth century. The first time the term monk, or *monachos* in Greek, is employed is in 324, nearly three centuries after the founding of the church.² It arose at a period of massive transformation within the Christian movement: Constantine, the Roman Emperor, had converted to Christianity a couple of decades prior and by throwing the weight of empire behind his new religion had changed that religion remarkably. Rather than being a small, impoverished, and persecuted group of religious eccentrics, the Christians were lining the hallways of power, dressed in the finest robes, and preaching a modified gospel that massaged the original radical message into something more palpable for the masses. And the masses came in droves: a stampede of new converts for it was now manifestly profitable in worldly terms to become a Christian. The monks were those that felt the church had lost sight of transforming the world and had become transformed by it. They marked their protest not by voice but by their feet: simultaneously in both Syria and Egypt, they left the confines of society to live alternative existences grounded in their perception of the radical spirit of the early church. They were known as *monachos* (monks) in Egypt and *ihidāyā* in Syria, but both terms meant roughly the same thing: solitaries. This ‘solitariness’ was in part physical – many of them lived alone, separated from the world – but moreso it connoted their mindframe: in a society that was now supposedly veering headlong toward an un-Christ-like Christianity, they would be undistracted and undivided in their devotion to Christ, they would be solitarily dedicated to God. They sought a higher form of life, quite literally for the Stylites in Syria who lived on platforms in the sky, sort of primitive penthouses. But, the crucible of the desert thus provided the backdrop for the most enduring form of alternative living the world has probably ever known. Though many of the early monks were hermits, there also arose a variety of forms of communal living whose definition and purpose was found solely in relation to the norms of the era. It was the formation of one of the original counter-cultures that over time would be co-opted and controlled by the very people whose presence prompted the initial reaction. Yet, the original spirit of monasticism shares a similar DNA to the impulse behind most modern examples of intentional communities. They are all predicated on a desire to live differently.

As an institution, monasticism has been far more successful in terms of longevity and scope than modern intentional communities. Such an appraisal seems warranted: the dominant monastic mode is the coenobitic form (from the Greek *bios*=life and *koinos*=common). As a model of alternative living, it has been most successful in human history, whether it is in the form of Benedict’s Rule in the Christian west or Basil’s rule in the Christian east, as well as its unrelated corollaries in the East: the Buddhist sangha, Hindu mathas, or the rich monastic traditions of Japan. Coenobitic monasticism has been around for at least 2500 years, spread literally across the globe, and penetrated into the heart of multiple religious traditions. The

¹ The dynamic is also apparent in Hindu and Buddhist monasticism, though those stories are beyond the scope of this paper.

² The first known use of the word *monachos* appears in a legal notice on a papyrus dated to 324. Its first use in a church writer is Eusebius of Caesarea in his commentary on the *Psalms* written sometime in the early 330s. See E.A. Judge, “The Earliest Use of Monachos for ‘Monk’ (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism,” *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977) 72-89 and also Francoise Morard, “Encore Quelques Reflexions Sur Monachos,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980) 395-401.

differences between and within the various forms are important, but they all follow the same pattern of attempting to forge a life in common.

Their equivalent in the modern intentional community environment is the commune whereby private property is limited and there are aspirations toward the common monastic goal of self-sufficiency. Communes have generally been less successful. While the ideal is still held in the highest esteem, most do not even last into the second year, let alone the second generation. And when they do last, they tend to become more and more individualist over time; in other words, they become less and less coenobitic. So the appraisal that monasticism has been a far more successful model than modern intentional communities seems safe. However, perhaps we are not comparing the proper equivalents. Perhaps the monastic model that is most fitting to the modern world is not the coenobitic model but a model that is now long lost, the *lavra*.

Background on the Historical *Lavra*

In the *Encyclopedia of Community*, which might qualify as the bible of the communal studies field, the entry on Monastic Communities states: “there are two kinds of monastic life – eremitic (hermit) and cenobitic (community).”¹ Indeed, these were the two primary models that survived, but it is more helpful to see the monastic world as a spectrum between these two extremes. In fact, the majority of monks in places like Palestine and early on in Egypt were neither coenobitic nor eremitic, but were a part of *lavras*.²

Lavras were communities in which the monks lived in clusters surrounding a series of central building that included (normally), a church, a bakery, storage facilities, and perhaps a few other common buildings such as an infirmary or guest quarters. The monks lived within walking distance of the central area, but showed a surprising degree of diversity and independence: some lived alone, others lived with two or three others and occasionally one would see homes of up to five people, usually under the direction of a spiritual elder.³ Each cell or house followed their own rule away from the central church and could even hold distinct theological perspectives, but they would come together one to three times throughout the week for common meals and worship; undoubtedly, they came together other times as well, but the primary paths converged at the core.

The Greek term “*lavra*” (Λαύρα) meant in ancient Greek a passageway, lane, or a back alley. However, it should not be seen as a lonely, empty path but a place of congregation. When *lavra* was translated into Syriac as the model spread north, it was translated as *Shouka* (*suq*, in modern Arabic), which is a marketplace, a vibrant and bustling place full of discussion, commerce, and social intercourse.⁴ So lexically the term meant something like a place where

¹ Van A. Reidhead, “Monasticism” in *The Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World*, edited by Karen Christensen and David Levinson (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication, 2003) 931.

² The best modern sources on the *lavra* model are: Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966); John Binns, *Ascetic Ambassadors of Christ: The Monasteries of Palestine, 314-631* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). A brief but helpful introduction can be found in Edward G. Matthews Jr. “*Lavra*” in *The Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, E.W. Johnston, ed. (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000) 746-7.

³ Hirschfeld, 180 has the average distance between cells being 35 meters and most living alone as he discusses on page 177, but some living in a cluster of caves, as he discusses on page 187.

⁴ See Chitty, 15.

pathways connect, a sort of intersection of souls. The fifth century monastic theologian Evagrius Ponticus gave a definition that seems to capture the broader picture: the lavra is a place “where the dwelling place is separate and distinct, but the common life accomplishes a single goal: divine love.”¹

The origins of the lavra system in Egypt is a bit obscure but the first lavra in Palestine was founded by Chariton in 330CE, who was captured by bandits while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and decided to stay and found a community at the place of his captivity. The pinnacle of the movement was in the sixth century with St. Sabbas (439- 532). The most important primary sources are *The Lives of the Monks of Palestine* by Cyril of Scythopolis (6th century) and *The Spiritual Meadow* by John Moschus (d 619 or 634). The period of decline begins in the seventh century and by the 9th century, there are none left in the traditional form.²

Even at their peak, however, individual lavra communities never grew too large by coenobitic monastic standards: most were between a dozen to seventy people, though there are a couple of examples swelling to 150 individual monks. The constraining factor, as with most things in the Middle East, was water: they needed to find unsettled places in the Judean desert that had an adequate water supply, which usually meant inhabiting fierce cliffs and ravines. Many of the cells and houses were caves or structures built attached to the caves, which provided natural air conditioning as well as protection from the weather and robbers. From above, they could almost appear almost as spiders with a network of paths leading to a central core.

The lavras were designed so that most of the formal interaction between the monks occurred in these shared core structures while the cells or houses were kept private. The cells and houses were not too distant from the core: monks write about being able to hear their brethren’s singing and all could hear the talon striking the board in the central area to mark the time periods of the day.³ The central complexes varied from little more than a chapel and a common room to rather robust central facilities: one abbot known as Gerasimus created a model where the common areas were more far more instrumental and vibrant than the original lavras. His form of lavra had a church, storeroom, and refectory as with others but it also had a kitchen, living quarters for staff including abbot’s quarters, and guest quarters.⁴ Regardless of the size and form of the core complex, there were always private zones and common zones with differing sets of rules applied to each area. Herein lies one of the most distinctive element of lavra versus coenobitic forms of monasticism: searching for a balance between individualization/privatization of life with the inherent value and advantages of a life in community.

¹ *Ecclesiastical History*, I,21

² To add an element of confusion, however, the term lavra comes to be re-appropriated in the rest of the Eastern Orthodox world as a sort of honorific title for *coenobitic* monasteries such as the Great Lavra of Mt. Athos and the Kiev Lavra, but these do not follow the original model so shouldn’t be confused with the subject of this essay.

³ Edward G Matthews, “Lavra” in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 746-7.

⁴ Hirschfeld, 13. Andrew T. Crislip studies in depth the medical facilities in the lavras in his book, *From Monastery to Hospital: Christian Monasticism & the Transformation of Health Care in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005).

The early monastic world, much like our own today, struggled with the question of community. The earliest monks were the hermits, especially in the deserts of Egypt and the wilds of Syria. They were fierce individualists, whose goal was to be “alone with the Alone.”¹ Later monastic writers such as St. Basil the Great was so appalled by this form of religious life that he argued that being a hermit was not only unchristian (for how do you love one another when you are alone) but also inhuman, since to be human is to be social.² For those of the second camp, a coenobium or life in common that sought uniformity in all areas of life – all the monks looked the same, prayed the same way, followed the same schedule, etc... – was the ideal. In the midst of these extremes stood the lavra, which allowed for diversity of life with varied degrees of individualization and privacy yet sought to harness the resource advantages of communal life and the opportunity to practice Christian virtues with one another. This diversity and individualization was apparent in many areas of life.

For example, they did not have a common rule to guide their life, across different lavras in the same region or even among the population of a particular lavra. Some communities met formally multiple times a week for meals in common and long church services; others hardly met in common at all, sometimes only in feast days. One should see it as a sort of spectrum where some lavras functioned very closely to the coenobium model while others functioned practically like a collection of hermits. The point is that the monks themselves decided where on that spectrum their community would place themselves and there was not one norm among the lavras.

While the amount of time dedicated to community varied, the primary energy in all the lavras would be dedicated to the private and individualized zones comprised of their cells and houses. Typically, they would divide their days into the classic monastic tri-part: prayers and reading, work, and eating/peace (sleep). However, the specific mix and form would differ between cells. Some might wake up every morning before dawn for long prayers; some might have a more relaxed or informal schedule that depended on shorter prayers. The spiritual exercises also differed. For example, fasting was the central ascetic act of the period for monks. All Christians and especially monks fasted to degrees that seem unimaginable to the modern world. Gerasimus mentions it was normal to eat only bread, water, and dates within his Lavra.³ However, Moschus tells us of a monk who ate only once slice of bread every four days; another was content to eat only the holy bread on mass on Sunday.⁴ Unlike the coenobium where fasting was more or less uniform regardless of personal capability or aspirations, the mark of the lavra was its relative spiritual diversity.

This diversity would have been apparent even to the casually observer. Unlike the coenobium where the monastic habit would quickly identify a monk as belonging to a particular monastery, clothing was also not uniform or mandated. Clothing always represents charged symbols that communicate social messages, but the monks were allowed to decide these

¹ This phrase is neoplatonic in origin but was used by Athanasius in his description of St Anthony the Great, the first monk, in his *Vita*.

² See Basil’s *Regulae fusius tractatae. The Long Rules*, 3.1.

³ See *Vita Gerasimus*, 2,3; Hirschfeld, 82.

⁴ See *Spiritual Meadow*, 9: 2860A, 42: 2896C; Hirschfeld, 82.

messages for themselves. St Sabbas, for example, wore regularly such tattered rags that he was frequently mistaken for a beggar.¹ However, there were certain fashions and trends, so to speak: most of the monks in Palestine seemed to wear a sort of sleeveless tunic with a hood. However, the point is that clothing was another area of diversity within the lavras.

The apparent diversity would also have been noticeable in the ethnicities of the monks of Palestine. The monks tended to be from all over the Roman Empire: from Italy, Asia Minor, and throughout North Africa. In fact, one of the earliest leaders, a man named Euthymius, had only one native Palestinian at his lavra but it was often that many different areas of the Roman Empire would be represented within the lavras of Palestine.² Clearly, these were still all Christian males, so grandiose claims of progressive values are not appropriate, but its international flavor stood in stark contrast to the provinciality that marked monasticism in other areas and kinds. Unarguably, the international character of the lavra monasteries was due to their location near Jerusalem, which was a beacon for pilgrims the world over. But it also speaks to the genetic structure of the community that allowed for a diversity of practices and norms. Much like today, the traditions and norms of life and faith varied across the empire. If one were a faithful monk from Gaul who travelled to a coenobium in Palestine, he would be asked to forgo all that he knew to conform to the uniform practice of the monastery. However, if he were part of a lavra, he could retain most of the traditions and practices that were familiar to him because most of his life was spent in his cell or house. In fact, the literary record shows some signs that some houses within lavras were comprised of people from a certain region.³ Therefore, the structure of the lavra model fostered diversity within an overarching unity.

This diversity tended to foster the cross-pollination of ideas. In the earliest lavra in Palestine, one of the monks could write in Greek, Latin, and Syriac and became a teacher to others.⁴ In fact, one interesting subgroup of the lavra population was immensely popular bishops and theologians who sought quietude in remote lavras, where their anonymity could be protected since they spent most of their time on their own.⁵ One can imagine a healthy and perhaps heated exchange on one of the lanes leading to the central church between a new young lavra resident from Egypt with an aging bishop from Rome about the proper way to divide up one's prayers for the day or a myriad of other theological questions. Once again, the structure of the lavra compared to the coenobium or the hermits fostered such an intellectually dynamic environment. Unlike the coenobium where the spiritual life along with every other aspect of life was merely given to you, the proper way to live would be a point of discussion because each cell or house would be deciding the contours of their specific form for themselves. Inevitably, debates would emerge that would foster reflection and experimentation. By creating a diverse environment that fostered debate, the danger of division and schism would inevitably also rise – and, as will be apparent, it was precisely such a debate that contributed

¹ Chitty, 116.

² Hirschfeld, 12-3.

³ See Hirschfeld, 187.

⁴ See Chitty, 85.

⁵ Chitty, 113.

to the decline of the lavra system as a whole – but the structure of the lavra tended to encourage reflection, debate, and experimentation.

By highlighting the relative diversity within the lavra system compared to the coenobium, it should not be taken that there was *so* much diversity that members of the community were relative strangers to one another and had little in common. Far from it, they were (in the lexical meaning of the term), an intentional community: they came together in order to foster the spiritual life of each other and to share resources. The lavra did not create the pressure-cooker social environment of the close-knit coenobium, but the lavrateer (if we could coin a term for a monk in the lavra) still had to interact with his fellow man. This part of communal life – the opportunity to share resources – marks a second hallmark of lavra life alongside its support of diversity.

Much like the Egyptian desert and the Syrian wilderness where monasticism also took root, the Judean desert was (and is still today) an area of scarce resources. If living in common had not been a spiritual mandate, it was also a practical concern. However, unlike the coenobiums in the area that shared everything, the lavra residents had to think through the questions of which resources to share and why, for the default was not to share everything as it was in the coenobium. In fact, the normative position was to keep things private and separate unless there was a compelling reason to centralize and communalize something.

In looking at the archeological record, they were quite smart about their decisions in this regard. For example, bread was the staple of their existence. Yet wood was scarce in the desert and building a fire for cooking it was time consuming. They uniformly chose to share this task, as archeologists have found a common bakery in which they would bake literally dozens of loafs at a time in nearly every lavra uncovered to date. Furthermore, much like communities today buying in bulk, the lavras pooled their resources to buy grain; we see in the literature that it was sometimes a full-time job to pick up the grain from central markets and transport it to the lavras.¹ Likewise, while there appears to be some common gardens for growing food, most of the gardens were small ones attached to individual cells and houses – after all, they were eating all but two or three meals a week there. However, they shared gardening tools and storage buildings for seeds.² They also shared books in central libraries³ and took care of guests in shared common rooms. In fact, many of the ancient lavras look like many modern cohousing structures. The point is that there are clear signs that the leaders of the lavras thought through resource optimization in a way that simply was unnecessary in the coenobium.

The efficient centralization and communalization of aspects of life also led to communal responsibilities for members of a lavra. Sometimes these duties involved physical labor such as being a gardener in the central garden or caring for the common animals, but other times it would involve more clerical tasks, such as assigning work as needed and insuring supplies arrived for everyone on time.⁴ These jobs tended to rotate, sometimes on a yearly basis. The

¹ See Hirschfeld, 83-4.

² Hirschfeld, 96.

³ Hirschfeld, 96.

⁴ This was the job of the steward (*oikonomos*). See Hirschfeld, 73.

picture that emerges is one where the lavrateers are interacting with one another at multiple levels throughout the week, not just during the common services and meals. Their cell or house may have been their primary mode of existence but they were also regular participants of life in common, with all its inherent advantages.

In sum, in staking out a position midway between the hermits and the coenobium, the lavra model demanded reflection of its members concerning the core questions of existence at the time: first, the proper balance between communal and private life, a common uniform existence and individualized expressions. Second, how to balance private consumption while optimizing communal resource use in an environment of limited resources. The thesis of this essay is that, once again, these two questions have become the central dilemmas of our existential plight. The lavra model could have been an important link between ancient monasticism and modern intentional communities, but it did not last.

The Decline of the Lavra

The reasons for the decline of the lavra system are many, including the Islamic conquest of the area,¹ but one of the most important is that over time, the ecclesiastical authorities slowly sought to co-opt the monastic movement and employ its ranks as a sort of theological army in support of their positions in church debates. The coenobitic monasteries with their uniformity under a charismatic and powerful leader proved far more easy to control than the decentralized and diverse lavras.² One sees evidence for this in sixth century legal code of the Roman emperor Justinian, who demanded that all monks sleep in common dormitory so that they could be more easily monitored by those in authority.³ At the same time, Lavras in Palestine were engaged in heated theological debates with each other that divided the movement; at one point, a debate about the interpretation of the early theologian Origen's view of the afterlife led to people of the New Lavra attacking the monks of the Great Lavra with knives.⁴ So there was also some internal dissection (pun intended). Nevertheless, with ecclesiastical backing behind the coenobiums, pressure from the Islamic invasions, and internal dissent, the lavras gradually were converted to coenobium or withered away, so by the ninth century they were largely gone. There are still some monastic forms that bear reflection of the original lavras such as the sketes of present-day Mt. Athos, but the peak of the lavra movement was clearly in the fourth through seventh centuries.

Implications for today

Perhaps, however, it is time for the resurrection of forms of communal life grounded in the example of the ancient lavra model. The core social and environmental issues today bear a striking resemblance to those of the fourth century, though undoubtedly the underlying causes have shifted. In the spectrum between hermit and coenobium, the center of gravity in western

¹ See Hirschfeld, 17. The monasteries became effectively cut off from the center of power in Constantinople and the flood of pilgrims that often provided resources and new recruits tricked to a stream.

² In the earlier periods, the strength of the personalities of Sabbas and Euthymius show that it was possible to have strong leadership connected to the central church authority.

³ See Justinian, *Novella*, CXXIII, 36.

⁴ See the summary of the controversy in Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

living arrangements has shifted increasingly toward the hermit end of the spectrum. Functionally, those following the conventional social currents are not yet hermits (with perhaps allowing for virtual connections to others) but we are becoming more and more isolated from each other.¹ The dominant tendency is inspired more by the hermit than the coenobium. Especially in the 1960s, there was a reactive lurch toward the fully communal life; nouveau coenobiums sprung up with a variety of flavors such as hippy, spiritual, and ecological. Today, this model is still idealized by many communitarians. However, in practice, it has proved challenging to implement, as most communities become more and more individualized and privatized over time. Perhaps there is room in the present environment for a lavra-like incarnation of a new modern model for communal life. Perhaps instead of the coenobium or the hermitages inspiring forms of existence, there is a better model, a golden mean of sorts, in the long-lost lavra.

In fact, some successful forms of co-housing bear similarities to the lavra model. However, many of the co-housing models share little in the way of an overriding ideological purpose. After all, the ancient lavras, despite their diversity of spiritual practices, embraced a shared wider worldview; they existed to inspire divine love. They aspired to a sort of union of souls as they respected, quite literally, different pathways toward that unity. Their strength came from the very intersection of those paths, as the name itself indicated. The ancient lavra was a place of fertile intersection, whose roots can, perhaps, inspire us today.



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¹ See Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

Harmonist Horticulture: Nourishment for the body and soul

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/45rZdbeQU6Y>

Abstract

The 19th century Harmonists belonged to an elite group of religious utopianists who no doubt helped to shape the ideological, cultural, and economic landscape of the United States of America, in particular that of the Midwest. This well-structured society successfully practiced both an inner-communal socialism and a fierce external capitalism. While living in a spiritual realm of Millennialist beliefs, they engaged in horticultural practices that profoundly mirrored the society's economic and spiritual principles. These practices confirmed the frontier experience that matter existed beyond the community boundaries that needed to be harnessed, thus leaving behind the idea of the Baroque garden, which according to the Harmonists symbolised the corrupting sophistication in Europe. With this view in mind, the Harmonists also opposed Jean Jacques Rousseau's notion that primitive societies who lack possessions and social structures are freer and happier. Instead the Harmonists preferred a highly controlled living environment that promised wealth, contentment, and salvation. As the Harmonists interacted with nature, they produced carefully arranged horticultural models that included communal house gardens, crop farming, and labyrinth gardens. The house garden and crop farming models that resembled horticultural practices in medieval monasteries helped to sustain the community's physical wellbeing and create capital. For their spiritual wellbeing, the society built elaborate labyrinth gardens that symbolized a proximity to paradise providing spaces that could nourish the soul.

Introduction

My scholarly interests in utopian communities and utopian concepts have greatly been shaped by the University of Southern Indiana's proximity to the town of New Harmony and the access to Harmonist archival materials. In addition to the university's connection with the historical village of New Harmony, USI is home to the Center for Communal Studies.¹

The university is located approximately 33 miles southeast of New Harmony,² which was settled in the early 19th century by the German Separatist George Rapp and his followers. The Harmonists would later sell their town to Robert Owen, a Scottish industrialist, also known as the *father of socialism*. Today I will focus on Harmonist horticultural practices and how they provided nourishment for their body and soul.

¹ USI Center for Communal Studies <http://www.usi.edu/libarts/communal/>

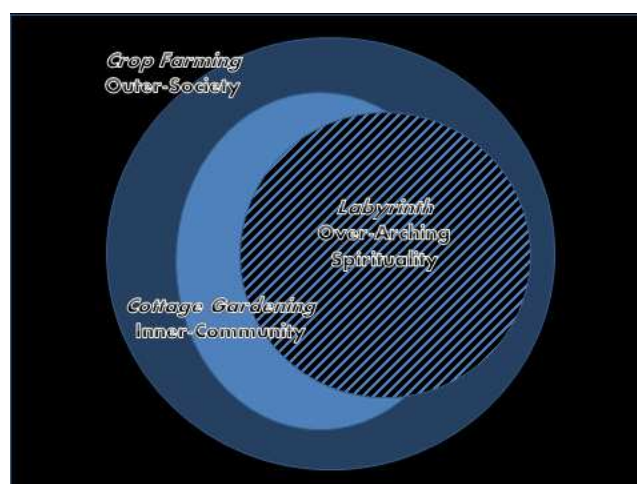
² Historic New Harmony <http://www.newharmony.org/>

Harmonist Horticulture

The Harmonists were religious Separatists from the German dukedom of Wurttemberg who, in the 19th century immigrated to the United States of America. They belong to an elite group of communal utopianists who no doubt helped to shape the ideological, cultural, and economic landscape of the United States of America, in particular that of the Midwest. This well-structured community successfully practiced both an inner-communal socialism and a fierce external capitalism. While living in a spiritual realm of Millennialist beliefs, they engaged in horticultural practices that profoundly mirrored the community's economic and spiritual principles. These practices confirmed the frontier experience that matter existed beyond the community boundaries that needed to be harnessed, thus leaving behind the idea of the Baroque garden, which according to the Harmonists symbolized the corrupting sophistication in Europe. With this view in mind, the Harmonists also opposed Jean Jacques Rousseau's¹ notion that primitive societies who lack possessions and social structures are freer and happier. Instead the Harmonists preferred a highly controlled living environment that promised wealth, contentment, and salvation.

As the Harmonists interacted with nature, they produced carefully arranged horticultural models that included communal house gardens, crop farming, and labyrinth gardens. The house gardens and crop farming models that resembled horticultural practices in medieval monasteries helped to sustain the community's physical well-being and it created capital. For their spiritual well-being they built elaborate labyrinth gardens that symbolized a proximity to paradise. These labyrinths delivered spaces to nourish the soul.

With regards to their communal arrangements the Harmonist lived - in what I call - a Tri-spherical model, that would allow them to operate in three distinctive spheres, namely in an inner communal socialist sphere; a Millennialist spiritual sphere; and an outer venture capitalist sphere.² The spiritual and inner socialist spheres supported community building activities while the third sphere of venture capitalism showed signs of a modern society.



¹ In: Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* (Chapter II).

² Tri-Spherical Model by S.A. Rode

In 1887, the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies published a book entitled *Community and Society*,¹ in which he distinguished pre-industrial rural communities and modern societies. In my opinion, the Harmonists combined both social models in their spheres. For one, the inner communal socialist and the Millennialist spiritual spheres best mirror Tönnies' concept of community because members would follow traditional rules. They enjoyed feelings of togetherness, mutual bonds of culture, and a universal sense of solidarity. On the other hand, the outer venture capitalist sphere best relates to Tönnies' concept of modern society where individual members focus on monetary endeavors. According to Tönnies, this sphere was marked by exploitation and profit - such can be found today - by the interests of corporations, the state, and voluntary associations. I believe that the Harmonist Tri-spherical horticultural model bridged *community* and *society* characteristics to maximize nourishment for the body, the soul, and to make profits.

With the concept of community vs. society in mind, let's go back in history and take a look at the Harmonists and their development of horticultural spaces.

George Rapp, the founder of the Harmonist community grew up in the small farming town of Iptingen in the dukedom of Wurttemberg, known for its rebellious, entrepreneurial, and pioneering people. He was shaped by the rules of Absolutism and a church hierarchy that left no room for religious sectarianism. Nevertheless, events of the national liberation movement and ideas perpetuated by the Enlightenment and the literature of the Storm and Stress did not pass him by. His early religious utopian visions were meant to replace the national liberation movement in the German states in favor of a divine economy that he would establish in the United States of America. Wurttemberg's history in the 18th century, and for that matter the history of a non-existing agrarian Germany, was most turbulent. The Age of Absolutism that was ushered in from France brought about a reaction against the official dogmatization of the church and a reaction against the excesses of the courts. George Rapp had much reason to despise the status quo in Germany because the political reality looked grim. He opposed the military service, which had cost many lives and which had led to much destruction. He rejected an education system that was based on scientific abstract learning and he debated an absolute government that squandered money and held ties to the hierarchical church. For one, it was the Absolutist garden that symbolized, yes indeed epitomized what Rapp opposed. During his involuntary visits to the local authorities in Stuttgart, Rapp had passed the ducal gardens.²

¹ The German original title is *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie.*

² Ludwigsburg, Germany Palace Baroque Gardens

https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&rlz=1C2SKPL_enUS445US470&q=ludwigsburg+germany+baroque+gardens&biw=1600&bih=799&bav=on.2,or.r_cp.r_qf.&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hl=en&tbm=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=B3fhUZnIIsibygT2ICYAw#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgrc=3qoinS0qQN6QwM%3A%3Bbi11cdPXC9rCUM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Ffarm6.staticflickr.com%252F5261%252F5644970410_69dafb9183_o.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.flickr.com%252Fphotos%252Ffaga_mum%252F5644970410%252F%3B3648%3B2736



Despite the fact that the palace parks were located in the center of town, they were shot off from the general public by walls and ornate iron fences. The public could only get a glimpse of the absolute splendor from a distance afar. The Duke of Württemberg's Baroque gardens were designed for the aristocratic elite who spent their leisure time in the gardens to admire nature's spectacles and the park's illusions. Frederick the Great¹ had once remarked that nature is intended to provide the back-drop to stage oneself. That meant that nature needed to be harnessed into esthetically pleasing horticultural spaces that could awe a particular audience, namely the secularized upper nobility. The aristocracy would gather to admire and to be admired and engage in the garden theatrics. Like a play, the garden was incomplete without its audience. This interplay of nature's performance with a select few was a physical expression of the owner's power and importance.

The Harmonist's, who had witnessed the devastation of farmland through war and thus hunger, despised the use of land for sheer pleasure. Furthermore, they could not identify with horticultural practices that were based on pure mathematics and science such as the palace gardens that were based on pure geometry with paths connecting the surrounding areas into their composition. In particular, the wasteful use of water for fountains and elaborate water games which did not support the production of crops but was meant to create additional pleasures for the senses, symbolized the wasteful nature of an absolute system that kept the lower classes in political, spiritual, and economic bondage. Rapp, however; would not completely break with the Baroque tradition. In later years he built labyrinth gardens and he installed a moveable greenhouse that was heated in winter to grow exotic fruits such as oranges, lemon, and fig trees.²

The landscapes of the American wilderness³ that the Harmonists encountered upon their arrival in the U.S. were diametrically opposed to the images of the Absolutist Baroque pleasure gardens and the meager farming patches that they had left behind in Germany.

¹ Frederick's enthusiasm for everything French has been well documented. His imitation for all French even extended to the German language, which he argued was only useful when talking with horses.

² See *The Harmonie Society* (Chapter on "Agriculture and Manufacturing" and "Gardening") <http://www.usi.edu/hnh/pdf/Expanded%20Text%20on%20the%20Harmonist%20Society.pdf>

³ A drawing by Karl Bodmer (1832-1833) of New Harmony, Indiana. <http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/karl-bodmer/new-harmony-1832>

After their arrival in the United States, Rapp sent two letters from Philadelphia to Germany and a third letter dated October 12, 1803, which was postmarked from Lancaster Pennsylvania. In *Rousseauian* manner he described the lush landscape as follows:

One need not fear any wild animals. Bears are shot and their meat is eaten as something delicate. At the beginning there were quite a few snakes on our land, but they soon were destroyed and have not done us any damage, the swine eat them and clear them away. There are wonderful birds here. You may shoot them to eat, every person may do so, game belongs to every man.... *And he continues...* This is very rich land, everything grows sufficiently. It is miraculous how this new land bears such abundant food. Cattle here is larger than with us, also the horses; women ride like men, it is all the same. Cattle for the greater part of the time runs about freely in the bushes or in the forest. Toward the West they have not found any end as yet, and it is to be suspected that America is connected with Asia.¹



Rapp was by no means naïve. His initial enthusiasm for a *Rousseauian primitivism* soon gave way to what the English philosopher John Hobbes called the *right to nature*,² a recognition that individuals are limited by their own physical power and the competing physical power of others. Rapp very well understood that the survival and prosperity of his community depended on a rational interaction with nature which he would call a divine economy or a divine Harmony.

In order to fulfill his divine plan, Rapp laid out a Tri-spherical horticultural system that included the raising of cottage gardens in the inner communal socialist sphere, the design of beautiful labyrinths that guaranteed an over-arching spiritualism in nature, and the careful cultivation of profitable corps in the outer venture capitalist sphere.

The *inner communal socialist sphere* refers to a hermetically sealed realm of Harmonist life where its members practiced a version of communal socialism while shielding themselves from the influences of the outside world. Even though there were no physical borders present,

¹ Karl Arndt. *Harmony on the Connoquenessing 1803-1815*. Worcester: Harmony Society Press, 1980, 2-3

² In: Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*.

in the inner communal socialist sphere, the Harmonists were utterly self-reliant because every house was surrounded by a garden that provided daily nourishment and plants for medical ailments. Since Rapp grew up as a farmer he was familiar with the cultivation of farmland and he had learned the art of gardening from his frequent visits to the monastery of Maulbronn¹ when he had to justify his separatist, unruly behavior to the authorities in Württemberg.



The careful design of cottage gardens that surrounded each Harmonist house on two sides reflected the long tradition of monastery gardens that provided independence from worldly as well as religious authorities. These gardens were spaciouly arranged in various box-like patches that reflected order and a somewhat formal style. The wooden or stone-edged boxes separated the vegetable, herb, and flower gardens. To quote a traveler:

From the Labyrinth we went to the Botanic Garden, which is well stored with valuable plants and herbs; ...We afterwards went to the doctor's house, where he showed us an elegant collection of plants, all natives of Harmony, which he had carefully arranged agreeably to the Linnaean system.²

In their cottage gardens, the Harmonists grew hearty vegetables that included beets, cabbage, celery, turnips, carrots, cucumbers, eggplants, leeks, shallots, beans, potatoes, and peas. To add to their self-reliance, they had refined the art of preserving vegetables, using pickling techniques, basement storage for the winter, and the drying of herbs and various vegetables and meats. In addition, these gardens included beautiful flowers that would adorn all their homes and factories. Amongst their most favorite flowers were roses, a symbol of

¹ The Monastery of Maulbronn (Kloster Maulbronn) is a medieval Cistercian monastery complex. Since 1993 it is part of the UNESCO World Heritage.

https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&hl=en&site=imghp&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=1600&bih=799&q=klostergarten+maulbronn&oq=klostergarten+maulbronn&gs_l=img.3...1793.6454.0.6726.27.15.2.10.2.0.89.731.15.15.0...0.0.0..1ac.1.17.img.bUllFoH5Kag#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgcr=x5UgYxw4pGVXKM%3A%3BKfb27PBxKtsEsM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fs2.germany.travel%252Fmedia%252Fcontent%252Fspecials_1%252Fspirituelles_reisen%252Fkloester%252Fkloster_und_bibelgaerten%252Fklostergarten_seligenstadt%252Fheader_Text1_Konventgarten-m_656x492.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.germany.travel%252Fen%252Fspecials%252Fspiritual-travel%252Fabbey%252Fabbey.html%3B656%3B305

Connections have also been made between Harmonist gardens and horticultural designs in American antebellum gardens.

² Karl Arndt. *Harmony on the Connoquenessing 1803-1815*. Worcester: Harmony Society Press, 1980, 457.

spirituality,¹ and seasonal flowers such as crocuses, violets, honeysuckle, poppies, phlox, tulips, and carnations.

The second realm that permeated all aspects of the inner-communal life, I call the *Millennialist spiritual sphere*. This sphere was dominated by Father Rapp's prophecies and visions. It also defined the spiritual nature of the community, since their striving for perfection and productivity was seen as preparation for the second coming of Christ. For this purpose, the community created elaborate labyrinth gardens that were based on the labyrinth at the cathedral of Charters in France. They consisted of elegant flower-gardens, with various hedges, rows and a grotto in the center. In his theological treatise *On the Destiny of Man* (1824), Rapp refers to the labyrinth as a misleading, snake path² that would eventually lead to an anticipatory paradise to a grotto in its center. Aaron Williams, a visitor to Economy, described the grotto as follows:

But most surprising of all was the grotto, constructed on the Chinese principle of pleasing by contrast. You approach, by a narrow tangled path, a small rude structure, of the roughest stone, overgrown with wild vines, and with a door apparently of rough oak bark. You enter – and you stand in the midst of a beautiful miniature Grecian temple, with a life-sized piece of emblematic statuary before you, and the dates of the great events in the society's history...³

The third sphere of *outer venture capitalism* was open to only a few select male members of the community and Rapp's granddaughter Gertrude for the purpose of conducting business. Horticultural practices in this sphere were highly competitive and profitable. By 1815, the community would harvest an abundance of corn, wheat, rye, hemp, grapes, flax and poppies, from which they produced sweet-oil, beer, whisky, wine and other luxury items for sale. The success of their grain harvests could be measured by the construction of an enormous grain barn – the largest in North America – that they built in New Harmony, Indiana. One of their most profitable horticultural successes, however, came from silk manufacturing.

Under the leadership of Gertrude Rapp, approximately 100 pounds of a variety of textiles such as satin, brocade, silk, and velvet in various colors were produced annually.⁴ Gertrude was the driving force behind the silk industry and the cultivation of mulberry trees. Moreover, some of the wealth that the Harmonists acquired through the silk production was made with the help of foreign labor, perhaps Chinese immigrant workers. The profits were later invested in oil and railroads.

The Harmonists no doubt pursued a most elaborate horticultural system that provided nourishment for the body and soul while creating enormous riches. I believe that this success

¹ See Arthur Versluis, "Western Esotericism and the Harmony Society" *Esoterica I* (East Lansing: Michigan State Press, 1999).

² Rapp mentions the term *Schlangenweg* in his treatise *On the Destiny of Man*. He describes the labyrinth as a confusing path that leads the traveler astray. In his book *Travels in the United States of America* (1812), John Melish provides us with the first description of a Harmonist labyrinth. The Harmonists under George Rapp's leadership went on to build two more labyrinths, namely in their settlements in New Harmony, Indiana and Old Economy, Pennsylvania.

³ Lilian Laishley, "Harmonist Labyrinths," *Caerdroia* 32 (2001): 8-20.

⁴ See Kristin B. Shutts "The Harmonists and their Silk Experience."

<http://www.smith.edu/hsc/silk/papers/shutts.html>

was due to their strict adherence to a Tri-spherical social and horticulture model that combined community as well as society-building elements.

After-thought

During a visit to New York City last November, I explored two urban horticultural models, namely, the *High Line Public Park*, built on discarded freight line tracks that lead from Manhattan to the Meatpacking district and the *Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm*. The park and farming movement was organized by New York City residents to convert the tracks into a park like promenade. The group was successful in reversing the demolition order by rallying the city of New York to back their plan of building what organizers called a “park in the sky.”¹ Brooklyn Grange on the other hand is a successful commercial organic farm project located on New York City rooftops. Its mission is to “improve access to healthy food, to make urban farming a viable enterprise, and to educate the public about healthy eating.”²

These fascinating experiments began as community organized horticultural grass-roots movement that would battle the institutions, zoning commissions, and urban planning committees – government institutions that were founded to uphold social interests for the utilization and preservation of housing and green spaces. The utopian vision to revitalize public spaces once deemed for industrial and commercial use took shape outside of office buildings, propelled by civil efforts, tenacity and communal spirit. Modern horticultural spaces – I am thinking of Central Park for example - that were established within the domain of political and social power structures – are now in competition with communal projects.

Tönnies’ arguments that communities can only flourish in pre-industrial time because modern society lacks cultural and traditional bonds has been proven wrong based on the success of these project. Just as the Harmonists were able to combine characteristics of modern society with communal values, New Yorkers of different greed, races, and nationalities have succeeded in building community in an urban setting, thereby overcoming the historical limitations of Tönnies’ social theory.



Silvia Rode, PhD (UCLA) is Chair of the *Department of Modern and Classical Languages* and board member of the *Center for Communal Studies* at the University of Southern Indiana. Her research on utopianism includes utopian concepts between WWI and WWII, theories on urbanism, and 19thC communal societies. As Associate Professor of German, Silvia believes that language learning is *the* basic tool needed to grasp global systems, to understand how things are interconnected, and how society can best address these issues.

¹ High Line Park New York <http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/highline>

² Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farms <http://www.brooklyngrangefarm.com/>

Understanding the Role of Spirituality and Subtle Realms in the Transformation towards a Sustainable Society

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/sY8Q1DZ6E_M

Abstract

The transformation towards a sustainable society involves changes in various aspects of human activity. In the national and international political discourse these aspects are traditionally grouped into the social, ecologic and economic pillars. In the research project to be presented here, we focus on a particular aspect which is, in our opinion, under-represented in most current conceptualisations of sustainability, namely, the inclusion of trans-causal, transpersonal, or in some sense transcended levels of reality both into worldview and concrete behavioural choices of individuals and communities. The primary research questions we ask is whether and how spirituality and engagement with *subtle realms* can contribute towards a culture of sustainability and whether and how this potential can be intentionally fostered. As a pilot study we have chosen to investigate an intentional community which places a specific focus on the inclusion of such aspects into their culture, namely, the Findhorn Community. We present results of a field study conducted in 2012, based on qualitative analysis of interviews, document analysis as well as participant (self)-observation. Furthermore we are asking which collective assumptions are necessary for integrating such transcendent perspectives into the transformation process. In particular we explore how this could take place in keeping with a rationality-based and science-based worldview. In this context we pursue the formulation of a theoretical model which abstracts the observed phenomenological pattern and proposes underlying principles, using concepts which are to some extent already established in current scientific discourses, e.g. in system theory, quantum theory and psychology.

Paper: Not available



Nikolaus v. Stillfried, PhD first studied Biological Sciences with a focus on Neuroscience at the Universities of Munich (Germany) and Cambridge (UK). His PhD explored whether principles discovered in quantum physics can be fruitfully applied in other fields, in particular to a better understanding of difficult to ‘prove’ consciousness-related phenomena. Nikolaus has recently been conducting fieldwork at Findhorn, in his quest to inter-relate science, religion and spirituality. He will present his findings at the conference.



Felix Wagner is a PhD student living in Freiburg, Germany. Over the last two years, he has conducted fieldwork in intentional communities in Europe, the USA and Australia – searching for clues about how a ‘culture of sustainability’ is created and how this knowledge and expertise can be transferred to society at large. Felix is part of *Lebensdorf (Village of Life)*, an ecovillage project forming in Germany and co-founder of *Research in Community (RIC)*, an organisation fostering links between intentional communities and academia.

Sustainability and Values: Lessons from religious communities

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Abstract

Our consumption and production patterns lead to an increasing pressure on the environment. These patterns are not just accidental, but are rooted in worldviews, including ideas of what constitutes quality of life and how mankind should relate to nature. The hypothesis of this study is that, to realise long-term sustainability, it should correspond with people's ideas about how to achieve and maintain a high quality of life.

This study focuses on the meso-level of communities and aims to investigate possible ways of realising a high quality of life combined with a sustainable way of living. The author studied the worldview, values and behaviour patterns of four religious communities: Amish, Hutterites, Franciscan and Benedictine communities, in order to study whether and in what way their values and principles may lead to a relatively low impact on the environment and a structure that helps to maintain their quality of life.

These communities appear to base their choices, not so much on environmental values, but on values such as community, stability, moderation, humility or modesty, the rhythm of life, and reflection. In many cases, these values lead to behaviour choices with a relatively low environmental impact, while they also contribute to their preferred quality of life. In order to maintain their quality of life, four principles appear to be important: a consistent and transparent worldview, a strong social capital, reflective change based on values, and good leadership and an appropriate decision-making process.

The study among the four religious communities has brought to light values that might still connect to ideas about quality of life rooted in broader Western society and may stimulate a reflective change towards sustainable development with a lower impact on the environment.

Introduction

Our world is confronted with significant global problems. The consumption of material goods has increased enormously over the last decades and the environmental impact is exceeding the carrying capacity of the earth. In order to maintain a worldwide quality of life, we need a profound structural change in consumption and production patterns and a reflection on the worldview that underlies these patterns and ideas about the aim and the direction of development.

Christianity has had a major influence on the development of Western culture and worldview. Benedictines and other Catholic Orders cultivated many wastelands into farmland. The sociologist Max Weber related the rise of capitalism to Protestantism, because of its work ethic, thrift, and the moral meaning it assigned to economic activities. This impact of

Christian values on Western development and the consequent environmental problems however has been criticised as well. With his article '*The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*' Lynn White Jr. (Science, 1967) ignited a lasting debate on the relation between Christian faith and the ecological problems. White emphasises the impact of Christian thinking on the development of science and technology, which he describes as important causes of our ecologic crisis. His conclusion is, however, not to get rid of religion. He emphasises that ideas of man's relation to nature are deep-rooted and therefore we must rethink our religious worldview. White concludes that "since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not" (White, 1967, 1207).

I have taken up White's suggestion to reconsider Christian worldviews and values in which Western culture is rooted, in order to find starting points for the solution of environmental problems and reconsideration of ideas about development and quality of life. These values need not necessarily be environmental values, but can also be other values, like for example moderation and solidarity. In order to find examples of values and behaviour patterns that do lead to sustainable choices and might bring about a connection with Western society, I searched within the Western Christian tradition for long-existing communities that seem to have a relatively low impact on the environment and studied the Amish, the Hutterites, the Franciscan Order and the Benedictine Order. Using the method of participating observation, I studied the values and behavioural choices of these religious communities regarding nutrition, transport, energy use, and agriculture in their cultural setting, to investigate how worldviews can be translated into values and ideas about a 'good life' leading to a lower impact on the environment.

None of the research groups functions as a blueprint for sustainable living in the ecological sense. In both Amish and Hutterite communities the population growth is conflicting with ecological sustainability in the long term. The monastic orders on the other hand take the vow of chastity, which is not sustainable either. Furthermore, Amish prohibit higher education and therefore might lack knowledge needed for environmental technology. Many monastic communities are situated in old non-insulated buildings involving a high energy use. Nevertheless, the values and ideas about quality of life of these religious communities do bring along important perspectives for gaining sustainability while keeping quality, particularly the way these values contribute to a reflective process of change. An interesting question is how and in what way the broader Western society can implement these values and ideas about quality of life in order to lower its environmental impact and develop more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

Short description of the religious communities

The Amish have their roots in the Anabaptist movement, which was founded after the Radical Reformation in the sixteenth century. Since the 18th century many Amish have moved from Europe to the United States. The Amish have expanded enormously; an estimated 270,000 Amish (adults and children) live in the USA and Canada nowadays (Young Center, 2013). This growth is caused largely by the high birth rate, together with the fact that more than 85%

of Amish children decide to commit themselves to the Amish community by baptism when they are adults.¹ Important Amish values, like respect for tradition, family security, devotion, humility and obedience, are translated into a simple lifestyle, small-scale agriculture, pacifism and a high work ethic. The Amish have a relatively low impact on the environment, for they are not connected to the electricity grid and travel by horse and buggy.

Hutterite history began in 1528 when a Moravian group of Anabaptists started to share their possessions. The Hutterites are named after Jacob Hutter, an important leader in the 16th century. Due to persecution, the Hutterites moved to Transsylvania and to Russia. In the 1870s they moved from Russia to the USA and later also to Canada. Nowadays, more than 460 Hutterite colonies exist, each with an average of about 95 members. Communal life and shared property are basic aspects of their community. All income is shared within the colony, and no wages are paid for labour. The meals are cooked and consumed in the central kitchen. Laundry is done in a central laundry area. In contrast to the Amish, the Hutterites have embraced advanced technology on their large-scale farms. The Hutterite household, on the other hand, is very modest. Hutterite thinking shows a fundamental dualism, in which the spiritual and the material are separated. The Hutterites are amongst the longest existing communal groups.

Franciscans are named after Saint Francis. Although we nowadays often think of Saint Francis as animal-lover, he was primarily the *Poverello*, the saint who chose radical poverty. His reasons were his choice to follow Christ, solidarity with the poor, and belief that wealth is an obstacle for a spiritually rich life. Since the 1970s, the image of the Saint has rapidly become greener. To my opinion, it is not so much the often mentioned partnership with nature that is the main contribution of Franciscan worldview to environmental care, but the deeply rooted values of gratitude, leading to an attitude of respect and humility, and the choice for poverty, leading to moderation.

The Benedictine Order is characterised by '*ora et labora*', a combination of prayer and work. Saint Benedict founded the first great monastery in the Western world in the sixth century and decided that the monks would remain self-sufficient. The monasteries translated the '*labora*' into a sustainable agriculture that supplied them with their needs and maintained its productivity, for which they became known as wise and good managers. Besides the agricultural '*labora*', the Benedictine rule might offer relevant concepts for both sustainability and quality of life in Western society.

Maintaining quality of life

The communities focus on the maintenance of their quality of life. Their values that make up quality of life are not isolated principles, but are rooted in a shared worldview and maintained by a clear social structure. They are therefore not very likely to change. The communities have succeeded well in keeping their values and consequent behaviour. They practise what they believe and provide the necessary framework to maintain their quality of life. Three

¹ This number depends on the level of orthodoxy of the church district.

things in particular appear to be relevant, namely a rootedness in a shared worldview, social capital, and a reflective way of change with a strategic border control.

Shared worldview → The main values are rooted in a shared religious worldview that pervades and transcends almost all aspects of life and are translated into codes of conduct and connected to explicit rules and vows. Many of these codes of conduct have become part of the communal identity. All community members underwent a certain process of socialisation and a 'ritual of commitment', subscribing and committing themselves voluntarily to the communal religious worldview. Whether it is the novice who takes the monastic vows, or the Anabaptist who is baptised, for all it is a combination of confession of faith and commitment to the community. In broader society, worldviews are often made up of fragmentary belief systems, with a certain discrepancy between beliefs and practical choices. The communities take their values seriously and practise what they believe. They accept the consequences of their convictions.

Social capital → In the communities, many values and coherent behavioural choices are embedded in a strong social context and maintained by a system of social care, control and correction, and are therefore likely to remain in the long term. In broader society, people are hesitant to give up their personal freedom and autonomy or bind themselves to long-term commitments in whatever form. The communities however emphasise that subordinating personal desires to the communal welfare is necessary and may bring much satisfaction. A well-functioning social context is important for providing boundary conditions for sustaining values and enabling and preserving preferred behavioural choices. This is a challenge for our present day society, where social capital and clear social contexts are subject to erosion and may need to be redefined.

Reflective change

All communities experience tensions between on the one hand the necessity of maintaining economic viability, leading to ineluctable changes, and on the other hand the wish to keep their main cultural and religious values. The Amish and Trappists in particular have incorporated the principle of weighing values and have largely succeeded in modernising in a reflective way together with strategic cultural border control. New developments and technologies, including their experienced or expected effects on the community, are subject to public reflection and consideration, leading to communal choices in which religious values and social cohesion are safeguarded as much as possible. Depending on the subject, it can take several years before the community decides to accept, reject or modify a development or innovation.

The choice for reflection emanates from ideas regarding progress and growth in relation to quality of life. In general, the communities do not perceive economic growth as a goal in itself. Sufficient income is a precondition for subsistence, but is not associated with progress and growth. Monastics in particular describe progress and growth in spiritual terms, focusing on growth in maturity, well-being and quality of life. Too much economic growth is perceived as a threat to spiritual life and group cohesion. This can be illustrated by the beer production of the Trappist Monastery in Westvleteren. Since their beer was declared the best beer in the

world, demand has increased enormously. Nevertheless, the monks stick to a limited production, for they do not want the beer production to influence their daily divine office. This reflective way of dealing with change, taking values as the starting point in the processes of change and adoption of innovations, has helped the communities to further economic viability, while preserving their core values and quality of life.

Promising values for sustainability

We will now take a look at the most promising communal values for sustainability among the communities, which are successively stability, moderation, humility and reflection. Ecological values as such hardly play a role in the values of the communities and are not mentioned as deliberate motivations for their behavioural choices. This might be explained by the fact that most of their values were established centuries ago, when the concept of ‘sustainability’ in the ecological sense was not an issue yet.

Stability → The Benedictine vow of *stabilitas* offers an interesting basis for sustainability, for it makes people commit themselves to a certain place and community of people. Stability provides the incentive to maintain a certain place for generations to come, implying a sustainable way of dealing with materials, natural and agricultural land, and people in the community and neighbourhood. Stability means to live in the present and to prepare for the future. Present-day monastics emphasise that stability might generate conditions for a more spiritual, inner stability and growth as well. In Western society, many people are hesitant towards commitment, whether this implies a physical commitment or a more spiritual stability. In the Benedictine view, stability encourages inner peace, rest, and religious maturity. It appears to be a basic element for finding quality of life in spiritual and relational aspects of life, rather than in excessive consumerism.

Moderation in material goods → The communities emphasise that moderation affects spiritual life in a positive way. Too much materialism might harm both personal and communal life, for it is believed to distract people from what is really important in life. The Amish emphasise that where abundance and luxury might lead to detrimental *Hochmut* (pride), *Deemut* (humility) and moderation bring real enjoyment, a principle that can be found among the other communities as well. The Amish teach their children that “sharing is caring” and encourage them to enjoy the simple things of life. It is visible in their simple living, plain clothes and houses. Benedictines emphasise that nothing is to be neglected nor wasted, and goods should be treated with care. They translate the instructions to be frugal and moderate into ethical choices on producing, buying and using things. Like Amish and Franciscans, they see themselves as stewards over what is entrusted to them.

Moderation and self-restraint obviously lead to behavioural choices with a low impact on the environment. They generally mean a choice for sober furnishing, plain clothes, sustainable buildings, low-energy and durable, high quality goods. The communities do not follow fashion trends and repair and reuse goods until they are worn-out. In the communally living groups almost all goods are held in common and superiors supply the needs of the individual members.

The value of moderation clashes strongly with the still growing level of consumption in the Western world. I think that this value is very important in the discussion on sustainability, for it offers an alternative vision of consumption, not based on wants but on essential needs. The value of moderation should not just be explained as buying less, but it should get connected to quality. Consumption choices that are no longer mainly driven by immediate gratification, cheap bargains, or short term fashion rules, but deal with quality in the long term, will have a positive effect on the environment in the long term. A community of like-minded people can help to embed and maintain these values and consequent behaviour choices.

Humility → The value of humility emphasises that you, as an individual, are not the centre of the world. Humans are believed to be creatures and not the creators of the universe. Humility stimulates an awareness of one's place in the order, whether it is the established or the natural order, and a sensitivity to other people and natural surroundings. Furthermore, humility emphasises that all life is *humus*, connected to the earth. In this way, the value of humility makes clear that humans are part of creation, and should cultivate the earth as stewards, not as owners. Abbot Klassen OSB (2006) remarked that the value of humility functions as a necessary corrective to the arrogance and acquisitiveness that has led to an increasing alienation from and exploitation of nature. Humility involves that people accept limitations and take up responsibility for the consequences of their acts, both towards other people and the environment.

Reflection → Franciscans and Benedictines keep a strict monastic time schedule, alternating times for work, prayer, and meditation through the day. Monastics explain that this time schedule provides structure and helps them to work more thoroughly, focusing on one thing at a time. The planned interruption of work prevents them from being submersed by it. These succeeding periods of rest, prayer, and meditation function as a re-creation of body and mind, putting the daily labour into a larger perspective. Such a communal time schedule may sound strict and confining, but it is highly appreciated for providing balance and an embedded reflectivity, which might be hard for an individual to maintain. The time schedule, together with the liturgical calendar, form a framework to help the monastic grow in religious life and to consolidate quality of life. Hutterites adhere to a structure with alternating time for work, meals, and a daily church service as well.

In broader Western society, many people experience an increasing pressure of explicit or implicit expectations in work and social relations and the work-life balance has become a pressing issue. The need for a better balance between work and time for recreation and reflection is growing.

Sustainability and quality in Western society

The studied communities make clear choices in accordance with their values and organise their economy and social community life in such a way that they contribute to this quality of life. By making choices and limiting or even excluding other options and possibilities, they are able to attain a profound quality of life that, even if unintentionally, goes along with a positive effect on the environment. In this concluding section, I will highlight three principles we can learn from these communities, in order to enhance sustainability in Western society.

Focus on quality

The four religious communities point out that an excess of money and possessions can hinder people from attaining quality of life. They are convinced that they deepen their quality of life and spirituality by limiting their needs to the essential. This is probably true for our Western society as well.¹ Besides, overconsumption leads to a high impact on the environment as well. An underlying question for reaching a more sustainable consumption pattern is therefore: what do we basically need? Taking into account that many poor in this world need to consume more just to be able to meet basic needs and to overcome poverty, Western countries must focus on quality instead of quantity, to be able to maintain a worldwide quality of life.

An interesting question is whether churches and Christian communities can play a role in redefining such values and ideas about quality of life and in translating it into actual behaviour. Over the last decades, churches in general have not been leading in the environmental debate. Nevertheless, they do have a basic structure and a rich history to connect with, like an organised community, a tradition of reflection on values and beliefs, and substantial social capital. Recently, new movements are rising, such as New Monasticism², whose members rediscover old Christian sources, live in communities that fit into the modern world, and are characterised by a clear translation of their convictions and beliefs into practices of justice and environmental care. Another interesting and inspiring example is the movement of Eco-Congregations, an ecumenical environmental project for churches in several countries, which helps those churches considering environmental issues in the context of their Christian life while encouraging positive action.³ This brings us to the second principle.

Community building

As we have seen, the social context appears to be important for keeping alive their values and maintaining desired behaviour. A second principle for Western society to encourage sustainability is therefore community building, to offer a context and a network for communal reflection and to create opportunities for environmentally sound practices. Communal reflection is important in order to consider values, and to face the effects of behaviour choices on the environment and accept the consequences. Environmental problems are often experienced as a social dilemma, whereby individual choices are perceived as meaningless, as long as others continue their wasteful and polluting behaviour. To solve this environmental social dilemma, community in whatever form is necessary, in order to recognise the problem,

¹ This is also expressed in the Earth Charter, a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society for the 21st century, which states: “We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more”. The Earth Charter is created by a global civil society and endorsed by thousands of organisations and institutions. The full text, as well as further information, can be found at the website www.earthcharter.org.

² The notion and terminology of ‘New Monasticism’ has been developed by Jonathan Wilson in this book *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World* (1998), in which he built on the ideas of the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre who ended his book *After Virtue* (1981) with the call for a new Saint Benedict. The publication of a cover story about the movement in *Christianity Today* by Rob Moll in 2005 and the book *The Irresistible Revolution: living as an ordinary radical* (2006), written by Shane Claiborne, made the movement widely known. See also www.newmonasticism.org.

³ Eco-Congregation is a project of A Rocha. See also <http://ecocongregation.org>.

to generate solutions, to agree on collective actions, to support and encourage community members, and to uphold these actions.

Although communal life is quite rare in our individualistic Western society, new forms of community find their way. Besides real life meetings, virtual communities are becoming increasingly important for stimulating reflection, forming people's identity, sharpening their opinions, as well as encouraging certain behavioural choices. An interesting example is the Northumbria community, which consists of a number of people who live in the community in the UK, as well as an online community in which people participate in a virtual way. The Christian community combines contemplative prayer with "a faith that is active and contagious, lived out in the ordinariness of everyday life".¹ The community practises a Daily Office that, as the community emphasises, constitutes the essential rhythm of life around which other activities can take their proper place. Any member of the Northumbria Network can follow the daily prayers on the Internet. Such networked communities may provide for a growing need for organising reflection, which is hard to maintain as an individual.

Community building is also needed to create opportunities for environmentally sound practices. Nutrition may be a good starting point, because food traditionally brings people together. Involvement of consumers with their nutrition and the producers of their food may encourage the appreciation of products and establish sustainable agriculture. A very practical example of how that can be realised, is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)², in which a community of (often organic) growers and consumers provide mutual support and share the risks and benefits of food production. Another field in which community building may add considerably to a lower environmental impact, is the domain of living. Some newly built areas are set up as complete 'green districts', consisting of sustainably built houses, supplied with locally generated energy, helophyte filters to purify waste water, and communal gardens.³ Likewise, an increase in local cooperatives for wind energy, for example, can be observed, in which persons communally own a wind turbine. High tech and community building are innovatively combined. A challenge will be to find out what kind of communal living fits in with the individualistic Western society.

Reflective change

The principle of reflective change refers to a form of development that contributes to quality of life in the long term. Therefore we need to reflect on salient values and seriously consider whether a certain development or new technology and its expected consequences contribute to these values and quality of life. Even when new technologies are developed with the aim of solving particular ecological problems, reflectiveness remains essential in order to consider the long-term effects on the environment, economy, and the social community, and to prevent irreversible negative consequences in any of these areas. The use of biomass for energy, for

¹ See <http://www.northumbriacommunity.org>. This community is related to the movement of New Monasticism and adheres to values such as community, hospitality and moderation.

² CSA consists of a community of individuals supporting a farm operation. See for further information on the CSA concept: *Lizio, W. and D.A. Lass, (2005)*.

³ In the Netherlands, examples of such green districts can be found in Utrecht (De Kersentuin), Culemborg (EVA-Lanxmeer) and Apeldoorn (Groot Zonnehoeve).

example, has generated an interesting ethical discussion, because sources like corn and rapeseed need much arable land that could also be used for food. Values need to be carefully weighed. This is a core element of reflectiveness.

Reflectiveness may be evident, it is not obvious however. Even the present financial crisis did not generate a society-wide fundamental reflection on the aims and structure of our economic system. Our 24/7-economy leaves little space for reflection and therefore processes of reflection on what constitutes quality of life, both communally and personally, need to be consciously organised. In our 'fast' high performance society, a revaluation of 'slow' is needed, in order to put our economy in the right perspective, to take time for a serious weighing of values, and to opt for quality of life in the long term. This will very likely lead to a more grounded sustainability as well.



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PART SIX

**REGIONALLY SPECIFIC
COMMUNAL INITIATIVES**

The Crisis and the Emergence of Communal Experiments in Greece

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Abstract

The post-Fordist era in the West signals painful and deep structural and systemic changes. It is an age of extreme privatisation, expulsion and precariousness, as well as ever-widening inequalities and deprivation of the middle class – what Marxists refer to as the creative destruction stage of late capitalism. Clearly, the Greek crisis is only a speck, albeit a pivotal one, within the current crisis that Europe and the world experiences at this critical moment in history and Athens, poorly prepared for this, has been at the epicentre of a maelstrom. Because of this particular condition, Greece is of critical significance as a subject of further study, both for itself and others, regarding social changes and trends that develop.

Out of necessity at first, we observe a shift in sectors of the private sphere of society into collective forms which embody solidarity. It is at a time such as this that many re-address an entire value system and their notion of the commons. The social, political and ecological background of some of these individuals and groups thus enables them to take more radical and innovative steps. For many, resilience becomes synonymous with survival, but several collectives choose to go beyond that by adopting active, sometimes genuinely proactive ways of dealing with the situation. Through contact with people and groups, a different story unravels from the one told by the official media – which indicates the emergence of a communitarian movement in the form of various initiatives, collectives and ecocommunities, a repopulation of the countryside.

This paper explores the effects of the crisis on society in Greece, and more specifically the role it played in encouraging an emergence of *communal ethos* and a variety of communal experiments.

The nature of the crisis and its ramifications

The current crisis is multi-faceted, severe and unprecedented, prompting uncontrollable chain reactions globally. On its way, it wreaks havoc; it intensifies inequalities and destroys the social fabric and the environment. Greece happens to be at the epicenter of this maelstrom and the reasons for this are quite complex and not the topic of this paper. But what types of resistance may be observed or could be anticipated?

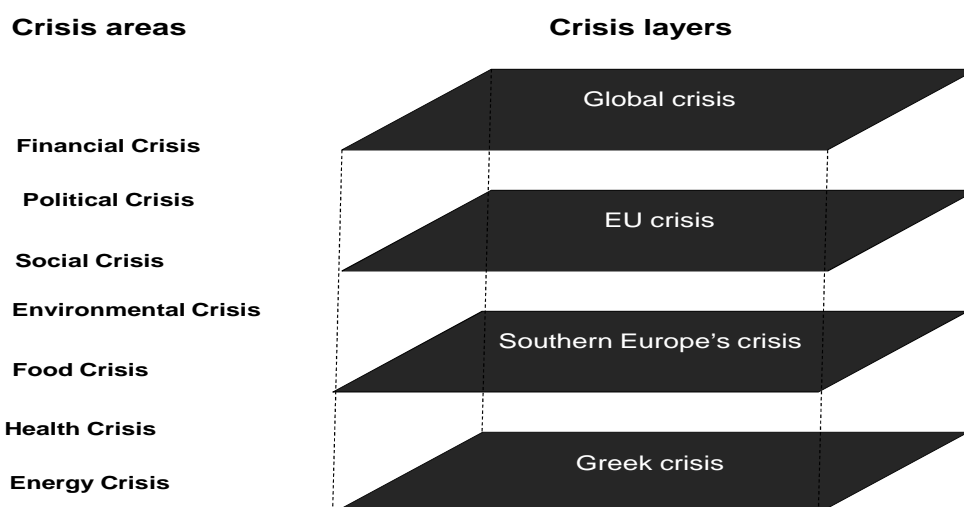


Fig 1. Schematic representation of major crises categories and their geographical layers expressing their impact on the Greek crisis.

Crisis repercussions and the new communal ethos

Crisis as experienced in Greece is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. It affects various sectors and is composed of distinct financial, political, social and environmental facets. It represents the “ripple effects” of the global crisis while it reflects the structural and systemic European Union crisis which has exacerbated the long standing North-South divide. On the other hand, a component of this crisis is decidedly Greek and represents the endemic and long-standing state dysfunctions. A significant component of the Greek crisis represents the deep distrust between state and citizens, corruption, *statism* and the breeding of dependence from the state for jobs. 2009 is a milestone in the Athenian crisis. It is marked by the death incident of a youth shot by the police and by the subsequent unprecedented insurrections. These served as the spark that kindled the fire and a chain reaction of events, where the multitude, often described as demonic (Negri 2000), made its presence visible then demonstrating a destructive side of its temperament. It also seems to polarize society towards the extremes of hyper-conservative, nationalistic, far-right, neo-Nazi tendencies and widespread anarchist groups, with a sound theoretical background but confrontational and sometimes violent tactics. On the other hand, to a rapid onslaught of austerity measures that made unemployment, poverty, substance abuse and suicides skyrocket, an equally rapid social response with an outburst of initiatives may soon be observed. Quite an impressive development in and by itself for modern Greek society. A strand of events taking place in parallel displayed clear signs towards self-organization and towards adopting a new paradigm shift, which embraces collectivity vs individuality, cooperation vs antagonism, active involvement vs passivity. This alternative universe is still very young, sometimes clumsy and lacking in experience and consistency. Each one of these various initiatives focuses on different regions or aspects of social and material production. These communal experiments and initiatives may be seen not as isolated and marginal cases of exception, but as potentially paradigms to a viable future.

Pro-active and retro-active case studies in Athens and Greece

All of the initiatives being recorded compose a map of alternative social structures. I propose a critical distinction between initiatives, distinguished –somewhat artificially, still in a meaningful context as proactive and retro-active, indicative in trying to assess the nature and the impact of various initiatives and collectives being discussed. This categorical distinction seems to help in understanding their motivations and characteristics. A different mindset informs a retroactive from a proactive initiative. Retroactive ones are triggered by an action as a reaction. They tend to have the form of a protest or insurrection. A proactive initiative tends to “attack” a problem in its own terms, more often than not using a different strategy than direct heads-on dialog with the crisis region and its constituents. This distinction has several ramifications in the effectiveness, the impact and the identity of the movement itself. Several pros and cons seem to be an aspect of the proactive and retroactive profile. An emergence of movements may be traced as already discussed as a response to a milestone event, or as a response to various austerity measures, fair or unfair. Arguably if seen this way, all initiatives are retro-active in the sense that they appear to respond to threats, if not imminent ones to anticipated ones. Still, a proactive initiative seems to only indirectly be linked to such an event. Its motivations are more holistic and informed by a visionary and all-encompassing, theoretically backed desire for change. The case studies being discussed here are certainly not the only ones or the ones worthy citing but they are selected as indicative for the distinction being made between the proactive and the retroactive initiatives and because they substantiate the case made concerning the qualities that tend to characterize either category as evidenced by the table below.

	PRO-ACTIVE INITIATIVES		RETRO-ACTIVE INITIATIVES
Pros	They build resilience	Pros	They serve an educational purpose
	More likely to survive		They build community
	More consistent		An awakening of social processes that wouldn't occur otherwise
	Tend to be more homogeneous		
	They build know-how		They build know-how
	Grassroots initiatives		Grassroots initiatives
Cons	Sometimes lacking in spontaneity	Cons	Prone to be vulnerable
	Danger of becoming institutionalized or appropriated by the system		More chances to disappear just as easily as they appeared
			They may unite or polarize people
			They tend to be heterogeneous

Fig 2. Table showing characteristics of pro-active and retro-active initiatives

Communal ethos in Greece

The meaning and history of communal experiences in Greece needs a short introduction in order to place it in context and provide an understanding of the case studies discussed. More than half a century’s worth of history and developments have contributed in fostering a private life, what in ancient Greece was synonymous to the idiot. *Ἰδιότης* (idiotis=private person) has

come to be void of any such connotations and to indicate a neutral state.¹ Rapid urbanization processes since the late '50s have occurred largely under the auspices of private enterprise and under circumstances which have ostracized anything common and communal in Athens and many other big cities. In two generations alone, an entire set of cultural traits was lost and is now being rediscovered by a younger generation, keen in critically appreciating the positive cultural aspects of their background.

Urban Retroactive case studies of 'communal' ethos and four Urban Pro-active case studies of communal ethos in Athens

Currently, societies themselves are experiencing major transformations in ways unknown before. With current and projected urbanization rates, the future of the world will inevitably be played out in cities. The people as a hegemonic entity has given way to smithereens of subjectivities and collectivities, all of which compose the emerging entity of a contemporary phenomenon belonging to the globalization era. This is best described theoretically with the concept of the passage from the 'people' to the *Multitude*. (Negri and Hardt 2008). In that respect, urban struggles such as those we witness these days in Istanbul, in the cities of Brazil and in Athens are very much of interest to this discussion. The emergence of new types of communities and of contemporary communal experiments is an offspring of these processes. (Bookchin 1990).

Theorists have proposed two distinct major types of response to present and future crises which would be described either as an *Exodus* or a *Transition* (Negri and Hardt 2011, Hopkins 2008). An *Exodus* might imply a complete break with the system. This could take the form of an insurrection and other mostly urban, often violent outbursts, the cities becoming the battlegrounds of current anti-capitalist and anti-globalization movements (Harvey 2012). An exodus may also manifest itself with literal departures in the forms of migration and/or recolonization of the countryside. In its extreme form, an exodus is embodied in a complete rejection and denial of any and all dependencies to the system in terms of resources, energy, communications, cultures, and so on. A *Transition* approach takes the form of a more gradual change and advocates infiltration and the eventual transformation of the establishment and of mainstream culture. When the Greeks got challenged by the Spanish *Indignados* movement nobody could foresee that this would trigger the equivalent of Puerta Del Sol square movement in Madrid, with the massive turnout of protestors in Syntagma Square. Despite the fact that the multitude's *spontaneity* prevailed and the crowd was composed by heterogeneous collectivities and by distinctly different approaches, the noteworthy component was the function of the lower part of the square as the host for ongoing open assemblies and debates with invited speakers, all informed by a clear horizontal, non-hierarchical, democratic and communal ethos. (Leontidou 2012). They were run in an extraordinarily well organized manner. Customary topics were the debt politics, direct democracy, the political system and the need for constitutional reform. These issues mobilized and united citizens in an

¹ Nevertheless Greece had a strong communal agrarian past, according to communal studies historian Konstantine Karavidas, which helped and was necessary for survival during the many centuries of Ottoman rule.

unprecedented manner in recent Greek history. Inevitably the system took this as a serious threat and it swiftly used every possible means in urban warfare tactics to disperse it.

Two years went by in confusion, silence and despair until recently, when the incident of the closing of the Greek Public Broadcasting System (the equivalent of BBC) with the excuse of corrupt practices sent the people once again out into the streets.

The Navarinou Park

This is a case of communal gardening and of urban farming which was indirectly triggered by the 2008 insurrections, as well as by a long-standing discontent with the poor quality of life in the center of Athens, due to the lack of open spaces and green and to high pollution levels. Over the internet, through mobile sms communication and through social media, a large number of people got mobilized over one weekend (3, 4 March 2009) to collectively transform a disused parking lot, which was under threat of development, into an open, experimental, and collectively administered green area in downtown Athens. Processes that were followed for the design and production of this space were open, democratic and direct. A huge number of people showed up with donations of plants, tools, materials and offer of work, contacts and services to facilitate the job of getting rid of the asphalt, digging the ground, enriching the soil and planting. A remarkable level of horizontal self-organization and coordination was displayed in distribution of tasks, participatory design, administration and execution. Open weekly assemblies remain the governing body of this space ever since. Many difficulties (with the police, neighbors, drug addicts and other issues) have ensued, but all have been weathered well to this day. In the meantime, nature has taken its course and the park has by now developed a life of its own, plants and trees thrive attracting wildlife, children and parents, passerby, artists and organized groups that may wish to use the versatile layout for an open air screening, a jam session or a debate.

The Embros Theater

A public theater deserted for several years, known for its experimental and avant-gard character was opened again by an artist collective, known as *Kinivi Mavili* since November 2011. The self-organized autonomous theater has remained open ever since, operated by a wider platform of collectivities and individuals having an open assembly which convenes weekly as its governing body. The main ideological precepts of this action were that a public theater should be understood as a *common good*, kept separate from the state's whims and inabilities to maintain and upkeep it. This has served ever since as an opportunity to develop a discourse on artistic production, the commons, community and democracy. It also has served as an informal "training space" for decision making and conflict resolution. Many innovative artistic productions, performances and events have taken place, which have attracted large numbers of the public, academics, immigrants, both well known and unknown artists and others. There have been several attempts so far to undermine this form of collective organizing. On the other hand this case draws support from several other similar cases of

artistic and community self-organization around empty, defunct theaters and other spaces all over Europe.¹



Fig 3a. 1st day of works at the Navarinou Park (3/3/2009)



Fig 3b. Open assembly at the Embros Theater (11/2011)

The Cooperative “Kafeneio” at Plato’s Academy

This is a highly successful initiative by a group of young people who decided in 2009 to create an ‘Open Space’ literally and metaphorically where there was none, both in this lower middle class neighborhood and in the greater central Athens area. They called it ‘Synergatiko Kafeneio’, which stands for collaborative café and functions as a non-profit entity. Several spinoffs are underway ever since, such as a *Transition Initiative*², various local community actions, revivals of customs long forgotten in the city and numerous social gatherings of a distinct and admirable communal nature, gradually building community.

The initiative takes advantage of the adjacent Plato’s Academy public park, a rather neglected, and largely unknown and underused until recently open space. Close to the center of Athens and of immense archaeological and cultural significance, it became the locus of activities where community events began spilling over, summoned by the *Kafeneio* collective itself and other affiliated groups and individuals. An extraordinary variety, vitality and richness is evident from the many cultural and communal activities which have had significant impact in the greater population.

The Agrosholi Communal Gardening experiment

This is a young group which has maintained a generally low profile until now, but has ambitious goals and a broader vision for the future. It remains largely unknown to the general public, but is better known to the community it forms a part of in Vrilissia, a suburb of Athens.³ The history of the collective goes back several years and is inextricably linked to another group called Vrilissos, engaging in outdoor activities such as hiking, mountaineering,

¹ ie The Teatro Vale in Rome and the Macao collective in Milan are two outstanding examples from a long list of similar experiments in several countries hailing back to the ‘60s.

² The first Transition Initiative in Athens, and in contact with the larger global Transition Initiatives network.

³ The name of the group is a playful pun of words and meanings in the Greek language, with the word ‘Argosholoi’ meaning idle, a loafer and it is a composite word using ‘Αγρός / Agros which is farmland and Σχόλη/ Sholi which means school, so it may also be understood as the farming school group.

rock climbing, skiing, etc which has always displayed a strand of volunteerism and community participation and has served as the common ground and the test-bed for developing a set of common values currently shared by its members.

The determining factor behind the group's success has been the vision and charismatic personality of its founder, a largely coherent group of individuals, consistency and a sustained program of events and activities bringing community together and building collaborative processes.



Fig 4. A heirloom seed conservation project and use of medicinal herbs demonstration at Plato's Academy, outside the Kafeneio. A collective urban farming routine at Vrillissia, an Athens suburb, by the Agrosholoi collective.

Two Rural Pro-active case studies of communal ethos in Greece

Telaithrion

The Telaithrion project which began by a group of a handful of young adults going by the name *Free and Real*, has been displaying an extraordinary vitality, clarity of vision, efficiency and determination. Its members share a common vision and resources. The Telaithrion project and the Free and Real collective which was formed in 2008 represent a truly grassroots and authentic communal experiment in character. A wide array of workshops and events serves as a conduit for widening the pool of interested people, who are simultaneously educated and they support the gradual development of the Telaithrion vision. Free and Real bypasses the present dysfunctional reality as its tactics and builds an alternative one instead, depending solely on their own capabilities and their supporters who share their vision. Their activities are both local and trans-local, by participating and sharing knowledge at various festivals all over Greece and by being media savvy, while at the same time in an open dialog and contact with other individuals and similar initiatives in the world elsewhere.

Elpidohori

Extraordinary vitality, clarity of vision, efficiency and determination have been distinct characteristics of the Elpidohori experiment which was formed in 2009. The initiative begun as a relatively simple idea to provide alternative education and holidays for children and has gradually developed into a full-fledged center of experimental and alternative practices and

approaches to communal living aiming to become an ecocommunity for interested individuals, with a small footprint in mind, being implemented with integrity and consistency. Providing education and opportunity for a retreat remains the fundamental intention. Despite its stated goals and record having been identified by a communal ethos and lifestyle, the current form of governance and management at Elpidohori remains attached to one person's will, the power and vision of its founder, a woman of extraordinary capabilities, intentions and intuition. It hasn't become a full-time residence for any number of people, but rather, functions as a gradual build up of momentum, dependent on open calls for a variety of educational events.



Fig 5. A recently completed large geodesic dome to serve as a common space for various functions at Telaithrion and a strawbale workshop to produce a guesthouse at Elpidohori.

Both Telaithrion and Elpidohori maintain a presence on the internet and their information and news are being updated regularly. ¹

Conclusions

A distinct and clear “communal ethos” has emerged in Greece, triggered by the current and ongoing crisis, primarily the current severe financial crisis, which has activated significant segments of the population. They are both pro-active initiatives displaying remarkable resilience and retro-active to state, and institutional (IMF, EU and Troika) assaults affecting people's livelihood.

A case is being made, distinguishing initiatives between pro-active and retro-active ones, based on the distinct differences found in these two categories:

The Syntagma Square movement (2011) and the recent ERT movement (2013) are both retroactive cases of insurrections which displayed the emergence of communal practices and ideals, not only through the techniques being used in the people's assemblies, but also in the various other practices that have taken place in the everyday life, primarily of the Syntagma Square “city-within-a city” makeshift ephemeral community. This experience gave birth to various collectivities which are active and thriving ever since.

¹ <http://www.elpidohori.gr/en> and <http://www.freeandreal.org/>

In terms of substantiating the proactive category of initiatives, even though it may be possible to cite several examples, the four presented seem to be emblematic in their own way, in circumscribing the emergence of communal approach and in demarcating a significant and rather new experimental shift in Athenian society.

A loose network has began forming over the past year, with an Alternative Economy Festival (10/2012) that brought together representatives from various such initiatives, which is a critical step to their survival and efficiency in disseminating information and know-how and in reaching larger numbers of people. Recently, there have been several more exchanges with initiatives from other European countries, hit by the financial crisis. The first “Alter Summit” European Conference took place in Athens. It is becoming evident that the future of such initiatives and the outcome of their goals largely depend upon collaboration, coordination, exchange of information and interdependence. The need for a framework and an organizational umbrella of sorts, permitting these to happen in a horizontal way has been acknowledged by most participants in such initiatives, where just a year ago such a perspective had not crossed many people’s minds. Signs of maturity begin to appear as networking efforts exist and they become denser and denser.

Note: All images and tables are the author’s except the Telaithrion dome, which has been taken from the Free and Real site.

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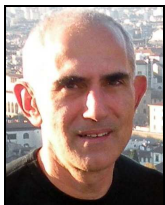
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GEN Africa and the Congo

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/xBVDGcIvUTM>

Abstract

The presentation focused on the relevance of the Global Ecovillage Network in Africa and its impact in face of the recent colonial history as related by Lua Bashala-Kekana (Vice President of GEN Africa and GEN-RDCongo) born into a middle class family in the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose great grandparents lived in human scale settlements within the forests of the Congo and whose parents adopted the western model of living pre and post-colonial rule.

South Africa born President of GEN International Kosha Anja Joubert also recounted her personal life experience living under Apartheid in South Africa and how this led to her journey in search of community, inspiring her work for the Global Ecovillage Network.

In spite of the systematic imperialism that Africa has faced, over the last 5 centuries community living is still commonly experience amongst people, albeit much of the cultural, spiritual, economic, ecological and social fabric has been torn apart. There is a strong recognition of the values that GEN represents in African traditional communities and GEN is embraced as a vehicle and platform to support sustainable community led development.

There are national networks emerging in many African countries connecting to GEN Africa. GEN Senegal which has been active for many years led to influencing policy in Senegal resulting in the Government institutionalising a Ministry of Ecovillages, the first Country in the world to do such, with a mandate of supporting the transition of 14,000 traditional villages into ecovillages. www.gen-africa.org



Lua Bashala-Kekana was educated in the US and Canada then studied Law at the University of Witswatersrand in South Africa. She and her family lived at Khula Dhamma Ecovillage in Eastern Cape South Africa and developed the Mama Na Bana Permaculture and Ecovillage Learning Centre in the Congo (a project that won the GEN Excellence Award in 2011). They now live part time between South Africa and the Congo as they are actively engaged in community based projects in both countries. In 2009 Lua took the EDE course and since has been active in GEN Africa and instrumental in organizing EDE's in Africa.



Kosha Joubert has been living in intentional communities for 20 years. She is President of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Executive Secretary of GEN-Europe. Kosha co-authored the Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) curriculum and co-edited *Beyond You and Me - Inspirations and Wisdom for Building Community* (2007). She has just published a book in German on the Power of Collective Wisdom and looks forward to translating it into English. Today, she organises EDE courses and works internationally as a facilitator and consultant.

Resident Participation in the Formation of Intentional Community: A case study of the Baek-hwa community, South Korea

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/K-JFsvKr1_Y

Abstract

Interest in, and academic research of, resident participation in the formation of planned residential communities has grown in South Korea since the mid-2000s. These are groups of prospective residents who meet before and during the design and construction of their housing project with the intention of steering the project. Importantly, another aim is to build social capital in anticipation of them becoming a socially cohesive, intentional community following move-in.

The process of collective decision making is generally unfamiliar to South Koreans and, due to this lack of experience, a certain amount of trial and error is experienced in overcoming the challenges. In Korea, conventional housing development, usually of apartment buildings, is supplier-driven. In this study, a project which is different from the norm was analysed to help people who may wish to establish such 'intentional' communities in the future. The recently completed Baek-hwa (white flower) village was chosen as a case study in order to investigate aspects of development process such as resident participation, its progress, and move-in motivation. Residents' common activities and levels of satisfaction were also studied.

Baek-hwa comprises detached housing and a common house. Located near a provincial town, it was completed in 2012. Residents are of different ages and household types. The study found that the main motivation for moving in was to establish a better community life with neighbours and to be close to nature, away from polluted cities. The development process was resident-led, and based on cooperation and participation. A variety of shared activities such as regular residents' meetings, traditional Korean music lessons and sports activities were incorporated into the process to help build social capital. Levels of satisfaction with these activities were found to be especially high.

Introduction

Background and Necessity of the Research

Since the Korean War (1950 – 1953), Korea has achieved rapid economic development in a very short period and solved the housing shortage problem through mass production and vendor managed methods. These methods can swiftly settle the physical and quantitative problems of housing. However, the former traditional housing culture in which we lived sociably in community is gradually disappearing. Furthermore, traditional housing rather

shows up the limitations of highly dense housing, standardized housing culture and an individualistic and privatised housing environment.

Since the quantitative shortage of housing was resolved in 2002 (when the housing supply ratio reached 100.60%), Korean housing related culture has faced a time of change. The most remarkable change is the increasing interest in intentional community. Also, in housing related businesses, there is greater focus on cooperative housing and consumer led methods. Moreover, the demands of those who want more community, as opposed to individualism – to share things with neighbours and to help each other – are being reflected.

But, the processes that solve various problems and are needed to build houses and villages through an agreed common consensus still seem unfamiliar to common people. In addition, due to a lack of accumulated experience, there are difficulties to getting over the many challenges. Therefore, in order to ground and develop intentional communities in Korea at this time, real cases of intentional community development need to be investigated and analyzed to accumulate and utilize information.

Aim of the Research

The aim of this study is to guide the process of residents' participation in developing a community in the future by analyzing instances of Korean intentional communities. In particular, this study is going to examine the characteristics in the process of developing a village and dwellings through a residents' participatory process and voluntary autonomy that is very different from the conventional supply of apartment buildings. Furthermore, this study is going to provide information to those who are willing to establish intentional communities in the future so that they can avoid unnecessary trial and error.

In this context, the recently built Baek-hwa village was selected for the concrete exploration of its characteristics and status, development process, residents' participation and method, motivation to move in, residents' common activities and other factors. Baek-hwa village is considered a particularly appropriate case study for research into the process of residents' participation because it is a village in which the residents enjoyed voluntary participation through the whole procurement processes from land purchase, village plan, and design to construction.

Research Method

Selection of Objective and Research Method

Baek-hwa village was chosen to investigate a residents' participatory process in an intentional community. The Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MIFAFF) has a project that supports infrastructure for intentional community. Baek-hwa village, which is a resident-led village as well as an appropriate model of intentional community, got economic support and cooperated with a local government. Through residents' participatory design, the common facilities were planned and the residents participated in the whole process of developing the village. Consequently, Baek-hwa village is seen as one of the villages that represents the cohousing concept in Korea.

The research methods included data gathering through a literature review, interviews and field-surveys. The literature review included data from Mindlere Cohousing, a coordinator for the developing village, the Baek-hwa village homepage and the village café and newsletter. In addition, a field survey of the village and interviews with 2~3 residents were performed.

Contents of the Research

The contents of the research are shown in Table 1, including features and characteristics, development process of the village, residents' participation process and method, resident autonomy management and common activities.

Item	Features and Characteristics	Development Process	Residents' Participation Process & Method	Resident Autonomy Management & Common Activities
Content	General character, Physical Character	Village Establishment Process Village Developing Process	Resident Autonomy Committee Toad School (Dukeobi School) Newsletter Resident Participating Workshop	Autonomous Rules Resident Autonomy Committee Resident Common Activities

Table 1: Contents of the Research

Result and Discussion

Characteristics of the Baek-hwa Village and its Status.

Baek-hwa village is located in Youngdong-gun, Chungbuk Province, a two-hour drive from Seoul or half an hour drive from Daejeon. To establish the Baek-hwa village, it was supported economically by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as the ‘Rural Village Support Project’. The village was formed by 40 families who decided to return to farming and to return to rural village life. Residents constructed common facilities on their own and the government put in the infrastructure. It took them 4 years to develop the village, from 2008 to 2012. Now, one year and four months have passed since they moved in. Most of the residents are aged in their 30s and 40s. They want to provide natural environment for their children. The rest are in their 50s and 60s. They wish who return to farming and return to rural village life. Therefore, this village consists of a social mix through infants to seniors.

The village has a homepage and internet café. The café is particularly active. (Homepage: www.beakhwa.co.kr. On-line café: <http://cafe.naver.com/beakhwa>) (Figures. 1~3).



Figure 1: Location



Figure 2: Site Plan



Figure 3: Overview of the Village

About the physical features of the Baek-hwa village: the total area is 103,537 square meters, and residential sector occupies 31,117 square meters. The remaining 72,420 square meters are forest. The dwelling construction is wood-based with red clay and straw-bale. Dwelling plan types are shown in Table 2. As you see, there are several different types that reflect diverse individual preferences for bedroom and bathroom layout. The main facility for common use in the village is a center for education and culture; it is a two-storied building with a size of 680 square meters. Additionally, there is a common forest and yard, stadium, playground, and so on.

Type	One-Storeid	Duplex type
35 Pyung* type	35A type : 5 Household	35B Type : 7 Household
31 Pyung type	31A type : 4 Household	31B type : 6 Household
25 Pyung type	25A Type : 4 Household	25B Type : 2 Household
Smaller type	19A type : 6 Household	19A type : 6 Household

* A Pyung is 3.3 square meters

Table 2: Dwelling Plan Types

Establishment Process of the Baek-hwa Village.

The aims of the Baek-hwa village are to provide work for adults, nature for children in an eco-village, an educational village and an affordable village. The development process is shown in Table 3. In 2008, suitable land was searched for and indentified. After the rural village supportive project was confirmed in 2009, residents prepared to form a village by starting with the ‘Toad School’ in 2010 (see below). In that summer, they discussed and designed together the center for education and culture as a core common facility through the Toad school program. In 2011, the common facilities and dwellings were constructed, and in February 2012, the residents started moving into the new village with new hope.

Sep. 2007. Looking into suitable land (three local places) Jun. 2008. Securing the land (contracted). Dec. 2008. Basic planning of “Advanced Rural Village Project” by Youngdong municipality Feb. 2009. Application for “Advanced Rural Village Project”. Jun. 2009. Application for budget Oct. 2009. Determine a renewal district application Dec. 2009. Complement of budget and land selection Mar. 2010. Determine a renewal district, working plan design, implement plan design. May. 2010. Completion of detail plan design and action plan Jun. 2010. The authorization for project implementation Dec. 2010. Breaking ground for making base Jan. 2011. Contract with a construction firm and the start of building construction. Sep. 2011. Established approval of Village Maintenance Union. Feb. 2012. Moving-in and running the village. Aug. 2012. Completion of moving-in. Mar. 2013. Brake-up Village Maintenance Union

Table 3: Development Process of Baek-hwa Village

Resident Participating Process and Method during Forming Village

Resident-initiated activity was intense during the participatory development process. It was conducted through four strategies.

The first process was the ‘Toad School’. Toad School (called, Dukeobi School in Korean) is where all the residents had a meeting once a month or twice a month during the development process (Figure 4). These meetings took an important role because they talked and discussed the progress of the village development and made decisions during the meetings. From February 2010, when the village started being formed, to February 2012, when people started moving into the village, 16 meetings were conducted. Of those, 9 seminars were held to provide information of diverse matters in community life. The topics engaged with included: sustainable village, energy saving village, social issues, concept of co-housing, playground for culture and art, alternative school, agricultural association, examples of successful returning to farming, community living, and so forth.

The second process was the organization of a residents’ association (Figure 5). They were the village maintenance team and the village development committee, which guided the overall progress of the village development. These teams had the task of decision making about urgent and important matters during the development process. They were representative – different from the Toad school that was composed of all of the residents. Basically, meetings took place once a month, but more often if necessary.



Figure 4: Toad School



Figure 5: Residents Association



Figure 6: Newsletters



Figure 7: Design Workshop

The third strategy was the publishing of a newsletter in which the progress of the development as well as residents’ stories were included (Figure 6). From November 2008 to February 2012, various stories about the Baek-hwa village, people and opinions were published in the newsletter.

And the last strategy was the participatory design workshop (Figure 7). Two seminars took place to offer the residents an introduction to the design workshop before practicing it. The first workshop took place in July 2010; 38 residents participated in designing the center for education and culture as a common space in the village. This was followed by the second one in August 2010 in which 23 residents participated (Table 4). In this workshop, they thought about how they wanted to use the common space in the village. And they designed space scale and the layout together based on those ideas. In order to compose common space appropriately, all of 5 groups presented their ideas one by one.

Item	Contents
Introduction Phase (45 min.)	Workshop Guide and Introduction of Workshop Leader Ice Break –Self-introduction Organizing Groups (5 Groups Composed of 7-8 Persons per Group)
Development Phase (120 min.)	Brainstorming and Making Mind-Mapping (Desired Common Activities and Needs for Space Composition) Setup for Each Space Scale Space Distribution and Layout Setting up Image of Common Space
Summary Phase (45 min.)	Seminar Game -Presentation and Q&A Traffic Light Game – Gathering Each Group’s Idea

Table 4: Resident Participating Design – 1st Workshop

Items	Contents
Introduction Phase (45 min.)	Workshop Guide and Introduction of Workshop Leader Introduction of Time to Plan Residents’ Common Facility Organizing Groups (4 Groups Composed of 5-6 Persons per Group)
Development Phase (120 min.)	Naming of Each Common Spaces Making Program of Residents Common Activities Making Regulations Role Play
Summary Phase (45 min.)	Seminar Game -Presentation and Q&A Sticker Game -Gathering Each Group’s Idea

Table 5: Resident Participating Design – 2nd Workshop

Based on the decisions from the first workshop, the architect designed the common facility. And then, the residents held the second workshop with the draft design drawing. The second workshop involved checking the space by virtually planning the space use based on that design drawing. The workshop proceeded in four groups. They tried to find names for each space, to think about the shared activity programs and to discuss potential problems when they use the spaces in real-life (Table 5). And then, they also tried to make rules for the common

spaces and did a role-playing game. Therefore, this workshop helped them understand the designed common facilities and share their feedback for correction and supplementation.

It is still rather rare to establish intentional communities by active participation by residents themselves in Korea, due to a complicated process of forming as well as lack of professionals. Therefore, Baek-hwa village was also supported during the establishment process by the Mindlere Cohousing Company that is one of professional architectural firms with experience in forming intentional community.

The common facility contains a library, children’s room, office, woodwork room, sound space (multi-purpose space), restroom, and machinery room on the 1st floor. On the 2nd floor, there are cafeteria, café, hall, guest room, and lecture room (Figure 8). It has very good accessibility from the entrance of the village because it can be accessed from the front, back, and side. As this picture shows, this building was eco-friendly, constructed by using wood and straw-bale (Figure. 9).



Figure 8: Common Space Plan -1st floor (left) & 2nd floor (right)



Figure 9: Views of Common Facility

Resident Autonomy Management & Common Activity

On finishing forming and moving into the Baek-hwa village, the autonomous management and common activities are ongoing, organised by residents themselves. They have created a ‘Village Autonomy Rule’ and ‘Residents’ Association’, a village organization. Various items are included in the Village Autonomy Rule, such as general rules, rights and duties of inhabitants, village organization, board members and finance. The organization of the Residents’ Association is shown in Table 6.

Committee	Members
Village Managing Committee	Chairperson, Manager, Chairperson of Women’s Society, Steering Committee: 8 Persons, Secretary General (Once Per Month) - 2/3 Attendance, 2/3 Approval
Village General Meeting	General Meeting (Quarterly-Based) Meeting (Monthly-Based)
Women’s Society	Village Women Residents
Advisory Committee	Inhabitants over 60s, Top Consultation Organization, Exercising the veto
Project Managing Committee	Committee for Village Culture Creation, Committee for Village Development, Committee for Village Defect Repair

Table 6: Residents’ Association

Table 7 shows the list of the common activities after move-in. These activities have been actively processed in the community.

- Cleaning of Village and Meeting Hall (Monthly)
- Communal Meal- Monthly (At the Inhabitants Meeting)
- Making Village Playground, Installing Exercise Utilities, Planting Street Trees
- Car Pool (Traffic Coupon), Service Sticker
- Village Restaurant, Back-Hwa Cafeteria – Rent to a Member of Residents
- Guest Room, Usage and Rent of Education and Cultural Center
- Marketplace (Group Purchase), Library Operation, Foot Volleyball Club
- Village Cafe “‘Hyu (means rest in Korean)” - Opening on Apr. 2013 – Operated by Women’s Society.
- Workshop for making Green Energy Experience Village
- Creating of Village Common Culture - With Neighbors
- Clubs: Broadcasting, Dance, Ceramics , Wood-working , Guitar, Taking Photos, Storytelling, Exchange and Society, Recorder ensemble, Musical Instrument (Haegum), Straw Handicraft, Cooking and so on

Table 7: Common Activity after Move-in

Due to a lack of experience in community life, just a little longer than one year, there has been some trial and error. However, the important factor is that the community is growing through cooperative management of common facilities. Recently, there was an initiative of community culture with local government support. This movement is expanding to the native people and the neighboring community beyond the Baek-hwa village. In the future, the residents are expecting to build their community as a green energy experience village.

Residents' Satisfaction

According to interviews with residents, they were mostly satisfied with their current living situation in the village. They were especially satisfied at the social interaction with neighbours through shared activities, for instance, various hobby activities. Even though they experienced difficulty in communication with others during the forming stage, they said that it became easier to get consensus with less conflict after 4 years of community life. Nevertheless, it is not possible yet to reach consensus with less conflict all the time. In addition, they recognized that they needed more concrete and value-oriented common goals for the village and started putting their efforts to make an eco-friendly village.

Conclusions and Implications

The investigation found that Baek-hwa village, established in 2012 in the suburb of Youngdong-gun, Chungbuk province, was a good example of intentional community in Korea. The resident composition of the village is diverse, in respect of age and family type. A common motivation to move into the village was the aspiration to be away from busy and polluted cities, to be close to nature, and to enjoy community life with neighbors. The development process of the village was driven by a residents-initiated method through cooperation and participation. There were various common activities and residents' satisfaction level was very high.

The emerging intentional community and community participation process are a rediscovery of community life in Korea. Through these movements, the housing challenges in Korea could be hopefully overcome, at least partially. The successful settlement of the early step of the intentional community project has the following importance. Above all, the active and voluntary participation of the residents is a crucial factor. Particularly, the residents need to be more familiar with the community's goals, sharing with neighbours and process. If it does not happen, there would be a drop-off from the community. It is necessary to build clear democratic procedures during the formation of intentional community by residents' management. In the process of the Baek-hwa village, it is very important to have cooperation and trust among the residents, local government, administrator and experts. It is quite difficult to overcome all the obstacles by the residents themselves because of lack of the professional knowledge and the time restriction. Thus, it is crucial to get some help from experts and special coordinator companies. Also, the local government or administrators set clear guidelines about the support for the intentional village construction. It is still at an emerging stage with this project.

Finally, in the case of the Baek-hwa village, there are some considerations of resident participation. First, it requires efficient communication skills. Second, it needs to solve the problems of time adjustment and time limits amongst residents for more equitable residents' participation. Third, limits of participation of individual residents should be eliminated. Fourth, reflection degrees and levels of resident opinions should be defined. Fifth, there needs to be a way for children and teenagers to participate as village residents. It will contribute to building a desirable village through these steps, gradually into the future.

References

Data service: Mindlere Cohousing, Beak-hwa community

Pictures source: *google.co.kr/ *beakhwa.co.kr/ *cafe.naver.com/baekwha



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Co-caring in Senior Cohousing: A Canadian model for social sustainability

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/uUymRJrxEw>

Abstract

Senior cohousing creates socially, financially, and environmentally sustainable communities for the second half of life. Common facilities include housing for a caregiver whom residents hire as needed. Members provide mutual assistance for each other (co-caring) that encourages wellbeing and aging in place. Like multi-generational cohousing these are intentionally cooperative neighbourhoods where each household owns its small but complete home and spacious common facilities are shared. Well-established in Europe, senior cohousing is new to North America and the UK.

This paper focuses on Harbourside Cohousing under development in Sooke, BC, and on the innovative Royal Roads University course that attracts new members to the cohousing and raises awareness of aging options in the larger community. Harbourside will be the second senior cohousing in Canada, the first with a care-giver suite, and the first to require a short course on Aging Well in Community as a prerequisite for membership. Experiential learning in the course helps people to get out of denial about growing older. They explore how co-caring can ensure social connection with their community and help them stay in cohousing and out of institutional care as they age. They become a force for change in the larger society redefining aging and elder housing.

Co-caring is a grassroots model of neighbourly mutual support that can help reduce social isolation and promote positive, active aging. It encourages independence through awareness that we are all interdependent. In a senior cohousing community, giving and receiving co-care is entirely voluntary. Members may choose to support each other through such activities as doing errands, driving, cooking, or going for a walk with a neighbour. Being good neighbours helps people age well in community and have fun doing it!

The course on aging well in community and the participatory development process at Harbourside are creating community two years before move-in. The paper concludes with lessons learned from this prototype and suggests how to begin scaling up senior cohousing as a radical social innovation to respond to the 'silver tsunami' of aging baby boomers.

Introduction

The news that household debt is on the rise in many parts of the world, including Canada and the UK, is more often cause for anxiety than for celebration. So it may come as a surprise to learn that in the southwest Pacific country of Vanuatu where I have lived and worked as an anthropologist, household debt reassures people that they can relax and not worry about the future. Indebtedness is their best insurance. Some of their debts are financial – they may owe a

fellow in the next village who contributed a pig to their father's funeral or be indebted to a brother for paying a child's school fees. But what is important to understand is that financial debt follows social pathways, and that social indebtedness ensures enduring relationships. To be fully human in Vanuatu is to live in a web of relationships. If they are square, like a cash transaction, you have no relationship. Social investments – a pig given at a wedding, a chicken to appease a grudge, cooked rice for a toothless old lady – are always slightly imbalanced – I owe you or you owe me – and that ensures they continue. These are mainly relationships you can walk toward or away from. They are very local. In crisis or as you age, you can call on those relationships and be confident that you will receive what you need. There are few doctors, scarcely any pensions, little cash, but also no starvation and a lot of joy. In fact, Vanuatu topped the first Happy Planet index in 2006.

In Vanuatu, everyone ages in place. There are no alternatives – no retirement homes, assisted living, etc. In North America and Western Europe, most of us **want** to age in place. We have unappealing alternatives. Who wants to move to “The Home” before they are ready? Often we don't think we are ready until it's too late. So we stay in our homes for “as long as possible.” Eventually, perhaps our children move us into a place they select for us.

It's good that most of us want to age in place, because we may not have many other options. The demographic bulge as Baby Boomers age will tax our health care systems. In just twelve years, thirty percent of the Canadian population will be retirement age. Not only our state supported health care, but the entire global system is challenged to keep up with the demands of ageing populations¹. Meanwhile a sluggish global economy that has not fully recovered from the recession that began in 2008 inhibits state support even as it reduces personal savings and increases household debt.

Ageing in place may be necessary but it is not always the ideal choice that it appears to be. First, retrofitting a home to meet the needs of ageing occupants may be financially unaffordable to many. Second, once a home is adapted for ageing in place, the cost of maintenance, taxes, and bringing in outside help may be unaffordable, especially to seniors on a fixed budget. The wealthy can afford these costs. The poor can receive basic services at little or no charge. The middle class may be out of luck.

A third reason that ageing in place may not be an ideal choice is this. Rich, poor, or part of the middle class, no one can afford the social isolation that often accompanies ageing in place. Recent research suggests that stronger social relationships are associated with fifty percent greater chances of survival in 148 studies. Surprisingly, the mortality risk posed by social isolation is as great as other risk factors such as smoking².

What if building a **social portfolio** had the same importance as building a financial portfolio? Could you act like you live in Vanuatu? Invest in relationships? Diversify? You probably

¹ See for example, Why Population Aging Matters: A Global Perspective, National Institute of Aging, Publication 07-6134, March 2007; *The Silver Tsunami*, The Economist 4 Feb 2010; *BC Seniors population to double by 2030* <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/05/10/bc-seniors-care-homes-future.html>

² The Public Library of Science Medicine Editors (2010) Social Relationships are Key to Health and to Health Policy, PLoS Med7(8):e1000334.doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000334

won't need a lot of support to age in place, just a little. The Baby Boomer generation has a chance to take charge of the next chapter of their lives like they did the earlier ones. What a great chance to reconnect with youthful dreams of changing the world by living values of cooperation and sustainability!

A rich and diverse social portfolio is much easier to build if one is not car-dependent. Imagine living in a beautifully designed home in the centre of a town that is walkable to everything you need. A home that has few steps, little maintenance, and lots of connection with cooperative neighbours. It is smallish but shares a large common house with guest rooms for visitors and a suite for a caregiver when needed. Not an institution, but a home you own in a sustainable neighbourhood you help organize and manage. You work with the architect to design it. It is built green to keep energy costs very low, maybe even at zero. You don't have to be "old" to live there but you have to endorse an "ageing-in-place-friendly" vision and be willing to cooperate with your neighbour.

This is senior cohousing. Our non-profit Canadian Senior Cohousing Society raises awareness, applies for grants and conducts research. In partnership with Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC, we offer a two-day course called "Ageing Well in Community." Our society promotes the development of the first senior cohousing communities in Canada. We are working with Ronaye Matthew, an experienced project manager, to build the first senior cohousing in British Columbia. We believe that this can be a prototype for a made-in-Canada model for ageing, not just in place but in community. For me, it is a model for a Canadian solution for ageing in place, inspired by one of the happiest places on the planet.

Senior cohousing creates socially, financially, and environmentally sustainable communities for the second half of life. Common facilities include housing for a caregiver whom residents hire as needed. Members provide mutual assistance for each other (co-caring) that encourages well-being and ageing in place. Like multi-generational cohousing these are intentionally cooperative neighbourhoods where each household owns its small but complete home and spacious common facilities are shared. Well-established in Europe, especially in Denmark where it emerged from multi-generational cohousing in the 1990s, the senior cohousing is new to North America and the UK.

This paper focuses on Harbourside Cohousing under development in Sooke, BC, and on the innovative Royal Roads University course that attracts new members to the cohousing and raises awareness of ageing options in the larger community. Harbourside will be the second senior cohousing in Canada, the first in British Columbia where seven of the ten multi-generational cohousing communities in the country are located. It will be the first with a suite for a resident caregiver, and the first to require a short course on Ageing Well in Community as a pre-requisite for membership. Experiential learning in the course helps people to get out of denial about growing older. They explore how co-caring can ensure social connection with their community and help them stay in cohousing and out of institutional care as they age. They become a force for change in the larger society redefining ageing and elder housing.

Harbourside Cohousing

If senior cohousing is about being in the right place at the right time, Harbourside exemplifies that serendipity. After lecturing about cohousing for years in York University courses on the anthropology of space and place, I left Toronto in 2004 for a sabbatical year on Vancouver Island, off Canada's west coast. The small town of Sooke, self-described as "where the rainforest meets the sea" captivated me with the beauty of its place and its people. I soon knew that if there were ever a place to practice what I preached about cohousing, this was it. A group of like-minded people formed and went so far as looking for land, but, as is so often the case with such ventures, when it came time to put money on the table, no one was quite ready.

By 2010, the time was right. I moved my mother into a "very nice" retirement home back east and knew in my heart it was not what I wanted for myself as I grew older. I wanted to have a say in the location and design of my home, not be car-dependent, control who was hired to provide care, and most of all, give and receive mutual support that would enable me and my neighbours to flourish as we aged well in community. My friends and I talked, and discovered this was what they wanted as well. We could see the pressure our Baby Boomer demographic was about to put on the health care system. We knew we had best get creative and look after our own old age. A friend and I called a meeting above a grocery store to gauge local interest and 30 people showed up. Our journey into cohousing had begun.

Meanwhile, in 2009 the Senior Cohousing Handbook was published in Canada. It clearly outlined the many steps for a grassroots group to create a senior cohousing community. The author, Charles Durrett, had brought the cohousing concept to North America in 1988 from Denmark where he had observed its success, especially as housing for young couples with children. For these families, supportive neighbours, economies of scale from shared ownership of resources, and yet the privacy of a single family home made cohousing very attractive. In the 1990s, Durrett had seen the adaptation of this model to a way of housing people in "the second half of life" in Denmark. He called it "senior cohousing." In these communities, members' priorities shift from raising children to ageing in community. Both the physical and social design reflected those priorities.

A group of teachers in Denmark who wanted to help seniors age in place successfully recognized the critical role that social connection plays. Even then, the dangers of social isolation were apparent. The Danish teachers created spaces for seniors to talk about issues of ageing in place. Durrett calls these meetings Study Group 1: "Once strangers, the Study Group 1 participants began to work together to address the issues presented at each meeting... The discussions prompted them to plan for a positive future together by identifying the issues important to them."¹

Durrett developed a ten week study group to prepare North Americans for ageing in community and he began training facilitators to offer it. In the spring of 2011, another Sooke resident, Andrew Moore, and I took Durrett's training at Nevada City Cohousing where he

¹ Durrett 2009: 101-102

lives in California. Back in Sooke, we then offered the ten week study group twice in 2011 to a total of forty-four participants. By the completion of the second study group it was clear that there was plenty of interest in and commitment to the idea of senior cohousing.

The next challenge was to find a suitable site. We considered six sites before settling in 2012 on a .8 hectare waterfront property in the village where we could walk to everything as well as enjoy a spectacular view and the use of our own wharf. The property was operating as a small resort. The 3900 sq ft resort building included a common area for cooking, dining and entertaining, three, guest rooms and baths, and ample multi-purpose space. It could easily convert to a common house for the cohousing group.

To purchase the property, a group of 8 households pooled equity of \$C 20,000 each (about £ 12,000) creating a limited liability company for the development phase with the help of an experienced professional, Ronaye Matthew, and her Cohousing Development Consulting firm. The property was purchased subject to preliminary feasibility studies (e.g., environmental, geotechnical, archeological, financial). Once these were complete the seller became a member of the cohousing group which came to be known as Harbourside.

While development proceeded into preliminary design and a rezoning application to build 30 units of housing on the site, our educational outreach changed tacks. From the beginning we had required that all potential members complete the study group. As interest in Harbourside grew, Andrew and I lacked the capacity to offer the ten-week study group as frequently as required. We also felt that the experience could be just as effective, perhaps even more so, if condensed considerably. I redesigned the curriculum and we developed a relationship with nearby Royal Roads University such that they handled registration and local arrangements for a two-day course we called “Ageing Well in Community.” So far we have offered this course twice in 2013 to 37 participants with great success. It is in the Royal Roads calendar four more times in 2013-14.

A crucial part of the course prepares participants for “co-care” which is central to senior cohousing in this country. The idea of co-care is as old as good neighbours but the concept has yet to be defined – there is no co-care entry in Wikipedia! In our course, we define co-care is a grassroots model of neighbourly mutual support that can help reduce social isolation and promote positive, active ageing. It encourages independence through awareness that we are all interdependent. In a cohousing community, giving and receiving co-care is entirely voluntary. We may choose to support each other through such activities as doing errands, driving, cooking, or going for a walk with our neighbour. We believe that being good neighbours helps us age well in community and have fun doing it.

Co-care is customary in cohousing communities. It is simply being neighbourly. In senior cohousing, though, it can be essential to living independently. Studies show that seniors need relatively little support as they age, especially until they are older than eighty-five.¹ Co-caring

¹ “The missing link to providing a continuum of care for seniors is assisting the elderly who can manage on their own with a little help.” Kevin Smith, chief executive officer of St. Joseph's Health System in Hamilton, Ont. Quoted in *The Globe & Mail*, 10 July 2011. See also John Restakis, *Co-op Elder Care in Canada, a Call to Action*, National Task Force on Co-op Elder Care, June 2008

neighbours can provide much of that support. A caregiver, living in an affordable suite in the cohousing and paid for by the members who need him or her, can help with dressing, medications, bathing, and other activities that are more than neighbours say they are willing to do. Economies of scale are possible as one caregiver can tend to multiple residents. Other medical and housekeeping services can be provided to our central location.

The course on ageing well in community and the participatory development process at Harbourside are creating community two years before move-in. In four months (Feb-May 2013), our equity membership has increased from eight to fifteen households and interest continues to build in response to the Royal Roads course and media coverage¹.

Not everyone who wants to join us is able to do so. We are building in affordable operating costs through construction to Built Green Canada/Energuides 80 standards². But this adds to the initial cost, so only people with considerable equity in a home (or other net worth) are able to live at Harbourside. We have active participants who intend to rent from other members who do not plan to move in initially, but this has its own complications including insecurity of tenure as one ages, and the potential for a socio-economic gap to appear between landlords and tenants. In an effort to increase the range of housing options, Harbourside will include three below-market units with prices reduced by the land cost which puts them about twenty percent below market price. These will have housing agreements registered with the District of Sooke that a buyer must agree to, and the resale price will be restricted to ensure continuing affordability.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Prospects for the Future

It is clear from the enthusiasm for Harbourside that senior cohousing is an idea whose time has come to British Columbia. Harbourside, with its caregivers suite and reliance on the “Ageing Well in Community” course has taken a different approach to that of its sister community, Wolf Willow, the first senior cohousing in Canada which opened in December 2012 in Saskatoon. Wolf Willow founding members chose neither to do the study group nor to require it future residents. They have a guest room that caregiver might use, but no real suite. Time will tell, but we believe that these aspects of Harbourside have made it more attractive to potential members by raising their awareness and increasing their acceptance of issues that can occur in the ageing process. A fearlessness, adventurousness, and sense of community arise that bode well for our success.

What else have we learned?

There is a pent-up yearning for community that will come as no surprise to participants in this conference on Communal Studies. Perhaps it is part of the Baby Boomer demographic, but

¹ Rosa Harris Adler, “Rest Homes with a Difference,” *Calgary Herald*, Sept 30, 2011; Wedy Haaf, “Living Together,” *Good Times Magazine*, Jan 2013; Erin Anderssen, “Better Aging through (social) Chemistry,” (Toronto) *Globe and Mail*, Jun 1, 2012; Judee Fong, “A Small Town Sense of Community” *Senior Living Magazine*, Feb 2013; plus Shaw TV and CBC radio in 2012 and 2013 and a forthcoming article in the *Toronto Star*. Members have published two articles about Harbourside: Michael Elcock, “Taking Charge of Your Own Old Age,” *Scottish Review*, Apr 25, 2013; Margaret Critchlow and Andrew Moore, “When Do We Begin to Flourish in Community?” *Communities Magazine*, Winter 2012.

² <http://www.builtgreencanada.ca>

senior cohousing seems to appeal particularly to those who had an agenda for social change in the '60s but did not live communally for their child-raising years. Now that they are in their '60s, the desire to reactivate their youthful values is palpable, especially as they respond to the state of the world and the planet. Can they be the change they want to see? Are we the people we have been waiting for? Many seem willing to find out.

Affordability is highly valued and difficult to achieve. There is a dance always between values of affordability, aesthetics, designing for physical accessibility, and building "green." Harboursiders, like many Baby Boomers, want it all.

A personal and community commitment to combine co-care with a potential caregiver gives members confidence that they can age in place in senior cohousing and enjoy healthier, richer, more active lives than if they lived in conventional housing, or in the institutions they dread. The hardest thing to learn, apparently, is the obligation to receive. Participants in our course are eager to share what they would offer to their neighbour but find it much more difficult to agree to accept the same care. We recognize the challenge of learning to accept help in a culture that values individualism so highly.

We have benefitted greatly from retaining Ronaye Matthew, an experienced project manager with a strong commitment to cohousing. This adds to the development cost at Harbourside but we know that without her the cost of our inexperience would be far higher and the results less successful. At present, only a handful of people in North America have this kind of expertise, which is a major constraint on the ability to scale up senior cohousing to meet demand.

Finally, Harbourside is being watched in the media and in the Canadian cohousing community as a prototype. If well-documented and if the lessons that emerge from our experience are learned, Harbourside can be copied. Increasing capacity to facilitate the 'Ageing Well in Community' course, and to develop senior cohousing, will allow for scaling up senior cohousing as a radical social innovation to respond to the "silver tsunami" of ageing baby boomers. Who knows, perhaps like the people I learned from as an anthropologist in Vanuatu, we will soon be cheerfully indebted to each other and topping the Happy Planet index ourselves.



Margaret Critchlow Rodman, PhD, president of the Canadian Senior Cohousing Society is a founding equity member of Harbourside Cohousing. She is an anthropologist (Prof. Emerita, York University, Toronto) whose seven books range from the meaning of place and community in Vanuatu to non-profit housing co-ops in Toronto. She is glad that it takes a village to raise an elder.

The Extended Home: On design solutions for community oriented housing

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/a8zB0dOyWTU>

Abstract

This paper discusses design solutions for community-oriented housing. Tentative conclusions are based on on-site spatial observations and resident interviews in housing developments around Europe. Some of the examples studied have extensive purpose-designed common spaces, while in others forms of collaboration between residents and sense of community have arisen without extensive common facilities. This variation calls for closer study of the design strategies and spatial solutions.

I illustrate some spatial characteristics that support the community oriented lifestyle preferred and chosen by the residents. Rather than describing one best solution, I illustrate many parallel spatial strategies. Spatial analyses are complemented with residents' own experiences of the use of space. Housing with a community orientation seems to extend the home beyond private walls. This means that the design of intermediary and semi-private spaces is of great importance.

1. Introduction: The Finnish Case

This study was motivated by the increasing interest in community-oriented housing in Finland. Cohousing is still marginal and unfamiliar to many in Finland, but a new wave of interest can be identified, and several developments are being built or under consideration.¹ Especially senior cohousing has stimulated interest, perhaps due to the successful and widely published case of Loppukiri senior cohousing in Helsinki.

One relevant wave of previous development took place in the 1980-90's when a number of communities were established. These were typically low-rise housing with a separate common house functioning as a kindergarten during the daytime and as common space for residents in the evenings and weekends.² Recent examples are more urban in nature and location, and follow the Swedish typological model. They are apartment buildings with a common kitchen, dining hall and other common spaces on the ground floor, accompanied by a sauna in the top floor. Despite these interesting new examples, the tradition of cohousing in Finland is altogether still weak, and there are prejudices against it. Privacy, self-determination and managing on one's own are valued in Finnish housing (Puustinen 2010, 324-328). Living communally may be seen as contrary to these values, and thus make it feel unsuitable particularly within Finnish housing culture (see e.g. Cronberg & Vepsä 1983, 78).

¹ For example: Loppukiri and Kotisatama senior cohousing in Helsinki, Omatoimi in Saarijärvi, Malta in Helsinki and Annikki in Tampere.

² For example: Tuulenkylä in Jyväskylä and Kotipehku in Tampere.

On the other hand, there is a tradition of sharing spaces and amenities with neighbours. We are fairly accustomed to sharing some spaces, such as courtyards, laundries and garages, at least in clustered housing. However, in recent housing developments, very few shared spaces are being built. Shared laundries, saunas and similar amenities that were once very common are gradually being replaced by private amenities. In addition, the amount of circulation and transition spaces in recent developments is scarce. At present, the Finnish housing market does not provide alternatives in terms of extensive shared spaces, and residents wanting more of them have taken action themselves. Formal, purpose-built shared spaces are typically – and almost exclusively – built within housing for special groups such as students or the elderly.

This is confused. Increasingly challenging global demands in terms of ecology and urban density, among other issues, implicitly support the idea of sharing spaces and resources. Changes in demographics and family structures as well as in lifestyles also drive the development of housing alternatives. The observed decrease in household size has been connected to lack of social encounters, loneliness and feelings of insecurity. The overall importance of family-based communities has decreased (Saari 2009, 26-29). Inter-household sharing may help to overcome these problems.

To address these issues a research project, “Monikko”,¹ was set up at TUT School of Architecture in 2011-2012. Its objectives were to study housing cultures in community-oriented housing, to examine how features of the built environment support social contacts and to document development processes and residents’ participation in them. The main objective was to study various different models of community-oriented housing and analyse their applicability to the current Finnish context and housing tradition.

This paper focuses on the spatial design of community-oriented housing. Section 2 briefly explains the research methods and section 3 defines the concepts cohousing and community-oriented housing. Section 4 focuses on physical space and presents five spatial types of community-oriented housing. Section 5 takes a brief look at the residents’ experiences on shared space.

2. Research Methods

In October 2011, we invited nearly 150 community-oriented housing developments around Europe to take part in an online questionnaire, which asked basic information about the size and typology of the community, its inhabitants, common spaces and activities, as well as about the construction process and residents’ participation in it. Contact information was collected from the listings maintained by parent organizations,² internet searches and personal contacts. We received 41 answers from five countries: Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. The language of the questionnaire (English) may explain the lack of answers from the French, Belgian or Italian communities.

The answers provided us with valuable information about the variety of community-oriented housing in Europe and on the elements of community in them. Based on the questionnaire, 10

¹ The literal translation is “plural”. A complete report of the study (in Finnish) can be downloaded at: <http://dSPACE.cc.tut.fi/dpub/handle/123456789/21272>

² For example: www.kollektivhus.nu, www.lvcw.nl, www.wohnportal-berlin.de, www.bofælleskab.dk

communities were chosen for closer study: 4 in Germany, 3 in Austria and 3 in the Netherlands. In these communities, we conducted group interviews, which focused on the personal and collective experiences on living in such a community: the motives and expectations; the use of space and the boundaries of what people considered home; the practices and rules of the common life; and the possible changes in personal life. Depending on the community, 1-5 persons participated. The interviews lasted two hours on average, and were accompanied by a walk on the premises.

In addition to interviews, spatial analyses were conducted in the selected communities. These included on-site observations and analyses of floor plans. The spaces were studied in terms of their spatial configuration, scale and atmosphere, location and connections of shared space, and relations between private, shared and public space.

Additionally, 10 Danish and 7 Finnish communities were visited during the course of the project. In Denmark and Finland, interviews were slightly shorter and not as structured. However, similar issues were discussed and spatial analyses conducted. Practical reasons and the fact that the Swedish *kollektivhus* has been quite well documented and the information is accessible in Finland, made us leave out the Swedish examples, even though they have been influential in Finland. During the project, altogether 27 different communities were visited in Finland, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands and Austria.

3. Defining Community

Due to the increasing interest in community-oriented housing on the one hand, and prejudices on the other, it was necessary to begin by exploring the concept of community in the context of housing.

We differentiated between cohousing and community-oriented housing.¹ In our definition, cohousing is an intentionally communal form of housing that has three characteristics:

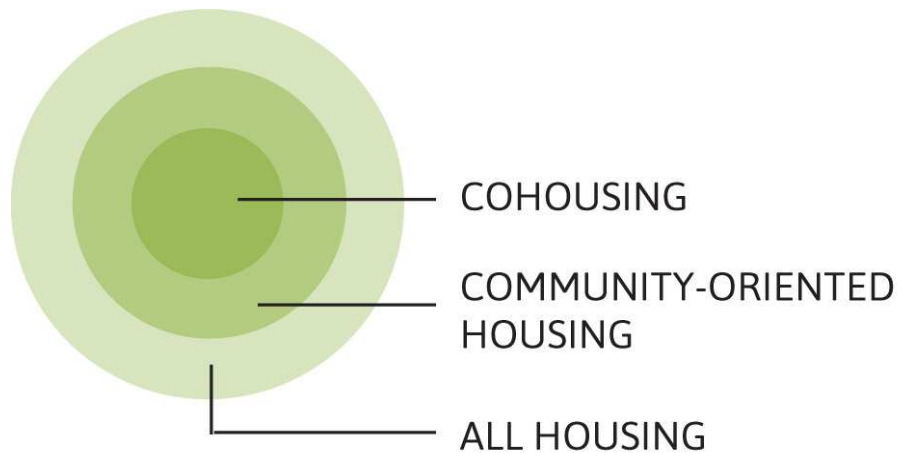
- Common activity
- Shared space and
- A community-oriented organization, meaning that the aim for community is built in the physical and organizational structures thus creating responsibilities or obligations for the inhabitant

Community-oriented housing is a wider concept than cohousing. It includes many types of housing that feature more common activities and / or common spaces than usual, but where the aim for community is not as intentional and not as binding as in cohousing. The boundary between cohousing and community-oriented housing is often vague. In this study, the definitions are intentionally wide. It was not in line with the objectives to set detailed definitions for community in the context of housing. Therefore, single features often associated with cohousing, such as resident participation in planning (e.g. Durrett 2009) or common dining practices (e.g. www.kollektivhus.nu) were not prerequisites for identifying a

¹ In Finnish the concepts are yhteisöasuminen (~cohousing) and yhteisöllinen asuminen (~community-oriented housing).

development as cohousing. Picture 1 illustrates our definitions of the concepts, and that “housing” and “cohousing” are not clearly distinct categories, but instead form a continuum.

Most developments that were visited during the study belong to the category of cohousing. Some lack the binding organisational structure of cohousing and are thus categorized as community-oriented housing.



Picture 1 illustrates that “housing” and “cohousing” are not clearly distinct categories, but instead form a continuum. The interfaces are:

- 1. More common activities and common spaces than usual**
- 2. Intentional and built-in community, creating responsibilities for the residents**

4. Design Issues – Focus On Shared Space

Shared space is one of the key characteristics of any community-oriented housing. All the developments we visited had shared spaces, but the amount varied notably. At the most modest level, common spaces comprised a common courtyard, storage facilities and staircases. At the other end were developments with almost an equal amount of shared and private space. In our spatial analyses, we focused on shared spaces and their relationship to private and public space. We studied the following aspects of shared spaces:

The nature and the use of shared space

Shared spaces include both purpose-built formal spaces intended for specific functions (kitchens, workshops, hobby rooms etc.) and informal circulation and transition spaces (corridors, courtyards, staircases etc.). Both have an important role. Purpose-built spaces enable organized and regular common activities, whereas spontaneous encounters often take place in informal transition spaces.

Purpose-built spaces may be further divided into spaces for necessary household chores and those for leisure. Cultural differences and the group’s motives for supporting community determine the repertoire of spaces. Table 1 shows the range of shared spaces in the communities that answered the questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE: COMMON SPACES																				
ALL RESPONDENTS	KITCHEN + DINING HALL	WORKSHOP / HOBBY ROOMS	LAUNDRY	MULTIPURPOSE SPACE	COMMON LIVING ROOM	SHARED STORAGEES	GUEST ROOM	CHILDREN'S ROOM	SPORTS ROOM	TV OR MOVIE ROOM	SAUNA	(ROOF) TERRACES	LIBRARY	OFFICE	WINTERGARDEN OR GREENHOUSE	ROOM FOR TEENAGERS	PUB	SWIMMING POOL	WINE CELLAR	MUSIC ROOM
41	33	32	30	29	27	25	21	20	18	12	12	12	11	11	8	3	2	2	1	1

Table 1. Common spaces in the communities that answered the questionnaire

Common spaces are not always intended to foster social contacts or for the purposes of being together. Guest rooms and workshops, for example, are typically used in turns. By pooling resources, residents can have some spaces and amenities that would be too expensive to achieve alone, a swimming pool for example.

The size of the sharing group

Shared spaces differ in character depending on whether they are shared by the entire community or only with a few close neighbours. The size of the sharing group affects the atmosphere of the spaces. Some communities also offer spaces for wider user groups and invite people in the neighbourhood to take part in yoga classes or choir practices, for instance. Shared spaces may also be temporarily in public use, for example as a polling station in local elections, as in one Dutch community.

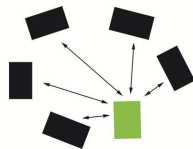
The location of and connections between shared spaces

There are many different strategies for the spatial arrangement of shared spaces. Firstly, the spaces may be centralized or decentralized. The literature on community architecture recommends centralizing the core spaces so that they are clearly visible and so that paths leading to them are central (Durrett 2009). However, if the spaces are plentiful or the size of the sharing group large, decentralizing spaces may bring some advantages. Spaces can be used simultaneously for different activities without one disturbing the other. Secondly, depending on the context (e.g. urban vs. rural) and the nature of community, shared spaces may be located as a buffer between the private and the public or as the inner core connecting private dwellings.

Thirdly, how private and common spaces are connected has impacts on the spatial structure and the opportunities to use space. An outdoor connection typically creates a slightly stronger boundary between the private and common areas, whereas an indoor connection creates a strong feeling of community and enables the use of spaces regardless of the weather. The indoor connection between common and private spaces can be horizontal or vertical, depending on the building type (low-rise or high-rise). Some earlier studies recommend low-rise typology in order to maximize the potential for social interactions (Williams 2005, 199), but vertical circulation is also very common, for example in Swedish cohousing (www.kollektivhus.nu)

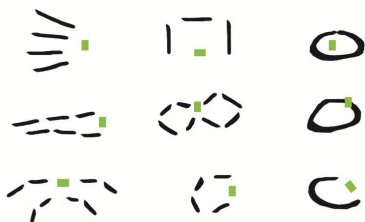
4.1 Spatial organization of community-oriented housing – five examples

We identified five different types of spatial organization in the housing we researched. This categorization is based on the positioning and lay-out of shared space in relation to private and public space. Also social organization and the degree of community are deeply related to the spatial organization. Each type is named after its dominant features. The categorization is not by any means a complete typology of community-oriented housing, as the sampling was rather small and concentrated only in a few countries. It aims to visualize the variety of possible configurations and to encourage the development of new spatial arrangements.



“Courtyard”

The common courtyard, as the name suggests, plays a great role in this type, where low-rise houses and a separate common house are placed around shared yard. Possible variations of the lay-out are many (picture 2), but the positioning of the common house is central, almost without exception. It is typically located either at the entrance or at a central node of pathways so that it is well visible to all or most dwellings. Courtyard communities are small to medium in size, housing typically 20-40 households. Many Danish communities fall into this category. In the North American context, Durrett (2009) has given rather detailed design guidelines for this type. Also in Finland, this type is familiar, due to developments made in the 1980s and 90s.



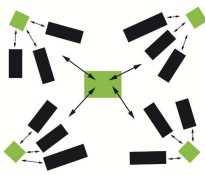
Picture 2. Possible spatial arrangements of “Courtyard” communities

The level of privacy is rather similar to other low-rise typologies, due to the private or semi-private outdoor space creating a buffer between the private and the common. In many cases, however, fences are intentionally kept low in order to encourage social contact. Visual contact between the private dwellings and the common space and central pathways are crucial in this type, as they facilitate social contacts while enabling the controlling of one’s privacy.

Shared spaces are centralized and located typically in a separate common house. The separate location allows for any noisy uses of common space (band rehearsals, parties) without disturbing the neighbours. On the other hand, the separate location may decrease the spontaneous use of common spaces, especially in winter. The courtyard itself is an essential part of the common spaces and common life. Its use, naturally, is seasonal and depends on the weather.



Pictures 3 & 4. Examples of Courtyard-communities



“Village”

The key feature of the Village-type is the clustered organization of space. Here, the community is divided into smaller subgroups; there are communities within a community. Some spaces are shared by the entire group, some only by a specific subgroup. Due to the clustered organization, they are rather large in size, typically 50 or more households. Dutch cluster-communities are examples of the Village-type.

The spatial structure is village-like with multiple paths and nodes. The private-public hierarchy of spaces is multi-phase and even the shared spaces differ in their degree of privacy. Spaces shared with closest neighbours are slightly more private than those shared by the entire group.

Shared spaces are decentralized, and different events may take place around the premises simultaneously. A village may house different subgroups with differing interests and ways of life. In the Netherlands, each cluster is typically responsible for choosing its new residents. This way, different subcultures within the community may emerge.



Pictures 5 & 6. Examples of Village-communities



“Forum”

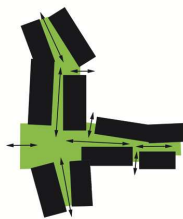
The Forum-type differs from most cohousing types in scale and communal organization. The size is bigger and the social organization is looser, thus it falls into the category of community-oriented housing.

Shared spaces are decentralized. The spatial structure resembles a forum or a market place: different actions take place in different corners, the resident having a choice over what to take part in, including being a passive observer. The large number of residents makes it possible to have a great variety of different common activities and spaces for them. Different events may take place simultaneously.

A forum may bring together people with different interests. Due to its size (170 dwellings in one Austrian example), the design of transitional spaces is of great importance. As the neighbours are not all acquainted with each other, and they take part in different common activities, the informal common spaces form a central platform for social encounters. For the same reason, visual contacts from the private space to the common areas are important.



Picture 7. Example of Forum-community



“Bazaar”

The bazaar-type is based on an indoor connection between private dwellings and common spaces. The name “bazaar” was chosen because of the lively atmosphere inside these communities. Typologically, there are some similarities to dormitories and hotels, but the atmosphere is closer to a bazaar with all its life, people, noises and colours.

In a Bazaar, the communal life begins right at the door. The entrance to private dwellings is through common areas and the spatial boundaries between private and common are not as clearly defined as in the other types. Instead, the private sphere is often extended into the corridors and other common spaces. Furniture, shoes and other private belongings are typically placed in the common corridors in front of the private dwelling. In order to maintain

privacy, these kind of buffer zones between private and common, as well as good sound-proofing, are important.

Formal common spaces can be centralized or decentralized. Typically, the core spaces are grouped together and located centrally. An indoor street or courtyard connecting all spaces makes this type suitable for harsh climates. Picture 8 illustrates some possible spatial arrangements of Bazaar-type communities.



Picture 8. Possible spatial arrangements of “Bazaar” communities



Pictures 9 & 10. Examples of Bazaar-communities



“Stack”

Stack is an alternative for urban environments. It has similarities with the Bazaar-type, but here the circulation is mainly vertical. Stack-communities can be found in many countries, mainly in urban contexts. Typically, shared spaces are centralized and located in the ground and top floors. Placing common facilities in the ground floor near the entrance make them well accessible and visible.

The level of privacy is rather similar to other high-rise typologies, as the formal common spaces are rarely located next to private dwellings. Fire and safety considerations also regulate the design of circulation spaces in multi-story buildings, creating challenges to the use of informal common spaces. In high-rise buildings, it is rarely possible to place furniture or other items to corridors and staircases. Thus, the boundaries between private and common are very clear.



Pictures 11 & 12. Examples of Stack-communities

4.2 Conclusions on spatial analyses

The five above-presented examples show that community-oriented housing does not require one specific building typology or spatial lay-out. Community orientation can be supported by various different spatial arrangements. Spatial configuration depends on the desired degrees of privacy and community, the size of the group, on what the common activities are and on the environmental context. Shared spaces form a backbone of the spatial structure, but the amount and arrangement of these spaces varies. Strong sense of community among neighbours may evolve without extensive purpose-built common spaces.

However, some principles of spatial design are common in all the developments that participated in the study. Spatial organization that enables and encourages social encounters and the possibility to control one's privacy by spatial means are perhaps the most important ones. Enabling social encounters is related to the careful design of pathways, gathering nodes and formal common spaces. Privacy control is related to buffer and transition zones, visual connections and the possibility of surveillance. Altogether, it is about the delicate treatment of scale and proximity, as well as about the articulation of semi-private and semi-public spaces between the private, common and public spheres.

In cohousing, especially in the new developments, the amount of common space and the desired level of community are usually negotiated by residents, and the result is very deliberate. Residents are committed to sharing, and private dwellings have been designed knowing that shared spaces will be plentiful and in active use. The cohousing model shows that sense of community and well-functioning shared spaces depend not only on the physical space, but also on social and organizational structures of the sharing group, as well as on the individual intentions of residents. (see also Durrett 2009; Williams 2005) Spatial and social aspects are in deeply interconnected.

4.3 Theoretical considerations

Theoretical discussion on the nature of community in the context of housing further emphasizes the importance of the design features – spaces for social encounters and possibility to control one’s privacy – that were identified as key characteristics of cohousing design. I will briefly discuss community development processes and mode of togetherness.

According to Lehtonen (1990), at least two different development processes of community can be identified. Community that develops in direct interaction through concrete action results in *functional community*, whereas community developing in consciousness through shared meanings and ideas results in *symbolic community*. Symbolic community may connect wide and otherwise heterogeneous groups, and separate functional communities. (Lehtonen 1990, 23-29)

In community-oriented housing, it is the functional community that is based on direct interaction and concrete action that is emphasized. Both forms of community are present, but common activity plays a central role. Functional and symbolic community are inseparable and support one another. Typically, the emergence of a functional community requires some level of symbolic community, shared meanings or intentions. Common action, in turn, strengthens the sense of togetherness through shared experiences. A functional community may be able to function even without shared symbolic meanings, if the common action is motivated by pragmatic – and not ideological – reasons, and the practices and meanings do not overly contrast. Housing communities that are bound to a certain location and based on concrete common action, are, according to some researchers (Hautamäki et al. 2005, 8-9; Lehtonen 1990, 243), somewhat exceptional compared to other present-day communities that are based more on a search for meaning and identity than local interaction.

A distinction between status-based and agreement-based communities was made in the sociological discussion already in the 1800’s. The members of a status-based community belong to the group because of their origin or other status. In agreement-based communities, members are part of the group because of their own choice. (Lehtonen 1990, 33-35) Traditionally, communities were based on status. The disappearance of such traditional, close-knit communities has been a common concern already for decades or even for centuries (Lehtonen 1990, 20–22; Putnam 2000, 25), and the modern individualised society has often been seen as contrary to the traditional communities. However, present-day communities, at least in the context of cohousing, are based on agreement and individual choice. Space for individual differences and voices is valued by the residents.

If community in housing is understood primarily as functional and agreement-based community that is founded on direct interaction and individual choice, instead of a community based on status and shared ideology, at least two conclusions regarding physical space may be drawn. Firstly, for a functional community to develop there must be a spatial structure that enables encounters and interaction. Contacts, even at the modest level of seeing and hearing – being in the same space – are a prerequisite for developing more intense relationships (Gehl 2004, 15-19). Secondly, in a community based on individual choice, the possibility to control the level of privacy and community by spatial means is essential.

5. Residents' Experiences

Most interviewees felt that the amount of shared space they had was suitable to the needs of their group. At the extremes, however, some changes were wished for. The residents in a development with not much more than a common courtyard were happy with the existing spaces, and wished only for an atelier-type of space for work. Residents of a former school that had been remodelled into apartments struggled with too many common spaces. To cover the maintenance and heating costs, they rented out some spaces for various events of the neighbourhood. Neither of these extremes was originally designed to be community-oriented housing. The maintenance costs of extensive common facilities, including an indoor pool, were an inconvenience for some residents in another development where the architect – and not the residents themselves – had, to a great extent, decided what spaces were built.

In the new constructions that had been purposely designed as community-oriented housing, the spatial lay-out and the repertoire of shared spaces was typically a result of long participatory process. As a result, the spaces fitted the needs of common life very well. Some design issues, however, came up in discussions. More room for teenagers was perhaps the most wanted extra space. Some regretted that they had not built a workshop, others worried about the insufficient soundproofing of common space, which had led to limiting the use to certain hours. Apart from these, the spaces and the common life were well matched.

The interviews affirm the observation that shared spaces are essential in many ways. The residents described them as being an inseparable part of both private and common life. They described the role of shared spaces as follows:

Shared space as a meeting place and arena for communication

People meet each other in the shared spaces. Visits to private dwellings are also common, but most interaction takes place in the common areas. More specifically, many emphasized the role of informal shared space as an arena for social encounters:

“We meet most in the hallways”

“When I walked through the house, it took me a long time [...] I always met somebody.”

Spontaneous meetings with neighbours differ from arranged meetings with other friends and relatives, thus creating an additional level to social life. People described how they meet others spontaneously in the informal shared spaces, and how these encounters are important in developing and maintaining relationships.

“I just go outside to take the waste and then I end up sitting here for three hours chatting with people”

Common spaces and activities encourage communication. Especially for socially shy people, shared spaces offer an opportunity for easy communication. Being in the same, neutral space, allows communication to develop effortlessly. The neutrality of the space – that it is shared and not someone's private space – was an important factor in terms of facilitating communication.

“With the common rooms [...] communication just happens”

Shared space as an extension of a private dwelling

Shared spaces can extend the private sphere both spatially and functionally. Spatial extension means that the boundaries of a private dwelling do not determine the boundaries of what people consider home. Rather, many interviewees felt that the entire building or certain parts of it felt like home. In many developments, the private life was allowed to expand into semi-private spaces: furniture, plants, shoes and other belongings were placed outside the private door in the common areas. This was most visible in the bazaar-type of communities with an indoor connection.

Sharing spaces provides spatial flexibility through extra rooms to be occupied for shorter or longer periods, for example for guests or for work. Buffer zones between the private and public areas can meet temporary needs for extra space or seasonal changes, and bigger common spaces can be used for hosting parties and family celebrations. Furthermore, common spaces widen the scopes for action within the neighbourhood. Different kinds of leisure activities can take place in common spaces. In addition, laundries, workshops, children's rooms and such make everyday life easier for many.

Sharing the spaces creates a feeling of safety. In many communities – especially in the bazaar and stack-types – residents felt that it was unnecessary to lock the doors to private dwellings, and that locking the front door was enough. This, naturally, depends on the type and lay-out. The self-managed maintenance of common areas strengthens the feeling of home. Importantly, the interviewees emphasized the importance of taking part in the design, furnishing, cleaning and repairs of shared spaces.



Picture 13. “Our home is bigger than our house”

6. Conclusions

Our study shows that in terms of spatial configuration, there are various ways to realize community-oriented housing. It does not require one specific building typology or spatial layout. A strong sense of community among neighbours may evolve without extensive purpose-built common spaces. The featured spaces depend on the size, intentions and motives of the group as well as on the urban context. This paper presented five different spatial types.

However, some principles of spatial design were identified as key features in designing community-oriented housing. Spaces for meeting others in both arranged and unarranged encounters, and the possibility to control the level of privacy were the most important features. They are related to the design quality of the semi-private and semi-public spaces between the private and public spheres: pathways, gathering nodes, visual contacts, transition zones and formal common spaces. Theoretical discussion on the nature of community further

emphasizes the importance of spaces for encounters and the possibility to control privacy as part of a community that is based on direct interaction and individual choice.

The interviews with residents give insights into the role of shared space in the daily life. Two themes came up. Firstly, shared spaces provide an arena for social encounters and ease the communication. Especially the role of informal common spaces was emphasized. Secondly, shared spaces can extend the private dwelling both spatially and functionally.

This study hints that shared space embodies potential for tackling some of the biggest challenges in housing, including flexibility and social and ecological sustainability. The positive experiences reported in community-oriented housing encourage further study of the role and meaning of sharing spaces in all kinds of residential environments.

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The Role of Shared Space for the Building and Maintenance of Community: A longitudinal case study in Helsinki

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/DKybGcOCQWc>

Abstract

Despite 50 years of successful development history, cohousing has not yet become a ‘normal’ housing option. In the past decade, however, there has been increasing mainstream interest in these alternative housing models incorporating communal spaces and shared facilities. Interest is being supported by conferences (in Sweden, France, Germany, Finland and Scotland), networks (Coho/US, UK Cohousing Network, Cohousing Now, ICSA) and publications. However, the importance of shared spaces is often misunderstood. In this paper, I will discuss the role of communal space based on my PhD dissertation, *The Dwelling as a Psychological Environment* – research of 21 families who co-designed and partly built their dwellings and the communal house, on the outskirts of Helsinki, in 1981-1983. I argue that shared spaces are significant for the building and maintenance of community, but they have a dual role. The existence of a common house, for example, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the building of community and has positive and negative consequences, especially for gender roles and for residents involved in providing care. I will discuss the conclusions from my dissertation in terms of theories of space.

Paper: Not available



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From Original Homeland to 'Permanent Housing' and Back: The post-disaster exodus and reconstruction of South Taiwan's indigenous communities

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/pE3shGg5DQI>¹

Abstract

Landing on Taiwanese Father's Day (Aug. 8th) of 2009, typhoon *Morakot* is considered the most crushing disaster of the past decade in Taiwan. Its record-breaking precipitation engulfed many indigenous 'original homeland' located in the ecologically and culturally sensitive mountain areas of southern Taiwan. The State's post-disaster reconstruction policies took drastic measures to relocate many significant tribes from their 'traditional territories' in high mountains to lower lands and force tribes of different cultural ethnicities to live together as a larger community. Advised by a few large philanthropic NGOs, the policies skipped the provision of transitional housing, which allows the disaster-affected people to self-empower and make collective decisions for autonomous reconstruction, and directly built 'permanent houses' to accommodate tribal environmental refugees and disaster-induced migrants in exchange of the relinquishment of their endangered properties.

The controversial reconstruction policies evacuate many traditional territories and uproot tribal communities' attachment with ancestral lands on one hand, and on the other hand, force different tribes to live together and establish a new collective identity based on the government's administrative demarcation. Some of the Taiwanese indigenous tribes are originally organic communities of shared values and collaborative living, the double deprivations of their cultural identities after the catastrophe in the name of ecological sustainability have incurred continuous movements and reflections to restore or renew the concept of cultural sustainability through collective and individual actions. Some tribal members even take their own risks to move back to the impaired homeland and start a more cooperative and organic living with little resources and support from outside. This paper will investigate the on-going struggles both in the original homeland and the new permanent housing of a particular tribe, *Davaran*, and provide a particular post-disaster lens to look into the less-observed aspect of cohousing.

1. The contemporary tangle of indigenous community, intentional community, and compulsory community

Indigenous community is conceived to be a type of native inhabitants sharing common ancestry and their inherited ancestral lands, while manifesting cultural identity through recognized forms of language, belief, kinship, tribal practices and social system (Martinez-Cobo 1986/87). Yet it is more noteworthy that indigenous communities in contemporary situations are often associated with ethnic minorities who have been marginalized as their

¹ **Warning:** We apologise for an unfortunate loss of sound for about 10 minutes, midway through this video.

"traditional territories" become incorporated into state properties (Coates 2004) and are vulnerable to colonial domination, oppression, and exploitation. Indigenous community is evolved out of cultural and social continuity rather than planned according to shared values, therefore it differs from the concept of intentional community which is based on conscious collective decisions to develop an alternative community whose members hold common social, political, or spiritual vision and engage in communal daily practices (Christian 2003) - even though the cooperative, sharing, and autonomous characters and the scale of community of both types may be similar. Indigenous community can be self-regulated by its internal rules, but it is hardly a compulsory one whose members are forced into involuntary co-living circumstances due to political, disaster-affected, or other relevant causes. However, a compulsory community is not unlikely to foster a sense of community and identity in its own right, for instance, some of the Chinese communes under the communist regime after the Liberation demonstrated clear community values of socialist idealism.

Indigenous community in modern discourses is sometimes romanticized as a pre-modern setting where its inhabitants lives self-sufficiently and harmoniously with nature, or on the contrary, degraded as a backwater society which relies on welfare and education subsidy. Also, due to the ecologically sensitive locations of most traditional territories, indigenous communities are easily blamed as violators or plunderers of natural resources. The structural impact of globalization and climate change further deepens the unresolved conundrum of sustainability of indigenous communities, and often results in qualitative transformation of their status, particularly from settlement into exodus or individual emigrations. The effect of migration can lead to the split of indigenous communities and even to their fundamental changes into intentional communities or compulsory communities, depending on their structural contexts and whether the community members are able to make autonomous decisions in contingencies.

A resistant indigenous community can go so far to persist its cultural identity and integrity by acquiring tribal land claim and state-recognized autonomy, yet in dire circumstances an indigenous community may have no choice but to adapt to new conditions with limited resources to keep part of the original community as an identifiable whole. The proposition and implementation of intentional community can thus shed new light on the reconstruction or continuation of indigenous community. Even in some of the indigenous communities seized in urban diasporas, the idea of reinvigorating themselves as intentional communities of particular purposes can be self-empowering and -assuring. In the cases of post-disaster relocation and reconstruction, which more frequently land on the environmentally and socially vulnerable areas of indigenous communities, to restart the community as an intentional one is a bottom-up alternative to the state-led and efficiency-prioritized relief policies.

2. “There’s no such thing as a natural disaster” - disaster displacement of the socially underprivileged

As Smith rightly argues, “there’s no such thing as a natural disaster,” and “the contours of disaster and the difference between who lives and who dies is to a greater or lesser extent a social calculus” (Smith 2006). It is not coincidental that the socially underprivileged are also

the least blessed groups who are predisposed by location and ill fate to encounter disasters (Wisner 1998; Jones-Deweever and Hartmann 2006). A socially marginal status may infer an unstable and peripheral location that is poorly managed and deficient in hazard-prevention infrastructure. In many urban fringe areas, rural, indigenous, or foreign immigrants and migrant labor families settle in the ambiguous land of floodplains prone to floods or on the steep slopes of hillsides exposed to landslide risk in a search for basic subsistence or to avoid paying high urban rent (Saunders 2010; Brillembourg and Klumpner 2005). Some high-mountain and shoreline communities attempt to make a living in their remote original homelands at the risk of severe-weather threats yet with little input from governmental resources.

The socio-spatial correlation of the underprivileged with high-risk geographic locations aggravates the peril of the most susceptible citizens during and after a disaster. These same politically and environmentally vulnerable communities often are exposed to preemptive actions and requested to relocate themselves by government agencies whenever disaster warnings are issued. Eviction and displacement are consequently proposed and undertaken in the name of disaster prevention, yet the community network and life experiences associated with the time-evolved settlement identity are less valued or carelessly overlooked (Yang 2008). If disaster actually occurs in such settlements and the drastic actions gain legitimacy, the impacted groups are likely to be overwhelmed by the disaster itself as well as by the post-disaster policies, which preempt all self-empowerment possibilities under the efficiency rationales of reconstruction goals. In some cases, the influx of relief resources can also induce internal rivalry and conflict that may contribute to identity disintegration and doubly devastate the affected communities.

Of all the consequences caused by disasters, the loss of home and homeland are the most difficult to reconcile and cope with other than the loss of family members, simply because home is not only associated with a sense of material belonging but also is embedded in deep memories and emotional attachments (Flynn 2007; Wang 2003). This is particularly true when disaster-affected regions contain socially and culturally coherent communities with rooted traditions and intensive socio-spatial networks. In the aftermath of a disaster, displacement is a difficult ordeal for those who were once integral parts of local social entities but have to relinquish relationships as well as their homelands and move elsewhere.

However, Hugo (2010) reminds us that there are subtle differences between *environmentally motivated migrants*, *environmentally forced migrants*, and *environmental refugees*. He insists that we should carefully look into the nuances between mobility as a strategy for adapting to the impacts and displacements required when environmental deterioration becomes so extreme that people are forced to leave an area. The environmentally motivated migrants are likely to be more autonomous and prepared to look for the best resources and destination location for their exodus because they choose to move. In contrast, environmentally forced migrants might have no choice about having to move, but could retain some choice in the timing of the move. Therefore, timing is a critical factor to evaluate if the option of autonomous mobility is possible in disaster. But even environmental refugees may not be

perceived or treated as a powerless and voiceless lump of people passively following the dictates of a relief program.

Accordingly, post-disaster reconstruction must recognize the distinctive tracks of mobility and displacement, and differentiate between those communities that are environmentally motivated and have made collective decisions and preparations for the timing of migration and those groups who are suddenly hit by disasters and must operate in a lost world of contradictory choices with unknown outcomes. Yet the institutions responsible for disaster-relief programs sometimes generalize those who are self-organized and committed to the rebuilding their homelands as a group of refugees desperately seeking shelter. While governmental agencies or philanthropic groups actively reach out to disaster-affected people and attempt to allocate all possible resources for reconstruction, their primary concerns are usually safety, efficiency, and fairness. Affected communities, however, may prefer outcomes that enhance self-empowerment infused by individual and collective will rather than being patronized by bureaucrats with a different agenda. It takes more than housing to compensate for uprootedness, loss, and despair. Post-disaster reconstruction is not only about providing shelter and physical infrastructure but also is about rebuilding self-identity and reestablishing an identifiable position in the world, especially for those who after the disaster must involuntarily leave their homelands and become exiles.

To maximize the capacity of accommodation within limited available public land, policy makers and planners sometimes opt to concentrate affected communities and individuals of various backgrounds in the same facility. Regardless of cultural and social differences, the composition of new settlements is presupposed to be a smooth conflation of diverse social groups and individuals facing similar circumstances. Optimistically, all inhabitants of the new site are expected to assume a new identity and gradually resume regular living. Yet the mechanism needed for trans-cultural or trans-social interactions to develop this new identity relies on the intensity of community meeting and sharing on daily basis instead of a top-down program managed by an exogenous team. This new identity can hardly be complete replacement of the one associated with the original homeland, even if the traditional territory is unreachable after the disaster. Arguably, the spatial and mental connections with the original homeland should be meticulously maintained in the process of reconstruction and subsequent inhabitation – not as a response to the nostalgic call of an unrealistic and unattainable memory, but as a component of continuity in the construction of a new, coherent, and comprehensive identity.

3. Cultural identity and cultural sustainability in time of disaster

As ecological sustainability gradually obtains legitimacy and strong supports in environmental planning theories and practices, the other aspects of sustainability, especially social and cultural sustainability, are either overlooked or weighed down whenever these aspects are in conflicts. In the name of ecological sustainability and forestry resource protection, the agricultural and hunting activities which are vital for the subsistence of certain indigenous communities are strictly banned by the state's declaration of the traditional territory as national park or national forest.

But there is a misconception on the part of outsiders that indigenous activities and their use of natural materials for construction are detrimental to environmental sustainability. This assumption ignores the large-scale industrial modes of forest exploitation employed by the capitalistic political-economy. Quite the contrary, knowledge based on indigenous peoples' intimate relationship with nature and their close observations of nature's fluctuations and changes is a necessary supplementary to scientific interpretations of disaster's causes and effects. Although most post-disaster restoration efforts emphasize environmental recovery, cultural continuity needs to be recognized as being at least as much an indispensable aspect of sustainability, chiefly because indigenous knowledge can play a crucial role in strengthening community resilience (Jang and Lamendola 2006). Local knowledge about nature and culture, ecological and social structure, even disaster prevention is ingrained in the cultural identity of place. The significance of this place identity is obscured by presuppositions of modern scientific studies in time of disaster (Dekens 2007). Particularly during post-disaster reconstruction in tribal areas, local knowledge is fundamental for cultural as well as environmental sustainability.

The cultural identity of a community has evolved out of a process of shared living over multiple generations, which implies collaboration, mutual understanding, and assistance, as well as a common recognition of values and beliefs. This shared culture is indispensable for a vulnerable society to become better prepared and equipped as a self-organized group that can organize for disaster prevention. If disaster occurs, common values activate self-help mechanisms and transcend individual losses to envision collective goals of the future. Cultural identity also boosts the process of post-disaster recovery and regeneration if the community is still spatially bound together. Continuity of cultural identity can be sustained by a community's unremitting affiliation with the original homeland, however inaccessible that space may become. This affiliation can also stimulate new commitment to the reconstructed settlement wherever it may be. In the case of a mixed-background reconstruction community, fostering a shared identity is conducive to reinforcing the community's capacity to overcome disaster and promote reinvigoration, and engage in prevention of future disasters. It encourages inhabitants' participation, cross-difference collaboration, and a return to a more sustainable mode of living (Guan 2010). Therefore cultural planning plays a role that is at least coequal to the provision of a basic supply of relief housing.

Risks also can be perceived as opportunities, as the old Chinese idiom suggests, or what Allen (2009) describes as "silver linings" after hurricane Katrina hit the vulnerable Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans. Post-disaster reconstruction does create new prospects for some underprivileged communities and, with the aid of relief resources, provide new opportunities to improve the material and nonmaterial setting of otherwise deprived societies. Cultural planning in disaster-affected areas can be practiced as a community empowerment project that mobilizes the affected people's participation in public or shared spheres and in the decision-making process. From such a base, a post-disaster cultural identity can be nurtured.

4. Research and planning ethos

The following analysis and narrative are based on direct participation in discussions and decision making as well as observations and interviews in different locations related to post-disaster reconstruction during the process of an action planning¹ after the disaster of typhoon Morakot. The planning project was an autonomous volunteer action first initiated by the students and tutors of a practicum course of the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning (GIBP) at National Taiwan University, which was later partially sponsored by nongovernmental resources and attempted to cover less-attended issues of cultural identity and cultural planning in the course of reconstruction. As a project director, the author was able to take part in the daily affairs and reconstruction debates of the affected communities and to conduct an intentionally *emic* approach of cultural planning. Local knowledge, hands-on experiences, and community connections accumulated from intensive fieldworks are critical for the narrative and interpretive modes of this article; while governmental communiqué and an independent daily web news specifically dedicated to tracking the post-disaster situations are also important sources of the analysis. Due to the nature of action planning, sometimes decisions are made and directly put into operation with the involvement of the affected communities, yet the critical distance between the analytical dimension of research and the decision makers' value of action becomes ambiguous. Especially when the institution-led reconstruction projects and the grassroots level struggles are not yet concluded, it may not be appropriate to reckon up a comprehensive evaluation on such basis. Some of the findings are hence embedded in a more narrative than analytical structure to elucidate the research argument.

5. The exodus and reconstruction of Paiwan's and Lukai's indigenous communities after Typhoon Morakot

5.1 The aftermath of Typhoon Morakot

Landing on Taiwanese father's day (Aug. 8th) of 2009, typhoon Morakot is considered as the most crushing disaster of the past decade in Taiwan, which nearly toppled the Nationalist regime when the mass media exposed the inefficiency and impotence of its emergency rescue and disaster relief efforts. Its record-breaking precipitation² (Figure 1) engulfed many indigenous settlements and their traditional territories, which were located in the ecologically and culturally sensitive mountain areas of southern Taiwan. The relentless storm transformed what the indigenous tribes regarded as their revered forests and rivers into their worst enemies and shattered their homesteads overnight. Altogether Morakot caused 699 deaths and missing, collapsed 1766 houses, and displaced 6316 households (19,191 people). Three fourths of the

1 Action planning here indicates a mode of cultural planning that engages in participatory processes of decision making and direct implementation of initiated projects. Its goals are not only to produce a general planning report based on objective value, analysis, and evaluation, but also to motivate autonomous community actions and empowerment stimuli. The planning process can also be modified or enriched through multiple levels of action.

2 The total precipitation generated by typhoon Morakot amounts to almost 80 percent of the annual average rainfall. The 24-hour precipitation (1623.5 mm) and 48-hour precipitation amount (2361 mm) in the Alishan area almost reaches the world record.

households listed for immediate relocation or reconstruction were concentrated in the mountainous territories of the indigenous tribes (Chen and Liu 2011).

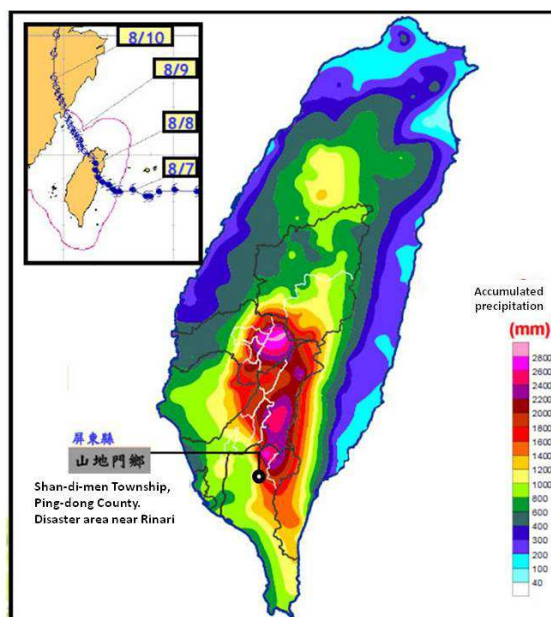


Figure 1. The route and accumulated precipitation of typhoon Morakot

Most of the tribal villages are located in the high-mountain forests where the indigenous people refer to as traditional territories before the Japanese colonial administration and later the Nationalist regime laid claim to these land. Some of the tribal seniors can still recall the boundaries of their traditional territories, the sacred and taboo spaces, the hunting grounds, and the water courses within the forests. It is not just a cliché that most of the indigenous wisdoms respect nature as an integral part of its practitioners' identities. Rather it is evident that ethnoscientific beliefs are abided by and practiced in peoples' daily lives. But the drastic weather events, along with deforestation for cultivation and logging that have occurred in recent decades, have resulted in extreme instability of tribal lands and caused a few cases of spontaneous *push* outmigration. The impact of modernization and urbanization has also prompted *pull* migration to take advantage of the better opportunities for education and income found elsewhere.

Younger generations of the tribal communities constantly struggle between staying in the original homelands and finding new possibilities in the city. Their strong identities gradually dissolve once they are subsumed into the urban educational system and detach themselves from daily use of their mother tongues. Some of the tribal members, who were conscious of such dilemmas, initiated movements such as Reclaiming Tribal Lands, Legitimizing Tribal Naming, and Legislating Indigenous Autonomy well before the Morakot disaster.

Typhoon Morakot epitomized these long-term struggles, brought latent tensions to the surface, and expedited the processes of claiming autonomy on the one hand yet toning down tribal subjectivities on the other due to forced migration from their traditional territory. Resistance discourses against the incorporative powers of the regime and the philanthropic sector centered around issues of guarding the original homeland – a culturally significant place that

became ecologically unsound after the disaster. The government followed the suggestions of academic and professional experts and decided to demarcate the seriously impaired and potentially dangerous areas in the impacted region where displacement would be strictly enforced.¹ Relocation sites were chosen from available public property or from the properties of former government monopolies, but the proximity of such locations to the mountains and the tribal homelands could not be guaranteed. Article XX of the “*Special Act for Post-Typhoon Morakot Disaster Reconstruction*” (Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council 2009) states that “the contractors of reconstruction projects in an affected area shall duly respect the organization, culture and lifestyle of the local people and communities (tribes).” But the legislation is vague about how this sensitivity is to be practiced and in what tangible ways it should be expressed. Based on the reports and articles in independent media of *88news.org Daily*, incidents of disrespect are ever present.²

Of all the displacement cases caused by the Morakot typhoon, Rinari has been one of the most symbolic and contentious reconstruction projects because it encompasses building reconstruction housing for three indigenous tribes: Magazaya, Kucapungane, and Davaran. The government has considered the reconstruction housing and relocation project as a remarkable success. But the tribal people have had markedly different views. Although some indigenous laborers were recruited for the construction of Rinari, very few tribal members were able to participate in the decision-making process that planned and carried out their communities’ displacement, relocation, and material reconstruction. This situation mirrors a larger post-disaster reality – the inherent problem of institution-driven relief and reconstruction programs is always the functional exclusion of the affected underprivileged people and their local knowledge in policy making and planning, even in the most emblematic case of Rinari.

5.2 One relocation site, three relocated tribes of different tribal identities and preconditions

The Magazaya tribe (of Paiwan ethnicity) was able to sustain itself in the mountains even though the road connecting the tribal homeland with the outside was washed away and impassable for several weeks after severe landslide caused by Morokot. The Davaran tribe (also of Paiwan ethnicity) was relocated quickly to the underused military barracks of Longchuan due to an imminent landslide threat, while the Kucapungane tribe (of Lukai ethnicity) had already been relocated to the deserted military barracks of Ai-liao since 2007 because several typhoon-induced floods between 2001 and 2007 had ravaged their homeland and reduced it to an uninhabitable state. Later the three tribes were relocated “permanently” together to the lower plateau at Rinari (the former Majia Farm, see Figure 1 for its location) as a new settlement. But each tribe’s relocation context and the condition of three original homelands after the disaster were somewhat different. These disparities gradually surfaced in

¹ According to the Article XX of the “*Special Act for Post-Typhoon Morakot Disaster Reconstruction*” (Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council 2009), for land in an affected area that is endangered or unlawfully used for construction, the government may, after reaching an accord with the original residents, classify it as a special zone that restricts residence or may order that the local residents relocate their residences, or relocate entire villages, and may grant appropriate accommodation elsewhere.

² For instance, see the reports by He (2011a) and Ke (2011).

a variety of tensions and struggles in the process of reconstruction and the practice of everyday life in Rinari.

The Magazaya tribal village was not diagnosed as a high-risk area, but its tribal members were eligible for the relocation housing in Rinari mainly because the site used to be part of the Magazaya's traditional territory before the Japanese colonial administration expropriated the area for sugar cane cultivation. When the Kucapungane tribe emigrated from their riverside homeland to the military barracks in 2007, the government did consider relocating them permanently to the Majia Farm as the sole occupants. Despite taking several years in planning this resettlement, acquisition of the required land from the monopolistic Taiwan Sugar Company was unsuccessful. In the era governed by the Nationalist regime, the Magazaya tribe could not reclaim their territory from the government either. But the recognizable landscape damage caused by Morakot gave the Magazaya tribe an immediately rightful standing and claim on a share of the relocation housing in Rinari.

The Kucapungane had gone through a tribal exodus from their original high-mountain homeland of Kochapongane to a riverside territory between 1977 and 1979, and the site was designated by the government as a safe location. More than 400 inhabitants of 127 households had finally developed a sense of homeland after three decades of residency during which they had transformed concrete block housing into culturally identifiable tribal homesteads. When they were relocated to the barracks, most of the people did not bring their belongings due to the extremely limited spaces allocated for their "temporary" accommodations. During Morakot, the entire village was washed away by the mighty river except for the spire of the collapsed church. All their belongings and precious cultural artifacts, which had been left in the village, were buried under mud and water. Unlike other affected tribal villages that still clung to their slopes and terraces, the homeland of Kucapungane was forever gone from sight and they became environmental refugees. Yet ironically, the *old* original homeland of Kochapongane was physically intact by comparison though only one family remained in the high mountains (Figure 2).



Figure 2. The washed-out riverside territory of Kucapungane (top) compared with the intact original homeland of Kochapongane (bottom) after Morakot (Photographs by the author, May 2010.)

The Davaran tribal village was heavily damaged and rendered nearly uninhabitable and inaccessible after the Morakot torrent, but the Davaran was one of the few tribes that refused to have their homeland classified as a special disaster zone by the government. The Davaran did recognize the landslide danger long before Morakot struck and had debated whether they should initiate an autonomous exodus to a safer place. The land that they considered to be environmentally and culturally suitable was not available. But Morakot immediately changed their status from potential environmentally motivated migrants to environmentally forced migrants. When the Majia Farm was designated as a Morakot relocation site, the Davaran chose to take this place as an alternative for their overdue autonomous exodus. Since they were best known for their arts and crafts talents and skills, the Davaran even traded in many truckloads of driftwood as a preparation for future construction in their new homeland. But subsequent development did not go their way.

When most of the affected Davaran were temporarily sheltered in the Long-chuan military barracks, they were able to engage in tribal meetings and religious rituals. On these occasions, there were many debates on whether they should move to Majia Farm when the reconstruction was completed or whether there were other options. Some of the Davaran families, living in the small subdivided compartments of the original barracks without proper heating and sound proofing installations and deprived of the possibility to farm, suffered a great deal from homesickness and the loss of privacy. This was especially for elderly tribal members. Nearly every month one senior, who had survived the disaster, passed away in the "military days." They realized later that they could not adopt the traditional mode of stone-slab roofing and hand-carved column-and-beam structure to build themselves their own "permanent houses" at Majia Farm. Without building permits signed by registered architects, and with each house size and lot predetermined and planned by professionals, the Davaran had no possibility of building houses of their own choice.

Many aspects of life in transitional housing proved to be unsatisfactory from the Davaran tribe's perspective. The military barracks were not designed to shelter families with belongings. The structures available could only accommodate 118 out of 174 Davaran households in need of transitional housing because half the site was still in use as a military base. Bath and toilet facilities were shared by many families, and meals were prepared in a public dining area – an indigenous community became a compulsory community in an extreme situation. Despite its forced situation, the transitional setting was unexpectedly communal and cooperative. The boundary between the military and indigenous daily activities was fuzzy, and conflicts between the military and civilians were numerous (Ke 2010). Individuals and families sheltered in the military barracks were required for security reasons to check in and out with guards whenever they passed through the camp gates, and this "confined" condition sometimes triggered volatile confrontations. But at the same time the entire compound was also a wide open space for children to run around in and play. The tribal women and seniors often sat on their front porch to escape claustrophobic and hot interior spaces and to make handicrafts or simply chat. Rigid military expectations about public decorum relaxed considerably during the evening hours when children were out of school and able to hang out in the field. There was an after school learning center sponsored by the

Presbyterian Church, and it could have been a special “language nest” facility (Aguilera and LeCompte 2007) that would give these tribal children an opportunity to learn tribal language and traditions outside the public school system. Most children were enthusiastic about the frequent visits by volunteer college students from afar, and some of their parents and young adults viewed such encounters as having potential long-term and positive impacts on the youth of the community, opportunities that would otherwise have been rare had they stayed in the mountains.

The Kucapungane tribe’s experience at the Ai-liao military barracks was beyond minimum tolerance. Not only did the Kucapungane find their allocated living spaces to be too small, the toilets too distant, the sound insulation nonexistent, and the interiors easily flooded whenever it rained hard, but they suffered a great deal from inhaling the unpleasant odors from a nearby pig farm. But by far the worst feature of their pre-typhoon stay at Ai-liao was the state of limbo in which their relocation to Majia Farm could not be materialized. Bureaucratic indifference dissolved only when the Morakot disaster completely washed out their riverside territory and material possessions and brought the validity of their land claim into the public spotlight. So deep seated was the sense of mistreatment among the Kucapungane tribe that as soon as relocation was completed, even if they were grateful for inhabiting new houses and leaving the military days for good, they sued the government for damage to and compensation for the loss of their treasured possessions (Zhang 2011).

5.3 Exchanging original homelands for permanent houses?

In Taiwan's previous reconstruction policies following natural disasters, providing transitional housing to victims was prioritized. The core debate about the post Morakot reconstruction is whether relief and recovery policies should skip providing transitional housing and opt to build permanent houses for the affected people (Feng 2009b). The experiences of the military days affirmed that if the existing barracks were to be considered as a temporary shelter, then the term should have been short; and if utilized as transitional housing, inhabitability should be the minimum requirement.

Several reasons compelled the governmental administrators to take an opposite position of constructing new transitional housing after the Morakot typhoon: (1) the government did not have enough land to build transitional and permanent housing at the same time, and the construction of permanent housing had the highest priority; (2) living in the transitional housing would delay the decision-making process and the progress of reconstruction; (3) facilities at the military barracks could be improved to make them suitable for transitional housing; and (4) disaster-affected people could rent whatever housing they preferred as an alternative (He 2011b).

The official argument did not convince the tribal people for a variety of reasons: firstly, tribal members were accustomed to making collective decisions through tribal meetings rather than pursuing individual options. Renting individually, even with a rent subsidy, was not an option for them; secondly, without major structural transformation, military bungalow barracks were not acceptable as transitional family housing; thirdly, concerns about the quality and stability of future homesteads, their livelihood, job opportunity, and daily subsistence, troubled many

tribal members; and lastly, tribal families wanted decent transitional housing as a stopgap so normal family and community life could resume before conditions at their original sites stabilize and permit better assessment as to whether they should reconstruct at the original sites or relocate.

Such discrepancies in the thinking about reconstruction between government agencies and affected citizens revealed a fundamental issue: in the name of efficiency, the decisions of government officials tended to overlook benefits of transitional housing. From the bureaucratic perspective, the shorter the transitional period, and the quicker permanent housing was established, the more effective and efficient the reconstruction process was considered to be. Excessive time spent on transitional housing and discussions with disaster victims about the nature of future tribal housing simply deferred the recovery process. But the rush to complete reconstruction quickly also removed tribal members from meaningful engagement in the decision-making process that dramatically affects the quality of their future. Short-term efficiency does not always translate into long-term effectiveness.

The governmental discourse and policy of providing "free" permanent housing, on the surface, rationalized returning ecologically sensitive land in the mountains to nature after the disaster and managing them through the Department of Forestry Affairs. This meant that the traditional territories and homelands of many indigenous tribes would be "protected and managed" by government agents. Government agencies would promise the tribal people permanent housing, which involved no ownership of the land, in an exchange deal that required them to leave their devastated homelands forever. In the lower lands where the permanent housing was constructed, there would be no guaranteed farmland or job opportunities, not to mention hunting and burial grounds and other tribal sacred places. Relocation was a serious decision that could not be rushed in a perplexed situation, and without an adequate supply of transitional housing the tribal people could only choose between the military barracks and the promised permanent housing with a package that required relinquishment of traditional rights and resources.

5.4 A compulsory community according to the vision of the philanthropic sector?

Immediately after the disaster, the government was prompt in allocating different displacement zones to various large philanthropic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including the Tzu Chi Foundation, World Vision, the Red Cross, the Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM) Foundation, among other charitable groups. These institutions were able to raise considerable donations to directly undertake many of the responsibilities of physical reconstruction. The government secured land resources and facilitated other administrative processes such as guaranteeing the legality of land use and carrying out environmental impact analyses. The NGOs appointed certified architects to engage in building housing. To a certain degree, this mechanism was indeed more efficient than the government's omnipresence in all affected areas, and the humanitarian NGOs were often more sympathetic to and sensitive about the situations of the affected people than the administrative technocrats. But many of the large NGOs are associated with religious values and codes, and their political influence on the government is extensive. Sometimes the NGOs might have crossed the line of government

administration and became the major decision makers and players of the reconstruction. There were even some controversies regarding how one religious NGO insinuated certain values and living codes into its newly established community composed of various tribal groups who had to practice an everyday life that was contradictory to their original cultures and traditions (Fan 2010; *Liberty News* 2010).

The Tzu Chi Foundation proposed that the government should directly build permanent houses for the affected people, and, according to their previous relief experiences, safe and high quality housing could be built within three weeks once the available land was acquired (Feng 2009a). The ad hoc reconstruction council, although having obtained prefabricated containers for transitional housing, decided to adopt the permanent housing mode for reconstruction and suggested that other NGOs should follow suit. The architect of World Vision, Hsieh Ying-Jun, commissioned to design housing for Rinari's construction, admitted that the houses he originally designed and built for transitional accommodation directly became permanent housing when the government changed the policy to build permanent housing instead (Hsieh 2011).

The tribal communities were concerned about the ownership of land and property, because they had been exploited again and again by different colonial and political regimes. In many ways the tribes are the most sharing communities in Taiwan, and some of the best practices of communal living and management can only be found in tribal territories. The use value of land and houses is more appreciated by tribal folk than is their exchange value. But when tribal families learned that accepting permanent housing came without ownership of the land or the property value the houses represented, tribal activists felt that they had been exploited again.

Compared with arranging transitional housing units at a temporary site, a permanent housing site needs to fulfill extra requirements including supporting infrastructure and accessibility to education, medical care, and economic opportunities. Even more important is a sustainable site plan, which invariably means an ecologically sound approach to preserve to a maximum extent the existing trees, plants, and species and to uphold the stability of topography and hydrology by minimum clearing. But the actual reconstruction site plans showed little consideration of any aspect of reconstruction beyond dwellings. With the construction of houses accommodating 483 households from different tribes, the negative impacts of policy makers' pursuit of efficiency became evident.

Hsieh regards that the permanent houses on Majia Farm are transitional housing with better standards than the prefabricated one. With pitched roof and semi-detached plan, the housing's overall appearance resembles an American suburban setting or a resort area. The inhabitants are allowed to modify the exterior of the houses with tribal decorations and flexible uses of the front porches (Figure 3). This is a settlement-type social housing that many planning activists yearn for, but many tribal activists do not identify with the Rinari housing outcome as reflecting what they fought for. This is particularly true of the cultural leader of the Davaran tribe. He had a strong vision of the new settlement and had drawn up many intricate plans for reconstruction, including housing, tribal classrooms, agricultural farms, arts and crafts

workshop spaces, tribal centers for the elderly and the young, and so on. But since he was not a certified planner and architect, his tribal self-building plan was not accepted. He did not join his tribal folks and settle in the new settlement because on one hand, “it is a place without soul” (Pavavalung 2011), and on the other hand he could not be accommodated due to the large size of his family. The latter is an unresolved problem in many households with multiple descendant families, since the new housing has only one standard size of 106 m². Without breaking the structure up into multiple units, many family members need to find lodging elsewhere. For many tribal members, Rinari is still a compulsory community which they are forced to accept only because most of their clans are accommodated there.



Figure 3. Two basic types of permanent houses in Rinari (top) and the adaptive use of front porches as workshop spaces (bottom) (Photographs by the author, 07 November 2011.)

5.5 Sustaining cultural identities in a compulsory community

The Davaran tribe went through difficult internal struggles over whether they would lose their endangered homeland once they signed the permanent housing contracts with the government. There was a deep-seated lack of trust in the tribal communities towards the state. At the same time, they also argued that as an integral tribe, all members should adopt common actions. The discussion of autonomous migration and rejection of the governmental proposals resurfaced repeatedly, but the tribe was not able to secure a large tract of land to which the entire tribe could move. When the tribal meeting finally decided to move into Majia Farm, a few dissidents chose to follow their own will and move back to the mountains at their own risks.

In contrast, the Magazaya tribe happily accepted the permanent housing offered, since they could still return to and live in their partially damaged homeland in the mountains. Through an

unpredictable turn of history, they eventually were able to establish their habitat in their traditional territory of Majia Farm. The permanent housing for them is like extra living units of emergency shelter or disaster-eluding housing.

The Kucapungane tribe could not be more relieved when they held the keys to and opened the doors of their new homes in Majia Farm after three years of confinement in the Ai-liao barracks. Besides being relocated in Majia Farm, they simply had no other options except to return to their remote and nearly inaccessible old homeland in the far mountains. They quickly settled in and recuperated from their transitional misery. Many small workshops for women were organized to reinstate traditional arts and crafts production. Yet there were a few issues surrounding their adaptation to the new environment. After the first tribal senior passed away in Majia Farm, people soon realized there was no burial ground near the new settlement. Because the old original homeland of Kochapongane is unreachable by automobiles, they had to bury the senior in another tribe's traditional territory or place the cremated ash in a temple, which is unorthodox for a tribal burial culture. This was rather difficult to accept for a tribe with a strong dignity and identity, but it was an aspect of culture ignored in the post-disaster planning of permanent housing. The burial ground is always an integral part of tribal territory and a source of identity affiliation, and in terms of post-disaster cultural sustainability it has become a crucial issue for a comparatively vulnerable community.

The insufficiency of farmland is another concern, not only because farming is an economic activity but also is an ordinary habit practiced daily by many tribal seniors. Without direct and productive contact with the earth, some tribal seniors seem to be lost in an unfamiliar land. In the case of Kucapungane, the tribal families were never able to recover most of their belongings from the landslide and it was hard for them to shake off the feeling of living in some other tribe's territory. They need to engage in certain familiar activities of which farming is essential to help them get through the uprooted and deprived sensation and identify further with their new homeland.

The clash of different ethnicities and tribes living in the same domain is not always obvious, and tribes do share many commonalities in terms of culture and religion. Subdivided into three living clusters (Kucapungane: 177, Davaran: 174, and Magazaya: 132 households, Figure 4), the Rinari tribes are spatially independent but connected by a major thoroughfare. They also will share a future elementary school and some public facilities placed in spaces between their tribal neighborhoods. Yet they were confronted by the issue of establishing place names immediately after settling into their new residences, including street names and the name of their new joint settlement. According to Potteiger and Purinton, naming is "an act of possession and a desire to fix the unpredictability and indeterminacy," and the act of naming will "bestow an identity" (Potteiger and Purinton 1998, 75). The chieftain of Magazaya claimed right to name the settlement Rinari, the original name of Majia Farm in the Paiwan language. This claim was accepted without dispute by the other two tribes because Rinari symbolizes lily, a flower of chasteness shared by the three tribes, and because the chieftain's family was the traditional owner of the land. But the naming of the main thoroughfare did not achieve an agreement in cultural representation and finally the tribes had to compromise on World Vision Road. This was acceptable because it gave credit to the NGO responsible for the

construction of the permanent housing. Naming the planned elementary school also challenged the traditional symbol system of the three tribes, and again the compromised title was Evergreen Lily, which honored the donator Evergreen International Corporation and the tribes' shared sacred flower.

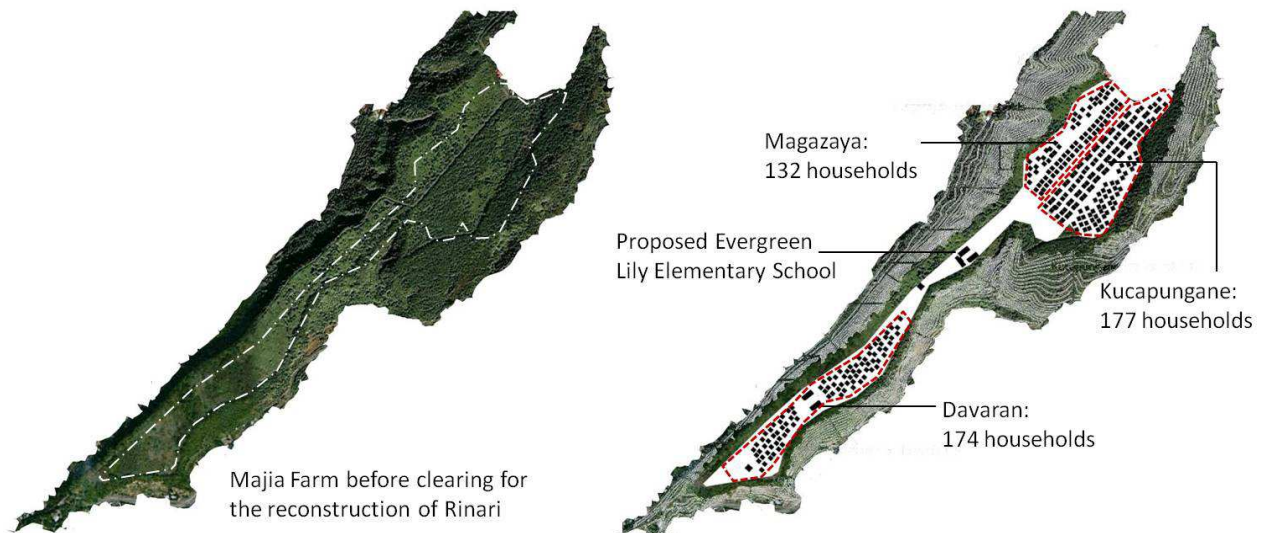


Figure 4. Comparison of the lush Majja Farm before the reconstruction (from Google Maps) and the layout plan of Rinari with the distribution of permanent houses for three relocated tribes

Claiming the right to establish place names is a big issue in traditional tribal communities, but the abovementioned process of naming was carried out successfully by a new cross-tribal council (Three Village Inter-Tribal Association) composed of various delegates from each tribe. This mechanism is unusual because it stands for a more comprehensive idea of “public” and “democratic” outside the social hierarchy of each independent tribe. However rudimentary this democracy may seem, it does exhibit a recognizable desire for intertribal collaboration and cooperation. It is also a sign of the transformation of a fragmented tribal society into a nascent urban system or a cohesive habitat into a cultural ecotone. This reflects a community that values an organic “niche” society of coexistence despite the territorialization of each independent tribal habitat (Kang 2011). The Inter-Tribal Association has become a major and nearly-autonomous decision-making board in Rinari, advised by World Vision. Its role as a cross-boundary organization is a self-empowerment attempt conducive to the development of a more resilient and inclusive community.

5.6 Homeward bound - intentional community as new indigenous community?

Though declared by the state as a highly hazardous area and inhibited from living and farming, the Davalan homeland is considered by most tribal members as the cultural root that will never be severed. Starting out as two families of the Davaran tribe who declined the permanent housing offer and decided to move back to the original homeland against the oppositions of many tribal members and the government, gradually more families and individuals followed their steps to repair the forsaken homeland. Estimated eight households are now sharing their daily lives in the homeland, not to count those who travel back and forth every day between Rinari and Davaran to resume farming (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5 The few families who have returned Davaran homeland and resumed traditional shared living (Photographs by the author, 21 September, 2012.)

The post-disaster living in the remote high mountains is extremely hard and isolated for these determined families, but they soon start cultivating the traditional food of millet, taro, and other crops and reinstating the traditional stone-slab bee farm to extract honey. This "shared farm" (Fig. 6) is conceived as an inception of autonomous homeland reconstruction and a continuity of tribal identity. They believe that the organic farming according to the ancestral wisdom and knowledge can bring together ecological and cultural sustainability. Supported by limited budget from another small humanitarian organization, they also restore the traditional crafts of stone-slab house construction and experiment shared kitchen and dining. They also revived the authentic harvest festival after the first crop season and instilled a new spirituality into the slowly recovered homeland. Through conscious collective decision-making and autonomous cooperative actions, this home-retuning indigenous community has somewhat resembled an intentional community.

But the struggles and challenges of living in the damaged homeland have hardly retreated. The original elementary school has collapsed, the children of these families enter a new experiment of home-schooling with the helps from a few volunteer teachers on and off. Though they are blessed with a rare opportunity to practice traditional arts-and-crafts and learn from the elders in the farming field in their mother tongue, the parents do not want to deprive them of their future options in higher education. As one of the children reaches 12 years old in 2013, his high-school education becomes a serious issue in the mountains. These families also confront disapproval from their tribal members for being the dissident against general tribal decisions. And they know very well that they are living in the fragile land at

their own risks. They are more alert about any disaster warning, but they can never sever the umbilical cord with the land where "they bury their navels."



Fig. 6 Organic farming in the "shared farm" of Davaran homeland
(Photographs by the author, 13, April, 2013.)

6. Root or route? Temporary leaving, permanent staying

On one evacuation trip down from the mountains of Davaran homeland prior to another typhoon warning in 2011, I shared the seat in the back of a pick-up truck with the two families who had to flee again to stay safe. Before departure, the senior *ina* (female elder) prayed for all of us in the rain for a safe journey. Then she sat down peacefully on the floor of the truck. It was dark and stormy, but everyone in the truck was calm and happy. Then the kids started to sing all the way down. I was drenched but it was an unforgettable episode which reminded me again and again that nothing could take them away from home and the homeland that they held dear. There might be a contradiction between ecological sustainability and cultural sustainability in modern world, but somehow there exists certain local wisdom which used to bind them together as one belief. Such belief also roots people deep down in their homeland with irreplaceable affection and attachment. It is not to be ridiculed as irrational nostalgia, instead it should be understood, respected, and evaluated as an alternative way of living even in the disaster-affected conditions.

But cultural identity is more than rooting in a bounded place, it is a dynamic sense of belonging continuously shaped and reshaped by the practices of everyday life and by endless efforts of resolving conflicts and contractions within. And a rooted homeland can be open to the wider world by navigating narrative routes of experiences, events, and knowledge which may traverse its fixed boundary and by encountering and interacting with the different others to approach a more inclusive and fair society, whether in an indigenous community, a compulsory community, or an intentional community.

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Community Facilities in Korean Apartment Buildings: Post-occupancy evaluation (POE) and analysis

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Abstract

Over the last five decades, South Korea has undergone massive industrialisation and urbanisation. To meet increased housing need, Government authorities have mass produced extensive amounts of high-rise, high density housing, which has become the prototypical residential building type in Korea. Only in the last decade, have purpose-designed community facilities been provided in an attempt to meet social needs, improve the quality of life of residents and to reverse the trend of quantity over quality.

Recently however, particular architect-designed community facilities implemented without consideration of their function, let alone a systematic management plan, have caused problems. Furthermore, there has been little or no follow-up research. This paper reviews the operation and management of community facilities within two apartment complexes, presents analysis based on post-occupancy evaluation, and proposes desirable alternatives. Data collection methodology included a survey of residents and in-depth interviews of Head Managers of the projects. The results of the analysis can be summarized as follows:

1. A professional manager of community facilities is necessary.
2. Residents need to be given the opportunity to participate in management.
3. It is essential to implement social programs in conjunction with local communities.

Paper: See P532



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Communication, Culture and Difference: Studies in collaborative communication for communitarian sustainability in the Brazilian Amazon

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/isW2RC-u3Us>

Abstract

We live, globally, in a unique moment; one that invites reflection and action for change as part of the Great Turning from an industrial growth society to a life-sustaining society (Joanna Macy). The complex problems that have delivered planetary crisis in its various levels are associated with lifestyles that can be seen as concrete expressions of modes of meaning production in Western culture, which are marked by a binary logic. This worldview establishes hierarchies between pairs of opposites, without recognition of interdependence. The processes of social communication prevailing today, which don't favour dialogue and plurality, are also expressions of this logic. These complex problems point to the urgent need for a creative reinvention of worldviews, lifestyles, and, specifically, communication processes that may contribute to plurality, peace, sustainability and resilience.

In this paper, we outline two interdependent aspects of ongoing PhD work in Communication and Culture: (i) at the theoretical level, a review of disciplinary modes of meaning production and the binary logic of separation, recognising its fundamental expression in human/nature relationship; (ii) at the action research level, we present the experience of a community of learning and practice in collaborative communication, through survey, experimentation and the sharing of communication processes that express other logics and facilitate a sustainable and collaborative culture based on interdependence and empathy.

The sharing takes place at *Céu do Mapiá Village*, an intentional community located in the Purus National Forest, Amazon State, Brazil. The community was created in 1983 by traditional people as a result of the communitarian work developed since 1974 by rubber-tappers and other rural workers motivated and united by the Santo Daime (*ayahuasca*) spiritual tradition. The community's purpose is to experience human development within a new communitarian living system, nourished by the Forest, as an experimental alternative seeking solutions to the current global crisis. Nowadays, due to its spirituality and ecological-communitarian purpose of honouring the Forest, people from different parts of Brazil and other countries live in Mapiá, creating fertile ground for the interaction of the empirical knowledge of the Forest people with the other experiences of residents, visitors and collaborators with different cultural backgrounds.

Paper: Coming



Ana Carolina Beer Simas has a Masters in Communication and Culture from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Brazil, and has been a Lecturer at the Federal University of Viçosa since 2001. Her on-going PhD is a participatory action research project in the Purus National Forest of the Amazon, facilitating a community of learning and practice in 'Collaborative Communication for Communitarian Sustainability'- part of the effort to offer the EDE curriculum in the Amazon in 2013. Ana lives in a small intentional community and is involved in the Transition Towns movement in her town.

Resident Participation in Community Gardening to Revitalize a Sense of Community: A pilot project in Seoul, South Korea

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/ujYQIo_okvE

Abstract

Over the last half century, South Korea has been one of the most rapidly developing countries, changing from an agricultural, to an industrial, and then, to an information based society. Due to rapid economic development and urbanisation, the supply of high-rise condominiums has played an important role in meeting a severe long-term housing shortage in urban areas. Homeownership of new condominiums has enabled families to accumulate assets. But financial profit available in the housing market has caused high residential mobility which has reduced a sense of neighbourhood and community. Strengthening a diminishing sense of community has become a major social issue. Local government has started to act to revitalise a sense of community with the participation of the residents.

Seoul Metropolitan City has just started a Community Garden project to revitalise regional communities. It is an experimental project involving 21 out of 25 Gu districts in Seoul. Typically, an abandoned piece of land is selected and a community park planned with the voluntary participation of local residents. The object of the project is to bring out common interests of the residents and to activate a sense of community through participation in the project – transforming a discarded place into a green garden.

The authors of this paper have been involved in the brainstorming stage of a Gu (Dongjak-Gu) project located near their university and guided the whole process. This pilot project started in March and will be completed in October, 2012. The aim of the paper is to illustrate the process, with a focus on the drawing, the voluntary participation of residents, perceptions of the purpose of the project, decision making amongst the participants, and complementing the plan. Contents of the research are as follows:

1. Residents' understanding of community gardens.
2. Resident involvement in decision making.
3. Residents' concerns about community governance.

The three concepts, 'local', 'community' and 'green' are promoted through this pilot project, planting a seed of meaningful change that will strengthen a sense of community and improve sustainability through caring, participating, self-help and social cohesion. Hopefully it will spread to other communities in Seoul as well as other cities in Korea.

Paper not available



Kuee Sook Suh, PhD is a professor at the Soong-sil University, Seoul, Korea. She has studied at the Catholic University, Hong-ik University in Seoul and also in the Department of Architecture, Kyoto Institute of Technology in Japan. She has worked as a guest-researcher at the Architecture School, Waseda University, Japan and researched in Sydney, Australia. She has been teaching architecture and interior design and currently conducts research into community gardens with resident participation for the Seoul Metropolitan Government.



Jae Soon Cho, PhD is a professor at the Korea National University of Education. She has participated in developing a national curriculum and writing textbooks on home economics education for 5th - 12th grades. She currently teaches and conducts research on the micro-sociology of housing and housing education. She has been involved in many formal educational research subjects related to sustainable living as well as in State and Local Agenda21 with the belief that education could make the world a better place to live for all.

Affirming a Filipino Spiritual Culture of Trust: A model of people empowerment in Isla Verde, Batangas City

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/gbL77PMlzYc>

Abstract

This paper considers the ways in which the people of Isla Verde come together and interact over extended periods. Firstly, it offers a brief description of the island in terms of its physical and socio-economic dimensions. The significant implications (for family, government, religion, education and business, in both the formal and informal sectors) of the Filipino spiritual culture of trust (*tiwala*) are then considered in terms of environmental protection, and individual and community empowerment. It is a phenomenological study using the culturally-rooted “*pamamaybay*” approach (Odal, 2001), i.e. ‘*kapwa-oriented*’ research. *Pamamaybay* is a reflective journey towards a full understanding of trust (*tiwala*).

Isla Verde’s biodiversity is amongst the highest anywhere. The island is well known internationally as a “Centre of Marine Biodiversity in the World” and locally as a peaceful and harmonious community. People on the island exhibit aspirations, achievements, creativity, well-being and positive responses to the many challenges and circumstances of their life.

This research has led to the discovery and appreciation of characteristics of the Isla Verde people, particularly, peace and happiness in their personal and community life. This brings people hope and cultivates aspirations for their social well-being. This spiritual culture of trust has inspired the people to be empowered to work on the attainment of their deepest hopes. Empowerment is complementary to social development. Social well-being is key to social development and the primary means to this is identification of the goal, “*What kind of nation do we want for our future generations?*”

1.0 Introduction

Filipinos have their own spiritual culture. It is an “intangible” reality - an integrated cultural value embedded in their collective unconscious and in their lives. This Filipino spiritual culture of trust is a way of embracing life. Despite the many innovations in lifestyle, there are Filipinos who have remained attached to the indigenous ways early communities lived and shared together. There are still people who have less access to basic needs but have been living a good life. This has inspired the researcher to consider the “trust” that holds people together in an island called Isla Verde.

Isla Verde’s biodiversity is among the highest and very well known internationally as the “Center of the Center of Marine Biodiversity in the World” and locally as peaceful and harmonious community. People in the island are full of aspirations, achievements, creativity and positive responses to the many challenges and circumstances of life. Their creativity

shows a variety of unique capacity to produce anything substantial for life, work, livelihood and purpose of existence.

2.0 Methodology

It is a phenomenological study using a culturally-rooted “*pamamaybay*” approach (Odal 2001), a ‘*kapwa-oriented*’ research which becomes integrated to the researcher in exploring and experiencing trust (*tiwala*) in the course of the study. *Pamamaybay* is a reflective journey towards a full understanding of trust (*tiwala*) - an empowering energy to the people of Isla Verde, which is an affirmation of the human power to will and act according to his capacity to get involved individually or collectively towards the attainment of their goals.

This phenomenological approach is also a way giving of philosophical presuppositions about the nature of the “person-in-the-world” which may encompass all foregoing approaches that create a value and appropriate attitude to develop a framework of making people positive about them and lead them to a desired future (Ramirez, 1983).

This approach relied on the indigenous ways of getting into the phenomenon of trust in their own lived experiences: a) exposure/direct observation, b) sharing of stories, c) in-depth interview, d) inter-subjective validation, e) personal reflections, f) thematic documentation, and g) reflective analysis of thematic documents and interpretation.

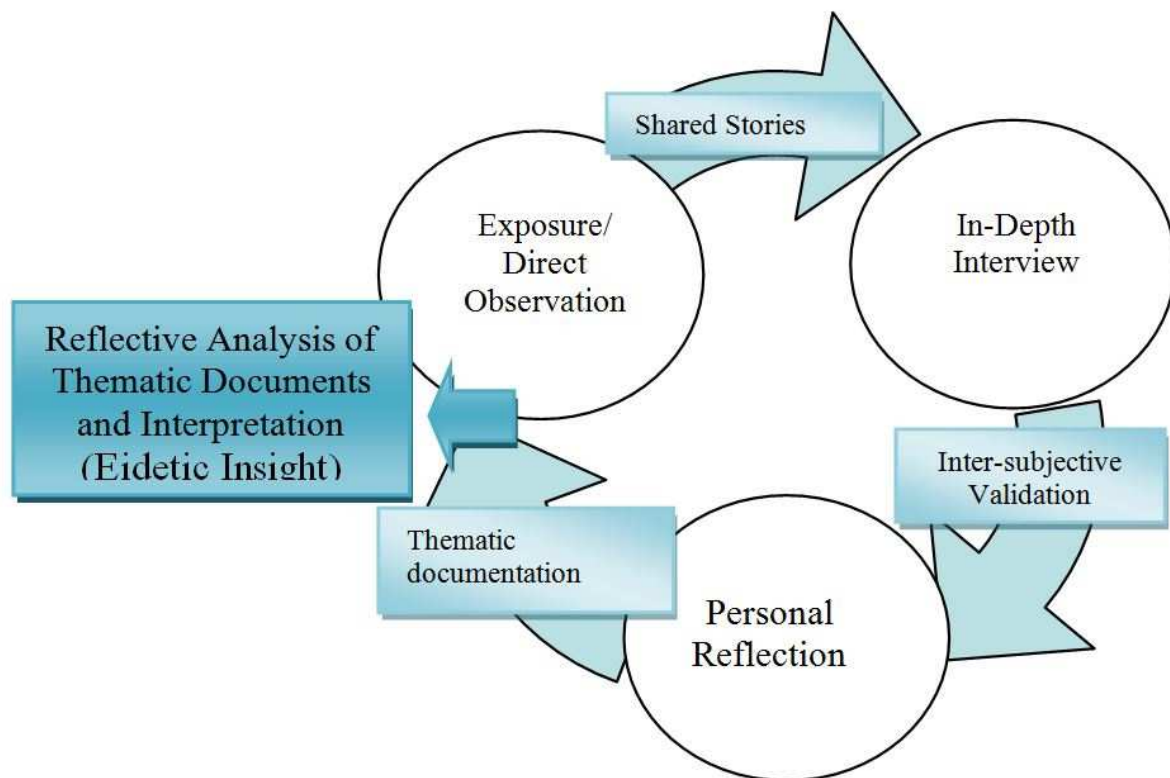


Figure 1. Process of Doing Pamamaybay Approach

The secondary data were sourced from various documents coming from the Batangas City Planning and Development Office and the Tourism Office - such were literature, studies, reports, profiles, etc., which were utilized for this study.

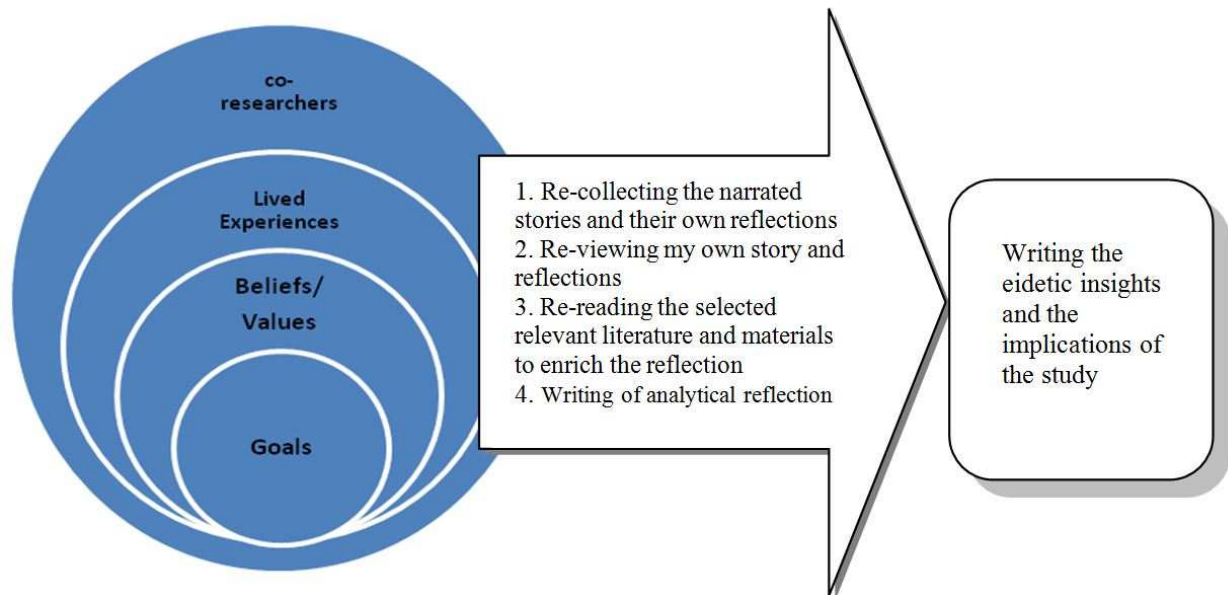


Figure 2. Process of Doing Reflective Analysis and Interpretation

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Brief Description of the Island

Batangas City is considered to be a city with an island. Isla Verde lies in the Verde Island Passage between the provinces of Batangas and Oriental Mindoro. It is a mountainous island which approximately has a land area of 1,678 hectares.

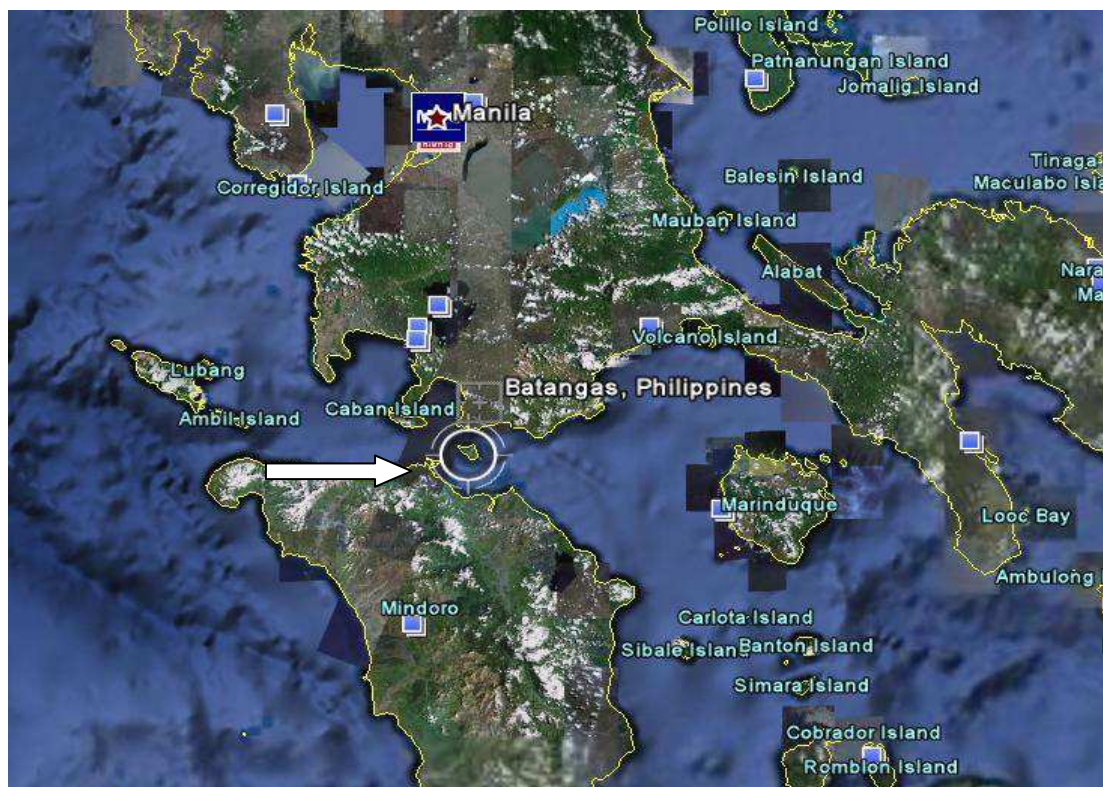


Figure 3: Location map (Source: www. Googleearth.com)

The island is surrounded by sand and reefs and has numerous sites for diving, snorkeling and fishing. There are thick stands of bamboo and ‘buli’ trees, caves, creeks and stiff connected mountains.

Isla Verde is under the administrative jurisdiction of Batangas City. The table below shows the actual population and the land area per barangay (LRDC, Batangas City).

Currently, the major occupation of the people includes fishing, farming, livestock raising, “banig-making”, “pakaskas-making”, carpentry, business and other employment.

3.2 Eidetic Insights

The lives of the co-researchers, as seen beyond their ordinary experiences, offer clues providing a deeper understanding of how the power of the human spirit can transform one’s life. The spiritual culture of trust is rooted in the affirmation of the following: Filipino Spirituality, Identity and Culture (*Trust in God, Trust in Human Nature, Trust in Oneself, Trust in Others, Trust in Nature*); and Justice in Society and Economy (*Fruits of Trust*).

Filipino Spirituality, Identity and Culture

The Philippines is endowed with highly spiritual people and abundant natural resources but according to Gorospe (1997), the Philippines’ social reality is still characterized by “*kahirapan*” (suffering due to poverty) and “*walang kaayusan sa bayan*” (injustices; lack of peace and order). Filipinos are now facing these crises. They are on a cross-road; a path leading to devastating future and the other offering the hope of a sustainable future. The question is “What kind of nation are Filipinos building for the future – disastrous or sustainability?”

A sustainable future can be achieved through the affirmation of Filipino roots on their spirituality, identity and culture. *Filipino spirituality* is a powerful domain of one’s soul to deeply connect with his/her Source in various forms like, “*pahingalay*” (*contemplation*), “*panata*” (*promise to God*), daily offering of suffering, compassion, etc. *Filipino identity* is a firm sense of identity, a distinct knowledge of the nature and strength of a Filipino spirit anchored usually in values and culture. *Filipino culture* is a celebration of the creative living presence in the universe through an intimate union with distinct forms and energy (de Leon, 1998).

In brief, the affirmation of the Filipino spiritual culture of trust is a way of empowering people towards a sustainable future which every Filipino dream of. It has been identified and expressed in the following ways:

TIWALA SA DIYOS : Trust in God (Faith and Spirituality)

Filipinos are “*maka-Diyos*” (God-centered). They have aligned themselves with their spiritual nature (origin from God) before their physical selves. And because they are grounded in spiritual virtues, “*kahirapan*” became bearable. Filipinos also love to pray. They keep their eyes in the “Glory of God”, which seem to be more close to them – a divine revelation that God is among them and their existence is not primarily for themselves but for God and others

as well. This trust relationship is sustained through constant prayers and faithful works in the believing community they belong in.

TIWALA SA LIKAS NG TAO: Trust in Human Nature (Loob ng Filipino: Kagandahang loob (Kindness) at Lakas ng Loob (Inner Strength))

Filipinos have drowned themselves to their own inner or spiritual nature more than their outer or physical nature. The “*loob*” of Filipinos is intrinsically *kagandahang loob and lakas ng loob* which can be extrinsically manifested in their way of relating to people and nature. They have faith in the goodness they have in themselves and in others. “*Kagandahang loob*” is in deep connection with their Source – God. “*Lakas ng loob*” is the gut – an inner strength coming from one’s capacity to hope and to persevere.

TIWALA SA SARILI: Trust in Oneself (Creativity)

Filipinos have their own creative way of living their lives - spending the day with combined work and fun, taking what is available, sharing stories together, celebrating together, accommodating people especially those in need, opening up problems and concerns with others, sharing achievements and knowledge about something, setting goals, adjusting in relationships, socializing, connecting with people, discovering and exploring something indigenous to them, etc. There are numerous achievements by some Filipinos which made them distinct from other communities. In Biblical sense, humans are stewards of God’s creation - a conscious awareness of “*kalikasan*” and “*kalikhaan*”. The “*pamathalaan*” concept of Filipino lies precisely in his/her being more than a steward, but a co-creator of things, events and ideas, in full partnership with Bathala within a constructive field of science and technology” (Diaz, 1996).

TIWALA SA KAPWA: Trust in Others (Filipino Family, Social Trust: Community)

Filipinos are highly relational. Their life is mostly centered in the family. Family togetherness is an important value. Maternal role is central within the family that has been invested with much religious significance (Brazal, 2004). They can connect with people intensely and can relate to people with deep care and affection. They could easily trust people because of their capacity to extend themselves for others. Personal knowledge of each other secures a reciprocal relationship of giving to and receiving from one another (Ramirez, 1996). “*Pakikipagkapwa*” and “*damayan*” are the core expressions of Filipinos on how they treat their “*kapwa*”.

TIWALA SA KALIKASAN: Trust in Nature (Interdependence)

Filipinos are nature lovers and depend much on nature – their homes, their livelihood, their everyday nourishment. A lot of healthy herbs are found in the Philippines. People from the provinces have learn to live in harmony with nature and are awareness of their environment. They therefore believe that preservation and protection of the environment is a shared responsibility.

Justice in Society and in Economy

Looking at the lighter side, kindness is simply meant as JUSTICE. Christian teaching holds that justice is the highest form of LOVE (Howard Dee). There can be justice in society if what the Catholic doctrine prescribes be lived accordingly - that all the goods of the earth are intended by God for the satisfaction of the needs of all men and not the overconcentration of wealth in the hands of the few. It is a reality that the socio-economic condition in the Philippines violates this principle of universal distribution of earthly goods (Montemayor, 1996).

The highest form of measuring development is when the economy is governed by justice and charity. Affirming the culture of trust can make it possible to be a model of people empowerment towards the achievement of justice in Philippine society and economy. It is acceptable to claim that when justice prevails, Filipinos will benefit from it and enjoy its fruits (peace, happiness, hope, and empowerment).

A human is an economic being but “he/she should not live by bread alone”. If economic development is only for expansion and profitability and does not uphold human life and dignity, security, sense of responsibility and protection of environment, it is not development in its sense.

For Filipinos, “*maginhawang buhay*” is a life of prosperity defined not only economically but socially and morally as well. By analogy, breath (*hinga*) is life (*buhay*). According to Ramirez (1996), “*the way one breathes is the way to one’s health and being. The smooth flow of breath means smooth flow of life.*” The economy to be successful must be grounded in sacred foundation – spiritual culture of trust and benefiting from its fruits.

BUNGA NG PAGTITIWALA: Fruits of Trust (Peace, Happiness, Hope, and Empowerment)

Value clarification is an affirmation of the most appropriate values when humans use their intelligence freely and reflectively to define their own values (Diaz, 1991). Defining priorities and relationship of these priorities are significant. An example of this is when human reach out to another and offer unconditional love, well-being expressed in joy and peace is the result.

Peace, harmony and happiness are the very basic values which inspire people to work individually and collectively for the well-being of the community. According to Reyes (1994), it is in contemplative prayers (in whatever forms) can strengthen the interiority, personality and authentic values of the Filipinos towards God and others which are indigenous to Filipinos and distinct from materialistic concept of development which caused too much destruction in today’s society. Through simplicity and worship, *individualism* and *materialism* are far from the values of the people for they consider most resources and responsibilities as shared resources and responsibilities.

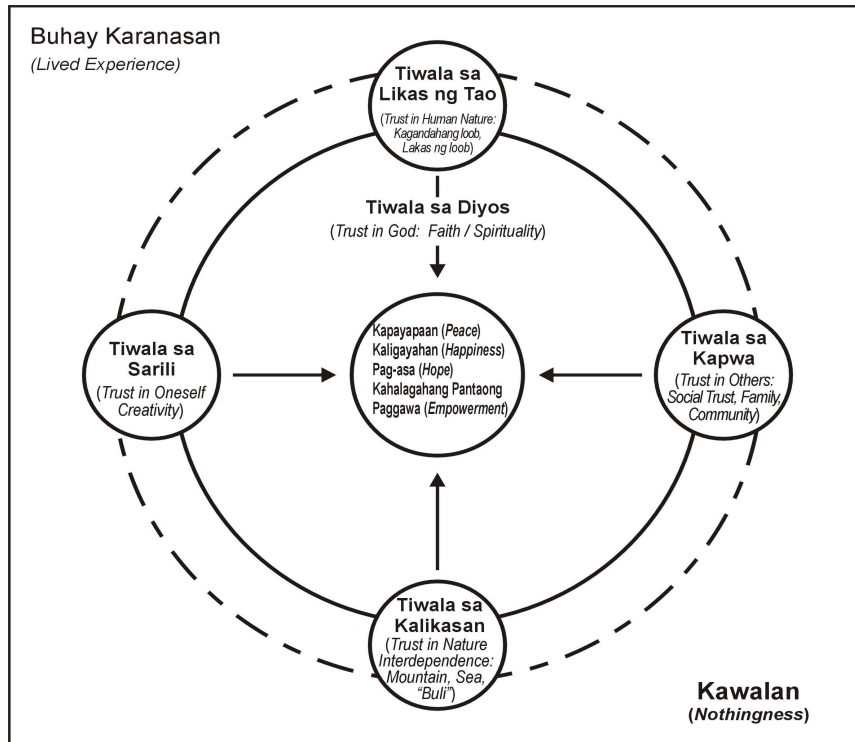


Figure 4. The Dynamics of Spiritual Culture of Trust

This shows the place and movement of the spiritual culture of trust in the lived experience in Isla Verde. The lived experience represents the limitation of their experiences which part of it is “nothingness” but at the center of it is characterized by “trust in God” which brings forth “trust in human nature”, “trust in oneself”, “trust in nature”, and “trust in others”. These four expressions of trust, in the process, may directly or indirectly influence each other. The contribution of all of these leads to deeper and inner realizations of “fruits of trust” (peace, happiness, hope, and empowerment).

4.0 Conclusion

This study on Isla Verde’s own spiritual culture of trust has led to the discovery and appreciation of what typical life Isla Verde people already have: peace and happiness in their personal and community life. This reality can bring people hope and cultivate aspirations for their social well being. Such structure of peace and happiness is a manifestation of social well-being and social development (Natulla, 2010).

Modernism (in its individualistic and materialistic sense) has not reached the island yet eventhough it offers amenities of good life to most cities, still, scantiness in life in most settlers have not made them see themselves as miserable. Instead, it has developed a way to believe in a context of interdependence and a culture of trust- a transformed practice.

In their experience lies their connectedness and oneness through sharing – of resources and responsibilities. Their wholeness or oneness has led to the path they wanted to live their lives which made spirituality even more visible as basis for their well being. Trust simply connects people and makes them one. Sharing is the deepest affirmation of the belief that people are

creatively living presence – of material abundance, spiritual devotion and creative energy (de Leon, 1998).

The very Filipino approach in understanding the indigenous way of dealing with life is further exhibited by the people of Isla Verde who, in their own simple life, have treated life extraordinarily and acted on it faithfully in affirming their own Filipino spirituality, identity and culture for the promotion of justice in society and economy.

Filipinos can generate socio-economic opportunities when they are able set goals for themselves anchored from their own values and identity. They should take pride in their roots and their values like *buhay* (life), *pananalig sa Diyos* (trust in God), *loob* (interiority) and *kapwa* (fellowship) (Ramirez, 1993). This inspired the people to be empowered and worked on the attainment of their deepest hopes.

Empowerment is complementary to social development. Social well being is equivalent to social development and the primary step to this is the identification of the goal - “*What kind of nation do we want for our future generation?*”

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www.metafuture.org



Vivian Titular, PhD is an Associate Professor at the College of Education, Arts and Sciences, De La Salle Lipa, Philippines. She has a doctorate in Applied Cosmic Anthropology. Her research has focused on social development and empowerment. Vivian will present analysis of the Filipino spiritual culture of trust (*tiwala*) amongst the people of Isla Verde, well known as a peaceful and harmonious community. It's a phenomenological study – a reflective journey towards a full understanding of trust.

The Fall and Rise of the Scottish Community

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/DpLzf02bCwI>

Abstract

In Scotland, a community based organisation is usually defined as one that is owned and controlled by a membership open to all adult citizens in the geographical community concerned, as distinct from an *intentional* community, which is generally more (self) selective. Despite suffering potentially terminal decline during the 20th century, community bodies are now thriving and have received significant encouragement from government in recent years.

Reasons for this change include the 'democratic deficit' that the very large size of the lowest tier of local government has engendered, the opportunities available from renewable energy production and the current squeeze on public finances.

There are now at least 200 active development trusts, a typical form of community based organisation; and the Scottish Community Alliance is a network of networks whose members number about 1,000. The Government has responded to this growth with a *Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill*, a formal *Land Reform Review*, and a *Regeneration Strategy* that promotes community-led approaches.

Many of these community organisations have features commonly associated with intentional communities such as: inclusivity and open, democratic processes; a focus on wider social benefits rather than simply on productivity or profits; community led and independent of any kind of private or public sector control; and, non-profit distributing.

This paper charts these changes and some of the opportunities that exist at present for regeneration and renewal, especially in areas experiencing significant economic challenges.

Overview

Community-based organisations (i.e. bodies owned and controlled by a membership open to all in their geographical community) are distinct from intentional communities, which are generally self-selective. Despite suffering potentially terminal decline during the 20th century, community organisations are now thriving in Scotland and have received significant encouragement from government in recent years. This paper charts this rise and some of the opportunities they present for regeneration and renewal and offers some comparisons with their intentional counterparts.

Historical Background

The way in which Scottish Highlanders experienced community for much of the historic period was through the clan system. These networks of extended kin relationships formed the backbone of medieval society and even as late as the 17th century this Celtic way of life

probably had at least as much in common with traditional Native American lifestyles as it did with the English-speaking populations of Lowland Scotland of the time.¹

The clans were broken up in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion and by the subsequent Highland Clearances that led to communal systems of land holding being replaced by landed estates owned in perpetuity by aristocratic families. The result of these traumatic changes was predictable. Large scale emigration to cities and distant lands became the norm. By the 1960s levels of earnings, unemployment and continuing net migration were so bad that a government agency, today called Highland and Islands Enterprise, was set up to combat them.²

In the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh the idea of community enterprise fared little better. The growing numbers of urban poor sought to improve their position through the activities of trade unions. The provision of key services (including housing for the majority) was seen as the responsibility of the state and of local authorities. Locally-based collective action was, generally speaking, not given a high priority.

By the latter half of the 20th century these "local" authorities had also abandoned their community roots, becoming (as they remain) amongst the largest in Europe, serving on average a population of 115,000 and in the view of some, creating a "democratic deficit". (Compared to the lowest tiers of government in e.g. Norway, where the average is 4,000 and Germany where it is 7,000.) Perhaps the nadir for the idea of community in Scotland came during the 1980s when UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announced that "there is no such thing as society".³

However it is in the nature of things that renewal often comes amidst the rubble of the old and the rest of this paper charts the remarkable rejuvenation of community-based action in Scotland during the last two decades.

Development Trusts

Attempts to promote common ownership have a long history in the UK. Some movements shared ideals that are prominent amongst intentional communities today. In the 17th century the Ranters' beliefs were in social equality and the divinity inherent in all mankind. William Blake observed the crushing effects of commercialism on the human spirit in London in the 18th century and called for "Mutual" to build a "New Jerusalem" - a rallying cry answered in the following century by the Rochdale Pioneers, who founded the Co-operative movement.⁴

Nevertheless, such was the state of affairs in the 20th century that when a group of community activists came together in London to found the development trusts movement⁵ in the 1990s,

¹ See for example See James Hunter (2000) *Last of the Free: A History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Mainstream. Edinburgh.

² David Turnock (1974) *Scotland's Highlands and Islands*. "Problem Regions of Europe" series. Oxford University Press.

³ In an interview for a magazine on 23 September 1987. For details see the Margaret Thatcher Foundation website.

⁴ See Steve Wyler (2009) *A History of Community Asset Ownership*. Development Trusts Association. London.

⁵ 'Development trust' is not a legal format and although many such have charitable status, the concept also embraces co-operatives, CICs and other forms of constitution.

the time was ripe for a new and radical attempt to bring community ownership and activism to the fore. A UK-based organisation was created to promote community-owned social enterprises and after a few years it had collected over 200 members.¹ However, there was still but one member from Scotland. Had community action died north of the border?

On investigation it was agreed that the newly devolved Government in Scotland, (created with a broad remit over Scottish affairs in 1997 and now based at the Holyrood Parliament building in Edinburgh), had encouraged systems of engaging with communities that were sufficiently different from those at Westminster, to merit the creation of an independent sister organisation. Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) was duly established in 2003.

Far from discovering a landscape deserted by community activists, only a decade later DTAS now has nearly 200 members of its own located throughout the length and breadth of Scotland, and especially in areas where community-based enterprise has attempted to meet the challenges of market failure - whether in the deprived urban housing estates or in the remote and (by now) sparsely populated Highlands. A 2012 survey found that in that year DTAS members had a combined annual turnover of £39 million and owned £51 million in assets.

Scottish Community Alliance

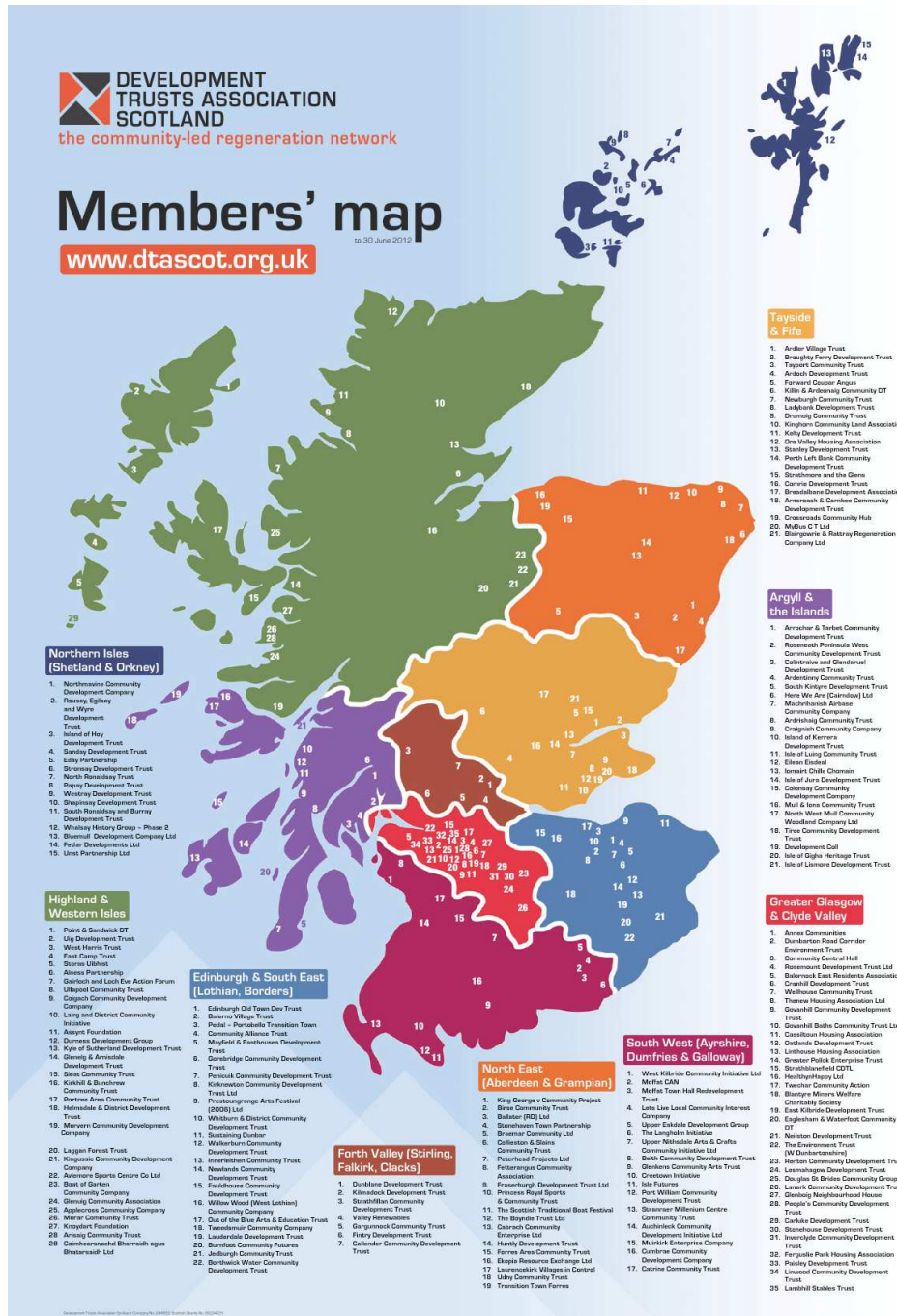
Development trusts are the generalists of the communities movement in the UK. There are also other streams and in recent years the Scottish Community Alliance was created to coordinate the activities of groups and networks that have sprung up offering community-based solutions for specific challenges in relation to energy, transport, food, retailing, woodlands, housing, estate ownership, recycling and so on.

Community Energy Scotland is the body tasked with enabling community organisations to maximise the benefits available from renewable energy systems. Scotland has an abundance of potential, especially from wind power and marine systems such as wave and tidal. Financial benefits to communities come from two main streams - discretionary funds provided by mainstream developers and outright community ownership of turbines. A 2010 study identified the potential annual income to communities in Scotland being £35 million or more by 2020 with the prospect of up to £100 million per annum if similar benefits could be obtained from offshore developments.² The scale of existing benefits is sufficient for various trainings to have been offered on the planning and implementation of local community benefit funds.

Some of the community-based housing associations also have significant assets, as do members of Community Land Scotland. The work of bodies such as the Community Woodlands Association, the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and the Scottish League of Credit Unions may have a less significant financial impact, but their members also provide important resources for the communities they serve. Overall, the bodies that subscribe to the Alliance have about 1,000 members.

¹ Total UK membership is now circa 650 and in England the organising body has been re-branded as "Locality".

² A Guide For Community Groups on Investing for Community Benefit (2010) The Pool in Scotland. A report for Community Energy Scotland and the Scottish Community Foundation.



There are also a significant number of community bodies beyond the membership of the Alliance. It has been estimated that there are nearly 76,000 assets owned by a total of 2,718 community-controlled organisations in Scotland, and with a combined value of just over £1.45 billion. Collectively these assets comprise 187,372 hectares in area, 95% of which is made up of 17 large rural estates under community ownership. About 73,000 of these assets are units of housing owned by 84 community-controlled housing associations, housing co-operatives and rural development trusts. A further 2,740 assets are those that bring benefit to, or can be accessed by, the whole community they are intended to serve, such as village halls.¹

¹ Interim COSS report (2012) Development Trusts Association Scotland.

Two-thirds of community-owned assets by value are to be found in remote rural areas, while those areas provide a home to just 6.5% of the population. In sharp contrast, just over one in every twenty community owned assets can be found in large urban areas where 39% of the population lives.

Comparison with Intentional Communities

Many of these community organisations have features commonly associated with intentional communities. These include: open, democratic processes; a focus on wider social benefits rather than simply on productivity or profits; community-led and independent of any kind of private or public sector control; non profit-distributing. They are usually also inclusive i.e. membership is typically open to all who live in a geographical area, although a small proportion are "communities of interest".

Decision making procedures tend to be less complex with a greater emphasis on majority rule and less on obtaining consensus than is often the case in an intentional group. This is partly because in some cases they are larger, with many hundreds of potential members (even if only a relatively small proportion are active) and partly because there is less of a need to offer any kind of notional "membership benefit" that includes a greater degree of control for any single individual. Membership is usually a given once an individual has chosen to move to the area.

It is hard to know the extent to which this has caused difficulties. Certainly, for many new community bodies there can be stresses and strains in for example dealing with the novel ideas involved, the economic opportunities provided by renewables and the difficulties of dealing with employee relations (especially in remoter rural areas where everyone tends to know everyone else's business - or at least thinks that they do). To date none of these problems appear to have been insuperable, although the modern community movement is still in its infancy.

The concept of an "anchor organisation" has been promoted of late. These are development trusts or other community bodies that typically invest in an important locally owned asset and provide a significant element of local leadership – a united voice which also holds and manages assets. They exist in both urban and rural areas and are seen by some as an ideal vehicle for promoting regeneration and renewal. Thus as a community body matures and takes on more responsibility it may, in some limited ways, begin to resemble an intentional community, especially if it is seen as a vital and enduring organisation of considerable local value to its employees, members and stakeholders. An urban example would be Inverclyde Community Development Trust, located on the western edge of the Glasgow conurbation. This organisation, which serves a relatively impoverished community, now employs 85 full time staff and has a turnover in excess of £3 million.

There are however few that would espouse any specific philosophical ideal - partly because this would tend to make membership less inclusive and partly because it may lead to a less successful fundraising strategy, give the public sector and UK Lottery's keenness to ensure that support is not provided to quasi-closed organisations masquerading as 'communities' (as these bodies would define them).

Government Response

The Alliance, working together with Scotland's leading community sector intermediaries argue for resources and decision making to be devolved to the most appropriate local level and for the achievements of the sector to be acknowledged as making a significant contribution towards improving the quality of life for everyone in Scotland.

Perhaps in a less challenging economic climate the community movement might not have received so much attention from central government as it has done, but whatever the reasons communities are increasingly being asked to take on much more responsibility for local affairs than used to be the case. There is evidence of this across many areas of Scottish Government policy as outlined below.

Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill

Known as CERB to its friends, this bill has significant potential to encourage the community ownership and control of land and other assets, and the capacity to generate income streams that are independent of the state. These are critical issues in determining the degree to which a community becomes "empowered". This process, so the Alliance believes, should be based on a number of first principles:¹

- **Self-determination.** Local people being allowed to determine for themselves how their community is defined and which structures are best suited to take forward their plans.
- **Local people leading.** Community empowerment best occurs when local people lead the process in a bottom-up activity. This is in contrast to regeneration efforts led by outside consultants and agencies.
- **Subsidiarity.** This is the proposition that a matter ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralised authority capable of addressing that matter effectively. (The word as defined by the OED is "that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level."²)

There already exists a "Community Right to Buy" land that comes on the market in rural Scotland. This, as set out in the existing Land Reform Act is essentially a community right to register an interest, with the community being given the first opportunity to purchase (at market value) should the property come up for sale. CERB and perhaps also the land reform review will consider whether and how this right should be extended to urban areas as well.

Land Reform Review

The SNP manifesto contained a commitment to the review of the Land Reform Act and the re-introduction of the Scottish Community Land Fund (both originally created by the earlier

¹ Development Trusts Association Scotland Response to the Scottish Government Consultation on the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill. An estimate recently produced by SCA is that there is now a collective membership of 1,269 community groups which involve well over 100,000 individuals, employ 5,500 staff, engage 20,000 volunteers, own or manage 250,000 hectares of land in addition to hundreds of buildings of all shapes and sizes and generate a combined annual income of £600 million.

² Those tempted to view the word "subsidiarity" as no more than Euro-jargon should read "In Defence of Subsidiarity" by George MacDonald Ross at www.senscot.net/. The idea was apparently mooted by Pope Pius XI in 1931.

Labour/Liberal Democrat administration). Part of the review group's remit is to "assist with the acquisition and management of land (and also land assets) by communities, to make stronger, more resilient, and independent communities which have an even greater stake in their development".

This ongoing work will attempt to build on recent successes, which include the extraordinary transformations of various Highland estates which have been bought up by community bodies. Examples include the island of Gigha, the Knoydart Foundation and Stòras Uibhist in the Outer Hebrides.

This last example is a development trust that is so large you can see it from space! Stòras Uibhist (the store of Uist) is a collective term for various related organisations that form the community-owned group ownership of the South Uist Estate, which has a population in the vicinity of 3,000. The estate extends to 93,000 acres of land covering almost the whole of the islands of Benbecula, Eriskay and South Uist. It is home to over 850 tenant crofters and numerous businesses in the aquaculture, agriculture, fishing, food processing, construction, tourism and service sectors. This organisation was created to oversee a £4.5million community buy-out of the estate that took place in November 2006.

They are by no means alone. More than half of the landmass of the Outer Hebrides is now community owned, a dramatic change from a century ago when absentee private landowners were the norm. (The Stornoway Trust was formed in the 1920s but the remainder of these buyouts have happened in the last two decades and more are planned.) It has become clear that community ownership has the potential to transform decaying economies and cultures in the west Highlands and that the experiment is likely to be worth repeating elsewhere.

Regeneration Strategy and COSS

Launched in December of 2011, this strategy promotes community-led regeneration for the first time in Scotland, signifying a major shift in policy direction. In the same year DTAS received funding from the Scottish Government to establish a "Community Ownership Support Service". In its first year the initiative fielded enquiries from 179 community organisations that were either interested in exploring the idea of taking on an asset, or were in the process of acquiring an asset, usually from a local authority.

Communities Day and Rural Parliament

On 26th April 2013 the first ever "Communities Day" was held at the Holyrood parliament. This event enabled community activists to meet directly with Members of the Scottish Parliament and their advisors and to hold both plenary events in the main chamber for the 250 delegates and workshops in the committee rooms. It is too early to tell what direct impact this event may have, but symbolically it places the communities movement at the heart of Scottish society.



Delegates from all over Scotland attending Communities Day at the Holyrood Parliament

The idea of a 'Rural Parliament' is also being explored. The concept has existed for some time in several European countries and provides a platform for the "rural voice" to be heard. In the Scottish context the very varied geography and the diversity of cultural history in rural areas may make the creation of a unified rural vision harder to achieve than elsewhere, but the community movement has had a significant role in advising government about this proposed event.

Political and Economic Landscape

In the UK as a whole the political landscape is usually dominated by "policy instability built on a divisive rural-urban culture".¹ By contrast, Scotland's "rainbow parliament" is more akin to the European experience. It has four major parties and several smaller ones and their relative positions cannot be described purely on the basis of a simple left/right axis. Similarly, the wider sectoral landscape in which community bodies are working defies a simple description.

¹ Madhu Satsangi, Nick Gallent and Mark Bevan (2010) *The Rural Housing Question*. The Policy Press.

The public and private sectors are well known. The "third sector" is the name used in the UK to refer to charities, voluntary organisations and community owned bodies. "Social enterprise" as a concept does not fit easily into this simple system¹ and as development trusts are essentially community-owned social enterprises, their place in the scheme of things is not straightforward to explain. Furthermore, local authorities must now have "community planning partnerships" although their relationship to the communities they serve is sometimes questioned.² Social enterprise groups within local authority areas have been encouraged and, in some places, thrive. With so many community-based intermediaries, a national "Social Enterprise Coalition" etc. the landscape has become cluttered.

This may be a welcome sign that economic and social diversity is being reflected in the institutions that serve the third sector's interests. Alternatively this may prove to be a short-lived spring in which many flowers bloom, but only a few last the test of time.

Observers of the Scottish scene will be aware that a referendum on whether or not Scotland should seek to become independent from the United Kingdom will be taking place in 2014. This has been described as the biggest decision for Scots in three centuries - where then, if at all, does the communities movement stand on this important topic?

The short answer is that (to date) no-one has asked. Community bodies are invariably not party political and whilst the actions or inactions of government are of considerable importance to them, outright political allegiances are all but unknown now and unlikely in future. Some, especially the woodland and recycling groups have a consciously green agenda - but then this is now commonplace and hardly an indicator of fervent support for the Green Party as such. As social enterprises, development trusts often act as small businesses, but as community owned bodies they straddle the left/right divide. The Alliance is a supporter of "double devolution", a slogan used to support subsidiarity as a concept, but as two thirds of Scots support greater powers for Holyrood too, this is hardly a controversial stance. Perhaps all that we can say is that political parties of every stripe have a tendency to want to control things from the metaphorical centre and that communities and their supporters, by and large, are likely to resist this trend wherever they encounter it.

Nonetheless, concerned that the debate leading up to the independence referendum has yet to engage with local people and their communities, (having thus far been the preserve of politicians and Scotland's chattering classes) the Alliance is embarking on a road show of local events around Scotland with a working title of 'The Big Vote'. Both the pro-Independence 'Yes' campaign and the Unionist 'Better Together' alliance have committed themselves to take part in these events, which will examine both sides of the debate from the perspective of each community's aspirations and concerns.

¹ The UK Department of Trade and Industry offered this definition in 2002: "a social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners."

² It has been argued that they are really 'Public Services Strategic Planning Partnerships' and that the word "community" should be dropped from their title. See e.g. DTAS Response to the proposed Community Empowerment Bill *op cit*.

The Future

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland have undergone a remarkable transformation over the past half-century. An area once marked by its economic failures now scores higher than the Scottish average on a range of statistics. This change has partly been due to happenstances such as the impact of the oil industry (although Shetland is the only part of the UK that has any kind of oil fund) and increasing affluence and improved communications that have enabled in-migration and a significant growth in the tourist industry. Nonetheless there are those who maintain that a key driver of this success is that since its inception Highlands and Islands Enterprise was given a remit to develop not just the business sectors of the region, but also its communities. This remit does not apply to its Lowland counterpart, Scottish Enterprise, and it is unlikely to be a coincidence that most of the urban areas of Scotland that were a cause for concern 50 years ago still languish at the bottom of the economic and social pile, whilst an albeit incomplete transformation of the Highlands has occurred.

These developments have been so remarkable that it may be worth ending on a note of caution. The community sector in Scotland is still relatively small and fragile. Community-led regeneration has its opponents, especially in urban areas where there are entrenched interests in both the public and private sectors. A high profile economic failure here and there, a change of government attitude, a continuing and deepening recession, might all contribute to the stalling of this movement. Nonetheless, such have been the changes over the past decade that given another ten years or so of fair winds and it is likely that we will be seeing a genuine and permanent transformation of communities throughout Scotland.

Further Information

DTA Scotland: <http://www.dtascot.org.uk/>

Scottish Community Alliance: <http://www.localpeopleleading.co.uk/>

Locality: <http://locality.org.uk/>

Alf and Ewan Young (2012) *The New Road*. Argyll Publishing.



Alex Walker, M Phil has worked on a variety of projects in Findhorn Ecovillage and in the Moray Firth area over the past three decades, including in recent years Findhorn Wind Park and Duneland Ltd. He was a member of the Scottish Government's Rural Development Council from 2009 to 2011 and has participated in the development of plans for a proposed 'Rural Parliament' in Scotland. From 2006 to 2012, Alex was Chairman of Development Trusts Association Scotland.

PART SEVEN

**INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY
MEETS WIDER SOCIETY**

Must Utopia be an Island? Positioning an ecovillage within its region

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/lw-zDDBbvXY>

Abstract

In this paper I will liken ecovillages to islands. Ecovillages maintain close relationships with each other but are often only marginally anchored to their respective bioregions. The picture of an isolated island is not consistent with the utopian vision of sustainable regional development. With reference to ethnographic studies of the ecovillage of Sieben Linden, I will therefore argue that the centralizing tendency of an isolated site could be profitably replaced with an attitude towards the surrounding region that builds solidarity and respects differences. The figurative representation of this ideal would be a peninsula.

I am grateful to the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society for its support and to RCC Editor Dominic Kotas for translating this paper.

Introduction

My paper opens the Utopia panel of this year's ICSA conference so I will begin by shortly introducing the concept. Utopia is the name of the most famous literary island, introduced in 1516 by Thomas More in his novel of the same name. In the novel, a seaman tells an English gentleman of his journey to Utopia and of what he sees as the island's excellent sociopolitical organization.¹ More thereby criticized the social structures of his homeland whilst suggesting how the living conditions may be improved.

Like many other international societies, ecovillages are frequently associated with this mythical island. Ecovillages envision a sustainable, global world, and they have established unique sites to realize this vision. More's wordplay, which made Utopia by mixing the Greek *eutopia* (the good place) with *outopia* (the place that doesn't exist), highlighted just such a tension: We seek the good and will inevitably fail to achieve it. However, authors like anthropologist Joshua Lockyer have shown that even the journey to Utopia can lead to significant transformations.² The search for the "good place" remains meaningful, even if we fail to reach Utopia as planned.³

However, I will address a different question in this paper: Why must Utopia be an island?⁴ Perhaps you are wondering what's wrong with islands. Some of the most beautiful locations on the planet are islands (think of Mauritius, if you want)! To explain my question, I need to clarify the connection with ecovillages. I was myself surprised to encounter the motif of an

¹ Note that Utopia, while admirable, is in no way perfect: illness, war and theft still existed in Utopia.

² Lockyer was able to show that Earthaven Ecovillage profited from the utopic endeavors of the intentional community Celo. Lockyer, Joshua P. 2007. *Sustainability and utopianism. An ethnography of cultural critique in contemporary intentional communities*. Dissertation. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia.

³ Think of the ambitious ecovillage-definition by Gilman, Robert 1991. The eco-village challenge. In *In Context* (29): 10. <http://www.context.org/ICLIB/IC29/Gilman1.htm>

⁴ Anne Melano will later discuss Aldous Huxley's Island – another utopic island novel.

island during my fieldwork in the German ecovillage of Sieben Linden. This ecovillage is situated not by the sea but in the Altmark, a region that, with the exception of the floods in summer 2013, is very dry. Nonetheless, I encountered defensive statements like “No, we are not an island,” or “We don’t want to be an island.”

Along with sandy beaches, cohesion and simple living conditions were the positive qualities often associated with an island by Sieben Linden residents – both typical ecovillage requirements. Self-reliance and the consequent isolation from the outside world were also highlighted. Now, you can correctly object that islands are often anything but isolated. My ethnological colleagues are well aware that islands often maintain strong reciprocal relationships. But islands nevertheless often serve as a symbol of isolation. According to a Sieben Linden resident, the island motif communicates how there is an “ocean between” the ecovillage and the rest of society. And this indicates how imitating an island represents a bad strategy, if the ultimate aim is to work together towards the utopic vision of a sustainable world.

My paper is divided into three parts: (1) After highlighting a small part of the history of ecovillages, (2) I will outline the idea of Sieben Linden as an island and (3) present ethnographic moments which might hint at how to end the island existence. The attempt to free oneself from the island motif points towards a desire for its opposite: connectivity. Like with the island utopia, then, desire and reality occasionally collide. In spite of this, I shall end by suggesting a new path towards utopia.

The History of Ecovillages

“Each ecovillage is an island,”¹ Declan Kennedy, the first President of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), has previously asserted. This “island network” was founded here in Findhorn in 1995, with the participation of members of what became the Sieben Linden ecovillage. The current GEN President, Kosha A. Joubert, has reflected on this period: “When the GEN was established, it was clear that we wanted to create an alternative to mainstream culture: green islands, lifeboats, a place of hope in a world of destructive capitalism.”² Ross Jackson, as one of the founders of the GEN, applied to the UN in 1996 for \$100 million to create 50 ecovillages around the world: “I cannot imagine any single use of funds that would have more leverage in moving the planet toward sustainability.”³ Although the application was declined, the GEN’s optimism persisted through the next 40 years.

In this time, ecovillages have achieved a great deal. And if they resemble islands, these islands feature lighthouses that attract thousands of people to the quest for sustainability. That being said, in 1996 the former GEN President Jonathan Dawson offered the following assessment: “One final challenge facing ecovillages is that of becoming less insular and more enmeshed in

¹ Kennedy, Declan 2001: 248. The eco-village movement, especially in Europe. In Saskia Poldervaart, Harrie Jansen & Beatrice Kesler (Hg.): *Contemporary utopian struggles. Communities between modernism and postmodernism*, S. 248-253. Amsterdam: Aksant.

² Joubert, K. A. 2010: 15. Von der grünen Insel zur eingebundenen Inspirationsplattform. Ökodörfer und intentionale Gemeinschaften der heutigen Zeit. In Einfach Gut Leben e.V. (Hg.): *Eurotopia. Gemeinschaften & Ökodörfer in Europa*, S. 14-17. Poppau: Einfach Gut Leben e.V.

³ Jackson, Ross J. T. 2000: 79. *We can do it. We will do it. And we ARE doing it! Building an ecovillage future*. San Francisco: Robert D. Reed.

the fabric of their own bioregions. Given the high levels of outreach and engagement with the world [...] this may seem a puzzling assertion. Nonetheless, it remains true that many ecovillages are only marginally anchored within their own bioregions.”¹ Dawson therefore demands an increasing turn away from island existence, and he emphasizes how the regional level has been neglected up to now – almost like neglecting the ocean on your doorstep.

I began my ethnographic project in 2008, thus experiencing a critical moment in the history of ecovillages. In February of that year, the international GEN Committee had met in an ecovillage in Los Angeles and, with the *GEN Manifesto II*, had initiated a U-turn. In this context, Dawson explicitly advised the 2008 GEN General Assembly to stop establishing more “classical” ecovillages” – a piece of advice that was repeated later in the same year by former GEN President Kennedy. A veteran of the ZEGG ecovillage later gave me his assessment of the situation in very simple terms: “Ecovillages are no longer the progressive end of the sustainability movement.”

Creating ecovillages had become more difficult, and for the global North it was also questionable whether rural ecovillages represented the best strategic approach to changing the wider culture. Over half the world’s population lives today in cities; Dawson and Kennedy therefore pointed to corresponding models, like the urban and ethnically diverse L.A. ecovillage and, in particular, the Transition Towns. These projects both situate themselves where ordinary people actually live, and thus avoid portraying themselves as islands.²

In my dissertation, I focused on question around the identity and new orientation of ecovillages in the light of such changes.³ In this paper, though, I would like to consider the integration of ecovillages into their respective bioregions with the help of the island motif. In 2008 the GEN Committee, following in the footsteps of Dawson, circulated the following recommendation to existing “classical” ecovillages: “If ecovillages are to be relevant to the needs of communities seeking to become more sustainable, they need to see themselves increasingly in partnership with their neighbouring towns and villages, helping to build the resilience and skills base of their own bioregions.”⁴ But it really isn’t that easy to come from an island to the mainland, as the case of the Sieben Linden ecovillage shows.

Sieben Linden as an Island

This ecovillage is situated in the Altmark, in the former DDR. Because of this, since its founding over 15 years ago, only a few of the inhabitants have come to see the site as home. “What are we really doing here in the Altmark, where no one can get involved with what we

¹ Dawson, Jonathan 2006: 70. *Ecovillages. New frontiers for sustainability*. Foxhole, UK: Green Books.

² “We recognise that under prevailing conditions – high land prices, restrictive planning regulations and a progressively more individualistic society – the creation of new ecovillages has become more difficult than previously. Thus, at this time of greatest need and with existing ecovillages enjoying an unprecedented level of influence and profile, paradoxically, it is becoming significantly more difficult to create new ecovillages.” GEN 2008: 1. *GEN Manifesto II*. <http://ecovillages.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/gen-manifesto-ii.pdf>

³ Andreas, Marcus. Forthcoming. *Positionierung im Wandel. Ethnographie eines Ökodorfes*. See also Andreas, Marcus & Wagner, Felix 2012a: “For whom? For the future!” Ecovillage Sieben Linden as a model and research project. In Marcus Andreas & Felix Wagner (Ed.): *Realizing Utopia. Ecovillage Endeavours and Academic Approaches* (RCC Perspectives 2012/8), S. 135-147. München: Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC).

⁴ GEN 2008: 1. *GEN Manifesto II*. <http://ecovillages.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/gen-manifesto-ii.pdf>.

are doing?” asked one inhabitant in 2009. The answer is simple: Sieben Linden found the conditions necessary for its establishment in this area. Many social projects in the former West Germany had sought to establish themselves in the so-called new republic, not least in order to profit from the political openness and the cheap real estate. It was “the year after the revolution in which such things were possible,” as a former Sieben Linden founder put it.

The West German forerunners of Sieben Linden had, in 1989, pursued the vision of a “self-reliant ecological village” – a self-sufficient island, in other words. It’s true that, since that time, the self-conception of the planned ecovillage became increasingly open. Ongoing self-sufficiency certainly remained as the goal, but so too did interaction with society. In 1996 it was declared that “This social-ecological initiative does not want to be a self-contained island; rather, it wants to become an inspiring example and a center for sustainable development in the Altmark.”¹ Following this vision, the ecovillage project won an important prize for regional development in the newly-formed German states. And recognized in this way, the ecovillage project was, in 1997, invited to the small town of Poppau, establishing itself there in 1998.

While many villages in the area had been afflicted by rural exodus, the ecovillage project still had more value than a new build and it took into account the danger of becoming an island:

In the planned development, new and forward-looking forms of living and working should develop. The requirements for such a model are not present in the structures of existing villages. [...] Such a project can be realized only as part of a new development. Given enough space, a peaceful coexistence of current and new settlements can be made possible.²

This peaceful coexistence is a reality today; the relationships with neighboring communities can be described as sustainable. However, the motif of the island persists, popular and unloved in equal measure, illustrating the previously marginal integration of the ecovillage into the region. To explain this phenomenon, the following quote from the official self-description from 2007 may be of help: “the ecovillage by no means wants to be an island, yet it often fails to avoid the characteristics of an island. When we are busy with everyday events, when our heads are full of our own social issues, some time can pass before the ‘outside’ world becomes relevant again.”³ “We’re too concerned with ourselves!”⁴ is how it is phrased at another point.

Most residents nonetheless insist that their project must extend beyond their everyday lives. They want to come into contact with the ‘outside’ world. The leader of the ecovillage’s Circle of Friends explains: “We don’t just want to be an island and have a nice life for ourselves – We want to spread our ideas to the outside world and have them shared and passed on!” The ecovillage generally succeeds in this endeavor: As the headquarters of the European GEN

¹ Wohnungs- und Siedlungsgenossenschaft Ökodorf e.G. [WoGe] 1996 [no page numbers]. Siedlungs- und Regionalkonzept Ökodorf 2000. Eine Information der Wohnungs- und Siedlungsgenossenschaft Ökodorf e.G. Groß Chüden: WoGe.

² Gemeinde Bandau 1998: 13. Bebauungsplan Ökodorf Poppau – Sieben Linden mit örtlicher Bauvorschrift. Stellungnahmen / Anregungen gem. § 4 / 3 (2) BauGB [official document].

³ Strünke, Christoph & Kommerell, Julia 2007: 39. In der Öffentlichkeit stehen. In Freundeskreis Ökodorf e.V. (Ed.): Sieben Linden. Lebensentwurf und Realität. Visionen, Alltag, Gemeinschaft, Ökologie, Ökonomie und Spiritualität. Eine Textsammlung. S. 39-40. Poppau: Freundeskreis Ökodorf e.V.

⁴ Kommerell, Julia 2005b: 22. Thema: Region und Ökodorf. In *Rundbrief Ökodorf Sieben Linden* 96: 22.

offices, Sieben Linden is well connected, has already won several prizes for sustainability, and was recently named “PR-Giant”¹ of the German social scene. The visitor numbers of Findhorns are yet to be reached, but the (national) stream of visitors to the ecovillage is considerable. The leader of the Sieben Linden cooperative thus argued in 2011:

We have 6,000 visitors each year [...]. This is by no means an island. However, our connections with our direct environment, with our direct surroundings, are not that great. On the ground a picture can emerge [...] of us as an island, because the way we live is so completely different from how people in a 1.5 kilometer, 5 kilometer, and 10 kilometer radius live.

The island motif is most utilized in relation to the (deficient) regional connections. Here, the differences with residents from surrounding towns like Poppau, Klötze or Beetzendorf are held responsible. One resident, for example, emphasized the structural differences: “Naturally there is not contact between Sieben Linden and Poppau, because the infrastructure in Sieben Linden is several levels higher than the infrastructure in Poppau. There’s nothing in Poppau except houses [...] and a fire department.”

In this context, according to the leader of the cooperative, the mere existence of cultural differences should not be surprising, because the ecovillage “did not grow organically, even on these green fields; rather, it was established here.” That’s the path to which Sieben Linden and other ecovillages committed themselves, in contrast to Transition Towns. And the search for alternatives, for example in the field of sustainability, also distinguishes intentional communities like ecovillages, separating them from the region.² So do such differences constitute unbridgeable gaps? A member of the PR Working Group drew two circles, distant from each other and without points of contact, to clarify: “I don’t even know what to talk about with people from the Altmark.” Sieben Linden, in her view, exists in “Nowhere”, the wide ocean. What’s more, she doesn’t see any great need for the ecovillage to change how it is integrated into the region. “We don’t really need the region, it was like this from the beginning.”

This impression is deceptive, in my opinion, and is contradicted in other places. Sieben Linden is certainly relatively autonomous within the region, but is in no way self-sufficient. Economic and social “holism” is made possible above all by the guests. They constitute a significant source of income for the ecovillage, allow the ecovillage to fulfill its own educational goals and are, ultimately, Sieben Linden’s on-site prescription against “island rage.” According to the leader of the Circle of Friends, it is the guests above all who contribute to:

alleviating this sense of being an island. If we simply existed here without visitors and no one came from the region and we just sat here in our own swamp, that would be no good and, for me, would be unattractive. And not economically viable, either. And there is a kind of longing [...], it would be nice if people didn’t all just gravitate here but rather

¹ Flieger, Burghard 2012: 1. Wohnen und Arbeiten verbinden. In *Contraste. Die Monats-zeitung für Selbstorganisation* 332 (29): 1.

² See the following dissertations: Meijering, Louise 2006. *Making a place of their own. Rural intentional communities in northwest Europe*. Dissertation. Utrecht / Groningen: University of Groningen; Kunze, Iris 2009. *Soziale Innovationen für eine zukunftsfähige Lebensweise. Gemeinschaften und Ökodörfer als experimentierende Lernfelder für sozial-ökologische Nachhaltigkeit*. Münster: Ecotransfer.

established themselves in the region. [...] I think that that would be very helpful, to develop those kinds of suburbs. And exchanges with other intentional communities too.

Two possibilities are thus raised for escaping the isolation: (a) through the visits of guests and (b) through the settling of like-minded individuals in the region – almost like an archipelago around the island. A further option would be (c) to influence the surrounding villages, so that they come culturally “closer” to the island of their own volition. Certain residents of Sieben Linden committed to this third way, implementing this transition concept in their region. Alongside the desire to contribute to regional development, this effort could also be understood as an attempt to change the position of the ecovillage in the region: less island, more solidarity. However, I would like to suggest that there is a fourth option in the pursuit of these goals: making friends with the people who are already there and with the way they are.

Change in the Altmark?

In the wake of the 2008 GEN GA, a small group of Sieben Linden residents appropriated the concept of the Transition Town – not for the ecovillage, but in an effort to convert the surrounding towns and villages. Some contacted people they knew in the region to set up a Transition initiative, called the *Energiewende Beetendorf*. Others met with four other European ecovillage projects to set up a so-called Transition Journey, a two-year project supported by the EU. Together they attempted to implement the Transition Concept, to connect with their surrounding regions, and not least to escape their island existence. In what follows I will present a few ethnographic recollections of the Journey.¹

(a) Among their peers The first episode highlights the jockeying for position within the ecovillage movement. As an example I have chosen a presentation by the Austrian Keimblatt ecovillage project. In 2010, Keimblatt was still looking for a site and had explicitly taken Sieben Linden as a model. During the Transition Journey, the other ecovillage projects were given the same presentation that Keimblatt used in its search for a site. Right from the beginning, they decided that they would abstain from using the ecovillage concept when presenting to mayors and officials. Instead, they referred to themselves as a Settlement Cooperative in the manner of an international society. Following this was a categorization of existing European projects along the same lines. Findhorn, along with Damanhur, was classed as Philosophic-Spiritual, projects like Dyssekilde were summarized as Cohousing and other were labeled Charitable. Keimblatt, on the other hand, was described as the only (planned) project orienting itself towards a Widespread Impact. Conversely, according to Keimblatt’s model, Sieben Linden was Idealistic – through their example they would attract mostly peers, who were, in Keimblatt’s view, “already concerned” with collective and ecological ways of thinking. Keimblatt, conversely, addressed itself to “society.”

Members of Sieben Linden later contested this assessment of them as an “idealistic project.” They had no desire to pretend and rather emphasized their authenticity: “We are how we are.” At the same time, paradoxically though, they were happy to see any indication that they were no longer being put in the “ecovillage drawer,” as the leader of the Circle of Friends highlighted. And in 2005 she herself agreed with the assessment that the development of

¹ Andreas, M. forthcoming. *Positionierung im Wandel. Ethnographie eines Ökodorfes*.

Sieben Linden should be aligned with “our fellow members of the alternative scene.”¹ She was worried about “giving off an air of elitism and arrogance, an attitude that would clearly hinder our integration into the region. A kind of ‘we’re so ecologically-aware and better than you’ attitude.”² As the gist from that episode I’d like to suggest at least a bit more strategic re-orientation towards the region.

(b) In the region. The residents of Sieben Linden had approached the cofounding of the *Energiewende Beetzendorf* cautiously. They had deliberately warded off concerns within the community that the ecovillage could undercut the region. They were careful to involve local residents and they published an internal statement, in which it was made very clear that the Transition Project was *not* an ecovillage project. This approach proved successful and the Transition Project took two of 16 seats on the local council. However, as it happened, at least one person subsequently left the Transition initiative after reading a critical article written by an ecovillage member. A colleague in the PR Working Group therefore wondered whether, for the Transition Journey, Sieben Linden would have to retreat from view and be less authentic in order to reach others.

The ecovillage wanted to be more heavily involved in the council, and this was only possible within the context of the Transition Initiative. The problem was, it seemed that success was possible only when the ecovillage or the Transition Initiative were not central figures. The local council decided after a long struggle, for example, to participate in a regional energy initiative – in the very meeting where the representative of the Transition Initiative was *not* present.

Whereas Sieben Linden envisaged for itself a central position in the region, the Italian ecovillage Torri Superiore assumed a more modest position in the Transition Journey. A Torri representative thus expressed understanding with people in the corresponding region who saw in the newcomers an attack on their identity. The ecovillage residents were in a far more comfortable position: “We are convinced that we are already on the right road. [...] Our basic beliefs are not questioned, we are not under attack.” In the Torri ecovillage, residents would attempt to exercise humility: “In general, people from Torri don't want to be the ‘big’ information holders or experts towards the locals.” The ecovillagers would generally attempt to attach themselves to existing activities, because, as they put it, “We are entering their landscape. They were first, we second.”

In the remaining space I can only outline a few further points, but I would like to highlight how the region seems to be increasingly ready to follow some of the suggestions and example of ecovillages. In Sieben Linden this tendency is apparent in the foundation of the *Energiewende Beetzendorf* or the joining of the regional energy initiative – developments that, however, functioned above all when the ecovillage did not position itself in the center, a position that would relegate the region to a passive role on the outskirts. What is important here is to take the presumption of an asymmetrical give-and-take relationship as given.

¹ Stützel, E., in Roeder, S. 2005a: 26.

² Stützel, Eva, in Roeder, Simone 2005: 26. 1 Viertel Gemeinderat in Poppau. Ein Interview. In *Rundbrief Ökodorf Sieben Linden* 96: 25-27.

I would however like to argue that the ecovillage also needs the region – to make its vision of sustainability a reality, but not only for this. The member of the PR Working Group, for example, also expressed her hope that the Transition Initiative could provide long-term support that would enable Sieben Linden to “become normal” and to develop normal relationships with the region. In her view, people would need to see that the ecovillages are not trying to manipulate them. The transition concept should therefore take on the role of a bridge as “something in-between village and ecovillage”.

The region may also help the ecovillagers to feel at home and to find a regional anchor for their own identity. It therefore seems to me counterproductive to refer to alternatives, in this case the concept of one’s own island. And I also don’t believe that we are actually talking about two distinct circles that don’t intersect. A Sieben Linden resident thus argued, for example, for recognition of the modest and often unloved concept of intersection:

We have lots of very conventional things here, and we need money, we build houses and so on, that’s all very conventional. [...] This is the crux of the matter, I think: One can live fruitfully in an ecovillage and be in contact with the environment only when one also has an appreciation of the conventional world, in a sense. And that’s a philosophical question or a question of personal belief. If one says, “ah, it’s all shit, what goes on outside,” it’s deliberately devaluing that way of life.

Future Prospects

The most famous definition of an ecovillage comes from Robert and Diane Gilman, a great utopian design. However, most existing ecovillages, according to Robert Gilman, have not even come anywhere near the status of a true village. These ecovillages display a far greater centralizing tendency, with a collective decision-making process. “But real villages [...] have many different centers of initiative: the village governing body itself and the many autonomous enterprises, associations, and projects of its residents – which together comprise the physical, economic, and social fabric of village life.” In 1999 Gilman therefore expanded his original definition, adding that ecovillages must exhibit “multiple centers of initiative.”¹ It is his belief that ecovillages increasingly transcend the template for intentional communities and thus become “real” villages, with many hubs. Similarly essential for the region, it seems to me, is the overcoming of too strong a centralizing tendency and a growing recognition of different regional centers, between which a lively give-and-take occurs.

“Think global, act local” – such is an old legacy of the globalization debate of the previous century, and it remains valid: ecovillages have developed impressive, well-connected sites that offer a counterpart to the general trend for globalization. But in so doing, they often have often ignored the regional level. Following a visit to the Copenhagen climate summit, a Sieben Linden resident thus expressed doubts about the local Transition Initiative. *Beetzendorf?* She didn’t see it as a good thing “to establish ourselves in our own region and to forget about the third world.”

In spite of this, I would like to encourage ecovillages to pursue their regional strategies – with as much modesty as possible. It may well be that, at first, this doesn’t contribute to sustainable

¹ Christian, Diana Leafe 2008. Robert Gilman on “multiple centers of initiative”. In *Ecovillage news* http://www.ecovillagenews.org/wiki/index.php/Robert_Gilman_on_%E2%80%9CMultiple_Centers_of_Initiative%E2%80%9D

regional development. But in my judgment it would already be a considerable achievement for an ecovillage to thereby succeed in developing a less insular identity. As a Torri member put it: “It’s part of sustainability. Communication is not just a tool, it is about building a language to communicate.”

The island motif is increasingly fading from the ecovillage scene, which is to be welcomed. Or, as the new GEN President Joubert wrote on the fifteenth anniversary of the GEN, when she was still in Sieben Linden: “The identity of the “outside role” and the idea that it should enable the founding of as many ‘classical’ ecovillages as possible is dissipating.”¹ For a successful interplay between international societies and regions, I recommend not the leveling of all differences but rather mutual respect and an interest in the respective differences. In Sieben Linden’s case, I think that this means finding a constructive answer to the inverted question: “What are we doing here in the Altmark, where we can’t get involved with what others are doing?” One thing in common is simply the geographical center of local life, which is the same for everyone in the Altmark. And although the region doesn’t seem to have much to offer to cosmopolitan ecovillagers, some of the ecovillage residents have visited the local fire station in Poppau. I count this as a positive step.

As an alternative to the island, then, I would like finally to offer the motif of the peninsula.² According to Friederike Habermann, the originator of this motif, peninsulas are “not island-remedies but rather open spheres of experience in which other implications can be found”.³ The challenging task is both to carry the utopic vision in the direction of the high seas and to make it increasingly possible for other people to access this experience. This means taking the idea of ecovillages across the headland and right onto the “mainstream” mainland. For an example of this process, Habermann points explicitly to the Sieben Linden ecovillage.⁴



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¹ Joubert, K. A. 2010: 15. Von der grünen Insel zur eingebundenen Inspirationsplattform. Ökodörfer und intentionale Gemeinschaften der heutigen Zeit. In Einfach Gut Leben e.V. (Hg.): *Eurotopia. Gemeinschaften & Ökodörfer in Europa*, S. 14-17. Poppau: Einfach Gut Leben e.V.

² In academic terms one might think of heterotopia instead of utopia, as Meijering has already done for intentional communities. Meijering, L., Huigen, P. & van Hoven, B. 2007:116. Intentional communities in rural spaces. In *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 98 (1): 42-52. “First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. [...] There are also [...] real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. [...] Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.” Foucault, M. 1967. *Of Other Spaces*. <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>

³ Habermann, Friederike. 2011. Weg vom Geldfokus. In *Oya. Anders denken. Anders leben* 08/2011. http://www.oya-online.de/article/read/408-weg_vom_geldfokus.html

⁴ Habermann, Friederike. 2009:138. *Halbinseln gegen den Strom. Anders leben und wirtschaften im Alltag*. Königstein / Taunus: Ulrike Helmer. Ebd. 2009:136f.

From Informal to Intentional: What can waste pickers in Jakarta learn from intentional communities?

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/fS5jocYxqqY>

Abstract

The research introduced in this paper asks what can be learned from established intentional communities such as Findhorn and explores how these lessons might be applied to the situation in Jakarta. Like many of the Asian mega-cities urbanisation in Jakarta has spilled over into the surrounding villages leading to uncontrolled development, housing shortages, and the expansion of squatter settlements. Inadequate infrastructure has resulted in a dysfunctional waste management system leaving space for a significant informal sector to exist on the discarded resources of the city. Research has shown that harnessing this source of human energy and expertise is crucial to reducing the waste footprint of developing cities but poor organisation, unsafe conditions, and extreme poverty are currently barriers to utilising this potential. This paper proposes that to improve the quality of life on the fringes and maximise the value of recovered resources the waste pickers could form intentional communities and occupy niche markets.

This paper introduces some of the shared themes between the two case studies and discusses issues and motivations influencing the research. Based on quantitative and qualitative data collected from stakeholders in both contexts, the research aims to explore the main opportunities and barriers to the informal recyclers and their families creating intentional communities. Of particular focus will be the challenges of purchasing specialist equipment in order to create value-added products for trade, the decision-making process, and low-tech methods for providing basic needs. Following the presentation of the paper additional data will be collected from interviews with conference attendees. The research described in this paper is part of a larger PhD study investigating how information technology and social networking can be utilised to reduce the waste footprint of a developing megacity.

Introduction

Every morning Yuni makes her way down to the water's edge to begin the daily chores. Caught in the branches are ribbons of shredded plastic and fabric. Hanging dank in the sweltering heat these stranded pieces of waste serve as a reminder of the swollen river level during recent floods. Black rubbish bags float down the river, accumulating in bends before eventually sinking or moving out towards the coast. Yuni collects bottles and other items when she can for her husband to sell to the waste collectors. This extra effort to put items aside makes a noticeable difference in their expendable income. Despite this financial gain she doesn't like the waste. She doesn't like the flies, rats, chickens, and cats that are attracted to the waste. She doesn't like that people throw so much rubbish by the side of the river. But, where else can they put it? In Jakarta, a city of more than 10 million people, many of the

citizens live in areas that have no waste collection, no running water, and no toilet facilities. Waste is a phenomena that touches on nearly every aspect of urban life.

Adequate infrastructure and social technologies are required to support sustainable behaviour (Timlett & Williams, 2011) and residents that live in poor kampung (urban village) neighbourhoods have relatively few sustainable waste management options. In Jakarta, public waste collection services do not penetrate into the areas of semi-legal or illegal settlements. Citizens are expected to pay for their waste service through housing associations meaning that disposing of waste, even to a relatively basic standard, costs money that many people do not have. As a result, a large population of the city cannot take part in the higher orders of the waste hierarchy, they are compelled to discard the material unsafely. The consequences of this to the natural and built environment are severe, uncontrolled material flow pollutes groundwater, soil health, and air quality (Lehmann, 2010).

Important elements of sustainable living can be found in arrangements displayed in successful intentional communities. Intentional communities commonly have a deeply engrained purpose to facilitate sustainable lifestyles. Residents of communities such as Findhorn in Scotland diligently recycle, favour organic food, and satisfy many of their needs locally. This stewardship has a positive impact on the environment and brings a high quality of life (Tinsley & George, 2006). Systems of collective ownership can be used to reduce levels of individual consumption and increase productivity. The practice of sharing a life together minimises the amount of dormant assets and encourages individuals and families to collaborate towards work and education.

However, working together collectively creates a set of challenges that must be faced; not all intentional communities survive. Barriers to developing a self-sufficient supply chain and organisation must be overcome, including issues of leadership and succession, definition and interpretation of community vision, and division of labour and its subsequent rewards. Communities also need to balance inclusiveness with practicality during phases of establishment and growth. Failed social experiments can waste large amounts of resources and frustrate those who take part, therefore recording solutions that have emerged from conflict could be a vital source of knowledge for early stage intentional communities.

How do the members of these successful intentional communities work together to achieve a stable and healthy existence? How can the lessons of these working examples be transferred to less idyllic locales such as slum areas? The answers to these questions could contribute to solutions for overcoming the challenges of rapid urbanisation and crippling poverty that we face. There is a growing feeling that the answers are out there, the task now is figuring out how we share resources and work together on a “whole-system” collaboration.

Social innovation has been defined as “the generation and implementation of new ideas about how people should organise interpersonal activities, or social interactions, to meet one or more common goals” (Mumford, 2002, p253 in Moulaert et al., 2007). Development of information technology is opening up new opportunities for fringe communities to accelerate social innovation and share knowledge about how to exist self-sufficiently with minimal interactions with the formal economy. This paper assumes the presence of shared themes between informal sector workers in Jakarta and members of intentional communities.

Underneath the surface of these two contrasting situations we find the same need for self-sufficiency, autonomy, and affordability of essential products and services. What follows is an exploration of these themes and literature relevant to the author's own PhD research into zero waste systems.

Research Design

The primary research question behind this project is this, *“What can the waste pickers of Jakarta learn from established intentional communities such as Findhorn?”*

The purpose of this research is to identify opportunities and barriers for informal sector communities in Jakarta to adopt and adapt sustainable practices found in successful intentional communities. This paper is an introduction to research that will be taking place in the second half of 2013. Interviews with experts and community members of both contexts will be used to identify opportunities and barriers to implementing possible solutions. This process aims to increase understanding about transitioning areas of urban poverty into sustainable habitats. The process of identifying viable opportunities and removing barriers is crucial for success when a group has poor access to resources.

The next section gives some details about the two case studies to provide a background to a survey of shared themes. The paper concludes with a discussion relating this paper to an ongoing PhD investigation into strategies for sharing knowledge and resources through online social networks with the intent of increasing community resilience.

Case Study Context

Megacity growth in many developing regions has been driven by mass migration and rapid urbanisation, creating winners and losers in a period of economic and political instability. In 1998, the South-East Asian economic crisis left many Indonesians in dire financial conditions (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2010) and today poverty remains a serious barrier to optimal functioning of the capital city, Jakarta. Whenever employment opportunities are scarce discarded resources provide an important financial lifeline and conditions in Jakarta have created space for a large informal waste sector to emerge. The waste pickers of Jakarta form an unintentional community, individuals and families brought together through close proximity and marginalisation (Godden-Bryson, 2011). They exist disconnected from society but fully immersed within the built environment of urban, economic, and political systems.

The World Bank describes the informal sector as unregulated, illegal, or unofficial occupation that can fall into two types of activity. Firstly, it covers coping behaviour where earning opportunities are scarce. Secondly, it can also include rational behaviour taken by entrepreneurs that desire to escape state regulations as informal activity (The World Bank, 2013). This paper is mainly concerned with the community of people who are described by the first group, although the line is often blurred in the ambiguity of highly dense, complex urban systems (Simone, 2006).

There is a fine line between viewing the informal sector as a place of resistance, the result of exploitation and corruption, or an unintended outcome of poor governance and underinvestment. The operation of all these states are not mutually exclusive and suggests no overarching coherence. Informality tends to attract prosecution where it circumvents taxation

and licensing revenues but governments may “look the other way” when convenient. In urban localities like Jakarta production and consumption self-organises into obtuse combinations of formal and informal activity (Simone, 2008). Poor regulation creates an environment where dangerous or unfair practices turn informal sector work into a negative force. These conditions contrive to make a significant proportion of the population under-productive, unsettled, and unhealthy. Research shows that informal sector workers are likely to encounter chronic health problems from these hazardous conditions, yet their short-term needs outweigh long-term costs and every year the urban poor workforce increases (Nas & Jaffe, 2004).

This does not have to be the case, communities such as Findhorn have demonstrated that self-organisation into a responsible, sustainable lifestyle is possible, even in unfavourable conditions. Whether by choice or necessity many intentional communities seek to exist “off the grid” and achieve a high degree of self-sufficiency. This desire to provide products and services locally improves the social and environmental impact of this way of life making intentional communities a viable model for sustainable, communal living (Meltzer, 2012). Garforth (2009) claims intentional communities are a recognised form of utopian social practice to which neither formal nor theoretical – critical definitions do justice; although common features have been identified. Marguite Bouvard, cited in Sargisson (2012) offers a background to intentional communities that shows clear links to the plight of the informal sector:

Intentional community was conceived as the seed of a new social order inspired by the principles of mutual concern, pooling of resources, democratic and nonviolent methods and a concern for the balance between the worth of the person and the societal whole.

To give an example of one intentional community, Findhorn began in November 1962 with just a few members living in a shared caravan. Initiated in adverse conditions Findhorn has now grown into a thriving, established community with a diverse range of members and activities situated in several locations across northern Scotland. The community includes several autonomous organisations that each serve particular purposes, a development towards decentralisation that Forster & Wilhelmus (2005) argue has been a major factor in the community’s resilience and growth. Also noticeable in the Findhorn community’s approach to growth is the importance placed on providing education and demonstrative experiences. This gives people unfamiliar with communal living a taste of the lifestyle that has been established so it can be shared with others and used as inspiration. It is hoped that in the future a similar, living and developing example may exist somewhere in Jakarta to demonstrate new possibilities of living in dysfunctional circumstances.

Shared themes

The following section introduces some of the themes shared between the two case studies that may be used as a basis for collaboration. Many more areas of common ground could be found so this selection represents topics that have crossed over several recent projects involving the researcher. Issues of governance and social cohesion are at the forefront of community development and are likely to play a major role in the development of sustainable settlements in the future. As an essential foundation to this process there are necessities like food production and access to clean water that must be provided to community members. These

practical projects are offered here as a catalyst for the creation of other intangible benefits that productive places can bring to the community, such as a place for multigenerational and multicultural interactions. Communities across the world face challenging times and survival depends on building resilience against multiple threats. Success and survival in a community requires a holistic approach to the practical, the social, and the spiritual.

Within informal settlements along the Ciliwung River in Jakarta, the danger of seasonal floods and other disasters creates a great need to nurture social capital. Social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively, an important factor in successful rebuilding after set-backs (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Social capital has been called a “moral resource” which Putnam (1993) explains is “a resource whose supply increases rather than decreases through use... and which becomes depleted if *not* used”. Whilst the urban poor have enough social capital to get by, they are often disconnected from the human and material resources needed to thrive. Weak, indifferent governments produce a vastly different effect of community life than more favourable circumstances where governments provide a safety net and remove corruption (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Maximising social capital requires a balance between local autonomy and government support. Informality in Jakarta has in part emerged because of the breakdown of mediating institutions and a reduction in grassroots organisations (Bose, 2010), so communities have a strong motivation to drive their own development.

The informal waste management sector encourages tight-knit connections and presents frequent opportunities for knowledge sharing. These interactions can bring communities together and generate important social bonds. In the absence of a supportive government it has been suggested informal waste workers can form cooperatives to improve their quality of life (Gutberlet, 2012). In Sao Paulo, Brazil innovative action-based research has demonstrated much hope for grassroots initiatives (Gutberlet, 2012). Here self-organisation and collaboration between the stakeholder groups that share localities and economic interests have been used as a pathway to move from informal individual coping behaviour towards an intentional communal approach.

Collective purchasing of equipment could assist waste pickers in creating more value from the materials they collect. Sharing productive assets has been shown to help generate a greater sense of community, but it may also produce conflict (Sargisson, 2012). Successful communities are often committed to inclusive decision-making designed to prevent conflict undermining relations. The Findhorn community has developed several social technologies and processes to assist in community development. Deliberative approaches give community members the opportunity to express their own interests and define collective interests. In a situation like Jakarta where stakeholders appear so divergent, good urban governance may have to include provisions for public spending to be conducted in consultation with those who work in the informal sector; the people who deal with the consequences of investment and legislative decisions every day. However, it should be noted that the constant search for consensus can hold up progress if significant differences of opinion emerge within the group, these conflicts can test the intention and resilience of an unprepared community.

Appropriate governance is just one factor that communities must get right in order to thrive, obtaining adequately nutritious food is also vital in individual or community success. Food production is an activity that intentional communities commonly seek to localise with members often contributing to the preparation and distribution of produce. Cohousing situations place a strong emphasis on the sharing of meals which has practical and social benefits. Findhorn does not currently have the capacity to be nutritionally self-sufficient; but it does have the finances and location to access high-quality sustainable supply chains. The struggle many urban inhabitants face is that affordable, convenient meals are often of poor nutritional value (Yates & Gutberlet, 2010) and require excessive packaging. An unhealthy diet compounds health problems associated with over-crowding, unsanitary conditions, and littering. Developing and integrating an urban food production and organic waste management system is no longer a technical problem, depending more on the capability of the institutions and local actor networks (Yates & Gutberlet, 2011).

There are examples of successful urban farming projects across a range of situations (Purnomohadi, 2000), many emerging from challenging circumstances. In Havana, Cuba there has been a sharp increase in urban food production since the early nineties. The collapse of the socialist bloc compelled the Cubans to rethink their reliance on fertilisers and fuel (Altieri et al., 1999). Small plot food production can rely on natural processes and human energy, a welcome change of pace and sanctuary from the hectic urban action. Roof top gardens and aquaponics can be harmonised with natural conditions to require fewer resources than food provided to consumers of supermarkets and pre-processed meals. Urban gardens have benefit beyond nutrition, green spaces can have a dramatic impact on the atmosphere of an area. Improvements include air purification, water capture, noise reduction, and shade – things that all cities could benefit from. There is also a largely unmet need to create spaces for collaboration and meeting in the suburban landscape. In the City of Unley, South Australia local organic food production and recycling is being proposed as a platform to encourage multigenerational socialising. Areas of food production can become a vital place where social capital is generated and utilised, turning a potential vulnerability into an activity of resistance.

Active and engaged ageing is an issue impacting all communities. This is possibly one area where the both cases have much to learn. As an individual reaches a certain vintage and physical labour becomes impossible the community must find ways to value the wealth of experience that each person represents. The reliance on offspring in old age is a driver for couples to produce the large families that can be seen in areas of poverty and Jakarta is hardly different. The tactic of pensions and superannuation is not available for members of informal or intentional communities and an adequate solution to the ageing population issue has not yet been found. Whichever way a community eventually reacts to this situation it seems vital that elder wisdom is passed down to younger generations (Bianchi, 2005).

Discussion

Isolation is often not possible to achieve for any community, nor is it desirable. Social networks and trade of surplus produce have been important components of community development and resilience. Without connectivity settlements remain more vulnerable to

changes outside of their control. Both the cases in this paper have potential to encourage collective action for change through the use of online and offline social networks. This situation highlights an opportunity for two distinct communities to create what Yates and Gutberlet (2011) call “networked socio-ecological reconfigurations”.

The growth of online networking has facilitated new connections of this type between communities like those mentioned here. Online social networks could provide open access to resources and knowledge, shared learning experiences, and an ability to comment on geographically distant situations. The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), of which Findhorn is a founding member (Forster & Wilhelmus, 2005), demonstrates that online collaboration and communication of grassroots activities can create tangible results. Despite differences in circumstances much can be gained from forming distant relationships, these could be founded in business, art, governance, education, spirituality, sharing, or environmental management. One promising platform that could be used for this means is the solution library (solution.ecovillage.org), a project initiated by GEN to collect traditional and innovative solution for sustainable living. In self-sufficient settlements the most important technologies are simple, adaptable, and affordable. Sharing this wealth of local wisdom online can preserve innovations, foster adaptation, and improve the online and offline commons.

Interactions taking place online can occur unmediated by official bodies, opening up opportunities for direct collaboration. Successful communities can make a great impact by using their superior access to resources to assist emerging intentional communities in developing counties. However, Joubert & Alfred (2007) warn that “rebuilding human community is an endeavour whose immense challenges should not be underestimated”. Indeed, the connection must be initiated and the relationship nurtured by both parties. It is not simply a matter of ‘successful communities’ providing solutions to someone else’s problems, the biggest challenge is building partnerships that empower both parties, acknowledging that learning can flow both ways.

Based on his experiences with intentional communities and transmigration settlements in Indonesia, Hoey (2003) claimed “realistically, community cannot be planned; it can only be intended”. Urban eco-villages face inherent challenges existing within a highly dense, heavily altered landscape, where nature remains it is often abused and degraded. By virtue of location members of urban intentional communities may be compelled to interact with wasteful public systems and utilities on a regular basis. The sustainable urban community has to encourage environmentally conscious behaviour and attitudes in the midst of a pervasive consumerist culture and globalised supply-chain (Ergas, 2010).

In a century that seems set to be dominated by trends of increasing population growth and continued rapid urbanisation perhaps one of the most important contributions that can be made by intentional communities is to help re-establish the viability of the small-scale settlement, the traditional village. Although this paper has been concerned with an urban population of waste pickers it could be argued that part of the solution to this situation exists in creating sustainable rural lifestyles. Many informal sector workers were initially drawn into the city because of perceived economic opportunities, with hindsight it can only be wondered how many look back on this move without regret and how many would return to a

village lifestyle if given the chance. As we move into the urban century it is worth considering what it is that we are gaining from this development and what values and experiences we are giving up in exchange.

Conclusion

The two case studies mentioned in this paper represent examples from two modes of habitation that show great variability. Although Findhorn is in some ways a model intentional community it is by no means the only model that can be successful. It is an on-going experiment in communal living and the lessons that can be learnt from this situation need to be considered in light of the unique place, times, and characters that have helped shape its history. Since the research documented here is preliminary this paper can only shed light on particular situations with much uncertainty. However, early indications show that the two contexts have much to offer each other and ultimately have similar motivations and characteristics.

Findhorn is considered a successful community, but there is evidence of many intentional communities that have been less fortunate. Good intentions do not seem sufficient to guarantee success. Longevity and positivity seem dependent on finding the delicate balance of inclusive participation and leadership. There is probably much to be gained from investigating more communities that have faced their problems and overcome difficulties, the in informal communities that live in Jakarta are likely to face many challenges as they attempt to come together and improve their situation.

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The Braided Way: Deep democracy and Empowerment Design Tools for Sustainability

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/08kroEVqLDO>

Abstract

We are living in times of a convergence of crises¹ that calls for systemic solutions. Individually and collectively, human beings have amazing depths of capacity and ingenuity and we need to encourage approaches that tap into these inherent resources if we are to turn current global trends in a more sustainable direction. Effective, deep communication is essential to facilitate this process of change and can lead to the creation of resilient communities and organisations that strengthen the inner capacities of the individuals and their part in the whole.

This paper is based on heuristic PhD research, which investigates using *Processwork*, an awareness based practice developed by Drs Arnold & Amy Mindell and colleagues, as an effective method for creating systemic solutions. Processwork is a multi-dimensional, process-orientated and interdisciplinary approach. Its philosophical roots draw from Jungian Psychology, Taoism, Physics, Shamanism and Systems Thinking. In the research this paradigm is used as a lens to evaluate the facilitation of a shift in perspective, consciousness, or meta-design. It is used as a way of becoming aware of the underlying assumptions and belief systems that inform our perceptions and thoughts. Processwork is a trans-disciplinary, systemic approach that values the inner experience of individuals. It highlights 'awareness' and suggests a language and a process that tracks the flow of subtle and overt, local and non-local communication signals. Consciousness can then be deconstructed and explored in terms of awareness of these signals, roles, dimensions of rank and power, belief systems, (or edges) and phenomenological experience within an analytical structure of deep democracy and eldership.

Data was gathered from case studies, interviews with practitioners and participants, relevant texts and field experiences with: The Findhorn Foundation Community; other members of the Global Ecovillage Network in Europe and Latin America; NGOs; grassroots and indigenous community leaders; the judicial system in northern Spain; and self-reflection of my own experience as a researcher in these contexts. In choosing such a broad spectrum of applications, I hope to highlight the contribution of applied Processwork in diverse cultural and social contexts.



¹ <http://vitalsigns.worldwatch.org/all-trends> 15 August 2013

The research has clearly illustrated that there is a deep longing for sustainable, resilient communities and organisations emerging across the world. Paul Hawkins speaks eloquently about this in his book *Blessed Unrest*, where he describes the self-organising, non-local ‘movement’ of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of organisations working towards ecological sustainability and social justice.¹

This ‘movement’ seems to have arisen in response to the increasingly fragmented structure of today’s society and the consequent impact on the biodiversity of the Earth’s ecosystems, all driven by the predominant paradigm of social and economic development. However, despite the overwhelming body of evidence, “the predominant paradigm of social and economic development remains largely oblivious to the risk of human-induced ecological disasters at continental to planetary scales.”² In 2012, Kate Raworth of Oxfam in her report, ‘A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: Can we live within the doughnut?’,³ points out that we are currently in breach of eight of the eleven social boundaries required for a safe and just world. These include food, water, equity, resilience and having a vote, and in particular, access to food and gender equality. Raworth argues that “any vision of sustainable development for the 21st Century must recognise that eradicating poverty and achieving social justice must be addressed within the boundaries of our Earth’s ecosystem.”⁴

It is clear that this situation is contributing to the destabilising of many individuals, families, communities, organisations and in some case entire nations, that now find themselves facing a shortfall in their basic needs, equity and social justice.

Donella Meadows and her fellow authors already pointed to this trend in their book, *Limits to Growth* (1974),⁵ which showed clearly, from a systemic perspective, how these unsustainable patterns, if unrestrained, could create chaos on a global scale, seriously damaging the ecosystems and social systems that support life on earth. Over forty years later, in 2013, we can see many examples that clearly illustrate this trend. Water scarcity is perhaps one of the most concerning as 1.2 billion people already live in areas of water scarcity, and another 1.6 billion face ‘economic water shortage’.⁶ With population growth, climate change and inefficient use of existing resources it is estimated that by 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living with absolute water scarcity.⁷ Michael Renner of the authoritative WorldWatch Institute suggests, “For reasons that range from warfare and persecution to natural disasters and development projects, an estimated 92.56 million people were forcibly displaced in 2012,

¹ Hawken, P. (2007) *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*, New York: Viking.

² Stern, N. (2007) *The Economics of Climate Change – The Stern Review*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

³ See: www.oxfam.org/en/grow/policy/safe-and-just-space-humanity

⁴ Short Circuit: The Lifecycle of our Electronic Gadgets and the True Cost to Earth (2013) www.gaiafoundation.org

⁵ Meadows, D., Meadows, D., & Randers, J. (1974). *Limits to Growth* (2nd ed.). Universe Books.

⁶ UN, “Water for Life 2005-2015: Water Scarcity,” at www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml , viewed 20 February 2013

⁷ Ibid.

either inside their home countries or across a border. Displacement is sometimes temporary, but in other cases it can last for years".¹

In the context of this deeply disturbing data and the increasing need for a large-scale coherent and effective response, I describe here some of the research that I have done, primarily in the area of social change, to examine how to shift our perspective or the lenses through which we perceive our world and our lives. I examine how we could awaken human consciousness to the current situation, and bring awareness to the worldviews that drive the current social and economic development trends described above: within the individual; in our relationships; and, within and between organisations and governance bodies.

It seems clear that the current worldviews, belief systems and consequent attitudes, which dominate our collective approach to life, are based on fragmented and reductionist belief systems and that if we are to pursue a long term sustainable future we need a perceptual shift from fragmentation to holism.

There is nothing unusual in the idea of life on Earth interacting with the air, sea and rocks, but it took a view from outside to glimpse the possibility that this combination might consist of a single giant living system and one with the capacity to keep the Earth always at a state most favourable for the life upon it.² James Lovelock

When you understand the power of system self-organization, you begin to understand why biologists worship biodiversity even more than economists worship technology. The wildly varied stock of DNA, evolved and accumulated over billions of years, is the source of evolutionary potential, just as science libraries and labs and universities where scientists are trained are the source of technological potential. Allowing species to go extinct is a systems crime, just as randomly eliminating all copies of particular science journals, or particular kinds of scientists, would be. The same could be said of human cultures, of course Insistence on a single culture shuts down learning. Cuts back resilience. Any system, biological, economic, or social, that becomes so encrusted that it cannot self-evolve, a system that systematically scorns experimentation and wipes out the raw material of innovation, is doomed over the long term on this highly variable planet.³ Donella Meadows

These quotes highlight the importance of respecting bio-cultural diversity and the ability to glimpse our reality from the outside as key components of designing a more sustainable path into the future. I propose that the current situation is essentially a design problem, based on a fragmented worldview, and consequently lacking the essential emphasis on **the importance of relationship or interconnection between the parts** of this complex living system. Daniel Wahl, in his PhD *Design for Human and Planetary Health*⁴, frames this clearly:

Design is an expression of intention in and through relationships and interactions. The basic intention behind the sustainability revolution is to provide a meaningful and humane existence for every local and global citizen within the limits set by the natural processes that maintain the health of ecosystems and the biosphere for this and future generations of life on earth.....Sustainability is not a fixed state to work towards and

¹ Renner, M. (2013) *Number of Displaced People Rises*, WorldWatch Institute Web site, <http://vitalsigns.worldwatch.org/trends/population-society>, accessed 20/8/13

² Lovelock, J., *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, 2000

³ Meadows D., *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System*, 1999

⁴ Wahl D., *Design for Human and Planetary Health*, 2006, p.1

ultimately achieve, it is rather the continuous process of learning by which local, regional, national and international communities learn to participate appropriately and therefore sustainably in natural process – both at the local and the global scale.

Arnold Mindell, in his latest book, *Dance of the Ancient One*,¹ also speaks to the need for a paradigm shift, with a universal interdisciplinary approach, if we are to resolve these complex individual and global issues. Mindell, as does Meadows in her quote above, highlights the need for a *global system mind*,² or access to the organising intelligence that has the capacity to self organise and maintain balance. If we are all then part of this *single giant living system*, then access to this global system mind or self organising system must not only be ‘out there’. Joanna Macy in *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory* explains:

Because the open system is self-organising, its behaviour cannot be dictated or directly modified from without. External pressures or circumstances can only operate in interaction with internal organisation. Past experience, as recorded in the system, is fed back into the making of present decision.³

In this light Mindell suggests that although effective leadership based on these principals is needed, each one of us also needs to develop the ability to facilitate our relationship with the whole, and learn to resolve conflicts inner and outer. He posits that this is relatively simple – all we need to do is to be able to identify the two, or more, sides of the conflict, find a degree of detachment from these and encourage all sides to express themselves fully, thereby finding the essence of all that is needed for the well being of the whole. This sounds simple – but how to do it? In practice, how can we develop the ability to self-reflect, cultivate the detachment or meta-view and perspective needed to facilitate positive change and not simply continue reacting unconsciously to inner and outer disturbances?

From the philosophy of a systems perspective, self-reflexive consciousness (i.e. the ability to self-reflect from a meta-position) emerges when a sufficient degree of complexity has evolved to require a selection or choice between different courses of action. When awareness is brought to this process through cultivating a more detached meta-position that can reflect on all parts of the experience, or all voices, this facilitates diversity and an ability to see more clearly the information arising in the system as part of the process that is emerging. This is very different from our experience when perceived through the lens of our personal and cultural belief systems and unconsciously letting the past or cultural belief systems dictate how we respond or react. How then do we design the conditions necessary for this shift in perspective?

In this paper, I describe research I have conducted, using the tools of applied Processwork informed by the underpinning philosophy and multi-dimensional framework of deep democracy, in various communities around the world. This approach facilitates individual, group and societal capacity for systemic awareness. Over the past few years I have had the opportunity to work alongside innovative leaders of grassroots organisations in South East Asia and Latin America. In these different parts of the world I have consistently met a spirit of

¹ Mindell, A., *Dance of the Ancient One*, 2013

² Mindell, A., *Dance of the Ancient One*, 2013, p4

³ Macy, J., *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory*, 1991, p174

generosity, fearless determination, love and commitment to the freedom from oppression and the right to dignity for all. These experiences have filled me with hope and love for the world. It is this spirit, which continually draws me back to these lesser known (to Western eyes) regions of the world.



Grassroots Leadership Training, in Myanmar, 2010 (left) and Thailand, 2011 (right)

Processwork, an awareness practise, is rooted deeply in the belief that underlying our experience is an *informing pattern*, which connects the relationships we have with ourselves, others, and the world around us, and that by bringing awareness to this pattern or *field* we can transform ourselves and our immediate environment. One of the central challenges in facilitating awareness of this perspective is an apparent dichotomy, often experienced as social tension or conflict between the dominant paradigm and transcendent, radical or marginalised views which seek to shift the cultural norms. This highlights the need for new frameworks and a language that can frame the complexity and multileveled nature of this challenge.



Process Orientated movement training, Barcelona, 2012

During this research I used Arnold Mindell's multi-dimensional map of reality encompassing the Consensus Reality, the measurable and quantifiable dimension, the Dreaming or subjective, more feeling, dimension of reality and the essence level – which ultimately points to the non dual dimension of reality which David Bohm termed *unbroken wholeness*, the

shamans of Mexico called *the Nagual*, and in some religious settings might be known as God or the Divine source. Connection with this dimension, while un-measurable in quantifiable terms, none the less seems to provide an important sense of meaning or orientation at a deep level for many. Mindell coined a phrase *deep democracy*, which encompasses this multi-dimensional perspective. This framework and metaskill¹ can be extremely helpful in framing and working with this apparent dichotomy.

Deep democracy is a universal metaskill, which reframes the Democracy paradigm:

We have frequently printed the word Democracy, yet I cannot too often repeat that it is a word the real gist of which still sleeps, quite un-awakened, notwithstanding the resonance and the many angry tempests out of which its syllables have come, from pen or tongue. It is a great word, whose history, I suppose, remains unwritten, because that history has yet to be enacted.
Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*, 1871

Deep democracy is not only a political program, but also a way of working with people, a feeling skill, or “metaskill” as Amy Mindell calls such skills. After many seminars in the ‘80s, Arnold Mindell’s term, Deep democracy, first appeared in book form in his, 1992/2000 work, *The Leader as Martial Artist: An Introduction to Deep democracy, Techniques and Strategies for Resolving Conflict and Creating Community*. Deep democracy is a psycho-social-political paradigm and methodology.

Unlike ‘classical’ democracy, which focuses on majority rule, Deep democracy suggests that all voices, states of awareness, and frameworks of reality are important. Deep democracy also suggests that the information carried within these voices, awarenesses, and frameworks are all needed to understand the complete process of the system. Deep democracy is an attitude that focuses on the awareness of voices that are both central and marginal.²

The primary research was carried out through a combination of case studies, interviews and conversations with a variety of participants in a series of seminars run between 2009 and 2013 in a variety of grassroots and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO), leadership training programmes, management team dynamics and inter-organisational collaboration, and relationship building processes, in Europe, Latin America and South East Asia. My aim is to highlight the contribution of applied Processwork and Deep democracy as design tools that can facilitate more sustainable relationships in diverse cultural and social contexts.

Within all of these programmes the key crosscutting themes have been ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, social justice, gender equity, climate change, and the impact of the socio-economic and political situation in those regions. It is a compelling setting in which to work. These insights are based on the written and verbal feedback of the participants, as well as my own impressions. Clearly, these impressions are somewhat subjective, but interestingly, feedback from different contexts is often very consistent.

¹ The meta-quality, or feeling behind the use of a skill. The “way” you say something or do something is a metaskill which can be harsh, helpful, compassionate, playful, scientific etc.

² Siver, S., *Processwork and the Facilitation of Conflict*, 2006, p 44.

For many participants the emphasis on inner work, eldership,¹ developing the participant facilitator,² the understanding of the three dimensions of reality and the permission to give voice to not only our own inner critics,³ but also the ‘ghosts’⁴ or unoccupied roles in the ‘field’⁵ and allowing for the facilitation of inner and outer diversity issues, are the key concepts that consistently receive positive feedback. The signal based awareness practise, awareness of the dynamics of rank, power and privilege and the skills to connect deeply with the useful essence in what disturbs us, and how this is often the meta-skill, or feeling attitude that we need to deal with that very disturbance, is in many cases transformative.

Learning the skills to connect deeply with the useful 1%, or essence, of a difficulty, whether that be an inner critic, or outer disturbance involves accurately tracking and unfolding subtle signals. Although as long as two or three days are sometimes spent working on this process, it would often feel very relieving for the participants when they started to experience the shift within themselves, and in some cases see how this could be the meta-skill (or deeper attitude) needed for addressing the initial difficulty. This process is akin to shamanism or homeopathic thinking, where taking, or injecting, a tiny amount of what is making us ill acts as an antidote, or resonates in such a way that it somehow meets, confronts or neutralises the energy of the opponent.

Another realisation for many was that we often have a group process going on within us. The pressure to present ourselves as a consolidated front, or a single unified voice, often leads to internal paralysis, or feeling stuck between points of view, and so we end up saying or doing nothing, or getting depressed or overwhelmed. Becoming aware of what we choose to marginalise or include in our ‘reality’ is often also an ‘aha!’ moment which facilitates insight and perspective, relieving an atmosphere of inner and outer tension, bringing awareness to the situation and consequently deepening relationships and understanding of ‘difference’, seeing that at a deeper level, ‘other’, is also ‘self’.

Knowing this process within myself, I was also able to share personal examples to illustrate this and many of the other key learning points. There is so much resonance with these kinds of experiences, that even in a culture that seems so different to my own, it is humbling to realise how similar we all are, and amazing to experience this depth of understanding and mutual empathy for the human condition and the process of becoming aware.

¹ Eldership: an attitude of support and caring for the well being and diversity of viewpoints of a group or community

² In WW, the concept of leader and facilitator is understood basically as a shared role. Therefore the old concept of participant changed, we call the new participant or “citizen” a “participant facilitator.” (just as the leader/facilitator is leader-follower etc.)

³ An archetype, or an anthropomorphized role or viewpoint, e.g., inner child or inner critic, the one who says you are not good enough, you will never be able to do that..

⁴ Ghosts or Ghost roles: A role in a field which is unoccupied (no one is representing or expressing the role) but which is nonetheless felt to be present, e.g., a black man entering an all white business club may feel the racism even though no one is doing anything blatantly racist at the moment—racism is often a ghost.

⁵ An emotional atmosphere or a felt sense of a particular shared consciousness that seems to be transmitted by acausal non-Newtonian means.

In conclusion

To sustain vibrant relationship we need to cultivate a more deeply democratic perspective or quality of *eldership*. This will enable us to sit in the midst of the heat of the moment and facilitate, embracing diversity with a degree of detachment and fluidity. This seems central to the facilitation skills needed in the world today. This type of awareness and perspective are essential if we are to facilitate change processes that address the systemic crises we, and the future generations are and will be facing.

Deep democracy, or the elder's multileveled awareness is typified by a special feeling; accepting the simultaneous importance of all voices and roles, and the three levels of experience. Everyday reality and its problems are as important as those problems and figures reflected in dreamland, and are also as important as any potential oneness or spiritual experience at the essence level of reality where rank no longer exists.¹

As I understand it now, this shift is also informed by a self-organising principle, which is teleological in nature and can organise all of our individual and collective experience. Raising awareness is at the heart of this practice and the consequent deepening of our ability to self-reflect and connect with a sense of intention, and deeper meaning then informs all our decisions, individual and collective. I suspect that it can be a life long journey to become aware of the ingrained personal and cultural patterns of behaviour and the belief systems that influence all of our relationships. Sometimes, the insights or signals that show the next step or choice are unexpected, irrational and synchronistic, requiring us to develop what is known in some cultures as second attention an – to be able to pick up the subtle signals that catch our attention. For example, in a dream that I had just before I started this research project, I found myself in the desert. Everything was very still, like a living snapshot ‘sparkling with lucidness’. Standing on the Australian red earth, a local friend was ‘smoking me in’ and a profound sense of the timeless nature of dreamtime and vibrant presence of life filled me. It felt like a clear sign to continue with this project focused on eldership, earth wisdom and the importance of relationship with the web of life itself of which we are all part.



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Does the UK's Community-led Sector Need to Accept Providing Housing Properties for 'Market Rent'?

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/GoDuCwGg0_U

Abstract

This paper examines the potential impact of the UK's private rental sector upon proposed and existing intentional communities. It notes the growing provision within the 'private' sector and the manner in which different commentators and housing interests are declaring their support for its revitalised role within the UK's rental housing 'offer'. It notes also the readiness to accept 'market rent' as the standard cost benchmark at which property will be occupied, and what this means for the costs of new housing and residential provisions. The paper then raises questions on the extent to which the terms by which 'market rent' properties may be created could impact upon the dynamics of intentional communities, if they choose to build in this way. This will particularly reflect contemporary debates on how to attract capital investment into new housing, and on the tenancy terms routinely being associated with private sector 'market' engagements. The argument will be put forward that the UK's 'mutual' / 'community-led' sector can already access alternative models and experiences for equitable property rental and ownership that will be more sustainable than 'market rent' arrangements, and that it should be wary of courting partnerships or investments that do not respect its values and intent. A set of final thoughts will then be provided on the challenge that mutually-based residential development can make to the UK's unbalanced housing market, and how its investment-models entail much less risk to the wider economy than the 'market rents' that consume increasing levels of housing income for minimal return.

Introduction to the intellectual foundations of the UK's renewed private rental sector

This short paper draws from general discussions the author has had with members of the UK's 'mutual housing sector'¹, and from concerns expressed about whether or not mutual and collaborative communities should consider future housing projects using new accommodation at the 'market rates' now set within the revitalised UK's 'private rental sector' (PRS). Discussion has often raised issues concerning the ideological background to current PRS provision, and the points outlined below are an attempt to look in some detail about the potential consequences of the 'mutual' sector embracing more of the dominant market conditions, and at what could be an alternative to those terms.

The promotion of UK rental housing provision through the private rental sector has both a history and precedent that predate the 2008 property market collapse which has brought significant change to housing provision across the developed world. Soon after the New

¹ This paper reflects the author's personal views and makes use of material prepared for the 2013 conference of AESOP-ACSP ('Association of European Schools of Planning') in Dublin, July 2013 and from a submission to the academic publication 'Local Economy'.

Labour government took office in the late-1990s, Armstrong (1989, p.132) provided a clear line on future directions for UK housing investment practice when writing that the Government would ensure “*a wider mix of public and private housing development, different types of tenure and mixed use*”. Murie (2008), at the point in time when the state’s main existing housing investment bodies (the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships) were changing into the Homes and Community Agency (HCA), recorded the start of the revised state frameworks to encourage institutional investment into housing provision that has led to the current £1billion being made available by the Government for PRS provision. Such frameworks were used first to *decrease* rental grant percentages towards new-build housing; then to drive the production of new RSL rental and low-cost options (‘Intermediate Housing’), with or without grant input; and now for new housing provision through joint PRS ventures between the public and private sectors.

Over and above adjustments to the *mechanisms* of supporting different approaches to new rental provisions, a host of reports and studies have also appeared in a relatively short period to *justify* expanding PRS provision as the particular form of new housing that could help overcome the kind of problems which contributed to the economic recession, and for stimulating incentives that could bring private and institutional investors forward. This effectively represents the establishment of an updated intellectual foundation to revitalise the PRS, and include :

- a far-ranging review of the private rental sector and its ability to expand away from being viewed as a ‘third option’, only considered after options for home ownership and social housing have been exhausted (Rugg & Rhodes, 2008);
- recommendations for the kinds of planning and regulatory change necessary to underpin substantial new levels of PRS provision and challenge the overall quality of UK housing options (Smith Institute, 2008)
- calls to expand the long-term ‘area stewardship’ underpinning residential ownership investment that has historically been present within leasehold ownerships in urban centres (Liz Peace / British Property Federation, 2009);
- promoting favourable ‘buy-to-let’ conditions that will encourage investments by small landlords and other local savers (Smith Institute, 2009);
- using the substantial institutional finance available in the financial and pensions sector, as replacement for the drop in other development funds caused by market changes and public austerity reductions (HM Treasury, 2010);
- seeing the PRS as a new long-term supply of flexible accommodation that will address persistent national shortfalls in housing provision (CLG Select Committees reports in the PRS, and into financing new housing supply, 2012a and 2012b)
- promoting PRS supplies as entailing less ‘risk’ in building homes for households no longer able to access such home purchase funds (Montague Report, 2012);
- viewing PRS provision as targeted at the needs of households with modest levels of resources, increasingly excluded from either social housing or home-ownership options (Resolution Foundation, 2012 and 2013).

Pawson (2012) and Pawson & Milligan (2013) have provided an ample resume of how traditionally 'risk-averse' investor calculations have been triggered by market recession to reconsider what long-term investment options are feasible in the post-2008 environment. They detail the policymaker appetite for more active intervention in this sphere, and are confident that it makes PRS engagements more likely to be realised in the near future than in the recent past. This certainly chimes with stories in the main housing 'media' that are consistently describing how new proposals for developing PRS provision are being progressed by a lengthening list of local authorities and social sector housing associations, and finding support even in the latest policy from the Labour Party (2013) that is barely distinguishable from the Coalition's support.

Present context and benchmarks of PRS in the UK

PRS provision in the UK now amounts to 17 - 18% of all UK households, and has now moved ahead of provision by the social and housing association sector (Pawson & Wilcox, 2013). However behind that bald statistic is a more revealing detail of growth in PRS tenancies throughout and since the recent UK's housing 'boom & bust' – i.e. before, during and after the economic recession of 2007-08. There was a net total of 1.8m new UK dwellings created in the period 2002-2011. In the same period, however, there was a net increase of 2.1m properties being used for PRS purposes : *more properties have been turned into PRS use* than all the properties built in the recent years that the UK's housebuilding and development industries were steadily increasing output to provide more and more properties to meet outstanding need. And this despite the continual polls and surveys that find more than 85% of the population still prioritise owner-occupation as their 'tenure of choice' if they could purchase such property.

In terms of current support from central government there is an existing £1billion of equity funding available for PRS development schemes. This will help fund new PRS provision where the state may take an equity share for finance injected into the development and redeem that by equity sales at a future date. There is also a further share of up to £10 billion of loan guarantees that the Coalition government has also made available within wider support for market housing schemes.

The defining features of what expenditure on PRS provision provides includes (a) a focus on 'market rent' receipts; (b) the design and development of property in the ownership of small buy-to-let investors and of large institutional financial investors and housing providers; (c) limited lengths of tenures and terms of residency; (d) an increasing 'shared' use accommodation previously used by a single household; and (e) a growing industry of management and lettings agencies, with associated fees and requirements. Some elaboration will help describe each :

(a) 'Market rents' are in practice rents that are as high as can be met by willing households : they may represent different absolute amounts in different parts of the UK, depending on the nature of the 'local market', but their fundamental rationale is only discernible in the manner in which they are used to maximise landlord income. For other practical purposes, the notional use of 'market rents' and rental receipts as benchmarks for development returns is applying

increasing pressure on perceptions and evaluations of whether or not development for *other* tenures or on a particular site (for example on ‘public’ land) is achieving good ‘value for money’. This in turn is eroding a willingness to plan for new proposals at the level of ‘cost’ rents - what a project will require in income or rental receipts to cover the costs of scheme development and construction, without including having to provide for open market ‘investment’ returns or comply with any particular investors’ conditions. In effect, the growing readiness to assume that ‘market’ rents are the ‘norm’ for *all* receipts is being used as a means to widen acceptance for how other aspects of ‘market’ aspirations (i.e. appetites) – namely rising development and construction costs - will be automatically covered by the income from the resident PRS households (who are finding it so difficult to have properties in the other tenures they would prefer) at a future price to suit the suppliers.

(b) The UK PRS sector is currently dominated by small scale buy-to-let landlords, purchasing family-sized property on the ‘second-hand’ open market, either to let as a single unit or as a shared one. Often landlords put forward a stated rationale that their transactions represent the their ‘pension’ plan for future security (usually voiced as if their forethought for the future somehow supercedes any forethought that could be displayed by PRS renting households, albeit the latter are without the income to put their aspirations into action). The current parallel courting of larger institutional investment into PRS provision is bringing more purpose-built plans into development, however it is extremely likely that these will regenerate an appetite to build new apartment blocks or flats, since it is this kind of building that is most suitable to development imaginations that want to maximise permissible housing densities and minimise housing management efforts. It is not however to the taste of many UK households who aspire to property that is more domestic in scale and nature.

(c) PRS tenancies are now usually commenced with a six-month assured short-hold tenancy, and renewed thereafter for either a further similar fixed-term or on a more ad hoc / flexible basis. The short-hold arrangements effectively convey the formal entitlement to a landlord to instigate a change in who occupies their property within a very short space of time (should the landlord so wish), so they provide minimal security of residence to the tenant household. Reports by Shelter (2012 and 2013) have been prominent in their arguments to at least create more superior tenancy conditions, especially for having longer tenancy periods.

(d) As has been stated already, there is a prevalent sharing of PRS accommodation taking place by people who are not related to each other, especially in large urban areas like London (and who are not overtly motivated by any ‘co-operative’ principles!). Not only does such cramming represent minimal respect for the need of people to have a sufficient degree of private space and amenity, but it is also providing inflationary competition to properties still being sold (at slightly lower prices) for single household occupation.

(e) A final element of the UK’s private rental scene has been the emergence of a multitude of housing ‘management and letting’ agencies, and the requirement by both landlords and prospective tenants to be paying ‘fees’ that are ostensibly to cover the basic costs of introducing those two parties together. It is an indication of the essentially unregulated nature of this new phenomenon that tenant campaign groups like ‘Priced Out’ (PO, 2013) and

'London Renters' (LR, 2013) are already demonstrating on the streets against the excesses of such fees, and against what is sensed to be new exploitation of households in vulnerable circumstances.

Considerations by 'mutual' communities to use PRS provision

Why might 'mutual' communities or groups consider using PRS provision? There are a number of conceivable scenarios where community members might think it feasible to engage with the concept and conditions of PRS accommodation. In particular :

- renting or leasing 'ready-made' properties from a private landlord (which are therefore likely to be on a site that is external to a 'mutual' group's ownership or control);
- the commissioning of new accommodation on a site that is external to or separate from any site already in 'mutual' use, but that is going to be in the group's control;
- the commissioning of new accommodation to extend use of a site that is already in the community's 'mutual' ownership and control;
- changing the terms of existing units used by a 'mutual' project / community into accommodation that will be let under PRS conditions.

[There are other possible connections with potential PRS provision – such as a group taking on some 'management' responsibility for PRS stock owned by another landlord, or a new 'mutual' group looking to establish an entirely new project, or even a community looking at special provision to cover members' ageing and 'care-related' needs - however the listed scenarios present a realistic core of backgrounds for when PRS use might be considered, and will suffice for the general purposes of the examination here.]

Broadly put, the basic reasons that 'mutual' sector considerations could be given to adopting PRS conditions are likely to fall into one or both of the following categories :

- to provide new accommodation in addition to what a community or mutual project might already have, in order to **increase the dwellings** in 'mutual' ownership or other management, that could then be offered to (new) members;
- to provide new accommodation or new tenancies that could be the source of an **increase in the overall funds** coming into the 'mutual' agency (to apply to either general community use, or for specific housing-based expenditure).

It is not likely that the PRS 'benchmarks' (and potential draw-backs) listed in the preceding section need apply in equal measure to all of these scenarios. 'Mutual' groups might certainly not see a need to establish short-term tenancies for new projects or new members, and the payment of external management fees will probably not apply. Otherwise, limits to the size or type of accommodation that PRS provision might involve - including a possible 'shared' use of them - could be more akin to existing values a community has already established. The main element of PRS conditions that is likely to feature in all scenarios and under both background reasons, however, (and that would arguably always put proposed provision within the 'PRS' bracket) would be demanding rents at 'open market' levels, so the points raised below are framed fundamentally in terms of the implications that flow from communities considering PRS provision at open market costs.

Impact upon financial issues and UK ‘affordable’ frameworks

To look at typical UK ‘market rent’ levels, they are increasingly being set at costs to the renting households that amount to higher outlays than would be required to service individual mortgages for equivalent homes. Basic costs for new buy-to-let PRS acquisitions are increased through being loaded with demands for other economic returns, such as the manner in which the mainstream lending banks are requiring rental receipts to be up to 125% of mortgage costs ‘in order to reduce risks to investors’ (Shelter, 2012) – i.e. in case rental receipts are not received on schedule from the resident households.

Other UK market-orientated pressures are encouraging more and more sub-division or sharing of properties that previously housed a single household, (including a very worrying and unlawful emergence of private sector landlords cramming lodgers into domestic ‘dormitories’ and even garden sheds). This is exerting a steady inflationary impact on the prices sought by property vendors, and is underpinning a general mindset that rents and property assets should strive to maximise income streams that correspond to PRS levels, not least to avoid criticism that new development may not be securing ‘value for money’.

The corollary to such steady increases in rental requirements is the pressure that is then exerted upon the resident households’ capacity to engage with other aspects of the local economy : for example, expenditure on properties by landlords (especially on improvements) is quite unlikely to mirror the levels that households would be prepared to invest in a property or in significant repairs if it was in their own ownership. Increasing levels of income being required to service PRS rent means correspondingly less for other expenditure – an outcome that actually weakens wider economic participation and saps other market strengths.

The ‘community-led’ housing sector in the UK is furthermore linked very directly into the wider framework for supplying ‘affordable’ rents and tenancies, and gains general support from being an element of the ‘social’ sector, including a sign-posting (from statutory ‘allocation’ policies) to potential new members. It is therefore concerning that the high-level government encouragement given to private sector investment, ostensibly to help stabilise UK housing provision, could *de*-stabilise wider elements of other welfare traditions. For example, there is a substantial established use of local ‘planning’ powers and principles to help provide local ‘affordable housing’ to meeting identified needs. Local planning authorities in England have a fundamental responsibility to plan for the provision of housing to meet all local needs, including meeting the short-- to longer-term requirements of ‘households in need’. An well-used element of such planning is that this will be for households deemed basically ‘unable to meet their needs through the market...’ (DCLG, 2006) – i.e. that needs of certain households will be met through housing being provided (and regulated) at a reduced cost in relation to other local market prices. A weakening of this stance began, however, under the previous New Labour government administration, when local authorities gained permission to accept PRS provision as sufficient to satisfy local ‘affordable housing’ policy where, it was argued, there could be cogent grounds for this. Coalition policy has since permitted the use of PRS properties at PRS rates for meeting the immediate needs of homeless households – under the 2011 Localism Act local authorities can now discharge their duty to

‘persons with priority need who are not intentionally homeless’ into the private rented sector. In other words, *open* market housing provision and costs are being increasingly accepted as suitable and sufficient grounds for meeting household ‘need’.

Given the tenure of other current debate to minimize UK affordable housing obligations where these might threaten the ‘viability’ of contemporary development, it can be easily imagined that arguments will be made that ‘open market’ provisions – like PRS provision - are more than capable of meeting modern housing need and will erode justifications for any separate ‘affordable’ supply at lower costs, and for the regulatory framework that once sat behind it.

PRS impact upon ‘mutual’ dynamics

Given the last point above, the UK community-led housing sector should be extremely wary of providing any support to the political ideology behind PRS provision, if such politics are based upon replacing established frameworks to address excessive housing costs with a one-dimensional application of the speculative (some argue ‘exploitative’) standards that is increasingly dominating general ‘open market’ housing provision. A core value of the ethos behind mutual and community-led initiatives is the intention to provide equal benefit for all those involved in an initiative (community members), in equal measures - that priority to ‘equality’ would risk being severely undermined by the introduction of new differentials between tenancy conditions of different groups of members. In the sense that community-led initiatives routinely prioritise ‘mutual values’, it would seem incredible to risk jeopardising these for either a few new dwellings, or on a new way to raise community funds.

It would also prove quite difficult to maintain justifications to adopt PRS rent levels as the basis for cost variations between tenancies in the long-term, assuming that some justifications could be made acceptable at the start, and be likely to decrease the attraction of such ‘community-led’ provision to prospective future members.

Even the experience of some communities or housing schemes that have an ‘ad hoc’ or independent renting of community accommodation being arranged between household members and other ‘lodgers’, need not conclude that this will have to find its own balance through ‘open market’ agreements : there should always be an opportunity for communities to stipulate that anything like ‘sub-letting’ is channelled or licensed through the community body as a whole (which could then set terms that can deliberately avoid households setting ‘market’ or otherwise speculative rates), rather than left to the discretion of individuals.

Some alternatives to private rental provision

Notwithstanding the current hallmark of the UK housing market remaining fundamentally unstable by changing mixtures of ‘speculative’ habits, it is not the case that no alternatives are possible to PRS standards of housing provision, or that the community-led sector cannot embark on other alternatives. For example, the fact that PRS provision seems predicated upon property ownership being in private hands is not an essential element of providing for ‘private returns’, as investment could be generated into mutual communities as a whole, such as via forms of investment ‘bonds’. ‘Mutually’-based provisions have an enviable history in

providing consistent financial returns (see CCMH, 2009) and retain a clear reputation for providing reliable income alongside having much less risk than other ‘conventional (non-mutual)’ schemes, whether or not they are in receipt of external investment funds.

Customary community-led rental schemes (i.e. at rates below PRS tenancies) can still be an outcome of new development projects, and frameworks are readily available to steer the planning of feasible rental provision at ‘affordable’ or sub-market rates, including the recent growth of support for promoting ‘land trusts’ as the basis for securing and maintaining transparent ‘affordable’ costs.

There are also forms of limited or collective ‘ownership’ options and other equity share models that the community-led sector could examine that retain the sense of challenging mainstream market aspirations (see Cerulli & Field, 2012), ranging from varieties of ‘co-operative’ and ‘cohousing’ initiatives, to combinations of these, like the recent ‘mutual ownership’ model that has developed to shape the new LILAC development in Leeds (see CDS 2003, and LILAC 2013).

There is also a clear irony concerning households bearing ongoing housing costs at PRS rates, rather than the costs of another tenure they would prefer, in that they obviously have sufficient income to cover the contemporary costs of other tenures (indeed PRS receipts will be likely to clear a developer’s mortgage debts within 25-30 years). Households could cover the costs of alternatives to PRS costs, if real practical alternatives were available, however their disposal incomes are being siphoned away to meet PRS rents before households. It would be so different if there were straight-forward routes available to put resources towards more sustainable long-term housing solutions, like communally-commissioned provision within a ‘mutual’ or charitable framework, or via low cost housing private housing on a ‘partial’-ownership model or through ‘affordable’ mortgage costs : see Field (2009) and NaSBA (2011) for further discussion of options.

Concluding remarks

This paper began by setting a number of rhetorical questions on whether or not intentional and collaborative communities in the UK’s community-led housing sector need have any involvement in a future provision of dwellings ‘for private rent’. The foregoing points could be summarised accordingly :

Does the UK’s community-led housing sector need to accept providing housing for ‘market rent, or are there alternatives?’ – the UK’s community-led sector clearly does not need to conclude that PRS-based provision is the only viable option for new accommodation, as there still exist viable alternatives and financial frameworks for increasing rental and ownership stock at lower costs.

Are there concerns and implications for PRS use that the community-led housing sector needs to recognise? - the UK’s community-led sector needs to understand the structural impacts that increased PRS provision is having on the UK housing market, and the damaging implications an endorsement of PRS provision will have for ‘community dynamics’ and for their members’ wider economic and social engagements.

If the rationale for use of PRS provision is to bring in extra funds, can other finance be obtained elsewhere? – the individual constituent elements of the UK’s community-led housing sector need to take realistic stock of their own aspirations for consolidation and growth into the future, and decide for themselves if the funds PRS tenancies could help generate are a fundamental need to have meet future requirements : what the foregoing points have sought to portray is that other business plans are achievable, and other ways to generate funds are still feasible, without resorting to the excesses of current PRS demands.

The dominant ideological role being given to PRS provision in the UK is accepting that PRS households will provide an ongoing supply of the finances to meet the investment and income streams planned and demanded by the rental providers. And even where some investment ‘horizons’ are put forward as likely to represent ‘long-term’ patience and aspirations, it could be argued that the prevailing political and economic ideology to maximise *short-term* results will still be the most influential on people’s residential opportunities. It is as though any residency of households under another’s roof is considered in itself a sufficient end. The argument put forward in this paper is that it is not, and neither is it ‘necessary’ future for the UK’s housing sector as a whole : as an underlying rationale to current growth in PRS provision in the UK it is clear why such investment has such potential for serious economic and social conflict, although as Hodkinson *et al* (2012, 2013) have argued, this may be deliberate in that it is part of wider attempt to complete a reactionary attack on the remaining aspects of the UK’s welfare state. This piece argues that other interventions are required to provide meaningful alternatives to PRS provision, and that the ‘mutual and collaborative’ community-led housing sector should focus on those alternatives, rather than expose itself to supporting unnecessary financial grief and division. Even where PRS provision may seem to offer a route to raise financial resources, the argument here is that the overall costs of doing this are not viable, and that adopting more of the terms of the current UK housing market will make a bad situation immeasurably worse. The ‘mutual and community-led sector’ can do better.

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What can Society Learn from Intentional Communities?

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/7dj8MFeOHBw>

Abstract

An exploration of the interaction between intentional communities and the wider society including the lessons that have/can/will be learnt from the many intentional communities around the globe. Acknowledging the literature regarding the contribution of ecovillages, particularly the progress of the Findhorn Foundation, which is well documented, as is the impact that Lammas is having on Welsh legislation, the researcher believes there is merit in the exploration of additional aspects of intentional community living and the lessons that have/can be learnt. Such aspects may include:

Work with young people

Young people's views on living in intentional communities as well as the views of young people who live outside of the communities but interact with those within. Specific young people's provision versus whole community provision. Models of participation/inclusion of young people in the running of the intentional community.

Grass roots community activity

What can people from inner city or suburban communities learn about community activity and engagement from various intentional communities? Perhaps a participatory action research project aimed at exploring the nature/methods and ideology behind community engagement?

Towards collectivity

In a time of increasing global communication and yet still quite individualistic societies (certainly UK and perhaps the minority world) how can/have intentional communities influence a more collective way of living for those in non-intentional communities?

Introduction – regressive or progressive?

In his reflective travelogue Peter Baker (2011) asserts that as a planet the physical context in which we find ourselves has evolved at an overwhelming rate since the introduction of agriculture over the past 12000 years yet our minds have not yet reached the capacity to effectively govern states much less the entire globe. We are still essentially applying models of thought that have barely evolved from managing tribes of 100 or so people. Having a great deal of optimism in the human race's capacity to intellectually evolve he says:

The real problem is that (due to their evolutionary heritage) humans aren't mentally tooled up to run countries, let alone planets. How to do it remains a major practical conundrum which has yet to be resolved.(Baker 2011:263)

Yet some anarchist writers such as Peter Gelderloos (2010) draw inspiration from tribal and pre capitalist communities that have apparently operated quite successfully without state

interference citing them as examples of non-hierarchical anarchism being a plausible alternative to current social/structural paradigms on a national and even global scale.

These two seemingly oppositional stances lead us to question whether attempts to operate in smaller social organisations such as intentional communities or anarchist federations are a regressive attempt to seek out safer, less imposing and intrusive models of living; or whether there are aspects of intentional communities that we, in wider society, have overlooked and lost along the way in the medieval bloodshed, dictatorship, world wars, fascism, communism and democracy that has created the backdrop for the globalised values of the masses and are in fact a progressive “...*alternative to mainstream society and, through participation, (intentional communities) actively seek out a contrasting lifestyle to the dominant cultural paradigm*”. (Metcalf 2004 in Bohill 2010:48)

Attempting to weave ideas from the varied and colourful yarns that are youth work practice, research amongst young people in intentional and non-intentional communities, conflict journalism and equality theory (amongst others) the piece alludes towards a proposition that intentional communities, far from being a regressive step, are examples of progressive and anarchist action; and the paper, being intentionally inconclusive, will attempt to elicit discussion at the ICSA Communal Pathways to Sustainable Living Conference 2013 about the contributions intentional communities can offer in the ‘conscientization’ (Friere 1996) of the wider, perhaps in many ways oppressed, society.

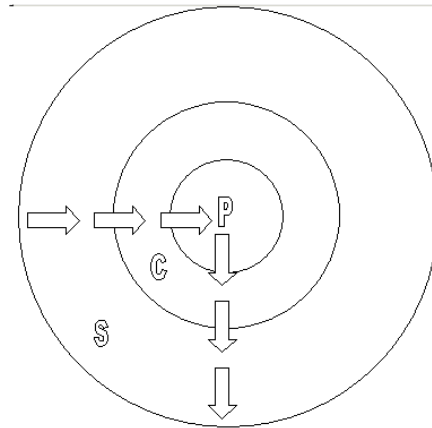
Intentional communities as a response to oppressive societies

In his “...*non-academic, personalised account of intentional communities around the globe*” (Metcalf 2004:11) Bill Metcalf asserts that “*There is a long tradition of people dropping out of their communities and trying to form intentional communities... The past forty years have witnessed almost an epidemic of intentional community establishments across the world*” (Ibid: 7). And many texts can offer historical accounts of the breakup of rural communities; from mediaeval land reform to the industrial revolution and its impact upon the western population (e.g. Carter 2002, Valance 2012). With global capitalism being fed by greed and the puritanical work ethic (Hodgkinson 2005, Hodgkinson 2007) it is not at all surprising that people seek solace from the oppressive isolation created by the pressure to work longer hours for little more money that has to stretch further due to the ever spiralling cost of living. Many, however, still wish to retain their sense of individualism yet learn from the experiences of intentional community members, albeit that, as Metcalf asserts, this “... *precludes a fuller experience of community*” (Ibid:8). It seems then that the move for some to a more communal way of life, whether in an intentional community or a secluded rural village, is a move away from some sense of oppression and towards a freer existence. The specific move to intentional community, however, takes individual reflection and decision, a meeting of or seeking out like minds and, should one desire state approval, the legal sanctioning (either before or retrospectively) necessary to establish a residence in a particular location. This assertion of intentional community as a response to oppression affords us the opportunity of considering Thompson’s (2011) Personal, Cultural and Structural (PCS) model of

understanding and analysing discrimination and oppression in exploring and applying the lessons that can be learned from established and emerging intentional communities.

Thompson's PCS model.

This model of analysing oppression is particularly useful as it can help us to explore how intentional communities may be able to influence individual behaviour, local cultural norms and practices, and policy at a macro level. Illustrated as a set of three concentric circles with P (personal) at the centre surrounded by C (cultural) and S (structural) in the outer circle Thompson explains that each level is influenced by and influences the other.



Thompson's (2011) PCS Model taken from Jones and Williams

(http://www.glyndwr.ac.uk/swpw/social_work_processes_eng/social_work_processes_eng.htm)

The personal level

Thompson identifies that discrimination or oppression at a personal level is often manifest as prejudice “...forming a judgement and refusing to alter or abandon it, even in the face of considerable evidence that contradicts or undermines it” (Thompson 2011:25) which can be open and explicit, in the example of overt sexism or racism, or covert and can even arise without the individual being aware of their own prejudice. Discrimination at this level does not occur in a vacuum, however, as individual assumptions and prejudice is informed by cultural norms and values and we do have to be wary of attaching too much significance to individual views and thus ignoring wider influences. Therefore the P is embedded in the C:

The Cultural Level

At this level culture is defined as “... the way of life of a group... including the meanings, the transmission, communication and alteration of those meanings, and the circuits of power by which the meanings are valorized or derogated”. (Kendal and Wickham 2001:14 in Thompson 2011:27) So here we are talking about any group, be it a group of friends, an organisation, a community or possibly a society. Thompson explains that cultural patterns can be observed and identified through the use of such factors as humour and language. Observation of humour and language in any culture will tell us something about the values that culture holds and what might be feared or rejected. An individual so embedded in a culture may not be aware of the level of the influence it can have over him/herself and what may be taken for granted in everyday life which, when looked at through the eyes of someone

outside of that group may seem strange. Culture can offer positive aspects such as ‘ontological security’ through integration and communion but it can also be a site of discrimination and ‘otherness’. This aspect of the model is particularly interesting as it directly relates to the study of those cultures identified as intentional communities. Again, however, the cultural level needs to be understood in its wider structural context and it is here that we can, perhaps, begin to see intentional communities as a cultural response to structural oppression.

The Structural Level

Thompson (2011:29) identifies three factors that are apparent at the structural level and with which cultural patterns are in constant interaction:

- *“Social Factors:* issues relating to class, race, gender and other such social divisions.
- *Political factors:* the distribution of power, both formally (political structures, parties and so on) and informally (power relations between individuals, groups and so on).
- *Economic factors:* The distribution of wealth and other material resources.”

UK policy on work with young people, their everyday lived experience and the experience of young people in two intentional communities.

Research being undertaken by Gilsenan and Grace (2013) into young people’s lived experience of social policy in Birmingham begins to shed some light on the impact that an oppressive structure of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2005) may have on young people in the UK. Two articles (Turnbull and Spence 2011 and Levitas 2012) which offer critiques on current UK government’s agendas set the scene for this piece and offer some insight into a worrying view of young citizens.

The research identifies that Britain has seen a rise in prominence of a ‘risk management’ approach to social policy due to a growth of managerialist thinking in politics. The early days of New Labour saw the coining of the phrase ‘The Labour Party PLC’ (Osler 2002) and a move from government to governance (Skelcher 1998, Meehan 2003 and Heere 2004). Critiques by youth workers and academics during the New Labour period identified that policy concerning young people at this time was centred on ensuring that they contributed to Britain’s competitiveness in the global market and targeted particular groups of young people e.g. NEETs (Those not in employment, education or training). The move away from locality based provision offering universal services to young people in a community context would change the relationship between youth worker and young person and radically alter the nature of youth work. We have indeed seen a shift in focus from youth work to youth development work and a growth of the case-work approach in England’s youth services (Smith 2003). This shift has not only affected the youth work relationship but has permeated society to such an extent that young people are now, more than ever, viewed as troublesome, to be treated with fear and caution, and vilified in policy and political rhetoric.

Turnbull and Spence (2011) in their detailed policy analysis identify a range of factors over the last 15 years that have lead to the current paradigm of ‘youth as risk’. They argue that the managerialist approach to government, which emerged in the New Labour period, involved a ‘risk based’ approach to policy centring on the identification of potential risks to the progress

of British society and developing strategies to ameliorate or eliminate the risk. The subsequent labelling of risk groups, risk individuals, risk families and risk communities and the accompanying strategies to tackle these along with the contested and problematic notion of 'youth' as an emotionally fraught and troubled 'storm and stress' transition, which has been legitimised by recent studies into the teen brain, has led to the emergence of the notion of 'Youth as Risk'. These observations may, at first glance, not seem particularly new to policy critics and youth workers:

Politicians and policy makers in Britain and Northern Ireland currently tend to talk about young people in three linked ways - as thugs, users and victims. As *thugs* they steal cars, vandalize estates, attack older (and sometimes, younger) people and disrupt classrooms. As *users* they take drugs, drink and smoke to excess, get pregnant in order to jump the housing queue and, hedonistically, care only for themselves. As *victims* they can't find work, receive poor schooling and are brought up in dysfunctional families. (Jefferies and Smith 1999)

However Turnbull and Spence suggest that the move in policy and rhetoric from youth as a 'problem' to youth as 'risk' is a much more pernicious discourse justifying intervention, surveillance and control even in the absence of a presenting problem. Worrying as this should be to all those concerned with the protection of civil liberties, it is not entirely surprising. Various agents of the state have, on numerous occasions, attempted to limit the freedom of the innocent (see for example www.reclaimthenight.org)

Asserting that the traditional links between school, employment and family have deteriorated but that historical social structures such as gender and class inequalities still remain they argue that young people are left confused in this individualistic society, expected to negotiate and manage their own risk whilst making the transition to responsible adult society. Adding to this the argument offered by Furedi (2002:145) which "*Suggests that lack of trust is a defining feature of modern society, resulting in a preoccupation with danger and 'a new morality based on themes of mistrusting people, exercising caution and avoiding risk'*" (Furedi 2002 in Turnbull and Spence 2011:941) they argue that youth emerge as permanent suspects to be viewed as 'risky' which is considered justification for policy intervention and control based on young people as either vulnerable and at risk from others, a risk to themselves or a risk to society either at present or in the future.

Levitas (2012) explores the development of the 'Troubled Families' agenda arguing that government misuse of research together with a demonising rhetoric has contributed to the notion that there are families that are 'undeserving'.

That is why today, I want to talk about troubled families. Let me be clear what I mean by this phrase. Officialdom might call them 'families from hell'. Whatever you call them, we've known for years that a relatively small number of families are the source of a large proportion of the problems in society... (Cameron 2011)

Initially identifying the survey data as 'spuriously accurate' (Levitas 2012:5) due to the sampling strategy employed the piece then discusses the move from the Blair and Brown's liberal inclination towards poverty and disadvantage as a residual problem which required policy intervention centred on inclusion to the coalition's individualistic notion of "*...families that are or cause trouble*" (Levitas 2012:5). This evidences what Thompson (2011) identifies

as an 'ideological tool' i.e. the use of language to shape reality and is manifest in statements such as that made by Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government:

These families are both troubled and causing trouble. We want to get to the bottom of their problems and resolve them – for their own good, and for the good of their communities. Councils will now be asked to identify actual families, based on factors such as truanting, antisocial behaviour and cost to public services. (Liverpool Confidential 2011)

With such oppressive agendas at a national level creating a negative discourse regarding the young and poor is it not surprising that we do not see more of the unrest as was seen in August 2011? Indeed it has been suggested that “...*taking away support from the disabled, the unemployed and the working poor is not straightforward. It can only be achieved by a campaign of demonisation – to crush any potential sympathy*” (Jones, 0 May 2012). Such an approach at a structural level is bound, as Thompson (2011) suggests, to have an impact upon the culture in the UK and what levels of income, employment status, behaviour and even age is seen as acceptable in a modern 'civilised' society. Gilsean and Grace (2013) in the pilot of their research begin to make some tentative suggestions that this aggressive policy and rhetoric towards the young at a national level is having two major effects:

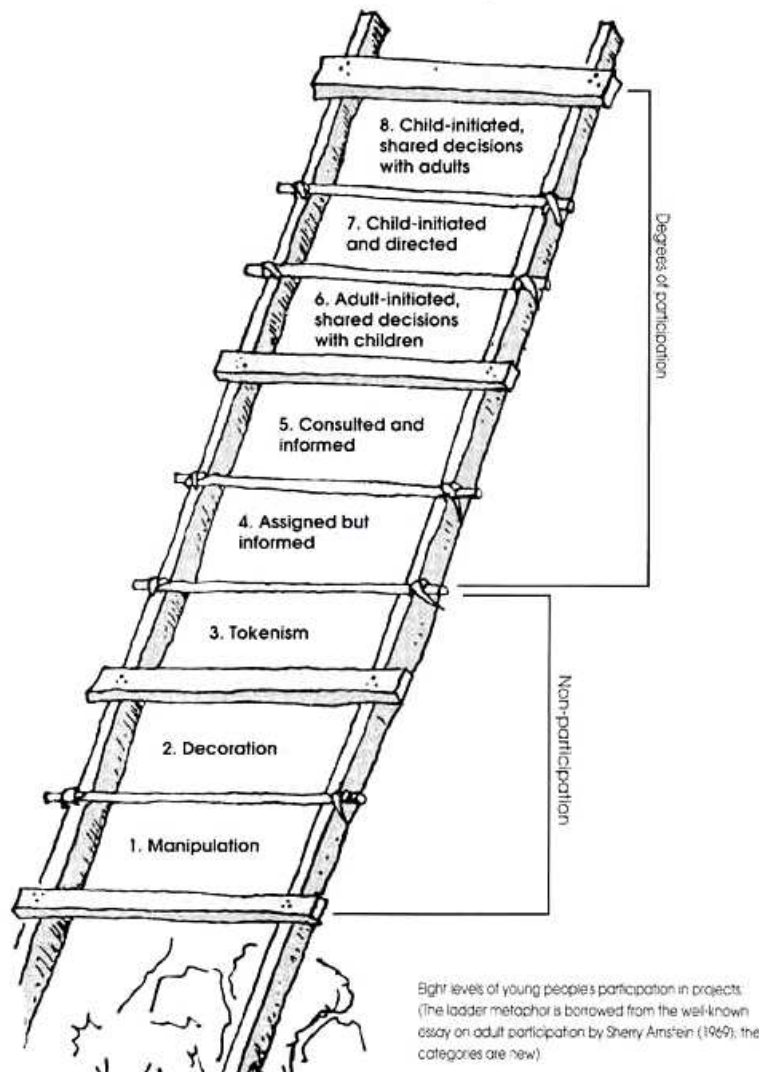
1. Acceptance of the discourse that young people are inherently a risk group to be controlled
 - “I get stopped and searched at least twice a month its normal”
2. Acceptance of symbolic and actual violence amongst the young and older that this discourse seems to be perpetuating.
 - “they (adults) hate us” “all we're doing is hanging around” “yeah all we do is hang around and smoke spliff”
 - “The people in the flats put Vaseline on the wall” – “to stop us rolling spliff”
 - “one of 'em threw an egg at me”
 - “yeah I got water thrown at me so we threw a scallop at the windows”

Of course there have been many studies over decades that have explored the tensions between young and old and between groups of young people; and there have been many policy initiatives over the years that have attempted to tackle such issues. Youth policy in the UK has tended to view young people as either in need of support or as troublesome and risky. Provision for the young has undulated according to government agendas and financial priorities and critics have asserted links between policy and behaviour but what of those young that are, in many ways, isolated or 'protected' from the invasion of this policy and rhetoric? My reading has not yet uncovered any examples of curfew orders or CCTV cameras used to control and monitor the young people and 'troubled families' in intentional communities so how different is the everyday lived experience of young people in such locations. Of course there are huge diversities in types of intentional communities and in their social norms and customs but perhaps Maxey (2004) can offer some insight on which we can base a comparison.

Maxey presents a case study of younger people's participation in two intentional communities offering three reasons for the exploration:

1. To highlight the diversity of forms that rural childhood takes.
2. Because little has been published of the role of young people in intentional communities, perhaps because of an adultist discourse around younger people in the minority world and he desired to explore the extent that intentional communities offer *'more participatory spaces for their younger members'*. (Maxey 2004:3)
3. He sees *'a strong link between levels of participation, access to social, cultural and physical spaces and liberation/overcoming adultist oppression'*. (ibid)

In this paper Maxey uses Harts (1992) ladder of participation as a tool for analysing children and young people’s activities within two intentional communities in South Wales UK. In children’s free and unsupervised time he observes that the further the children and young people are away from the eyes of their parents and other adult community members the higher up on the ladder of participation tends to be their activities.



(Hart 1992:8)

He also identifies the different perspectives/attitudes held by young people and adult community members to land adjacent to the communities. Adults tended to see the adjacent land (particularly at Holts Field) as a sight of tension and ‘out of bounds’ due to the historical dealings and tensions regarding dwelling on the land, whereas the children and young people

saw the barbed wire as a challenge and added sense of adventure was provided by this challenge.

With regard to education provision Maxey identified that all the young people at Brithdwr Mawr chose to be home educated due to a lack of policy and practice around education within the community and they had a high level of participation in decisions about their own education (choosing to attend college at 15 for example).

The decision making processes and actions at a community level, however, tended to exclude young people. Parents seemed to have a desire to encourage individual initiative within the family unit affording young people a high level of influence but this did not necessarily radiate out into the decision making structures within the community due to their 'adultist' nature and structure. Maxey did, however, identify examples of young people directly challenging adult behaviour regarding environmental issues such as car dumping and observed that young people's lives were not dominated by adultism; and the spacial geographies afforded to young people in the intentional communities allowed them the opportunity to explore issues, such as evictions, between themselves in creative ways such as spontaneous large scale collages using flora and fauna found from the environment. He suggests, quoting Valentine (1997) and O'Kane (1998), that there is a direct relationship between young people's participation in community life, their access to social and cultural space, the empowerment that provides and a desire to seek out just ways of maintaining community and that this is evidence enough to justify more research into the relationship between participation of young people and the sustainability of intentional communities. This level of spacial freedom, participation and spontaneous creativity is, it seems, curbed in some urban locations by acts of symbolic violence such as curfew orders and the threat of ASBO's or CRIMBO's. It would be hard to imagine young people outside a row of shops on an urban estate using whatever materials are at hand to create a collage without some level of interference either from adults in the community or officials in uniform.

Of course the study did not directly tackle the question of policy and its effect on young people but it is interesting to note that the young people, despite not having access to the formal decision making structures (something which Maxey identifies is a replication of societal inequalities) were not resigned, as were the young people in Birmingham, to unacceptable adult behaviour (car dumping) as part of the way things were, they actively challenged this behaviour using poster campaigns. As Gilsenan and Grace's work has not, as yet, included research amongst families and their attitudes towards the individual initiative of the young it is not possible to make a direct comparison but it is not beyond the realms of possibility that the nature of intentional communities being essentially of, in many ways, like-minded people with regular interaction between members and in opposition to (although not necessarily in conflict with) wider society and social policy directives allows for more freedom of expression amongst the young without fear of, or at least the expectation of, conflict and retribution from authority figures – be they police or other community members. The social structures are conducive to a culture of dialogue which in turn leads to individual sense of safety and liberty with a responsibility for and to each other.

Concurring with Maxey I suggest that not only is there need for further research into the participation of young people in intentional communities and their sustainability but there is value in undertaking comparative analysis which identifies the relationship between policy, discourse and the impact on young people's relationship with their intentional and non-intentional communities. However, the focus on young people only illuminates one, albeit very important, area of investigation. Recognising that the idea of intentional community is currently outside of the majority of the world's frame of reference and that the move to intentional community may be in response to some level of oppression, what are the structural conflicts that intentional communities seem to be able to ameliorate at a cultural level and how can this learning be shared with wider society?

From global discontent to grass roots community activity

Current UK coalition government policies guided by the principles of The Big Society (www.conservatives.com) and enforced through swathing austerity measures have led to a shift in the traditional patterns of employment and poverty. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, poverty is now more widely experienced across different sections of society with many suffering in-work poverty and a rising number of part-time employees looking for full-time work (1.4 million, the highest in 20 years). Additionally "*while 1.6 million people are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) at any one time, 4.8 million have claimed JSA at least once in the last two years*" (Aldridge et.al. 2012) and "*The welfare cuts so far are likely to hit low-income households more than once, through changes to both income-related and housing benefits. Changes to disability benefit could mean low-income disabled people being hit even harder.*" (ibid) Whether what we are seeing is a proactive Big Society agenda or a traditionally conservative small state approach it leads to the same conclusion, that of shrinking benefits, lower levels of employment and national morale hitting rock bottom: "*They talked of how benefits sanctions and fitness for work assessments were driving many to the verge of mental breakdown, of the humiliation of having to go to food banks in order to feed their children and of the "zero hour" contracts which mean that even when in work there is no guarantee of earning enough to subsist on.*" (O'Hara 2013) On a global level there have been uprisings in the East and anti-austerity demonstrations across the west in which, according to Paul Mason:

... a number of common traits can be observed. First, that the quintessential venue for unrest is the global city, a megatropolis in which reside the three tribes of discontent – the youth, the slum-dwellers and the working class. The estates, the gated communities, the informal meeting spaces, the dead spaces between tower blocks just big enough to be blocked by a burning car, the pheromone-laden nightclubs – all combine to form a theatrical backdrop for the kind of revolts we've seen.

Second, members of this generation of 'graduates with no future' recognise one another as part of an international sub-class, with behaviours and aspirations that easily cross borders...

But there is a third social impact of the 'graduate with no future': the sheer size of the student population means that it is a transmitter of unrest to a much wider section of the population than before... Since 2000, the global participation rate in higher education has grown from 19 per cent to 26 per cent; in Europe and North America, a staggering 70 per cent now complete post-secondary education...

In Britain, the Blair government's policy of getting half of all school-leavers into higher education meant that, when it broke out, student discontent would penetrate into hundreds of thousands of families. (Mason 2013:69-70)

If we view attempts to ameliorate the effects or combat the causes of such discontent as a continuum with bank bailouts and relaxed planning laws to encourage property development at the one end and gang warfare, riots and insurrection at the other it would seem that some of the models of intentional community are not particularly radical and could even, in the UK, be described as coterminous with the Big Society agenda (albeit despite government policy rather than because of it). One model which offers some hope is the cohousing approach written about in some detail by Graham Meltzer (2005). One particularly inspirational example is that of the N Street community which comprised, at the time of writing, 15 separate dwellings on a corner block that had, over a twenty year period, taken down dividing fences, developed a system of meal sharing, laid pathways that meandered through the land between and behind the properties, installed a hot tub, changed the legal status of the block and bought a 'communal house' (Meltzer 2005:61-67). There are many such estates across the western world which could lend themselves to a more communal approach to living yet do not necessarily require residents to operate as an intentional community but could still develop a more cooperative and perhaps self-reliant way of living. Take, for example, David Leach's (2012) suggestion of "Kibbutzing your 'Hood'". One inspired by living communally in Israeli Kibbutzim, a simple idea of removing fences between houses and sharing garden space. Surely an approach which would benefit all, from those who are elderly or infirm to those who are healthy but out of work. The simple sharing of land between houses to cultivate and grow food, keep chickens and exchange pleasantries would surely lead to a more self-sustainable community akin to the Big Society agenda. It may, of course, also act as a cultural response to the structural/global level free market "Tescopoly" (Simms 2007) we are currently suffering – 'every little helps' – let's hope so!

Local decision making - towards collectivism

Centuries of industrialisation, capitalism and land reform acts have led to a society of individuals being unable to have any real influence over the use of land within their locality (Carson 2002). Land and property is fenced off, closely guarded by cameras, people in uniform and dogs – even land that has been unused for decades. Elected governments, both local and national work with large developers and multinational companies to design homogenous "crap towns" (Jordisan and Keiran 2003) and offer 'consultation' by inaccessible means to unrealistic timescales (wakeup_admin 2013) so that beautiful countryside can be ripped open to make way for the insertion of car parks, supermarkets and unaffordable housing (Protect Congleton 2013). The current UK government has relaxed planning laws to allow for developers to build on agricultural land and:

...because fewer than half of the councils in England have developed local plans which protect them from builders having free rein to build where they like... authorities will have to use the new National Planning Policy Framework, which is biased towards "sustainable development", when assessing planning applications, which campaigners say will leave them at risk of "damaging development". (Bryant et al 2013)

Given the intention of the relaxed planning laws to encourage house building it is hardly likely that intentional communities desiring large open space will be given any sort of priority and of the non-co-housing type Intentional communities in the UK only one, Lammas in Pembrokeshire, was given planning permission before residents moved in. A number have been successful in gaining retrospective planning approval and many more are still under the planning radar.

It could be argued that this structural roughshod ride over local wishes, desires and needs is a current incarnation of what Illich et al (2005) called the disabling professions; although the campaign groups identified above offer a hopeful drop of activism in the ocean of apathy. We have lost the ability or even the desire to communicate with our neighbours and share some of the fundamental everyday tasks and tools. Instead we abdicate responsibility for ourselves and offer our lives and money to the professionals who decide where we shop, what we teach our children, what help we need, how we seek mental health assistance and therapy etc. There has been a backlash but real change needs a structural root and branch rethink rather than just lip service to the so-called localism that is being spoken about in the UK at present. So what individual and cultural mind shifts are required to oil the wheels of revolution? How can we, every day folk, begin this paradigmatic shift?

The co-housing model mentioned earlier identifies three types of support which could, with careful consideration and effective communication amongst community members, be offered and applied in localities all across the UK. Quoting Bellah et al, Meltzer identifies three types of support which are the norm in co-housing and which have diminished in contemporary western society:

Social support...is restored in cohousing through ready-found 'caring and sharing'. Practical support is ubiquitous in cohousing through close-knit neighbouring. Moral support is the collective consciousness in co-housing that maintains support for, and validation of, individual members by the group. (Meltzer 2005:141)

This kind of support could re-emerge in society if there are enough keen individuals to encourage their neighbours out of their doors, away from the TVs, shopping centres and Tesco stores. In an era of disillusionment with global society and, as evidenced by Metcalf (2004), a growing move to intentional community it seems the current climate is conducive to being influenced by those who dwell in intentional communities with a desire to offer suggestion and consultation. Such a move however is paradoxically both directly in opposition to consumerism and can be aligned to 'Big Society' principles as it will encourage people to be less reliant on the continual purchase of material goods and promote more community oriented self-reliance. A neighbourhood that takes down its fences, shares gardens, lawn mowers and cars will consume less and reduce its contribution to fuelling the capitalist machine. So how might key individuals be lured from the seeming comfort of their consumerist isolation and be encouraged to create community?

Community workers for decades have worked in ways that have promoted collective action and collaboration in neighbourhoods, whether this be to tackle specific issues such as the set-up of Housing Trusts in the 1980s or more general/social improvements, such as community fairs etc., and in the current climate of global austerity it appears that there is potential for

communities to look inwards towards their own locally available physical and social resources and, in many ways turning their back on the state, develop their own social capital. Collaboration between intentional communities and community work organisations could offer such sites for more collaborative ways of living, communal activity and even land sharing. Perhaps the internet might be an appropriate start. It seems that with the emergence of social media and on-line free exchange sites such as Freecycle and The Freeconomy Community we may, if the link is made, see a move back towards the reliance on moneyless markets and gift giving as a means of exchange. Many are willing, nowadays; to give and receive second hand goods over the internet, perhaps a web site which combines social media, goods and services exchange together with local social meetings and the sharing of information and ideas between intentional and non-intentional communities; Ideas that may question the nature of established ways of living such as borders, fences, individual car ownership, supermarket use, individual power tool ownership etc. can help to germinate the seeds of a more collective existence.

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Effective and Inclusive Decision-making and Governance: The example of Steiner schools

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present decision-making and governance approaches that allow members of a community to feel that their voice is included, yet without the community losing effectiveness and speed where this is necessary for the functioning of the social organism.

By ‘governance’ as it is used here, is meant all that pertains to the management, leadership and decision-making processes of an organisation, as well as its organisational structure. Dynamic Governance or Sociocracy (Buck 2007, Endenburg 1988, 1998), an approach to governance that will be presented here as a model for inclusive and effective organisation, discerns 6 elements that define governance, which will be presented further. ‘Intentional communities’ refers to a place where people have gathered to live or work together focusing on a common intention rather than having conglomerated purely geographically.

Research based on surveys and interviews in Steiner-Waldorf schools (which are based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, 1996) and in intentional communities will be discussed to illustrate the challenges and solutions of governance for groups of people pursuing a common goal.

The social organisms focused on in this paper are those that Rudolf Steiner’s three-fold social order (1923) would attribute to the spiritual-cultural sphere of society. This functioning principle of three-folding, used also by Rea Gill in her school organisation (2011), will be further explained and its application shown. The suggestion being that if an organisation belongs to this sphere, it will obey different functioning principles than if it were a business (economic sphere) or a political institution (political/rights sphere). Therefore also, schools and communities have sufficient elements in common for case studies of schools to be useful. One could thus draw lessons for the governance of intentional communities. Especially as in one case study, the school is a boarding school. Schools can be seen as a form of community. This happens especially when staff, parents and children gather around a strong ethos, when wider school decisions are made together, when a kind of community culture has been established. This is especially true of Steiner schools embedded in Camp Hill communities, residential communities for people with additional needs and their carers. Data about such communities were not included in this paper.

Experiences in one Steiner school indicated a lack of structural fixity/form and an over-emphasis on 'life', openness and freedom (Heijne 2012). This dichotomy of *life* and *form* will be discussed. Interviews with members of this Steiner school community also revealed dissatisfaction; a certain lack of clarity about the structure of the organisation and more inclusivity than effectiveness in decision-making.

These findings suggest that increased clarity, transparency and effectiveness may improve the experience of governance in schools and communities. This paper will outline some suggestions for improvements based on data collected in one school and a small sample of communities. In these places, increased structural clarity, transparency and effectiveness was introduced through the Dynamic Governance or Sociocratic approach.

Research methodology and ethical protocol

The research by Heijne on Steiner school governance that is quoted here was carried out under the University of Plymouth ethical guidelines in the framework of a Masters dissertation. Permission for reproduction of data collected in the other surveys was obtained.

The focus was on qualitative interpretative research, the research emphasised the content of the responses and created an iterative interpretation. The samples were small (14 interviews, 15 surveys and a few responses from intentional community members), but the researchers were interested in presenting content rather than using quantity of data as evidence. The researchers used an analytical method of coding and categorising (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Saldaña 2009) for the analyses of the materials on the Steiner school case study.

As the authors were a Steiner practitioner (Heijne) and a Dynamic Governance trainer (Buck), they placed themselves as insiders to Steiner education and to Dynamic Governance practice on the action research continuum (Herr and Anderson 2005). Any bias due to this positionality has been considered during data analysis.

Theoretical background

The authors of this paper have essentially used three sets of theoretical frameworks to underpin their research and their suggestions for governance. The suggestion is that combining these approaches creates a stronger and mutually reinforcing understanding of governance.

The first approach, or set of principles, comes from Gerard Endenburg, who developed 'Sociocracy' in the 1970's in the Netherlands, using principles of cybernetics and the principles he learnt at the Working Place Children community of Kees Boeke (Rawson 1956). He sought to create a structure assuring equality in value in decision-making and applied this to the governance of his electric-engineering business. Several academic articles have been published about this approach (Romme and Endenburg 2004 and 2006) and Sociocracy was translated to the Anglo-American world by John Buck, who called the approach 'Dynamic (Self) Governance'. The three basic principles according to Buck (2012) are:

1. Consent principle
2. A structure that includes circles and double-linking of hierarchically linked circles

3. Constant evaluation and feedback

In general, a system of steering (governance) works best when it supports effectiveness, equivalence, and transparency, according to Buck (2012). The following six parameters are seen by Buck and Kunkler (Buck 2012) as important in governance:

1. Clear and compelling purpose
2. Defined roles and accountability (leadership)
3. Effective processes in meetings
4. Fair and efficient decision-making
5. Good communications, among group members and outside
6. Record keeping of the organization's shared information (e.g. minutes, policies, decisions, etc)

Appendix 1 outlines these six parameters in more detail.

The second theoretical framework used in this article, is the idea of three-folding of society and of social organisms that Steiner initiated (Towards social renewal 1923). This idea was further developed and experimented with by authors and organisations building on his philosophy, which is called 'spiritual science' or 'anthroposophy'. Steiner suggested that society consists of three major realms, areas or spheres. He discerned a 'spiritual-cultural' realm, a political-rights sphere and an economic realm. He studied the embryonic development of humans and saw parallels between the development of nerve-sense, rhythmic and metabolic-will parts of the human body and a three-fold division in social organisms. Rawson, a Steiner teacher, author and researcher explains this same idea as follows:

The economy should be guided by the principles of association and the meeting of needs rather than by freedom alone, as it is in neoliberalism. The state should follow the principles of social justice and equality and should not for example deregulate the economy or environment. The cultural sphere should be governed by the principle of individual freedom, and not by equality in the sense of "one size fits all". (Rawson, 2011:7)

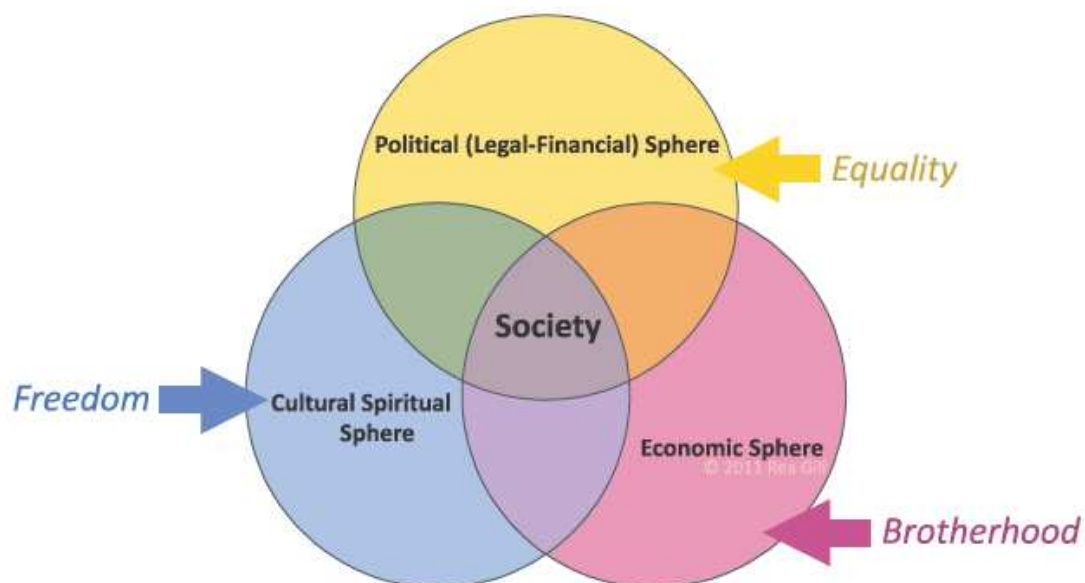


Figure 1: Steiner's Three-fold Social Order (Gill 2013)

Gill, Executive Director of the High Mowing Steiner-Waldorf School in the US describes how the three-folding of the human body and the embryonic development serves as inspiration for the social three-folding of a ‘school as a living entity’ (2011). She has created an organisational structure for Steiner schools that develops three main departments in the school, based on social three-folding (Figure 2). Gill says:

“The use of the term three-fold when characterizing a social or governance structure is a reference to a principle that describes organizations as dynamic living social entities – responsive, changing, growing and learning – created by human beings and therefore reflections or projections of the same archetypes that exist in the human being. Beginning with this foundational idea, living organizational social systems can be intentionally modeled on mental pictures formed out of a study of the development of the physical living systems in a developing human being. In this way, such a correlation (not a direct equation) can be drawn between the development of human systems and the development of organizational systems. Understanding the development, differentiation and functioning of the interconnected and interdependent human systems can provide insight into how an organization develops and functions as a living entity.” (Gill Feb 2013).

A third theoretical backdrop comes from a series of current academic researchers. Woods and Woods studied Steiner schools and their governance (2005) as well as democratic schooling and holistic democracy (Woods and Woods 2011:1). Woods speaks about a dichotomy in schools between openness/freedom and structural fixity (Woods, 2005). Fielding and Moss mention a ‘personal’ vs. ‘functional’ dichotomy (2011). Wenger (1998) distinguishes ‘participation’ from ‘reification’, where reification refers to the ‘making into a thing’ of a social participatory practice, for instance by creating a written policy. All these served as inspiration to Heijne’s case study analysis of data of one Steiner school (Fig. 1). This analysis found a tendency in that school to lean towards so-called ‘life’ over ‘form’. This dichotomy is similar to the dichotomy between chaos and order, the synthesis of which Dee Hock (1999) termed “chaordic.” Any institution needs a chaordic balance to function effectively.

LIFE	FORM
Openness, freedom, participation, personal	Structural fixity, reification, functional
-Leadership seen as accessible and shared	-Disempowerment in lead-roles
-Openness in communication	-Lack reification of communication channels
-Initiative and creativity encouraged	-Unclear remits and responsibilities
-Trials and change in organisational structure	-Structural changes not transparent/reviewed
-Inclusion in decision-making valued	-Long, inefficient decision-making
-Autonomy of individual teaching staff	-Lack of unified direction and leadership
-Interest in social change	-Lack of collective vision for social change
-Warmth and care in relationships	-Stress levels of staff, lack of staff review

Table 1: Life and Form

The suggestion was that if a school, and by extension a social organism of the spiritual/cultural domain, were to display too much ‘life’ or openness and freedom in its way of operating, the balance would be lost and this would harm the community to some extent. Equally, the theory would be that if there was too much ‘form’, the community would suffer by lacking these qualities. The suggestion would be to appoint a group of elders constituted of people who would have accumulated a certain amount of experience and wisdom about the

organisation and whose task it would be to keep a finger on the pulse with regards to the balance between degrees of ‘life’ and ‘form’ in the organisation. They would only report their almost contemplative observations, but leave it to the insiders to act upon these insights.

When these three theoretical backdrops are brought together, namely dynamic governance principles, three-folding of the social organism and the life-form dichotomy, a new proposal for governance can be constituted. When a balance of life and form, of openness and structure, of personal and functional elements is found in a social organism, the organisation should gain in health, efficiency and inclusivity. If it also integrates principles of consent, double linking of levels in the organisation and the ongoing use of feedback and evaluation at every process phase, it would gain in effectiveness, transparency and equivalence. And lastly, according to the three-folding of society, it could recognise that, as a school or as an intentional community, its basic functioning principle is ‘freedom’, and that as such, it has a different inherent structure than a business or a government institution. Equally, its internal organisation could adopt a three-fold structure as demonstrated in Figure 3. Like in Babushka dolls, there is again an internal three-folding of each section of the organisation as demonstrated for a Steiner school in Figure 2 and 3.

The bringing together of these three conceptual models is still a work in progress. This paper will now discuss some evidence of places where parts of this theory has been brought into practice.

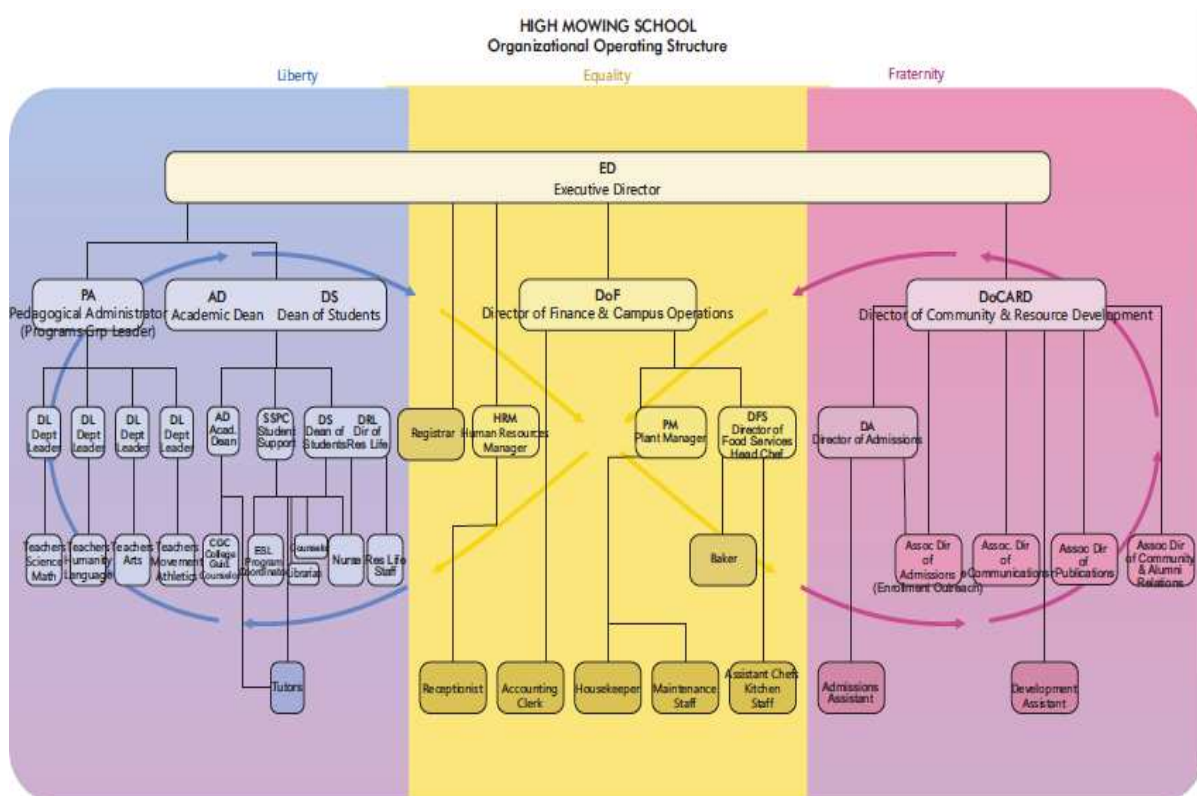


Figure 2: Three-fold Figure: High Mowing structure three-folded

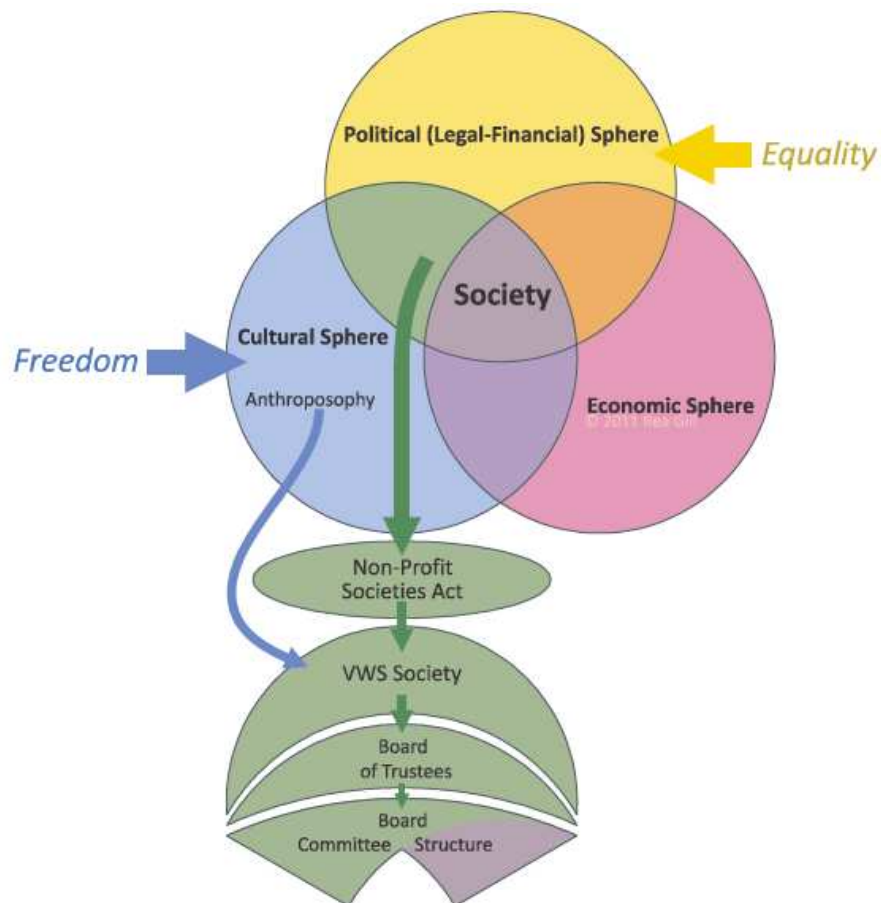


Figure 3: Legal Structure of a Waldorf school

Current evidence

Steiner schools in the UK and worldwide work with forms of governance that seek to integrate principles that are an alternative to the traditional top-down head teacher model. Rawson summarises the authority structure with the following key words: “Teachers’ republican, collegiate, non-hierarchical, distributed authority and leadership, self-organization/administration, peer-accountability, dynamic delegation.” (Rawson 2011: 11). It is because of this alternative approach to leadership and because of the value placed on community in a Steiner school, where it is felt that “A healthy community values the individual and the individual values the community.”, (Rawson 2011:11) and where the community is seen as focus for learning (*ibidem*), that Steiner schools may provide valuable comparison material for intentional communities.

Evidence from case-study research in a UK Steiner school and from surveys held with UK representatives of Steiner schools shows that the members of a school community, teachers, trustees, management and administrative staff had a variety of inner representations of their school’s organisational structure (Appendix 2). When asked to draw their school’s organisational diagram, the lack of unity indicates creativity as well as lack of clarity. Appendix 2 shows some of these diagrams. Respondents however were asked to give their subjective impression and did not have time to consult any official documents to help them.

Indeed, the emphasis of the research was about working knowledge and personal experience of school structure.

In the case study, people interviewed had differing interpretations of the remits and accountability lines of different bodies within the school (Heijne 2012). Most respondents had a prominent role in the school management, which led the researcher to infer that there was a lack of clarity about remits (Table 1).

When decision-making was concerned, school community members felt their voice was generally included but effectiveness of decision-making was not highly rated, especially in school-wide decisions that went beyond their primary task (Fig 4-7). Also, when asked what decision-making modes were predominant in both areas, the definitions were very diverse (Table 2).

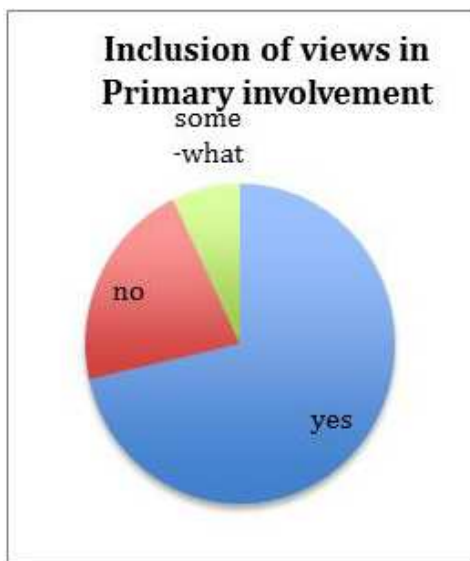


Figure 4: Inclusion - Primary



Figure 5: Effectiveness - Primary

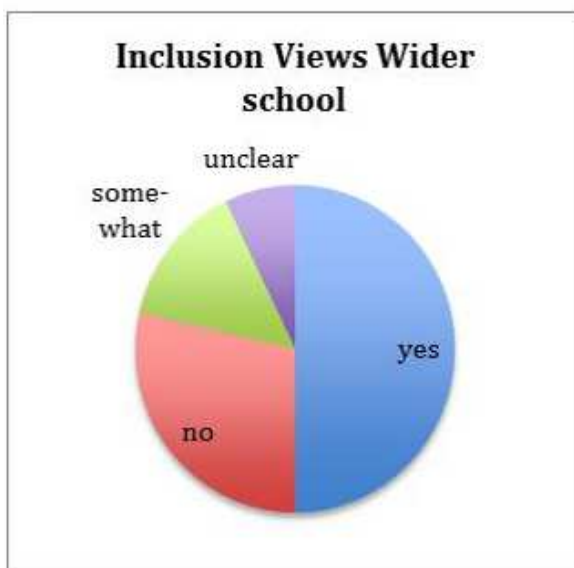


Figure 6: Inclusion - Wider

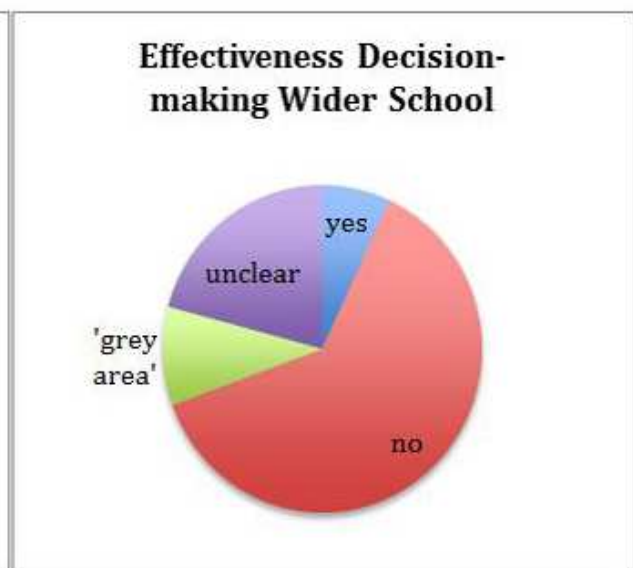


Figure 7: Effectiveness - Wider

In Primary task/involvement	In Wider School
'If empowered to do the job': effective = directive	Majority vote; beginnings of consent; no protocol
Collective	Definitely democratic
Consensus ('madness')	None, not habitual, haphazard, 'shout loudly'
Benevolent dictatorship, Very free	Directive (in the past), consensus (now), Can be charisma driven
Show of hands; consensus	Majority vote in EGM/AGM
Consultative; no strategic plan	Combination
Consensus; insecure in executive decisions	Accumulation of opinions, circumstances, personalities
Participative; at least consultative	Consultative, majority vote
Democratic; consensus; discussion	No forward planning
Authority depends on age pupils; primarily autocratic	Consensual in small groups, seen people abstain in College; Trustee process unknown
Majority vote; not democratic, anarchy	Consensus; undue process

Table 2: Decision-making modes named in interviews

The overall experience the 14 respondents had of the school structure was not positive (Figure 8). Thus, we could conclude that the existing governance would need to be improved.

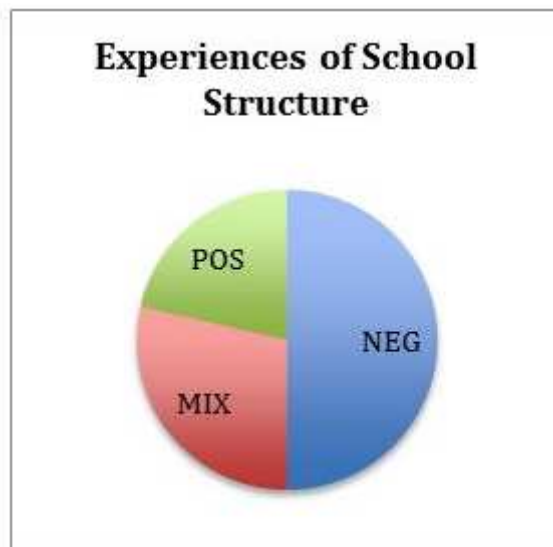


Figure 8: Experiences of School Structure

A way forward: Three-folding and evidence of applications of Dynamic Governance

From this research, it appears that there is scope for improvement. For instance there could be more clarity on decision-making protocols, more satisfaction with effectiveness of decision-making and a better general experience of governance.

High Mowing, a Steiner boarding school in the US, had started to apply both a three-fold structure and principles of Dynamic Governance. A survey conducted amongst members of that school community revealed that people felt there was improved effectiveness and inclusion of all the voices. There obviously were differences between the contexts and sizes of

the school that served as a case study and High Mowing, but the comments in the survey suggested that similar issues were at play in High Mowing before the introduction of the changes.

About 24 ecovillages or intentional communities were at different stages of implementing Dynamic Governance, varying from considering applying it to having integrated it into the fabric of community life (source: Buck 2013). A beginning has been made with a survey to ask members of some of these communities about their experience of the change in governance (Appendix 3). A first analysis of the data these two surveys had generated will be presented here, but first it is necessary to present which dynamic governance and three-folding principles had been applied and how these two approaches could work together.

Dynamic Governance or Sociocracy when implemented in a community or in an organisation will work simultaneously on the organisational structure and on the processes (such as electing people to roles and making decisions). The structure can be changed gradually, step by step, and this can happen on all levels, but ideally including the top level of the organisation from the start. This top level is also called 'top circle', as all the parts of the organisation are organised in circles. In Dutch, the language in which Endenburg created Sociocracy, the word 'kring' is used, which refers more to the process that happens in the circle than to the geometric shape. The top circle is usually equivalent to the Board of Trustees or Governors. The function of this circle is to connect the organisation with the outside world by attracting different experts. Endenburg (1998) mentions the three parts of society having to be represented here as being the cultural, the legal/financial or political and the economic part of society. The top circle also has to do a certain amount of creative visioning and crystallise this into a strategic or development plan for the organisation.

For communities who struggle with the notion of 'hierarchy' or 'top-down' relationships between these circles, it is good to realise that there is no value judgement placed on the different levels, simply a distinction between levels of abstraction. The top has greater overview and abstraction than the bottom. However, policy is made by each circle to meet its own aim. Thus, circles have autonomy in that way as long as their aim is set in conjunction with the aim of the whole. It is also interesting to note the etymology of the word 'hierarchy', which comes from the Greek 'hieros' and 'arches' or 'archein', meaning the ruling or governing by the 'sacred' or 'holy' (Oxford Dictionary).

In order to maintain the circle principle in the whole organisation however, all the circles are connected and interlinked to each other to form one whole circle. The interlinking happens through the so-called 'double-linking' principle where a representative of the circle below is also a member of the next higher circle, and where the leader of each circle also sits in that same next circle higher up in order to pass down policy to the circle they are leading. This allows for information and action flow to be bi-directional.

Leadership is seen as important, but it is mandated and overseen by the circle. One person is elected in a specific open election or selection format which invites each person to contribute a nomination whilst giving reasons and which requires consent of each member of the circle (Appendix 4). A term of service as well as an evaluation and feedback date are set at the

election/selection time in order to guarantee and implement the circle's oversight and to integrate feedback from 'below'.

Leaders will hold so-called operational meetings, which could be called work-meetings (opera meaning 'work' in Latin). In these meetings the leaders give directions and instructions. Dynamic Governance thus harnesses the effectiveness and speed of directive, autocratic leadership but puts clear boundaries around its use.

Through all these structural implementations is woven the principle of 'consent', which invites all members of the community to give consent to decisions that are made in the circle they are a part of. The General Circle will tend to be the biggest circle, with most representation of different parts of the organisation. 'Consent' has to be distinguished from 'consensus' (Endenburg 1988, Buck 2008, Heijne 2011), in that one consents when one has no paramount and argued objection to the proposal made. 'Objection' is a translation of the Dutch 'bezwaar', which emphasises the weightiness experienced almost as a bodily feeling rather than an argument. A skilled facilitator will navigate the decision-making process by welcoming objections that are raised out of an awareness of the circle aim and by re-directing those that aren't. This allows for the organisation to move forward even if some of the members are over the moon with the proposal. Decision-making processes use 'consent' as their basis (Appendix 5).

Rounds allow for an equal distribution of opportunities to speak. So again, in the group processes, the use of rounds and the directive intervention of the facilitator show a combination of directive and inclusive dynamics, seeking to harness the positive contribution of both. Directive because of the security, clarity and transparency given through the actions of the facilitator, and inclusive because of the inclusion and equality provided by the use of a structure created by 'rounds'.

As far as the three-folding is concerned, Gill in February 2013 reports:

We have just completed the redesign of High Mowing School's leadership and operating structure, with the implementation now completed in the Pedagogical realm of activity and a corresponding and interconnected circle structure designed for the other two folds or realms of activity –the Legal-Financial-Governance area, and the realm of Community & Resource Development (CaRD) – also being implemented over time.

For intentional communities, it would be interesting to explore how three-folding of the community into a cultural-spiritual, economic and mediating interpersonal sphere would apply. The purpose of doing this would be that the community both clearly separates and mindfully interconnects these spheres so that they can become stronger and communicate more effectively. Insufficient information had been gathered on how the three-folding principle affects people's experiences. It would be valuable to do so in future research.

The survey in High Mowing (see Appendix 3 for the question schedule) revealed that 13 out of 15 respondents were quite enthusiastic about the changes Dynamic Governance had brought to the school, after a little over one year of it being introduced. Here are some excerpts from the quotes:

- Huge change in morale for the better

- More being accomplished
- Less complaining, fewer personality conflicts
- Fewer groups gather for whispering sessions
- Feeling of “THEM” pulling strings off stage has lessened, but not completely abated
- People feel actively heard because they are seeing results.

Two comments were more equivocal:

- Still a work in progress
- Not enough information to comment

The survey asked respondents to rate the impact of the introduction of Dynamic Governance on how the school operates and on the collegiality and inclusivity of one’s voice, but because of a flaw in the data collection, the data of these ratings on a quantitative scale are less reliable. It suffices to say that the ratings were above average.

When asked what was working well, respondents touched on a wide variety of points:

- Much greater sense of safety in the faculty
- Ability to go online and see minutes from any circle
- Voices being heard, collaboration
- Meeting structure highly effective
- Decisions seem to make more sense
- Some people are well trained in how to run circles
- Faculty meeting has more time to focus on students
- People can’t usurp power.
- Communication a little better
- Posted agendas make meetings more productive

When asked one thing that Dynamic Self Governance could do better, three respondents said that there were too many meetings, three said there were too few meetings of the smaller circles. Other comments that would be relevant to general application of Dynamic Governance were that distinguishing between operational and circle (policy-setting) meetings could get muddy. It was mentioned that training in communication skills and how circles work was important and that the format of circle meetings needs to be understood and determined with input of the circle members. Regular reviews also were mentioned as being important. One comment also referred to the need sometimes for deeper discussion, which may not happen in highly structured meetings focused on decision-making.

Considering that it was only a year since they introduced Dynamic Governance, these responses are encouraging. Staff seem to appreciate greater inclusivity and transparency, greater effectiveness and clarity.

The survey that was started among intentional community members lacked sufficient time for a big sample of responses. Six communities in three different countries were approached and four answers came back. Despite this minimal sample, it seems worthwhile to quote some of the answers, as they give an indication for further research.

One person said “Equivalence has really taken place, tasks and responsibilities are more clearly defined, everybody feels responsible, we celebrate decisions, the right person is in the right position. My image is that of a circle, when all are equivalent and connected the circle is round, leaving the open space in the middle for creation.”

Another said: “More clarity has been obtained about who decides where and when about what. This brings a calm in the group and less emotional outbursts”. Yet another said that “a new culture of decision-making has developed. (...) Members don’t tolerate less systematic methods anymore. Difficult or complicated decisions are made without people feeling thwarted or left out. The sociocratic circles have integrity and are respected”.

In terms of things that could be improved, one person said that it is important to discern which minutes of which circles are important so as to reduce administration and make it purposeful. What needs to be tweaked according to another respondent is the information flow between different levels and there needs to be a procedure for amending or revisiting a decision when one has been absent.

These comments as well as the fact that many residential and intentional communities were already experimenting with Dynamic Governance at the time of writing (see also Appendix 6) is encouraging evidence of the value of this approach. The process of integrating new principles of governance has to be taken into account as being a learning curve.

An additional realisation that was made during the writing of this paper, and based on experience of Buck and van Dantzig as sociocratic trainers, was whether intentional or cohousing communities lack a clear common mission and aim that creates a base for governance. Indeed, intentional communities are defined mainly as having socialisation aims, such as in the Wikipedia definition:

An intentional community is a planned residential community designed from the start to have a high degree of social cohesion and teamwork. The members of an intentional community typically hold a common social, political, religious, or spiritual vision and often follow an alternative lifestyle (...)

The question is whether a lack a purposeful exchange of goods or services with the outside community, may make it harder for governance to function adequately. This would be because governance is centered around clear formulation of vision, mission and aim and through this commonality supports the overcoming of individual differences in values. Further research would be needed to examine the question of the common purpose and aim of intentional communities and whether the presence or absence of an exchange of services or goods has a bearing on good governance in such a social entity.

Conclusion

The evidence gathered is very small quantitatively speaking, but the answers given in surveys and the analysis of data from Steiner schools suggest that more inclusive and effective governance would be preferred by members of the communities.

This paper sketches out some suggestions for applying equivalent, effective and transparent governance systems and practices by using the principles of Dynamic Governance in

intentional communities. It also presents some initial qualitative research trails that could be continued in order to establish more firmly whether Dynamic Governance is felt to be beneficial in communities and organisations such as schools.

Further, it is suggested that the three-folding of schools and of other social organisms may benefit the organisation and governance of intentional communities, because it allows to develop a new ordering of the different areas within the organisation.

Further research would be needed to determine whether an intentional community needs to include an exchange with the outside world to allow for a base for good governance.

This paper provides a perspective on whether and how different and new forms of governance could benefit schools, intentional communities and other social organisms.

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Appendix 1

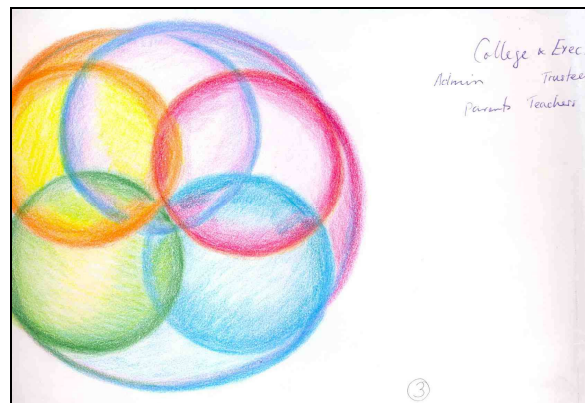
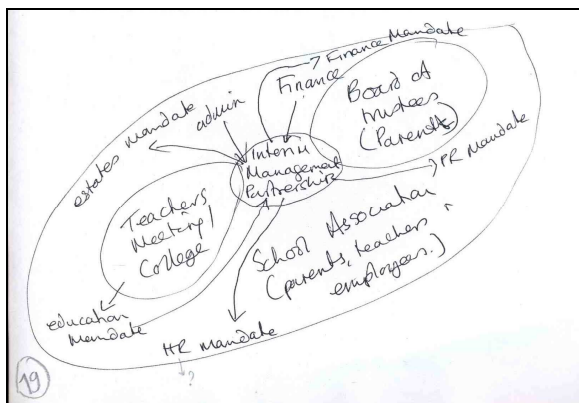
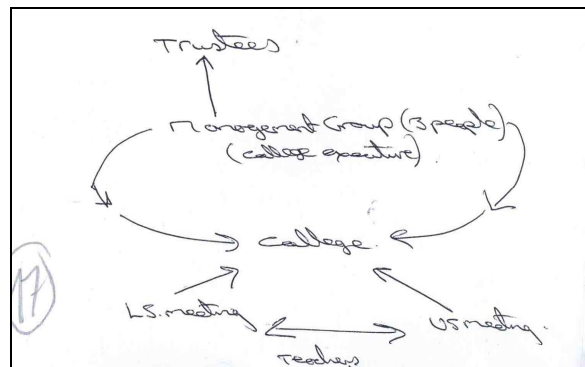
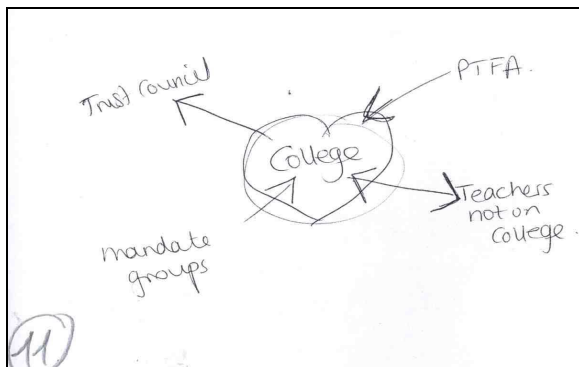
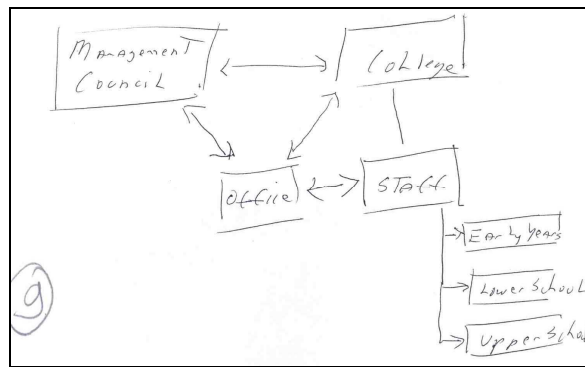
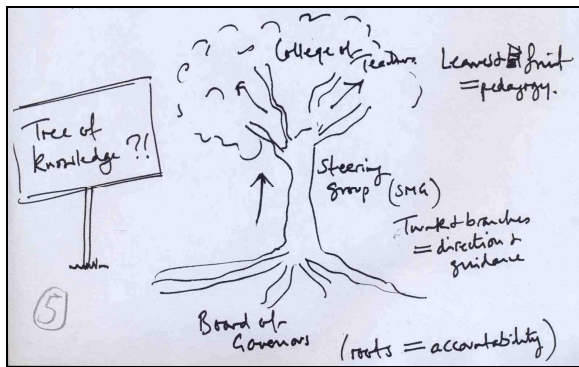
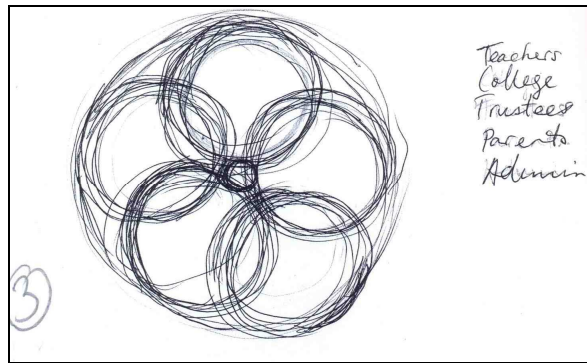
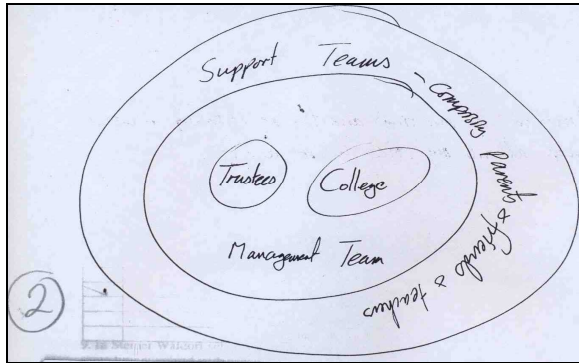
This table shows how the method known as Dynamic Self-Governance (DSG) addresses each of these key considerations.

1. Clear and Compelling Purpose
* Written Vision, Mission, Aim
* Aims that anchor domains of decision-making
2. Defined Roles and Accountability (Leadership)
* Written role descriptions
* Consent-based election process for all key roles
* At minimum, these elected leadership roles:
Facilitator
Secretary
* Other elected roles as needed, such as
Representative(s) to other linked circle(s)
* Operational leader
* Assign operational role
3. Effective Processes
* Solution-focused processes to achieve the circle’s aim:
Lead-Do-Measure and 3-step design of work
3-step or 9-step proposal process
* Facilitator and Secretary prepare and send agendas in advance
* Rounds where people are repeatedly given the floor and asked for their participation
* Meeting minutes that emphasize tasks and decisions
* Ongoing development; development = learning, teaching, exploring/researching in interaction with doing
4. Fair and Efficient Decision-making
* Consent decision-making
* Defined operational decision-making
* Double-linking
5. Good Communications, Among Group Members and Outside the Group:
* Role descriptions, elected leadership, and circle representatives
6. Record Keeping of the Organization’s Shared Information
* A document system on-line that everyone can access equally, with printed records for those without computer access, overseen by Secretary
* A handbook kept by Secretary for reference in meetings.

Table 1 - How DSG Supports Features of “Best Governance”

Appendix 2

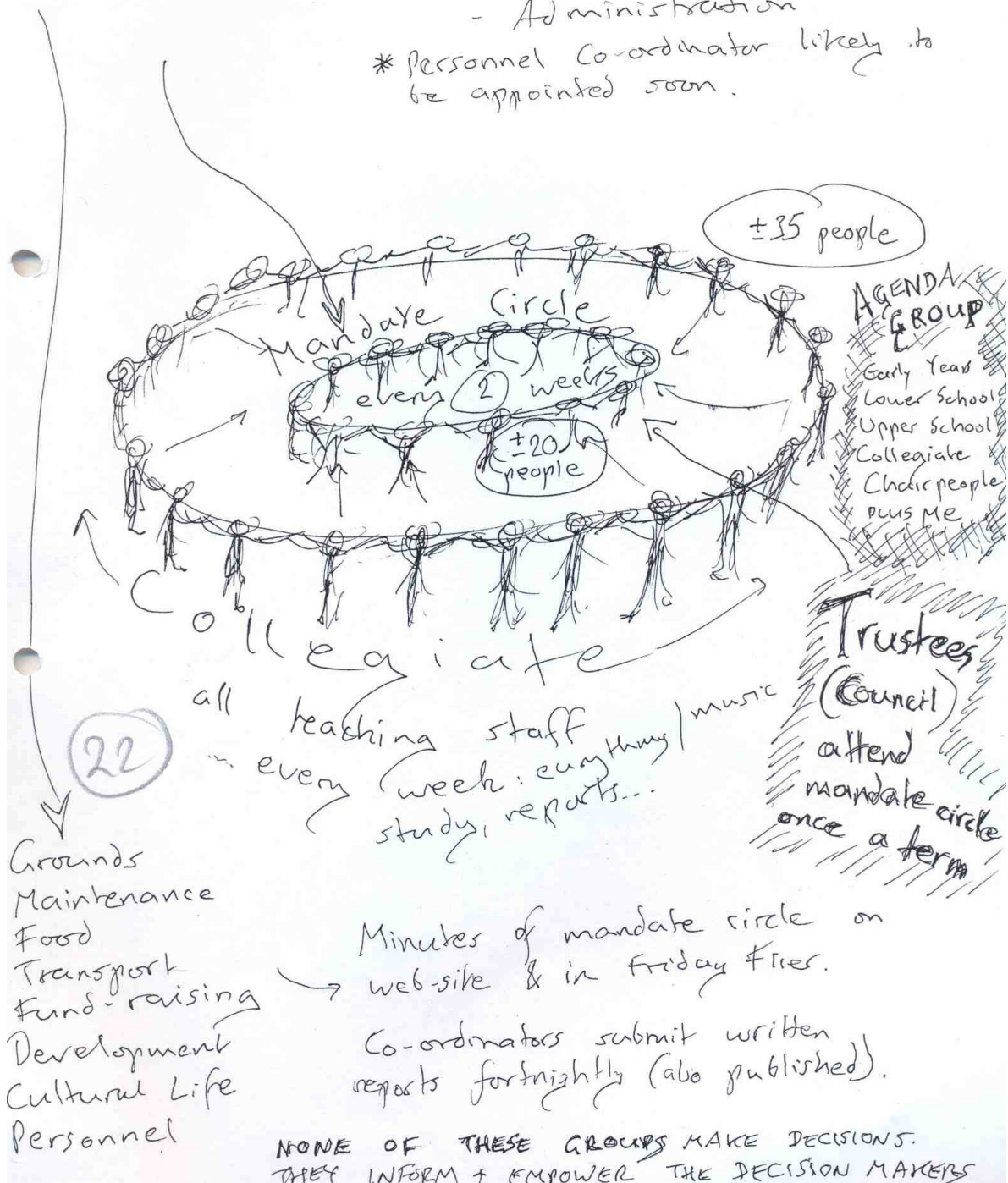
Impressions of school organisational diagrams from Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship reps from Steiner schools in the UK and Ireland



- Mandate holders:
- All class teachers / full-time teachers
 - Departmental "carriers" (Rhythmic/Music/Languages etc.)
 - 4* Co-ordinators (Paid) :- Education
 - Finance
 - Facilities
 - Administration

also

* Personnel Co-ordinator likely to be appointed soon.



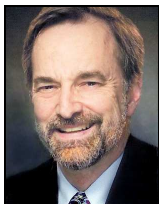
Appendix 3

Survey: questions schedule

1. In a few sentences please summarize your understanding of DSG.
2. In a few sentences please summarize any changes in the School and the School community you have observed since we started using DSG about a year ago and your feelings about them. We have made tremendous progress in one year. Employees of the school have a greater sense of participation in the operation of the school and the improvement in morale and a sense of positive progress is apparent to most people in the community.
3. How do you judge those changes?
4. Do you feel that the atmosphere of the school is collegial and that your voice is heard in important matters?
5. What is one thing about DSG that is working well? Everyone has a voice and as a result we are improving as a school and community.
6. What is one thing about DSG that could be better? We need to find time for all the circles to meet. Right now it is difficult to find the time for some of the circles to meet regularly.
7. What improvements would you like to see in the way the School governs itself? If the Board of Trustees could adopt the DSG model it would provide a stronger link to the day to day operations of the school and help strengthen the level of confidence the Board has in the the people responsible for the daily operations of the school.
8. Other comments



Saskia Heijne has an MA in Education from University of Plymouth's Integrated Masters Programme, a collaboration with the Steiner Hogeschool Helicon (NL), and has worked for six years in a UK Steiner school, participating in the collegial running of the school. Previously, she completed Findhorn College's Semester in Sustainability (FCS). She studies and practices social forms that support individuals to behave cooperatively, such as Steiner's social Threefolding, Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg), Restorative Circles (Barter) and Dynamic Governance or Sociocracy.



John Buck serves as CEO of the international *Sociocracy Consulting Group* based in the District of Columbia, USA. He teaches Dynamic Self Governance, or Sociocracy, based on the work of Gerard Endenburg from Rotterdam, NL. John earned a Master's degree from George Washington University and co-authored the book *We the People: Consenting to a Deeper Democracy, A Guide to Sociocratic Principles and Methods*. One of his current assignments is with a Steiner School in the USA.

Redesigning Democracy

Ross Jackson

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Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/ZeaYLa_IDJ0¹

Abstract

How can we explain the current global political situation where the elected political leadership continues to pursue ‘business as usual’ economic growth policies which totally ignore the appeals from an increasingly concerned public, including many of our most respected scientists, for recognition of the seriousness of the multiple threats facing humanity, not least global warming? The way we deal with these issues has serious consequences from the global right down to local communities, including the quality of products available in your nearest store. The correct explanation of the failure to act is critical if we are to put forward a solution to the logjam of inaction.

Some plausible explanations that come to mind:

- Politicians think short term, certainly not beyond re-election.
- Politicians do not accept the validity of the scientists’ arguments.
- The antiquated structures of our international institutions are the problem.
- Commercial interests have far too much influence on politics.

I contend that it is a combination of the last two – antiquated institutions and too much commercial influence – that best explain the failure of our political leaders to deal realistically with the crises facing us. The consequences of this conclusion are (1) the current model of democracy is no longer working and must be replaced, and (2) the international institutions that implement current policies must also be replaced.

But what is the alternative? And how can it be implemented?

Alternative forms of global democratic organisation will be discussed, with the focus on one in particular, including a concrete plan for implementation.

Introduction

*This land was once the land of the free,
 Of justice and democracy,
 Now America’s lost her way and got off track.
 One man one vote was the order then
 Now our land’s been stolen by the money men
 And all of us here are just trying to get it back*

from **Occupy World Street: the song**

¹ **Warning:** We apologise for an unfortunate loss of sound for about 10 minutes, midway through this video.

Over the past thirty years, the world has experienced two disturbing phenomena: an economic system dominated by “neo-liberal” ideas, and a decrease in democracy, particularly in the USA. The two are closely related.

Neo-liberal economics was the child of President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, fulfilling the wildest dreams of large multinational corporations, whose claim was that the opening up of foreign markets with the free flow of goods and capital across national boundaries, deregulating the corporate sector, and privatizing public monopolies, would benefit all world citizens. This was an audacious experiment, a political project, not based on empirical evidence, but rather on unproved dogmatic concepts that united the unorthodox political ideas of the two “parents” with the wishes of the wealthiest segment of the industrialised countries. Thirty years later, we can see the clear results: an enormous degradation of the environment, economic growth with no net benefits to ordinary citizens and unprecedented levels of inequality across the world, with the wealthy promoters of the system the sole beneficiaries, particularly in the financial world, which became the most profitable sector of all.

The following two tables illustrate dramatically how drastic the upward flow of income in the USA was during the neo-liberal experiment.¹

GROUP	1950-1978		GROUP	1979-2005	
Lowest 20%	138%		Lowest 20%	1%	
Next 20%	98%		Next 20%	9%	
Next 20%	106%		Next 20%	15%	
Next 20%	111%		Next 20%	22%	
Highest 20%	99%		Highest 20%	75%	
			Top 1%	200%	

Table 1: Inflation-adjusted Increase in Income

These figures are what inspired the Occupy movement to question the relevance of the current economic system for ordinary citizens, who seem not to be aware that an economic system is man-made and can be changed.

The Democratic Deficit

There has always been a major discrepancy in the understanding of democracy in the USA between the rulers and the ruled, going right back to the founding fathers. James Madison, the prime drafter of the American constitution, set the tone very early on, arguing that a major function of government was “to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority”. Echoing sentiments similar to those expressed by the aristocracy of Great Britain at the time, he feared that “the property of landed proprietors would be insecure” if elections “were open to all classes of people”. Madisonian scholars are in general agreement that “the Constitution was intrinsically an aristocratic document designed to check the democratic tendencies of the

¹ 1950-1978: US Bureau of Census. 1979-2005: Budget of the United States Government, 2009. www.econdataus.com.

period”. For Madison, the solution was to keep political power in the hands of those who “represent the wealth of the nation”, i.e. property owners. He called them the “more capable set of men”.¹ This is not the way ordinary Americans imagine democracy, but this is what they have to deal with in practice.

One result of the neo-liberal period is that the wealthiest 1 % has increased its political power enormously. A 2010 Supreme Court decision allows corporations to spend unlimited amounts on advertisements to support or criticize political candidates. Noam Chomsky claims that “in U.S. electoral politics, the richest one-quarter of one per cent of Americans make 80 per cent of all individual political contributions.”²

During the last 60 years, and in particular in the neo-liberal period, democracy in the USA has deteriorated, based on a number of relevant measures, including: voter turnout; equal access to vote; equal voting rights; equal opportunity to stand for election; balanced media; integrity of candidates; ease of forming new parties; citizen influence on political decisions between elections; foreign policy; representative candidates. On all of these points, there are serious questions about the degree of true democracy present in 21st century USA.

John Gray, professor of European Thought at the London School of Economics puts it this way: “Those who seek to design a free market on a worldwide scale have always insisted that the legal framework which defines and entrenches it must be placed beyond the reach of any democratic legislature.”³ The WTO and IMF are both excellent examples of such undemocratic institutions.

David Held, professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics and a leading scholar of modern democracy, writes, “Inequality *undermines* or *artificially limits* the pursuit of democratic decision-making”. “Democracy,” he adds, “is embedded in a socio-economic system that systematically grants a privileged position to business interests.”⁴

American philosopher and former professor of politics at Princeton University Sheldon Wolin is one of the USA's leading political theorists. He calls the political system which has evolved in America “inverted totalitarianism..... the political coming of age of corporate power and the political demobilization of the citizenry”.⁵

The crux of the matter is that the “1 %”, who now own 62.4 % of all business equity in the USA,⁶ control the political system, the media, the judicial system, the financial system, and the infamous “military-industrial complex” that president Eisenhower warned about in his parting speech in 1961.

¹ Noam Chomsky, “Consent without Consent”, in *Profit over People*, (Seven Stories Press, 1999).

² Robert W. McChesney, “Noam Chomsky and the Struggle against Neo-liberalism,” (Monthly Review, April 1, 1999).

³ John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, (London, Grants Publications, 1999), p.17-18.

⁴ David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 2nd edition, (UK: Polity Press, 1998), p. 215.

⁵ Sheldon Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*. (Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁶ Prof. G. William Domhoff, “Wealth Income and Power”, 2013 update;
<http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html>

An Alternative World Order

The above analysis is critical in designing an alternative global economic/political world order, because we must keep in mind the fatal flaw in democracy that allows commercial interests a disproportionate influence to the detriment of the broader interests of society.

In *Occupy World Street*, I have put forward such an alternative based on the following premises. Firstly, if we are to survive as a species, it is imperative that we replace neo-liberal economics with ecological economics, recognising that economics is subsidiary to, and must operate within, a non-growing ecosystem. Secondly, we cannot implement ecological economics within the current world order structure because its institutions (WTO/IMF/World Bank) are based on exploitation rather than cooperation. They must be replaced with new, more relevant institutions. Thirdly, the two areas where all nations must cede sovereignty if a sustainable and just world order is to emerge are *environmental protection* and *human rights*. Everything else, in my way of thinking, should be a matter for individual nation states, which take back control of their economies. In practice, this means a new organisation of trade which gives sole discretion on the flow of goods and capital to each sovereign nation rather than ceding this power to foreign commercial interests as in the current world order. This organisational principle should encourage a world of great diversity, in keeping with the way of nature, and is, in my opinion, a necessary step if we are to become a sustainable society.

The result of this way of thinking leads to what I call a Gaian World Order with a number of new institutions, as illustrated below.

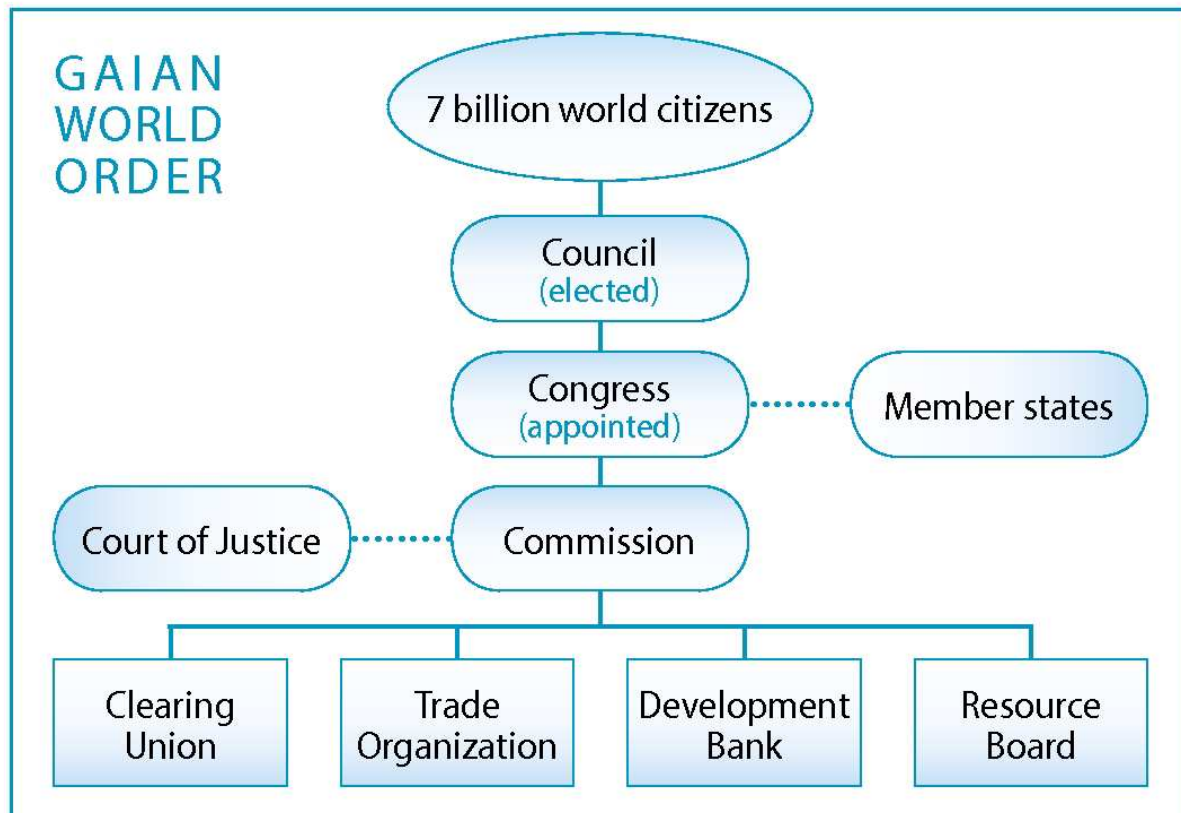
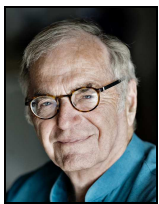


Figure 1: Gaian World Order

As my focus in this article is on the role of democracy, I will refer to my book for the details, including other institutions, as well as a strategy to get from there from here. Let us look at the way decisions are made in this new supranational organisation. A key component is the Congress, which is envisaged as a legislative body made up of appointed representatives from member governments. Decisions of this body constitute international law for member states, with serious consequences for non-compliance (Remember that this body only has jurisdiction over global environmental protection and human rights).

It is at this point that the lessons of the evolution of democracy in the USA must be applied. For what is to prevent a majority of states from taking over control of this body for their own narrow interests and thus sabotaging the whole intention? Nothing! Therefore I introduce a new institution, the Gaian Council, made up of elected members from major Earth regions. I envisage this as a group of “wise elders”, a small group of high integrity individuals who are no longer involved with business or politics, but have demonstrated a love for the whole of humanity in their life journeys. There are such persons in every culture and citizens know very well who they are. The Gaian Council has one and only one formal power, and that to be used sparingly; the right to veto any resolution passed by the Congress. This will enable them to keep global society on a sustainable and just path. In addition to its formal power, the Gaian Council could mediate conflicts if requested, suggest new legislation, and generally keep a close watch on possible trouble spots around the world.

Winston Churchill has been cited for the following: “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.” Perhaps the unique demands of the 21st century require a new way to structure democracy, not as an elected parliament that appoints a government, but rather as a small elected council representing all 7 billion world citizens, guiding our civilization in the right direction with a nudge here and there.



Ross Jackson, PhD is chairman of Gaia Trust, a Danish-based charitable entity he co-founded in 1987 to promote a more sustainable and spiritual world. Gaia Trust continues to support two major international NGO initiatives: the Global Ecovillage Network and Gaia Education. Ross worked for 25 years in international finance. His PhD was in Operations Research, a branch of economics that focuses on problem solving in the broadest sense. He is the author of *Occupy World Street: A Global Roadmap for Radical Economic and Political Reform* (2012).

District Future – Urban Lab: High-tech meets community movement

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Video of conference presentation: Not available

Abstract

In our cities, neighbourhoods and communities there is great interest in urban development that will lead to a sustainable future. Communal and collaborative sustainable urban development critically includes social and technological innovation. Our project *District Future – Urban Lab* aims at transforming an existing urban district of the City of Karlsruhe (Germany) into a sustainable one. It is based on the scientifically well defined *Integrative Concept of Sustainability*, based on merging the aspects of otherwise separate pillars of sustainability (ecological, economic and social) in a cross-pollinating way.

Part of this societal vision is to connect the big local university and research centre, the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), with the citizens and municipality of Karlsruhe. This transdisciplinary endeavour of KIT, the City of Karlsruhe, its citizens, the private sector, and cultural players aims at a cooperation and long term establishment of new forms of ‘science in society’ and ‘society in science’. A shared experimental space for studying and establishing new forms of participation, knowledge production, ways of living, democratic technology and city design will be opened in Karlsruhe. Such a transformation of a whole city district towards sustainability can neither be manufactured nor brought about by decree. What can be achieved is a shaping of the process by pointing to possibilities, developing new ideas to select and implement innovations, bringing ideas and initiatives together to create a space for creativity and new approaches and to accompany the process in a transdisciplinary way.

Conception

In the coming years, a very special living space will be created in Karlsruhe – the *District Future*, where sustainable urban life of the future will be tested and developed. The cooperation project *District Future – Urban Lab* aims to transform an existing district of the city of Karlsruhe into a sustainable one. The process is intended to be open and on a long-term basis. Of central importance here is a joint effort of the entire urban society, in particular the citizens. Thus, *District Future* is also a platform for getting involved. Following the concept of sustainable development as defined by the United Nations, the project intends to develop a – scientifically sound – integrative view on ecological, social, economic, cultural, and institutional



concerns in Karlsruhe and breathe life into them. In cooperation between the urban society and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, a space for experimentation is created in which new, progressive ideas, social and technological innovations and lifestyles can be tested in a comprehensive sustainable development process.

Besides the City of Karlsruhe and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, it is the citizens as well as large enterprises, associations and initiatives that are of prime importance here. A comprehensive and integrative sustainable urban development can only be achieved if many people contribute. Getting involved is therefore the driving force behind *District Future* – a project based on active participation in urban development. *District Future – Urban Lab* sees itself as a frame-setting and at the same time creative platform for many types of concrete projects. Invited are those from the fields of science, arts, technology, education, social services, administration, culture, and civic engagement who would like to contribute to a future worth living in Karlsruhe and world-wide under the principle of sustainable development.

Aims

Main objective of the project

Transformation of an existing district of the city of Karlsruhe into a sustainable one

The central aim of the project is to transform an existing district of the city of Karlsruhe into a sustainable one. The development of *District Future* is perceived as a process of long-term change. The project is based on a comprehensive and integrative concept of sustainability (cf. Kopfmüller et al. 2001) focusing on global and intergenerational equity. In keeping with this orientation, the project aims to promote an urban development which surpasses sectoral needs and individual interests within the city while taking account of internal and external relationships, effects and responsibilities of the urban actors, both within the region and in the distant world (e.g. via goods or financial flows).

Further objectives

Development within an existing urban area as a model

The future challenges for sustainable urban development lie in the sustainable transformation of our existing cities – not in large-scale reconstruction. Hence, the aim is to develop within an existing built-up area and to demonstrate an innovative perspective for sustainable development of cities. *District Future* intends to attract substantial national and international attention and to serve as a model. The procedure and concept of *District Future* are supposed to be transferable to other cities, in particular European ones.

Examining the interactions, synergies and goal conflicts of sustainable urban development in the Urban Lab

District Future creates the *Urban Lab* – a space for experimentation of urban life in Karlsruhe. The idea is to concentrate and integrate innovative, potentially sustainable approaches and solutions from the different areas of need (housing, mobility, energy, water,

education, etc.) at one place in order to identify and investigate related interactions and synergies, but also inevitable goal conflicts and their possible solutions.

Transdisciplinarity and making the region benefit from the KIT

The development process of *District Future* will be designed in a transdisciplinary way, i.e. across multiple disciplines and in close cooperation between science, politics, civil society, and private sector. The purpose behind this is to bring science closer to the citizens – and vice versa. This means, on the one hand, to open the KIT as a knowledge factory for the region, to make the region benefit from its knowledge and expertise. On the other hand, citizens will be involved in knowledge generation and technology development – and, in this way, upcoming local tasks, challenges, needs and possible approaches will be incorporated into research.

Anchoring the concept of sustainable development in city life and developing new qualities of life

District Future aims to generate urban life which responds to the challenges of the 21st century with innovative solutions but also by creating and enhancing social contexts and leaving space for creativity. Contrary to the view that sustainability is primarily a matter of efficiency and abstinence, the main intention of *District Future* is to bring new qualities to urban life. The aim is to anchor the concept of sustainability in the long-term in the entire city life. In the course of the project progression making sustainable development the basis of action in *District Future* is intended – be it in the areas of technical infrastructure and buildings, economy and consumption, municipal administration and politics, work, education, nutrition, or mobility.

Topics

The *District Future – Urban Lab* covers a wide and complex range of topics in all areas of urban life. These areas include: construction and housing, community, economy, work and finance, mobility, communication, health, leisure and recreation, education, arts and culture, as well as supply and waste management.

The individual areas of urban life are considered in their interrelationship and are dealt with in the context of sustainable development. The *District Future* is committed to sustainable urban development in the following thematic areas:

- Healthy City
- Mobile City
- Loop City
- Urban Technology
- Built City
- City and Climate Change
- Value Shift towards Sustainability
- Urban Energy Landscapes
- Living in the City
- City in Post-growth
- Social City
- Economic Activities in the City
- Consumption in the City
- Design of the Urban Development Process

The *District Future* Team

The *District Future* team develops the conceptual framework and content of the project, which is intended to be a creative platform for a great variety of practical sustainability projects. It coordinates the overall development and provides scientific support. The team networks actors, communicates, discusses with the urban society, and activates for a joint shaping of a future-oriented, sustainable city.

The *District Future* team consists of seven members from multiple disciplines. The project work greatly benefits from the different scientific perspectives and experiences of the team members. The project team is supported by a network of associated partners as well as qualified research assistants.

Initiator and leader of the project is Oliver Parodi who has been studying issues of sustainable development for more than ten years. Being a philosopher, construction engineer and cultural scientist he approaches the city in completely diverse ways and sees *District Future* as an ideal project to get from knowledge to action, to open up new qualities and ways in daily practice, and to make science fruitful also for the local citizens. In his understanding, humans and joint efforts among them are at the heart of a sustainable urban development which leaves plenty of scope for new ideas, attitudes and initiatives.



Oliver Parodi, PhD is Administrative Manager of the research focus *Humans and Technology* at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and senior scientist at the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) in Germany. He has a doctorate in philosophy and is a qualified civil engineer. Oliver is leader of several projects in the area of sustainable urban development. Yet, our common cultural background and the link between sustainability and spirituality are the matters most dear to his heart.



Andreas Seebacher, PhD is scientific staff at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Germany. He has a doctorate in architecture and gained worldwide experience during his studies and professional engagement in development co-operation and humanitarian aid. He currently works for the project, *District Future – Urban Lab*, on urban sustainability solutions at the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS). It is important to him that the project establishes a direct relation between local urban life and the global through a sound theoretical basis.



Alexandra Quint is geographer with a focus on management of urban and metropolitan development and scientific staff at the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) in Germany. She currently works for the project, *District Future – Urban Lab*, on urban sustainability solutions at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. The complexity of the urban has always fascinated and inspired her. Her concern is to raise social awareness of sustainable urban development and to make it tangible, understandable and perceptible for everyone.



Kaidi Tamm is researching connections between sustainable development models, civil initiatives and value change in Europe. Originally from Estonia, she is currently a doctoral candidate in sociology at the International Graduate Center for the Study of Culture in the University of Giessen, Germany. Kaidi has extensive fieldwork experience with ecological communities and initiatives as well as governance institutions across Europe. She currently works for the project, *District Future – Urban Lab*, on urban sustainability solutions at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology.

Renewing Traditional Community¹

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Video of conference presentation: <http://youtu.be/ej1HCkP-tzo>

Abstract

This article seeks to present a type of communality that, like most forms of contemporary communality, tends to confront or challenge neo-liberal, individualistic culture. Yet unlike other sorts of communality, the one under discussion does not rest upon the values of modernity, nor is its vision derived from a utopian future; rather, in determining its norms, values and even its organisational structure, it adopts either actual or mythical ancient tribal traditions. These are customs that have endured for generations and have been handed down from past to present. Drawing on scholarly literature and the author's practical experience, the paper attempts to throw light on the phenomenon of the adoption of communal norms and organisational structures that promote solidarity. These elements are chosen because they are marked as being representative of the collective, even though they generally relate to a particular period of its historical or mythical past, or belong to the tradition of a particular group or tribe within a far broader array contained in a large representative organisation, such as the confederations of agricultural labourers in Bolivia or Honduras. This choice is not 'automatic', natural or obvious, since the themes are chosen from a wide variety of different and even contradictory structures and regimes in the history of these peoples or ethnic groupings.

Like other types of communality, that discussed here is bound up with further social and political goals. In this case, it constitutes part of the effort to raise the status of an ethnic identity that offers its own solutions to the shortcomings of Western modernity.

Paper

Today's utopian-oriented communality seeks to contend with the individualism and inhumanity that besets liberal-capitalist modernity by generating new types of relationship in order to create a shared, humane, just and more egalitarian world. In proposing alternatives to the dominant culture or in seeking to become an integral part of a pluralistic society, they challenge the society's conventional norms.

Yet, alongside these streams, there are other sources from which different communalist currents that challenge postmodern society flow. These trends confront the self-same ills, but seek to shape social behavior and organization by harnessing values and guidelines for activity anchored in traditional sources, in the values and norms of communal solidarity.

¹ Short version of the chapter : 'Renewing Traditional Communalism', in: Ben-Rafael, E., Y. Oved and M. Topel (eds.): The communal idea in the 21st. Century, Brill (Leiden-Boston) 2012, pp. 205-220 printed here with permission from Brill Publishers.

Those who present this path as a desirable option choose to utilize communality, which they are able to do by virtue of the multiplicity of cultures that compound the past. Members of the elites of the Quechua and Aymara peoples of Bolivia, for example, utilized traditional elements of the Incas (in fact their erstwhile conquerors) or those of their own peoples in order to bolster the demands made during the popular revolution of 1952 to restore the communal ownership of land, a practice that was gradually abolished following the Spanish era.

Yet these social innovators certainly do not seek to “return to the past.” They explicitly strive to reestablish what they perceive to be traditional norms in the present and the future, in order to improve the conditions that they experience. They introduce this “traditional” content to “modern” structures, such as political parties like the MNR in Bolivia, or trade unions like the *Campesinos*. This effort is sustained through a constant dialogue between the ruling and the traditional cultures, resulting in a measure of integration between them.

The people who adopt selected elements of traditional cultures to serve as a basis for communal principles of contemporary practical social organization are well aware of their status as the “other” in relation to and in the eyes of mainstream society. They thereby exhibit a further characteristic of intentional communities, which tend to regard themselves as a different, defiant, challenging component of society, which, while belonging to it, opposes its dominant norms. Bearing this ambivalent status of being a part of society while being “different,” these communities demand recognition of their special identity as an integral part of a pluralist society.

The adherents of communality find a significant added value in this old-new communal culture, which transcends its contribution to the quality of life of the community’s members and the immediate creation of tangible social capital through the promotion of solidarity and trust. The advantage offered by this path is that it turns one’s ethnic identity into a potentially elevating one, restoring the dignity of the sector or the ethnic grouping, and serving as a tool whereby to correct the world that “modernity” has spoiled. This is an important instrument in the social struggle of the group within the wider society, which makes an essential contribution to the positive definition of the collective identity that struggles for recognition as part of the contemporary multicultural state.

I became aware of this phenomenon years ago, as director of development of self-help communal projects for some of the poorest communities in Latin America. In Bolivia I came into contact with the leadership of Bolivia’s agricultural workers’ organization, most of which belonged to the Aymara tribe. I encountered strong opposition to the development of “cooperatives,” which they regarded as a measure that modernist governments were imposing on the farmers. Yet these people immediately agreed to proposals for development of communal modes of organization that embedded the economic system in the social system, both at the local community level and the level of the nation-wide organization. These had been a prevalent form of organization during certain periods of the distant tribal past, which had facilitated the joint marketing of agricultural produce, land distribution, and the supply of water. For example, one of the practical proposals that they encouraged was the joint marketing of potatoes, which was the major crop grown by these farmers. This form of organization was identical to the structure of a cooperative, but it operated as part of the

constellation of communal life. During the period of the history of their people to which they referred, economic cooperation and organization was inherent to everyday communal life and no distinction was made between the different aspects of life.

Traditional communality may thus evolve not only as an “imagined community” of people who share an ethnic identity, but also as a solid basis for organization within central and vital spheres. The land-use system today constitutes the contemporary fruit of the integration of methods employed in the distant past and current organization. It is, in other words, a system constructed in the **present** through judicious use of ancient practices.

The assistance through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions was facilitated by an initial grant for each specific project received from donor countries, according to a proposal drawn up together with the participants in the project in those countries. This was a one-off grant which in most cases I turned into a loan given on favorable terms to the project, which was expected to sustain itself. The community or group that receives the assistance is expected to repay the capital to a fund to support projects of additional groups in the same area. The repayment serves to leverage a “chain” of aid to further groups of “brothers” and it is regarded as an expression of solidarity among the groups. As far as these people are concerned, communality is part of a wider social structure, which plays a significant social and political role in even the most down-to-earth economic activity. This is exemplified by a noteworthy case in rural Indian communes in Honduras.

A group of penniless Indian farm laborers occupied land during the course of a prolonged and obdurate struggle for land reform. They did obtain a plot of land by virtue of their struggle, but difficult to access and to cultivate. A Dutch funded project provided them an initial herd of milk cows. By virtue of their joint hard labor they turned the place into a farm. One should bear in mind that they live a life of extreme poverty, having no way of building themselves built houses or of ensuring adequate health or education for their children.

The program was successfully implemented. The herd of cows grew, the crops began to bring in a minimal income. When the time came, the farmers met the conditions for return of the loan to a fund that supported similar projects for “brothers.” And indeed, an identical enterprise was implemented in a different community. Two years hence, moreover, this second community, although still living in abject poverty, began repayments, and a similar project was launched in a third community. At a convention of *campesinos*, the community members explained that this strict adherence to the repayment agreement was an obligation toward a broad communal solidarity, which had even sparked discussion in the press.

The major theme found by studies to characterize both religious and secular modern-day communes, however, is the ethos of solidarity that challenges the neo-liberal ethos of individualism. Here too, one can of course find an analogy to those communities that attempt to cultivate communality from mythical or historical roots.

This phenomenon is illustrated by a comparative analysis of a case that squarely confronts the ethos of communal solidarity with the individualistic, neo-liberal ethos of maximizing personal gain in the “marketplace” of social relationships. It relates to a case of humanitarian aid – the supply of building materials. The need for such aid arose in the wake of the

destruction caused by a major earthquake that occurred in 1983 in the city of Popayan, the capital of Cauca region in Colombia.

The building materials were distributed in parallel to the heads of an urban trade union and to the headmen of neighboring villages. In both cases the materials were earmarked for the restoration and repair of the most damaged homes of members of these organizations.

Visiting the houses in which the work had already been completed in the urban regional capital, I in fact reached the homes of most of the union's committee members. Not all the homes showed signs of serious damage. Both, the heads of the organization and the rank and file accepted that this was "how things were," that it was only natural that the activists should be the first to receive aid, on the strength of their personal involvement. In all cases the beneficiaries received the materials and themselves saw to the work of renovating the house, each according to his limitations and capacity.

The picture that emerged in the neighboring rural Indian community was very different. They conduct the project according to the *minga* custom, an ancient traditional mode of carrying out communal works whereby each member "contributes" a day of work per week.

The village was first of all divided according to streets into groups of some 15 families, which thus comprised a random composition of people with respect to their marital status and demographic and health attributes. Each group worked in unison, assembling on Friday mornings and renovating one house at a time. At least one adult family member participates in the work, most of which entails hard physical labor. The type of contribution required from the people, however, takes consideration of their condition. The sick or elderly are given the tasks of providing food for the shared midday meal on the work site, bringing water, helping to deliver materials, cleaning up at the end, and so forth. Toward the end of my visit to this community we assembled in the home of the committee chairwoman (a woman indeed), whose ailing husband lay beneath a ceiling that threatened to cave in at any moment. In response to my remark about this irrational order of priorities that took no consideration of the level of danger, those present explained that it was taken for granted that the order in which houses are renovated begins with the families of the elderly and ailing, proceeds to single-parent families, with the last house to be renovated being that of the head of the community.

Since the community members derived great satisfaction from the joint implementation of the renovations, they decided to employ the same organizational-social structure on further activities.

A further aspect that connects the traditional and the contemporary quests for communality is the ecological one. This motif, which is becoming increasingly associated with communality, constitutes an integral part of the community. In native cultures humans are perceived to be an integral part of the natural world, which includes the heavenly bodies, the earth itself, the flora and the fauna. They do not rule over them. They are merely a modest component of this world, and their role, both as individuals and as a community, is to protect it. In all native cultures communality is embedded in the connection to nature, to varying degrees in the different tribes and periods, but the two are always integrated and never appear as separate phenomena.

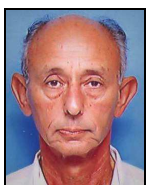
In conclusion, this presentation seeks to present a type of communality that, like most forms of contemporary communality, tends to confront or challenge neo-liberal, individualistic

culture. Yet unlike other sorts of communality, in determining its norms, values and even its organizational structure, it adopts either actual or mythical ancient tribal traditions. This choice is not natural or obvious, since the themes are chosen from a wide variety of different and even contradictory structures and regimes in the history of these ethnic groupings.

Like other types of communality, that discussed here is bound up with further social and political goals. In this case, it constitutes part of the effort to raise the status of an ethnic identity that offers its own solutions to the shortcomings of Western modernity. While this form of communality generally makes use of modern technology and modes of organization, these are always integrated to a significant extent with traditional communal organization and norms. Challenging the modern, dominant social and political identity and seeking to acquire a status equal to it, this ethnic identity constitutes a focus for the crystallization of an explicit social-class or political movement.

In the early 21st century, we see that the attempts on the part of a few groups or leaders here and there across the American continent to develop traditional communality as part of their effort to restore tribal pride and to galvanize the rank and file to political action have produced tangible results for them. For the first time in Bolivia's history, and in an occurrence with few precedents throughout America, Evo Morales, a man of Aymaran origin, was elected president. He has been a militant leader and campaigner for the rights of the oppressed, who promotes clearly communal elements at both the local and the national levels. And there are other leaders in various countries, who unlike Morales are not directly descended from indigenous Indians, but who are likewise borne aloft by the native population who are introducing communalist and socialist elements.

From a comparative perspective, in relation to the secular communality of the latter half of the 20th century, the traditional communality discussed here exhibits a further aspect linked to the people who adhere to it and to its essential *raison d'être*. The members of the communes of this period generally belonged to the middle-class and were primarily concerned with achieving solidarity and fraternity, combating alienation, maintaining quality of life and the environment, assuming responsibility for the future, and so forth; namely, largely high-level goals on the Maslow scale. The traditional communality presented here, on the contrary, sought to satisfy far more basic needs, such as minimal levels of livelihood and housing, as well as social recognition of the members of the group as partners with their own identity and worth in the social fabric of the country in which they live, thus far as a discriminated minority. Yet this "traditional" identity or solidarity acquires a dual meaning in the current political and social climate. As noted, it introduces traditional, unifying and inclusive content to bodies engaged in class or political warfare at the macro level, while at the same time seeking practical ways of realizing its ideals through shaping modes of organization and promoting innovative norms of solidarity at the micro community level.



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Communities, Currencies, and Credit

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Video of conference presentation: Not available

Abstract

Most intentional communities try to achieve some measure of self-sufficiency. The aim is to reduce dependency on the outside world, to build resilience in the face of economic shocks from the outside (unemployment within the community is generally not a problem, even if the global economy sinks into depression), and also to build social capital within the community - binding people together in a web of community relationships and activities, the aim of which is not primarily economic, but which has economic implications.

Close-knit, relatively isolated groups have an advantage in building self-sufficiency. Communities which are integrated into the global economy, such as towns, have a harder task - the effects of a downturn of the national and global economy are keenly felt. However, it is possible to strengthen the economic base, social capital and resilience to shocks by moving towards local solutions to problems. One element of a holistic strategy to achieve this goal is ensuring, as far as possible, that the spending power of the community remains in local hands, and does not leak away. The Transitions Towns movement, developed initially as a way of fighting global warming, has realized this. Some of the towns in transition have adopted their own local currencies (first in Totnes, and then, more famously, in Lewes), with the aim of keeping spending local. Many towns have their own credit unions, the de facto successors of local Building Societies, or of local banks in the US, which seek to make loans locally from deposits from local people.

This paper surveys some of the modern initiatives in Canada, the UK and the US, and also explores what can be gleaned from the past - especially from the monetary experiments that grew out of, and were necessitated by, the Great Depression. The aim is to attempt to produce a set of criteria for evaluating monetary initiatives, and their role in building community.

Introduction

Money has been around for a long time, but do we really need it? In very small communities, people can get by with barter and reciprocal gift exchange, so it is likely that the first human societies didn't need any form of money. But once communities start to grow in size, some way of keeping accounts becomes necessary. Research suggests that we do not have the mental (let alone emotional) capacity to have a direct personal connection to more than around 150 people in more than a superficial way; most people's friends (outside of Facebook) number far fewer than that.¹

¹ This is Dunbar's number, which is Robin Dunbar's suggested limit to our cognitive capabilities to relationship maintenance.

But for many, there is a yearning for a return to a mythical Golden Age when we didn't need money, when people spontaneously gave of their best to others, without the polluting effects of filthy lucre. Karl Marx's vision of the final stage of communism (which, in its original formulation, was a return to a Golden Age) saw the withering away of the state – and with it, the elimination of money. When, in August 1988, an elderly Party member wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the East German Communist Party asking why, in the most advanced Socialist state, it had not been possible to abolish money, the Party felt it necessary to send a delegation to talk to the letter-writer, to try to convince him that he should retract his letter. The letter-writer's critique – that money was a capitalist artefact, “minted increasingly from the suffering of humanity” – was seen as a threat to the Socialist Realism of the East German state (which, of course, tottered on for only 15 months more). Jonathan Zatin's account of the last years of the so-called German Democratic Republic (GDR) analyses how, rather than trying to abolish money, the GDR came not only to allow its currency to circulate, but even encouraged East Germans to use the capitalist West German deutschmark to buy luxury items in foreign-currency shops. Far from money fading away, the socialist utopia was promoting its use.¹

But why does this matter? Economics textbooks tend to claim that money is just a neutral means of facilitating change, a way of storing wealth over time, and a common unit for keeping accounts and denominating prices. Money exists solely to facilitate exchange, to improve on barter transactions. Barter is inefficient, unless you happen to have a sheep, which I want, and I have chickens, which you want. If you want a cow, then one of us has to find someone who will exchange a cow for chickens to allow us all to get what we want. This, of course, takes time (sometimes a great deal of time, if the cow-owner wants a donkey, not sheep or chickens); a common means of exchange is therefore more efficient.

The first types of money that were used were precious metals – usually gold or silver. Around 1800 B.C. the patriarch Abraham paid four hundred shekels of silver to buy a burial place for his wife, Sarah (Genesis 23). At various times since, commodities such as wheat have been used as currency, just as prisoners used cigarettes as a currency for much of the twentieth century.² Today, though, we are more accustomed to paper notes and coins, which, though they are roughly the same colour as silver or gold, are made of baser materials. This Government fiat money, as it is called, is no longer exchangeable into precious metals, as it used to be: the signed promise on a Bank of England note to pay the bearer on demand the sum of the value of the note, is today an empty promise. We use, and are prepared to accept it, because we know that others will accept it from us, in turn, for things we want. In fact, most of the time we no longer use the physical currency, preferring to use debit and credit cards, or electronic transfers to pay for what we want.

¹ Jonathan R. Zatin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2007. Zatin reports on Erich K.'s letter, and the GDR's over-reaction, in the book's introduction.

² R. A. Radford, himself a resident in a Second World war camp, wrote a fascinating account of the ups and downs of the cigarette currency used by Allied Prisoners of War; R. A. Radford, *The economic organisation of a P.O.W. camp*, *Economica* New Series Vol. 12 No. 48 (November 1945) pp. 189-201

Given that the fiat money we use generally works well to facilitate exchange, why would we look for an alternative? Sometimes, people will use a foreign currency if the home government's policy means that its money ceases to be a good way of storing value, for example, if inflation is very high. During the 1990's, inflation in Turkey was generally above 80% per year, and there, and to an even greater extent in north Cyprus, people changed their Turkish Lira into US dollars, deutschemarks, or English pounds, to preserve the value of their savings. At other times, there is a shortage of cash (notably during the Great Depression of the 1930's), or a local shortage of a medium of exchange (such as in mining or lumber camps, where the employer would issue a local currency. Finally, it might be worth using some other form of currency if it is a more effective medium than government-issued money for certain kinds of transactions.

If the problem with government-issued money is only that the government tends to debase it through inflation, then there is an easy solution: allow competing currencies. The Nobel Prize winner, Friedrich Hayek, argued that removing the government monopoly on issuing currency and allowing competition between currencies, would mean that bad currencies would die out, as people chose to conduct their business in a currency that they knew would maintain its value over time.¹

But perhaps money isn't simply a neutral means of exchange, but instead embodies a whole set of other attributes. Money isn't just a measure of wealth, it becomes an asset in its own right. It is hoarded, by individuals and, at present, by banks, who are reluctant to lend out the amounts deposited with them. According to Positive Money, 97 percent of money in the UK is now bank-created.² When banks refuse to lend, a shortage of money (or, more accurately, credit) is likely to result. Further, money tends to move towards financial hubs. In England, the Bank Charter Act of 1844 restricted the activities of banks close to London, with the result that they deposited more of their funds with the Bank of England. In the US Financial Panic of 1907, rural banks found themselves unable to access the deposits they held at bigger banks in urban centres, and so were placed in danger of failing themselves.³ During the boom in securitisation just prior to the 2008 crisis, local U.S. banks found it more profitable (and thought it safer) to lend to investors to buy mortgage-backed securities than to lend to local businesses. The result is that there is a danger that sources of finance for local development dry up.

Given the problems of the monetary system, are there viable alternatives? If we're concerned solely about the inadequacies of the banking system, then Positive Money's ideas for reforming the way it works, which would make it easier for the government to control credit creation, would be a solution. Other people argue that it would be purer to produce a currency that competes, and might ultimately replace, the current monetary structures. Grand schemes, such as the Euro project, or the International Monetary Fund's currency, confusingly called

¹ Friedrich Hayek, *Denationalisation of Money* London: The Institute of Economic Affairs 1976

² <http://www.positivemoney.org/> accessed 6 July 2013. See also Andrew Jackson and Ben Dyson, *Modernising Money* (London: Positive Money 2012)

³ It was the realisation that the financial system could not withstand a crisis of the proportions of 1907 that led J P Morgan and other bankers to lobby for the creation of an American Central Bank, which resulted, six years later, in the creation of the Federal Reserve System.

Special Drawing Rights (SDR's) created to replace the dollar when its remaining links to gold were severed in the early 1970's, have had, at best, only limited success, and, in any case, require considerable power to compel acceptance of the new medium. Finally, and more promisingly, one might introduce a currency to complement, rather than compete with, existing forms of money in order to create and enhance opportunities.

Local currencies

Local currencies in the UK have seen a resurgence in the last five or six years. The Transition Towns movement has seen the launch of a number of local initiatives, starting in Totnes and Lewes, with the aim of keeping spending local. In Canada, local currencies have been around rather longer: Manitoulin Island's Tourism Association (in Ontario) produced three-dollar notes annually in the 1980's. Over in British Columbia, the Salt Spring Island dollar started life in 2001, and, before that, special coins were issued in communities such as Squamish and Chemainus during the 1980's to promote local businesses during festivals. In the US, wooden nickels have long been produced for local events, and paper community currencies, such as the Brooklyn Torch and Colorado's UC Smiles, have appeared in the last few years. Local currencies were seen to have the potential to cultivate local businesses, and by keeping money within the community both increase the community's resilience to outside shocks, and reduce the carbon footprint of the community, by reducing the distance travelled by goods (and shoppers). Findhorn itself has its own local currency, the Eko, which can be used in the community, and in some of the businesses in Findhorn village.

The common aims of these complementary currencies are well summarised by the aims of the Eko:

- To provide low cost financing for new projects through low interest loans and surpluses generated by the currency project itself.
- To enable existing businesses to make savings on bank charges (surprisingly perhaps, this benefit may outweigh the value of the low cost financing), and to stimulate trade amongst community business, residents and visitors.
- To promote these businesses and projects, and the Ecovillage in general as a place of innovation and sustainable economy
- To inspire both guests and residents with the demonstration value of a locally based currency, and to get the users thinking about how and where they spend their money.
- To create gift capital for local projects.¹

However, most complementary currencies do not fare well over time: after an initial burst of enthusiasm, their usage and velocity of circulation declines, as people discover that they can do everything that they can do with the local currency they can do with normal government-issued money; and government money has the advantage of being more widely accepted. Unless there is some incentive for buyers and sellers to use the complementary currency – some benefit that it can confer that government money cannot, there is little reason to use it. Occasionally, governments intervene to prevent a complementary currency from circulating:

¹ <http://www.ekopia-findhorn.org/eko.shtml> accessed 6 July 2013.

an American who developed a complementary currency in Kenya faces seven years in prison on charges of forgery; Bernard von NotHaus, the creator of the Liberty Dollar, was convicted of similar charges in the United States, and faces up to 20 years in jail.¹

Other forms of community currencies, such as Michael Linton's LETS ideas, have run into similar problems. For example, the level of activity of the Morayshire LETS has declined steadily since its peak a few months after the scheme launched. LETS offers are dominated by services – and particularly services such as rides to town and yoga lessons: few lawyers, accountants and doctors want to be involved with them.

Perhaps there are things to be learned from successful business-operated currencies. Tesco has what is probably the most successful loyalty programme in the world. Shoppers trade details of their purchases, by means of the Tesco Clubcard, for points that are later exchanged for vouchers that can be used in-store. Knowing details of its customers' purchases mean that Tesco can send highly-specific marketing to people based on what they buy (and, therefore, what they can be persuaded to try); the additional benefit of "green" points for bag re-use mean that customers see Tesco as doing its bit to save the environment. As Tesco says, "Every little helps."

Another successful business currency, this time on a global scale, is that of Air Miles. Not only do Air Miles generate loyalty to the particular airline grouping with which you have your account, but also allow airlines to sell air miles to other businesses to give as an incentive to their customers – a modern equivalent of Green Shield stamps. For customers, the advantages are obvious – free travel, or, increasingly, the ability to buy other goods and services with their air miles. For the airlines, as well as the benefits of loyalty and the revenue stream from selling miles, there is the benefit of filling seats that would otherwise be left empty. As the cost of carrying an additional passenger on a plane is almost nothing (the extra fuel costs of carrying an extra 100kg or so, plus a fizzy drink), and baggage and other additional charges may well cover this, air miles generates benefits for the airlines at effectively zero cost. By changing the price of seats in terms of air miles, they can prevent an air miles passenger from displacing one who would pay real money to travel on the flight. A resource (a seat on a flight) that would otherwise be wasted is put to use, customers feel appreciated by the airline, and the airline has the hope of further purchases by the traveller. Everyone gains – a free lunch for all!

Some community currencies function in similar ways. The Calgary Dollar, for example, is often accepted by retailers only in part payment for a particular good or service.² Thus ice cream might be sold for \$2.50, with \$1 payable in the local currency. The advantage of this to the business is that the government money portion of the price can be used to pay for the costs

¹ The rapid rise and fall of the Kenyan Bangla-peso is described in Ellen Brown, *The crime of fighting poverty: Local currency's success in Kenya ends in forgery charges* at <http://truth-out.org/news/item/17297-the-crime-of-alleviating-poverty-a-local-community-currency-battles-the-central-bank-of-kenya> (accessed 8 July 2013); the Liberty Dollar saga in Alan Feuer, *Prison may be the next stop on a gold currency journey*, *The New York Times* 24 October 2012. As of July 2013, Mr von NotHaus is still awaiting sentencing.

² <http://calgarydollars.ca/>. The idea of partial payment in community currency and part in government fiat money is not uncommon elsewhere as well.

of the product (the milk and flavourings in the ice cream) that have to be bought from the outside, whereas the complementary currency component attracts business allowing an otherwise unused resource (the ice cream scooper's time) to be put to use. The retailer could attract additional business by offering a discount for ice cream bought with community currency, which would encourage those using it to buy from him, while, in effect, creating a form of price discrimination: as generally only locals have easy access to the community currency, out-of-towners still pay the full price for the product.

Other community currencies have been based on time, rather than a monetary standard. As a result, they are truly complementary to the mainstream of cost-based pricing. Robert Owen's Utopian Socialism led him to found the National Equitable Labour Exchange in 1832; initially successful, it closed in 1834 after disputes over the value of products and the time taken to produce them could not be resolved.¹ 150 years later, Ithaca, New York, USA introduced a similar idea – Ithaca Hours are supposed to be related to the time taken for a task, but have a monetary equivalent (an Hour is worth \$10 – so it is unlikely you'll get an hour of an engineer's time for an Hour; however, if you need babysitting services, you'll probably have no difficulty finding a willing provider).

Currencies and Credit

At present, most community currencies are circulating mediums and, as such, they lack an important characteristic of modern banking – the ability to make loans, or give credit for business formation or development. The word “credit” comes from the Latin word for trust, which is apposite: where there is no trust, credit is unlikely to be granted. If a bank doesn't trust that you will be able to repay what you've borrowed, it won't make you the loan. One feature of the ongoing financial crisis is that it is a crisis of trust and credit: despite the extraordinary measures of Quantitative Easing undertaken in the rich countries, which provide the banks with easy access to funds that they could use to make loans, persuading them to do so has proven to be exceptionally difficult. Things have improved since late 2008, when banks wouldn't lend to each other through the fear that the borrowing bank might collapse through the weight of its debts; but lending to new businesses or house buyers is still perceived as much riskier than it was in the heady days of 2005.

There are, of course, alternatives to banks. Like Dave Fishwick, a community could try to start its own bank; but, as Mr Fishwick found, it is almost impossible to set up a bank, given current regulations. In the end, he settled for forming a credit union.² However, although credit unions may be able to keep banking local, makes loans only within their community, they also need to ensure that they get back what they loan – and will need the same assurances (usually pledged collateral) that banks need. Other alternatives to banks also exist: the Dragons on BBC 2 and CBC's (and elsewhere) Dragons' Den programmes illustrate the role of venture capitals. Would-be entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to four or five potential investors (the dragons) who decide whether the risk of handing over money for a stake in the proposed

¹ See http://www.unionhistory.info/timeline/TL_Display.php?irm=2000031 for an example.

² <https://www.burnleysavingsandloans.co.uk/>; Mr Fishwick's story produced a set of Channel 4 documentaries (<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/bank-of-dave>) and a book (Dave Fishwick, *Bank of Dave: How I Took On the Banks* (Virgin Books, 2012)

business is likely to yield them benefits. The Dragons take a chance on relatively few of the proposals they get to adjudicate, and generally demand evidence of business competence (and sets of accounts) before committing themselves. A would-be business could attempt to raise loans by a direct offer to the public (as large firms do with public offerings of their shares), but this was, until recently, very difficult to do.

Could we use the insights of the experience of complementary currencies to produce a model for credit and loans, as well as just facilitating transactions?

Doing more with local money

Michael Linton and those working with him have recently launched an innovative community currency that seeks to add value to businesses by providing a way for them to donate to charity without coming up with government money for the donation. The Seedstock launched in Vancouver in the winter of 2012/13 and works like this:

A business decides that it wishes to donate to a charity, and issues Seedstock for the amount of the donation. It agrees to accept the Seedstock back in exchange for its own products, perhaps for the total price, or, more often, for a proportion of it. Under Canadian law, the donation entitles the business to write down the amount against revenue before paying taxes on its profits. The charity can now either use the Seedstock to purchase goods or services from the issuer (or from another participant in the currency), or to have the Seedstock sold on its behalf by the Seedstock organising committee. Individuals who want to support the charity (or the organising committee) buy Seedstock at face value and use it at the participating businesses. In this way everyone benefits: individuals know that they are supporting the participating charity of their choice when they buy Seedstock, the charities get the benefit of the donation (or the cash), and the business gets the tax benefits in exchange for donating what are in effect its surplus resources. In effect, the participating businesses have provided credit to the charity – their commitment is just to honour the Seedstock as it comes back to them to be spent.¹ The Seedstock principle has recently been copied in Powell River, on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast.²

The Tetla dollars of the Duncan area of Vancouver Island is based on a similar idea. Businesses donate gift certificates for their own goods and services, and receive Tetla gift certificates in exchange. The purpose of Tetla Dollars is to provide funds to the First Nation Coast Salish people; part of this endeavour is to pass on traditional wisdom from the elders to the younger generation: the Coast Salish earn Tetlas for explaining their lore to the young. Probably uniquely, Tetlas can be obtained in exchange for other community currencies (such as Salt Spring Island dollars) as well as unwanted gift certificates from other businesses and certain business currencies (Air Miles, Petro-Canada's Petro points, and the iconic Canadian Tire money).³

The use of complementary currencies to provide a kind of credit to a community is not new. The stamp scrip of the Great Depression in the US is a good example of using business to

¹ <http://www.seedstock.ca/>

² powellrivermoney.ca

³ <http://tetla.org/>

support the unemployed. Stamp scrip was originally the brainchild of Silvio Gesell, a Swiss/Argentinean business man, was tried successfully (as Wara) locally in Germany and Austria in 1931-2, and rose to prominence in the US in Hawarden, Iowa, in late 1932. There, Charles Zylstra, who knew of Gesell's ideas, persuaded the businesses of Hawarden to accept scrip certificates given to the unemployed for work in the community, giving 97c of goods for a \$1 certificate, the remaining 3c being used to pay for a special stamp issued by the town's Chamber of Commerce. The certificate could then be used by the recipient at any of the participating businesses, but each time it was used, another 3c stamp had to be affixed on the back. When 36 stamps had been put on the certificate, it could be taken to the town's offices and exchanged for a US dollar note. As, in circulating, it had required \$1.08 in stamps, there was enough money available from stamp sales not only to redeem the scrip, but also to pay the costs of printing and administration of the plan.

Before it became festooned in stamps, those interested could read the message on the back:

By using this coupon in your transactions you promote employment and an early return to prosperity. Your 3 cent stamp makes this possible.

Zylstra also produced a longer justification on notices posted in participating businesses:

The 3 cent redemption stamp represents a 3% discount on that part of our transactions done with coupons. This coupon would not have been here except through the hands of an unemployed member of our community. All new business so created also directs 36 times this amount of business to be done in our city and 3% is therefore a reasonable amount spent for advertising.¹

The idea of stamp scrip spread far and wide; Irving Fisher, America's most famous economist of the time, wrote a short volume entitled *Stamp Scrip*, although he was at pains to point out that a time-based system, where a stamp needed to be added every few days, or week or fortnight, regardless of whether it was used in the interim, was superior to Zylstra's one-stamp-per-transaction version.² In Michigan, a number of towns issued stamp scrip to customers as a promotional idea – the note might be free, but each time you used it (or every few days) you had to pay for the stamp. Other versions, such as those of Red Oak, Iowa, and Pilot Rock, Oregon, were partially backed by commodities: farmers were paid a premium rate in scrip for their maize (Iowa) or wheat (Pilot Rock); the corn was then auctioned off and the proceeds formed the basis of the redemption fund. That way, not so many stamps would be required before the issue was redeemed.

The stamp scrip schemes all had an element of credit: businesses pledged to give their goods and services in exchange for the scrip, and it was this credit that gave value to the scrip and made it acceptable to other people. Local governments and school districts (which, in the US have separate tax-raising powers) issued tax anticipation notes to pay their employees – these would be accepted for back and future taxes, and so could circulate as money in the area where they were issued.

¹ For more on Charles Zylstra and stamp scrip, see my earlier ICSA conference paper, "Community, money and the coherence of community: the stamp scrip scheme of Charles Zylstra" which is available at <http://www.ic.org/icsa/docs/ICSA2004.pdf> pp.64- 75.

² Irving Fisher, *Stamp Scrip* (New York: Adelphi 1933). In fact, hybrid versions, where a stamp was required for each transaction, or each week if it hadn't been used, tended to be the most successful.

Time banks are based on a similar idea of credit: in Japan, where a major use is for the young retired to earn credits by looking after the very elderly to use for their own care later on.¹

Another example, but this time harnessing the use of time as a resource, is the proposed Brazilian Saber Plan. The Ministry of Education proposed giving vouchers to seven year old children to be used for tutoring, by 10 year olds. They, in turn, could use the Saber to obtain tutoring from older children. After a number of cycles, the Saber would end up the hands of 17 year olds, who could use them for a proportion of their University tuition, which the Ministry would then redeem from the University, using government money. The result, it is hoped, will be educational benefits at all levels of schooling, and an encouragement for more children from poor families to attend university.²

All these ideas suggest ways in which the operation of the economy can be enhanced by complementary currencies and credit.

Putting it together: a community credit idea

Harnessing the power of community to provide credit is attractive, and possible – but not necessarily through the medium of a physical complementary currency. One idea that did combine physicality with credit, though, provides an excellent example of community credit – the Great Barrington Deli story.

In 1990, Frank Tortoriello was able to finance the expansion of his delicatessen in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, by selling scrip that could be redeemed in meals at the deli after the move had been completed. Advised by the Schumacher Society, he printed 500 certificates, and sold them for \$8 apiece, raising the \$4000 he needed to move the deli. Each certificate was worth \$10 in food at the deli when the expanded business re-opened. Interestingly, and unexpectedly, holders of Mr. Tortoriello's deli scrip found that others in the town were prepared to accept it, and it circulated like money for several months. One church received several deli dollars in the collection plate: the congregation knew the minister patronised the deli regularly, and so the certificates would be going to a good home.³ The idea was copied by some local farmers, but might not have universal validity. In Pittsburgh, Ethan Clay's plan to offer gift cards valid at his ice cream parlour in lieu of interest to people willing to lend to him (and allow him to lend out the money at lower rates of interest, as a result) ran foul of Pennsylvania's banking officials, who accused him of operating an unlicensed bank.⁴

Modern technology means that there are now more ways in which to emulate the Great Barrington Deli. Online peer-to-peer lending is developing, but, of course, risky. Companies such as Zopa (or, for developing country microfinance, Kiva) limit risk by limiting the amount

¹ In Britain, Time Banks have been successful, too: but here it may be that a different cultural dynamic is at work. Many people want to help others, but are concerned that offers of help might be refused. Formalising the relationship through the more impersonal institution of a time bank allows for volunteering to take place without the stigma of accepting "charity." Many participants don't record their hours; suggesting that it is the role of time banks in making volunteering acceptable that is truly important, not the banking of hours.

² For a full description, see Gwendolyn Hallsmith and Bernard Lietaer, *Creating Wealth: Gowing Local Economies with Local Currencies* (Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers 2011) pp. 84-87. The book also documents other innovative uses of community currencies.

³ See Jeff Gates, *The Ownership Solution* Reading, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1998 p. 156

⁴ John W. Miller, Ice-cream bank's rocky road *Wall Street Journal* 13 September 2012.

of exposure each lender has to a particular borrower.¹ But still a considerable risk remains: how do I know the borrower won't just abscond with the money?

A more promising approach might be the development of Crowdfunding, like the Kickstarter model. Here, anyone can post a project proposal, and anyone can back one and receive a small reward for doing so. Money changes hands only if the funding target of the project is reached. The site is mainly used to finance creative projects, with contributors receiving a DVD of the film they have helped fund, a print or photograph of an art project, or access to blog postings of the experiences of travellers. It has been used to raise funds more conventional business, with mixed success, and has now extended to the UK.² At present, US regulations prevent Kickstarter from allowing lenders to receive more than token rewards for their investment (although legislation may change this soon), which means it is most useful for projects where the token reward is sufficient, rather than investment. In any case, Kickstarter draws in contributors from across the United States, and so is not a good platform for supporting local community projects.

But localising the crowdfunding idea has great possibilities. Today, to move (or start) a deli, a crowdfunding method could work well. A recent community initiative is Salt Spring Island's ShareSpring idea: a local Kickstarter model. The Gathering Restaurant is attempting to raise \$5000 – in exchange for a \$25 contribution, you will receive a \$27 Membership Card, giving you access to member-only perks, but also \$27 worth of restaurant fare.³ While anyone in the world can contribute, it is likely that the vast majority of the money will be raised from local people, so encouraging communities to invest in their own business talent.

The UK has a more general online platform that allows co-operative and social enterprise ventures to raise capital. Unlike Kickstarter, more than nominal rewards can be offered: in Community Shares' case, interest is payable on loans provided to finance the business. Again, although people from all over the UK (or, potentially, the world) could invest, the attraction of social enterprises tend to be that they are doing good in a particular area, meaning that investors are likely to be local people.⁴

Conclusions

We live in an exciting time for the development of community currencies. More currencies are being established, and, while the success of many of these is not guaranteed, innovative ideas (such as Seedstock and the Saber) are garnering support. In addition, credit and loan arrangements via crowdfunding (either local or global) are easy to arrange through the power of the Internet. Novel uses of community currencies have the potential to provide local credit, by mobilizing underused resources to community benefit. The next step would be to allow

¹ See <http://uk.zopa.com/> and www.kiva.org/. A recent initiative is Pave <http://www.pave.com/>, which currently has a \$500 minimum commitment from investors, and expects borrowers to ask for at least \$2000.

² <http://www.kickstarter.com/>. See also Emine Saner, Kickstarter: the crowdfunding site that wants to spark a creative revolution in the UK *The Guardian* 14 November 2012 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2012/nov/14/kickstarter-crowdfunding-creative-revolution-uk> accessed 8 July 2013).

³ <http://www.sharespring.ca/> As of 8 July 2013, The Gathering restaurant had raised \$2220 of its \$5000 target from 26 contributors, with another three weeks of the campaign still to go.

⁴ <http://www.communityshares.org.uk/>

contributions to a project to be made in community currency, rather than requiring the use of government money.

But it is not all plain sailing. To be successful, any such project must achieve buy-in from stakeholders, and provide a benefit for all concerned. If there's no benefit to those expected to participate, or the costs outweigh the benefits, little will happen. This has been a problem for LETS and traditional forms of community currency, where the limited options for spending the currency make it unattractive to all but the most committed. The realisation of this point should spur the development of innovative and useful complementary currencies, perhaps modelled on business currencies like Air Miles.

New opportunities through crowdsourcing and P2P lending are opening up exciting possibilities for the future development of community credit. There is now a way in which local community enterprises can obtain the credit to start businesses. Whether these businesses are more successful financially than more conventionally-financed businesses (which have a high failure rate) remains to be seen. If so, the wisdom of crowds, coupled with localised crowdfunding, has the potential to become an important complement to more conventional forms of financing.



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Competing Values in Developing Intentional Communities

Mark Westcombe

Lancaster Cohousing and Lancaster University, England

Video of conference presentation: http://youtu.be/vs_IFvnTaTA

Abstract

This paper explores the conflict and inter-relation between task and process orientations in developing intentional communities by exploring Lancaster Cohousing as a case of a developing cohousing project.

The need for, and practice of, negotiating the values and visions between the members of developing intentional communities has been well rehearsed, whereas advice regarding managing the conflict between task or value rationality (a focus on ends), and process or instrumental rationality (a focus on means), is less available. The founding end-values of Lancaster Cohousing are explicitly expressed as environmental sustainability, social sustainability (both balanced against cost constraints) and acting as a cutting edge example of sustainable design and living. These end-values and their expression (i.e. what the community does in the light of what its ideals were/are) have required negotiation and re-negotiation amongst its members. The means-values are not explicitly expressed or negotiated, but similarly require regular re-negotiation as the end-values are operationalised (i.e. how the community completes the necessary activities in light of what its ideals were/are). Furthermore different members place different value on the importance of assigning resources (time and money) to engaging with task activities against process activities, creating a further arena of negotiation. The focus of this paper is exploring these competing values and their implication for developing, leading and managing intentional communities.

The data drawn upon in the paper is from an ongoing research project involving interviews; participant and non-participant observations of the two researchers; and documentary and artefact analyses of the cohousing group over a two-year period covering the building development phase of the project and the subsequent establishment of a cohousing community.

Paper not available



Mark Westcombe, Lancaster University Management School, is a founding member of Lancaster Cohousing, the UK's largest PassivHaus development; chair of the UK Cohousing Network; and a lecturer in Process Consultancy. He has co-chaired the two national UK cohousing conferences and various policy seminars relating to cohousing. He is currently researching how cohousing residents negotiate values during the development stage of a project.

Community Facilities in Korean Apartment Buildings: Post-occupancy evaluation (POE) and analysis

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In order to address a housing shortage caused by industrialization and metropolitanization, for the last 50 years, Korea been implementing policies that generated housing construction. Helped by such policies, buildings with as many apartments as possible, in higher buildings and higher densities even in limited spaces, has been rapidly supplied and established itself as a normative residential form. This quantity-focused supply of apartments resulted in a unified built environment and reduced public space. The trend distorted resident's concepts of the space, resulting in increased tension between neighbors and the dismantling of community. In the last decade there have been a reconsideration of local residential culture. In 2003, the importance of residential management was emphasized in a revision of the Housing Construction Expediting Law. Since end of 90's, under the plan, local constructors have supplied community facilities as a way to differentiate apartments that satisfied residents with not only the quality aspect of residency but with meeting their various desires for life in their apartments.

As demand for improvement in residential welfare and residential environments have recently increased, the importance of various community facilities and programs as a means to build a sense of community and to improve residential welfare environment, not to mention residents' conveniences, has emerged. However, a problem has arisen. The community facilities are not working well due to an absence of efficient management systems. This paper will offer the basic data needed to improve Korea's community facilities and their management methods for the future by comparing supply and management situations of community facilities within condominium and public rental apartments in Seoul.

1.2 Subjects

The subjects of this study are people in both condominiums and public rental apartments.

1) They include general managers in charge of community facilities of the following two comparative apartments and their residents. One is Banpo R apartment which was reported as a case of residents' satisfaction in which the apartment's efficient management contributed to

raising residents’ levels of satisfaction toward their apartment, and the other is Banpo X apartment that attracted attentions for it extensive variety of community facilities

2) They include general managers in charge of community facilities of four randomly selected public rental apartment buildings and their residents. The four buidings are public rental apartment complexes in the Pankyo region that Korea Land & Housing Corporation has provided for ten years.

1.3 Methodology

The research methods included visiting sites of subject apartments, data collection, generally grasping outlines of their community facilities by drawings and photo takings, and analysis of their specific management conditions through conducting in-depth interview with managerial personnel. And it also conducted a simple Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) on some residents.

1) The condominium apartment’s investigation started on July 18 and August 11, 2011. The investigation conducted focusing on community facilities of Banpo R and Banpo X.

2) The public rental apartment investigation started on July 7 and August 16, 2012. The investigation focused on a community facility of each complex.

3) All the subjects in the two investigations were general managers of each apartment complex who were in charge of its community facility. The investigations included conditions of management, management system, the current situations of management, and managerial businesses. Problems were drawn out from integrated analysis results and directions for better management were sought. The study module of this paper is as follows.

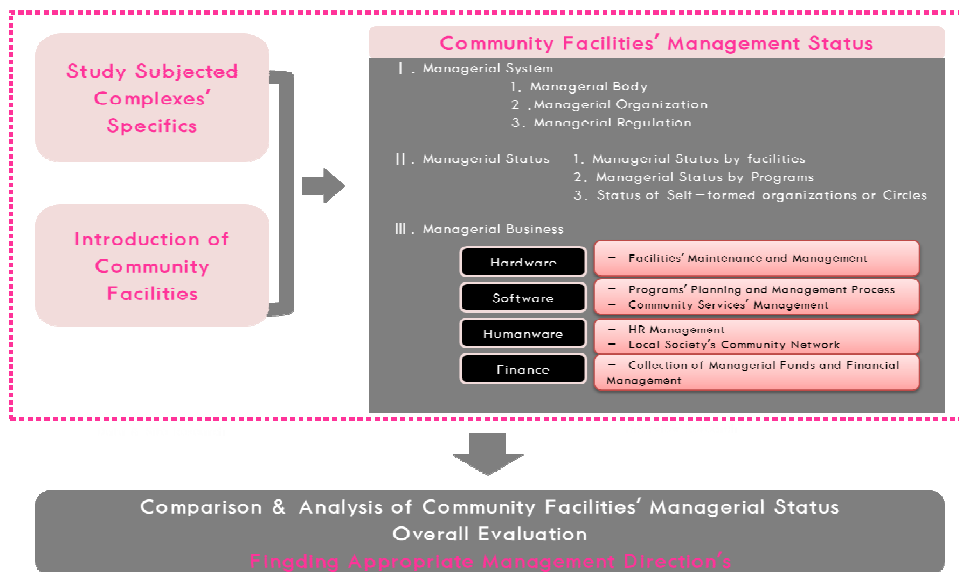


Figure 4. Study module

2. Analysis

2.1 Condominium

2.1.1 Study Subjected outline

In terms of the total number of households and scale of complex, X is bigger than R. But at time of move in, R is earlier than X. Both cases have a lot of community facilities. Especially X, which has the most community facilities in Korea.

Table 1. Community facilities

Banpo R	surveyed	Banpo X
6246m²	area of facility	9200m²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Health facilities fitness, GX-room, sauna Swimming pool golf course ➤ cultural facilities Ballroom, Book Cafe, Café, conference room, ➤ Learning facilities Reading room, studying room ➤ Child care facilities kids' room 	Kinds of community facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Health facilities fitness, aerobics room, private yoga room, sauna Swimming pool golf course ➤ cultural facilities Ballroom, Book Cafe, Café ➤ Learning facilities Reading room ➤ Child care facilities kids' room ➤ Other facilities Silver John, Studios, coin-operated laundry

2.1.2 Managerial System

Table 1. Complexes' Specifics

Banpo R	surveyed	Banpo X
18-1 Banpo-dong, Seocho-gu, Seoul	location	20-43 Banpo-dong, Seocho-gu, Seoul
Samsung	constructor	GS
Dec 2008	occupancy	July 2009
2,444	Total households	3,410
26P-512h/34P-955H/44P-130h/52P-210h/62P-231h/72P-224h/81P-182h	No of households by pyeong	25P-683h/35P-1363h/50P-340h/60P-340h/70P-296h/80P-162h/90P-156h/91P- 70h
32 F highest / 23F lowest	Total stories	29 F highest / 23F lowest
28buildings	Total buildings	44buildings
133,060m²	Site area	199,653.10m²
540,103.12m²	Total floor area	838,484.86m²
270%	Floor area ratio	268%

1) Managerial Body & Organization

Table 2. Managerial body

Banpo R	surveyed	Banpo X
Overall commission management	Management method	Overall commission management
Tower pmc	Operator	Ezville
52persons	Participants in operation	51persons
26persons	Full time	14persons

The subjects had adopted the entire management system since move-in. A specialized management company was commissioned to operate the apartment's community facility and its programs by agreement. An operational organization was created according to size of a complex and situations facing it. A management company provided a set of basic manuals necessary for the organization, but as each complex had a different situation, simply following as suggested by the guidelines was not the case. Participants in operation might largely be classified as full-time employees and part-time workers. There was little difference in terms of number of the employees (52 for R and 51 for X). However, considering the apartment X which was 1.5 times larger than R in terms of facility areas, it apparently had a much smaller number of employees.

Both apartments replaced all overtime work by the full-time workers with employment of part-time workers, and divided individual working by employees on time period basis. In addition, residents' complaint recording system was introduced to require all staff to record all the process and results after a formal complaint was completed, and to report the details included in the business log to the director in charge of operation.

In case of R, a small number of manager-level or higher employees were in charge of working-level task such as community program-related planning and advertising. Most employees appeared to engage in simple and passive works such as cleaning and equipment management. When it comes to X, it tried to divide classification of its full time employees into more details, but due to conflicts with committee of representatives for residents over budget, temporary positions, not full-time jobs, were mobilized for operation challenge with no expectation of incentives.

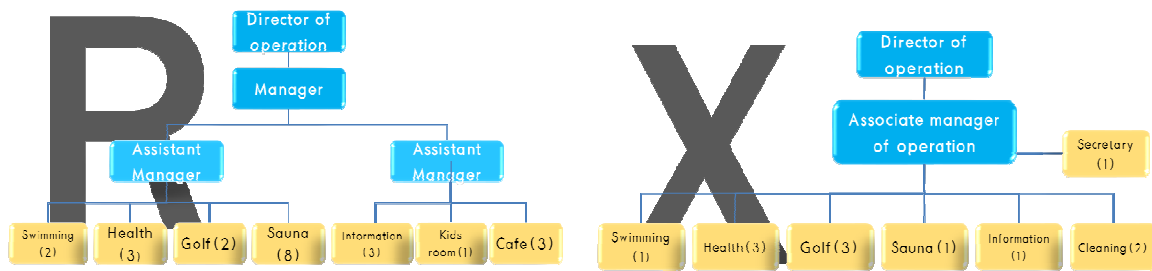


Figure 2. Organization

In both cases, organization charts are shown as in table 4. R was an apartment which largely divided its community facility into a sports facility and other facilities, and a facility had an organization of regular staffs, assistant-level employees, and an operational manager and a director who was at the top. X, on the other hand, had an organization in which employees, an associate manager and operational manager at the top for each facility. Secretary, a general employee, was responsible for assisting an associate operational manager. As explained, R had a more divided organization than X, so it was presumable that a work task by its employees' of R might be more divided and specific. In terms of status of employees, the total numbers of employees were 26 for R except part-time workers, and 14 for X, and R, though with its relatively small size had doubled number of employees compared with X. This indicates that X apartment employees would face higher working intensity than R's.

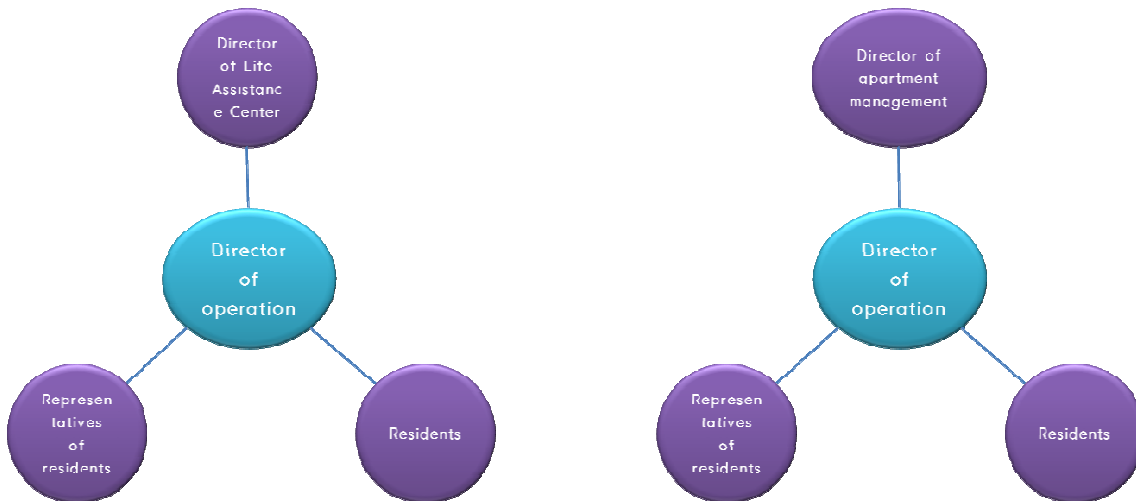


Figure 3. Committee of community

Both apartments had a committee of community operation, and had a similarity though they had a difference in number of members and name. R had a committee which in fact served as all a reporting function by the operational director. The committee of representatives for residents and residents themselves were responsible for decision-making when the director made a proposal. Director of maintenance seemed to do nothing much except reading the work flow.

R had an explicit statement on support and operation of a community club in the provisions, whereas X had no specific provision, making us assume that its community club would be not as active as the other. X named a committee of operation as a committee for advisory, indicating it is expected to play a role as advisor, excluding active participation by residents in substantial operation. In fact, the committee was first formed but not active in its activity.

2) Regulations on operation

The two apartments of this study drafted regulations on operation of community facility, and each directors of operation were responsible for this. R has seen its related regulations stably in place, whereas X runs its facility in accordance with temporary provisions as it was not passed through by the committee of representatives for residents.

Regulations on operation, in the cases of both apartments, were found to be similar to each other in terms of composition and details, though contents or tables have a different name of specific articles and classifications.

Table 4. Regulations of operation

Banpo R APT	surveyed	Banpo X APT
Objectives and compliance with the provisions	I . General	Objectives and compliance with the provisions
Management		Management
Acquisition and loss of membership	II . Membership and facility	Acquisition and loss of membership
Rights of Members		Rights of Members
Member's duties and responsibilities		Member's duties and responsibilities
Basic operational fee		Basic operational fee
Admission fee		Loss
How to charge other fees		Facility fees
Facilities opening and closing hours		How to charge lecture payment
Constitution of committee of operation		Facilities opening and closing hours &
Mission of committee of operation		III Committee of operation
Regulations on pre-decision before the meeting	Duties of advisory committee	
Quorum	Meeting and Quorum	
Amendment to regulations		
Others	Amendment to regulations Or change	
Effective Date (01/06/2010)		Others
Each facility rule of operation	Supplementary regulations	Effective Date(X)
Operating hours stated	IV . Compliance by members	Each facility rule of operation Operating hours stated
Purpose / Scope of clubs/ Registration standards/methods/Committee of execution/Decision on operation standards and evaluation methods/ Supports/Withdrawal and Termination	V . Club support & operation	No corresponding statements

2.1.3. Managerial status

1) Community facilities

Despite the difference in size, both had a similarity in number of management staff for each facility, but more precisely, it was R having more employees. As mentioned earlier, conflicts with a committee of residents were blamed for X not able to organize a right size organization for its operation. Disposition of much smaller employees for a large- sized facility could translate into burden for its employees, causing a decline in quality of their service in favor of residents. So this needs to be complemented in appropriate manner. X had some facilities with low rate in utilization or neglected due to management difficulties, and thus it seemed to be required to reconsider space utilization as well as proper management plan for a facility.

First of all, compared with lectures of similar orientation, or a sports lecture and a GX lecture, X had more lectures than R as it had its lectures more divided lectures by days, times and even levels of difficulty. In addition, it was noticeable to have a program for a targeted group of residents such as ‘gymnastics for seniors’ or ‘kids’ ballet with moms’. When it comes to cultural lectures, R targeted mainly among children and continuously opened a new lecture while X had no regular cultural lectures at that time. Apart from these, R was providing a variety of event lectures on different themes, while X relatively provided less variety of lectures.

Table 5. Status of community facilities

Banpo R		surveyed		Banpo X		
Fees	Operator	Facility		Operator	Fees	
	No.			No.		
Households-2 times of free of charge over 2times - 1500W	6	Swimming pool		4	Facility admission fees Households-2 times of free of charge over 2times - 2500W	
	12	Sauna		9		
Free	7	Fitness		4	Separate charges	
Vary depending on programs		GX room				
Assigned -2000W/H	4	Golf course		4	Assigned -2000W/H	
Before 16:00 - 5000W After 16:00 - 7000W		Screen Golf			15,000W/H	
20,000W/H *non-resident(events by non-resident) -300,000W/4H -500,000W/8H	1	Banquet hall		1	AM: 50,000W PM: 70,000W 1day: 100,000W Non-resident : 800,000W/1DAY	
Monthly 80,000W/Seat Daily 4000W/H	4	Library		3	Day: 50,000W/M Night: 50,000W/M 1 day : 100,000W/M	
Separate charges	4	Book cafe	cafe	cafe	4	Vary depending on menus
		Clouds' cafe		Book cafe		
guardian ○ - 1000W/H guardian X - 2000W/H	3	Kids' room	Others	Silver zone	No	Free
				Guest room	3	general: 50,000 W/1D special: 70,000W /1D
				Art room & studio	No	40,000W/1 day
				Coin Laundry	No	laundry: 5000W dry: 5000W

2) Community program

Table 6. Status of community program

Banpo R APT			Surveyed	Banpo X APT			
Program	Lectures (no.)		Program category	Lectures (no.)		Program	
Opening a lecture by days and times	Group (8)	golf	Sports Class	golf	Group (20)	Opening a lecture by days and times	
					S-group (9)		
	S-group (2)						
Opening a lecture by days and times	Group (8)	swim		swim	swim	Group (8)	Class for Adults/ Females/ Kids/ Beginners (beginners, intermediate, advance) weekends / opening a class of acuorobics by days and times
						S-group (2)	
	S-group (2)						
Adjustable time	S-group (2)	Fitness		Fitness	Individual	Adjustable time	
Opening by days and times	Stretching(3)			GX class	Seniors Gymnastics(1)		Subject to over 60
Opening by days and times	yoga(4)				yoga(6)		yoga-ABT/Yoga Pilates
1 class	Aerobics(1)		Aerobics(1)		1 class		
beginners/intermediate/advance	Ballet school(2)		Ballet(6)		English, Creative ballet/'Kids' ballet with Moms/Children ballet/Elementary school students ballet/Adult ballet		
1 class	Sports dance (1)		Line dance (1)		1 class		
5~7 age /3~4grade/1grade	Physics class(5)		Children TV dance (1)		1 class		

3) Community clubs

R runs different kind of clubs such as a sports club, a culture club, a study club and a childcare club, and its center has a detailed set of provisions on club operation. However, the initially planned finance support for the club activity is stalled by other residents who oppose to. X has no specific provisions on this kind of activity, although it has a sports-oriented gathering. Lack of communication among residents stops such a social gathering from being active, so it seemed to be required to elect a right leader who is able to lead and maintain the club.

2.1.4. Managerial businesses

1) Facility Maintenance

The surveyed apartments were all large complex with more than 2,000 households, and their community facility had a high number of daily users. Because of this, any complaints by residents of defect repairs at facility were a significant factor that could have an impact not only on satisfaction with the community facility itself but on satisfaction with their own residence in the apartment. In the case of R, it was working together with a repair team of the office in order to maintain the community facility's hardware. No exclusive department, though every staff was responsible for the facility inspection as frequent as possible, so that this could minimize complaints by residents. X is a large-scaled apartment equipped with a separate team of maintenance and repair at facility so frequent inspection is possible and

immediate response is possible. It is believed that improvements in facility using its own resources would translate into reduction in maintenance fee, creating positive effects.

2) Programs' Planning and Management Process

In survey of community program planning and operation, each process at the two apartments has been led by director of operation and small number of managers. The overall process is similar between the two, but R has more detailed process than X. Residents can deliver their demands through direct conversation and phone call to the management operators, but no steps are found to document and organize these. The planning and promotion used bulletin of boards at the center, and online advertising, in principle, is not underway in fear of commercial exploitation. Program assessment is done through simple oral survey, and other than this, participation sustainability and Rate of facility use are referred.



Figure 3. Programs' Planning and Management Process

3) Employees Management

The same thing was each apartment employed each director of operation by different contract companies, but R had its regular full-time employees employed by the headquarter and a director of operation was directly responsible for employing part-time workers and lectures, while X had director of operation who was responsible for all the employment of staff including regular full-time employees, part-time workers and lecturers. With respect to a possibility for a resident recruit, managers of the two apartments showed different opinions.

R regarded residents as a customer who is not supposed to work as an employee. In principal, it does not recruit a resident. This is because it 's not easy task when a resident is required to have a proper response service to different complaints by other residents. X, however, is open to recruitment of residents if he or she has a capability, and there's a precedent of actual

recruitment of a resident. Through direct participation, residents may be able to understand problems of operation.

R had a more detailed promotion system and motivations for staff including award of the excellent employee, incentives proposal for employees of each department and wage increase adjusted for inflation. Continuously through the committee of representatives for residents, it increased recognition of importance of motivation among employees, making them feel sense of rewards and pride from their work, and eventually increasing rate of their job settlement. However, X had a lack in motivation measures for employees, resulting in low rate of job settlement among them.

4) Community Network Programs

In working with neighboring public organizations, the two apartment complexes have participated in community program conducted by the Seocho-gu Office. A number of residents took part in and showed positive reaction, but a manager of the office of R was a skeptic about its profitability and sustainability due to the Seocho-gu Office not promising budget assistance. No linked program with neighboring public facility for residents was seen either R or X. It's a typical example of gated community. For working in association with neighboring commercial facility, R had a business agreement with hotel, golf course and medical foundation, in which its residents received benefits of discounts when they used such facility and its service. X, however, tried to provide a linked cultural lecture in association with neighboring hospitals, but residents' reaction was not sufficient enough to continue the program.

5) Operation Expense Collection and Financial Management

The surveyed two apartments uniformly charged burden of operation expense including basic fee monthly 20,000 won plus individual payable on each household. Paying basic fee allowed a resident of the two apartments to use facility of fitness, swimming and sauna twice daily, the amount of basic fee was different. X had faced a continued opposition to the current charge of imposing operation expense on its residents so that it expressed it wanted to go with alternative of charge solely according to individual use with no basic fee attached. Profits from operation between the two apartments varied, but all enjoyed around 30million won every month. According to a manager of the office of X, there was distinct difference in profits by seasons. When considering fixed expenditure such as labor cost and energy expense, which accounted for a significant share of the total together with long-term repair reserve, undeniable surplus was hard to be found. R had continued to find a way to save maintenance expense in the process of operation, and at the same time created a new source of income. It said it tried to return as much benefits as possible to residents by opening a free lecture or use it for gaining a discount service in association with another facility of convenience.

2.1.5. POE interview

1) Condominium R

We have a systematically- operated community system compared with other apartments. There are different cultural programs we can choose from, and it is beneficial to communicate with other residents whom I don't even know their face. - *Resident, house maker/ Mrs. Lee (Age 46)*

I wish the community program more reflected with needs and demands of residents. As non-member of the committee of representatives for residents, a normal resident has an opinion she wants to be heard, but there is no idea if it is being reflected or disregarded even after she delivered her own idea to director of operation. Plus I think it is as important for an existing program to be kept active as introducing a new program. - *Resident, employed/Mr. Kim (Age 50)*

The ultimate purpose of the community facility is to make the community activity alive, I guess. It is important to operate focusing on the various facilities and service the community produces, but it is more important to think it is time for residents to more voluntarily involve in having a sense of ownership. In order to do this, it is important to think that every resident can involve in the community operation, at the same time promoting the community clubs and self-made groups.

-*President, committee of female residents /Mrs. Park (Age 47)*

2) Condominium X

We have a qualified community facility in the complex, but I'm not sure if we have a community activity among residents. It's like no constructive development present as the committee of representatives for residents has been in chaos with member change and maintained its position against the management company. Being in tune with each other is urgent task, I think.

President, committee of female residents /Mrs. Han (Age 49)

I'm always too busy to use a facility of the community, but charged with basic fee of use every month. I think it's more reasonable to impose the fee on who actually use it.

- Resident, public officer/Mr. Kim (Age 50)

I wish we have a variety of cultural programs in the complex. I know there are residents who are able to teach a paper art or flower art, and use of their assets for the community program will be a great idea, like under talent donation system. If this is possible, why we do need human resources from outside rather than inside our community itself. - Resident, house maker/ Mrs. Jung (Age 38)

2.2 Public rental apartments

2.2.1 Study Subjected outline

Table 7. Complexes' Specifics

Name of complex	A	B	C	D
Location	Baekhyeondo ng 545	Baekhyeondo ng 558	Unjungdong 922	Sampyeongd ong 722
Principal of business	Korea LH Corp	Korea LH Corp	Korea LH Corp	Korea LH Corp
Construction company	Ginheung	Daelim Industrial Development	LIG Kunyoung	Kyeryong
Types	Pubic rental +condominiu m	Pubic rental	Pubic rental	Pubic rental
Total households	772 (PR:491, C281)	340	504	870
households by pyeong (unit: households)	32py- 281 39py- 332 45py- 159	38py- 136 44py-198 56py- 4 67py- 2	21py- 148 25py- 356	24py- 666 30py- 102 34py- 102

4 complexes were 10-year public rental apartments supplied by Korean Land & Housing Corporation, and located in Bundang-gu, Seoungnam near Seoul. A apartment was a complex of mixed public rental and sales housing, different from the other three. In terms of total households, D apartment had 870households, the largest out of the four apartments. B apartment was a 340-household complex, the smallest, but had significantly larger spaces in relation to general rental housing of 38py at minimum and 67py at maximum in its extent, meaning that middle-class residents who can afford a relatively expensive rental fee reside in the apartment. The four apartments showed a small difference, but has all started to reside since late 2009 and C apartment was the earliest complex to have its first residents among them.

Management method of the surveyed four apartments is a commission contract-based with a company with expertise. The contract is 1year-based between the two parties.

In terms of the number of community facility, the smallest complex B has the most number of 9 facility, while the largest D has the least number of 4 facility, far short when considering its 870households in total.

Table 8. Community facility Specifics

Name of Complex	A	B	C	D
Maintenance office Management principal	Daehan Industrial Development	Kyounggi Ginheung Housing management	Korea Safety Industrial	Purun Safety Industrial
Management contract periods	1y	1y	1y	1y
Employees of the office	20	12	17	20
Number of community facility	6	9	6	4
Kinds of community facility	Hall for seniors, childcare, library, Fitness, golf, sauna	Hall for seniors, childcare, library, Fitness, golf, sauna, Ping-Pong, multimedia Rm, guest Rm	Hall for seniors, childcare, library, Fitness, Ping-Pong, meeting Rm, sauna	Hall for seniors, childcare, library, Ping-Pong

2.2.2. Managerial System

1) Managerial Body

The four apartments had no independent agents who were exclusively managing a community facility, rather each facility had been operated in cooperation with maintenance office, community clubs or residents autonomy organizations.

The A apartment had only one community club of books run on residents autonomy basis. Members of the book club would voluntarily lend and borrow and provide various community programs, and the maintenance office played an aid role in supporting supplies. Other facility for fitness, sauna and golf actually did not operate the facility as it was difficult to finance equipment and under the current laws on housing, making a profit from operation of a community facility in public housing through commission-contract based management was restricted. The B apartment's all facility was managed on residents' autonomy basis, and had a committee of community facility operation. For initial times, B, like the other apartments, experienced difficulties in facility operation, however some residents, who formed a common ground through online café, naturally made an offline organization which has laid a ground for the current committee of operation. On the other hand, the B also received assistance from the maintenance office, only accounting for a small fraction of the roles. The C apartment had a commission-based contract of fitness operation with a company, which invested in equipment in its contract stage, and then donated it after 6years, In case of book club, an employee of the maintenance office was responsible of lending service, but no active membership in fact. In case of Ping-Pong facility, it was run by a club of Pin-Pong, far from a systematic operation. The D apartment had a limited facility of book rental and Ping-Pong, other than hall for senior residents and childcare, the two facilities were operated mainly by

the office. The book rental was mainly run by volunteers of members and residents, while the Ping-Pong was supported by the office after collecting opinions of residents.

2) Principal's participation in management and community activity support

The principal in apartment management supervised and evaluated its management and community facility-related business. Evaluation was made frequently, and higher scores for community-related items were assigned, reflecting emerging significance of promotion of community activity in society. The scores mainly included kinds of facility and program and their needs, and the evaluation closely looked into how it operated for what purposes or what contributions it made for community promotion. The principal provided a manual for residents who moved into the apartment and an assistance of 1,000 books to the book rental. In addition, it supported expense of community promotion once every year.

For A apartment, however, such expense of promoting a community caused conflicts between rental and own households. The currently-run community facility was all opened to residents regardless of their types of residence. But, since the community promotion expense was estimated amount based on the number of households, the committee of representatives for residents maintained a position not to share it with households on rental. It now looks into an alternative for those on rentals, yet not easy to find a solution given that it was a mixed complex.

3) Organizations

The four apartment complexes constituted a committee of representatives for tenants, and it all held a meeting once a month. For A apartment, there was constitution of a committee of 7 representatives for residents, separately from the one for tenants. In its initial days, the two committee had a meeting together, but now have a separate meeting due to difference in their position. If necessary, they were sitting on the same table for negotiation before decision.

On the other hand, the four apartments had a committee of representative for administrative community and seniors, but not as active in the participation. There have been no apartment having a committee of female residents among the surveyed, and this was blamed on characteristics of rental housing, which there were a number of double-income families and their priority was making a living.

Concerning self-made organizations or community clubs in participation of operation, A had a club of book rental, but its participation in the committee was impossible although it raised many proposals, which were delivered through the director of the office to the committee. B had only residents- autonomous committee of community facility operation, which built a close relationship with the committee of representatives for residents and showed its availability to participate in the meeting to deliver its own opinions. The C and D participated in operation of community clubs, but were not possible to take a part in the committee of representatives.

2.2.3. Managerial status

1) Status of community facilities and programs

Table 9. Status of community facilities and programs

complex	Facility	Fee	Programs
A	Hall for seniors	free	* Hall for seniors Gu office subsidized for song class and health check-up * Library Space rental, quilt exhibits and experience events, Magic, events of family month, volunteer outing
	Childcare	local government-subsidized	
	Eagle community library	free	
	Fitness	x	
	Golf	x	
	Sauna	x	
B	Silver center	free	* Library English storytelling with mom * Community Center Skiing and snowboarding courses jazz courses gol courses * Complex only Bazaar, the town annual events, World Cup central square group watching
	Childcare	local government-subsidized	
	Hae-ttul community library	free	
	Fitness	Membership: 100,000W for house hold-refundable after 3yrs /fee: 30,000W/m	
	Golf		
	Ping-Pong	free	
	Sauna	x	
	Multi-media room	20,000W /3h	
C	Hall for seniors	free	* Hall for seniors Gu office subsidized for song class, Health check-up, and physics * Meeting room Used as space of residents education
	Childcare	local government-subsidized	
	Book rental	free	
	Fitness	30,000W/M	
	Ping-Pong	free	
	Meeting	free	
D	Hall for seniors	free	* Hall for seniors Gu office subsidized for song class, Health check-up, and physics
	Childcare	local government-subsidized	
	Book Nuri library	free	
	Ping-Pong	Member :10,000W/M, Non-member: 1,000W/H	

The A, C, and D complexes have little community clubs in active operation, except legally mandatory facility such as hall for seniors, childcare and book rental. The B was seen to have a committee of community operation, a resident’s autonomy body settled and run based on specific operation policy of each facility.

In terms of programs, A had a variety of programs that met needs of kids and female residents at the center of the book rental service. B had outreaching programs including bazaar and annual events not to mention programs of each facility. On the contrary, the C and D had no programs in operation except subsidized programs for seniors’ community at that time.

2) Community clubs

The four apartments formed a resident’s autonomy community of leisure and hobby-related clubs. One or small number of leaders attracted members, and when it grew, it became systematically operated with assistance of the office or the committee of residents for tenants. Each complex had varying community-related assistance.

2.2.4. Managerial businesses

1) Facility maintenance and management

The four apartments had no exclusive departments that were responsible for maintenance of a community facility, rather facility maintenance and management team of the office was linked to the responsibility. The B's autonomous management by residents was shown to actively participate in facility cleaning and management.

2) Program planning and operation

A's book rental club planned a program which was delivered to the office, and then the proposal on to the table of committee of representatives for tenants by director of the office. B planned various programs led by the committee of community facility operation and normal residents, in many cases, voluntarily participated in the planning. Especially based on community promotion by residents, there was a system that residents with expertise from various fields can be utilized as human resources of the community operation, which was noticeable. The C and D appeared to run little community program although there was a trial by a community club to plan a community program. Difficulty in agreement among residents prevented it from being implemented.

3) Community Network Programs

The four surveyed complexes showed a high rate of utilization for neighboring center for residents. The center not only provided various community programs including English, Photograph and Dance programs, not operated in the complex, but affordable and thus attracting good response from residents. In the case of B with relatively active programs, it tried not to make its programs overlapped with ones of the community center for residents. Meanwhile, the rental apartment had its characteristics of residents who think making is a living is a priority, showing its limitation to use of day programs at the center for residents.

4) Online webpage management

Excluding the C, the rest 3 apartments started to have its own website in place from the birth of online café, arena that prospective residents gathered. B's committee of community operation used it website to build relationship among the members, indicating the homepage's contribution to formation of its community. The homepage was operated by operators of the initial online café responsible for managing posts online.

5) Management of operation expense and profits

The A, C, D complexes have little profits from operation of the community facility.

B had a miscellaneous income from guest rooms or fitness center, a facility that was managed and operated autonomously by the community. However, when managing a fund by the autonomous operation, this increased a chance of embezzlement, and therefore more systematic management was needed to be proposed.

2.2.5. POE interview

1) A

We have a mixed of apartments of rental and sale, showing a difference in opinions of residents on operation of community facility in the meeting that ends up with arguments. It has a facility only, nothing either material or environments is present necessary for it.

2) B

We are the good example of residents-led autonomous operation compared with other apartment of rental. This is because we are able to have the President who once initiated the community activity and had plentiful experience in operating events at a large company. Under the leadership, we have an organization of operation in which we put together opinions for a solution, and are proud of what we, as community, have done. We are happy to live in our apartment.

3) C

It seems our residents are not much interested in the community. They are expected to participate in the community activity, but everyone of our apartment is busy , and there's no one who takes an initiative besides far short of facility than others.

4) D

We have a number of people in relation to facility, and no one seems willing to take care of the community. I wish our community run a simple program just like other complex do, but there seems no one to lead the program even if it is introduced.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Sub-conclusion – Condominiums

First, R has a community facility management system in place led by the dispatched operator of a contract company, while X shows its lack in operation and management of community, but considering the large scale of facilities, number of households and time of residence, in order to see it in place as an efficient operation management system, it need to take times.

Second, R showed a negative position in its continuous implementation of not profitable community programs although they maintained high rate of residents' participation. This can be considered for it to seek profit-minded operation only , not enhancing community exchange among residents. Since X has conflicts with the committee of representatives for residents over its operation and management of the community facility. There should be urgent needs for solution to addressing these problems.

Third, in seek of efficiency of operation and management, operators of the two apartments prefer to have passive residents. That is limited number of managers participate in planning

process, and thus lack in system under which residents' demands for the community are not properly reflected.

3.2 Sub-conclusion – Public rental apartments

First, principals in apartment operation business are not up to the mark in considering measures of management and operation in community facility planning and supply. According to standards of the construction laws, the supplied community facility's purpose were assigned, but in reality little support of material and equipment required for its assigned purpose has been underway, and up until now even 3years after residence, residents have to satisfy with most community facility having limited space and equipment, which hardly serve their purpose in operation.

Second, system lacks in order to efficiently operate the community facility and programs. Except B complex, a designated body in charge of operation of the community facility is not in place, and those currently participating in operation of the community are community clubs, self-made organizations and the committee of representatives for residents who only exchange their opinions through the maintenance office rather are far from in close relationship.

Third, the maintenance office was not only responsible for managing the complex as a whole but providing assistance in operation of community facility and programs. This means intense level of work and responsibility for a manager, causing a decline in management service. To tackle this, there was an urgent need for measures in place. Furthermore, the number of staff in the office was in fact far short in relation to total households, and thus that was the reason for employees of the office not able to make much effort to promote the community facility.

3.3 Suggestions

Based on operation reality assessment so far, there are proposals for management measures.

First, in order to promote the committee of residents though operation of the community facility, there should be more participation by residents in management of the community, allowing them to find out needs and lead their way. In long-term aspects, the residents participation in management of the community can contribute to enhancing continued community activity by mutually understanding, smoothly communicating with managers of the office and reducing mistrust and complaints.

Second, such an induced participation by residents will make it possible to meet the needs for professional community experts who can contribute to enhancing the community. Led by the professional community experts, there can be a brisk division in responsibility between their own of employees and operation of the community facility. The placement of professional community experts is expected to increase rental residents' attention to management of the community facility and further participation among them.

Third, for condominium, it should promote a community program in association with local community. By linking cultural programs by other public facility in the same local community or public organizations, it should increase a variety of promoting community exchange, staying away from the gated community but moving into promotion of the community in the local community.

Fourth, it is desirable for an apartment of rental to link with the local community by minimizing the number of a community facility in the complex. This can be solutions to two aspects, including of overcoming realistic limitation that the principal of apartment operation business can in fact not afford providing consistent assistance post residence, and of providing a variety of programs that promotes the community among residents living on rental. They can simultaneously be met, in the end.

Fifth, Measures to supply and operate the community facility are needed taken characteristics of residents living on rental at apartment into consideration. They show a different characteristic from their counterparts living in condominium, and the difference can be divided in more detailed depending types of housing of rental. In addition, in order to materialize promotion the community through smooth communication among every spectrum of classifications when it comes to mixed of apartments of rental and with ownership, considering characteristics of residents living at apartment in planning and supply of the community facility is a must.

This study is to find problems in analysis of apartments' community operation reality through close interview investigation, and has its significance in laying a ground for providing basic materials in order to explore a future direction of the community facility operation. However, there is a limitation to this study which only looks at a limited case of apartments in the single area of the country, and therefore there is a need for a comprehensive operation model to be proposed for promoting the community of the apartment complex of rental by comparing more cases in the future study.

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