THE 'HOW' OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: STORIES FROM

THE SALISH SEA ISLANDS

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how transformative spaces and agency provide opportunities in everyday lives for transformative shifts from the dominant culture towards a culture of ecological decision-making. Stories about transformative change and system shifts, told by forty people involved in Canada's Gulf Islands, form the basis for the findings. Their stories demonstrate how personal transformation leads to changed lifestyles and system shifts that reflect the interconnectedness between all living organisms. Two elements of the shift to ecological thinking are increased understanding of the natural world, and willingness to hear and empathise with other people's realities. Change in communities is cumulative and unpredictable, mirroring personal transformation. Community self-governance is at the core of cultural shifts – the extent to which community members, with various purposes and realities, engage in empathetic dialogue. When interacting with governments and corporations, those who have shifted to ecological-thinking mode exercise their agency and respond according to their inner values. Factors that increase the likelihood of cultural shifts include: a) a multiplicity of different realities in the same space that create the opportunity for people to rethink their cultural box and see the arbitrariness of dominant norms, b) people exercising their agency rather than looking to government as authority, c) collective, non-hierarchical processes, and d) support and links to others in a network of symbiotic ecological-thinking nodes. The power in d) is the power of an accumulation of localisms that creates cultural shifts, arising from communities, which shifts society's norms and behaviours.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Each time that I've tried to do theoretical work it has grown out of elements of my own

experience: always in relation to processes which I saw unfolding around me. It's

precisely because I thought I recognized cracks, muffled shocks, disfunctionings, in the

things I was seeing, in the institutions I was dealing with, in my relations with

others...that I went to work. (Foucault, 1982, p. 35)

Problematic

On May 24, 2008 on a small island off the west coast of Canada, Anna Bauer was serving

local eggs at the Gabriola Farmer's Market. Anna was handed an official notice by the Health

Inspector, informing her she could only use eggs that had been officially graded. Experiencing a

'muffled shock' (Foucault, 1982) or dissonance, between her beliefs and official regulations, she

refused.

Anna's story depicts what I describe as a transformative space. I use the word

transformation to reflect the urgent need to create change one believes in, "The moment one

begins to be unable, any longer, to think things as one usually thinks them, transformation

becomes simultaneously very urgent, very difficult, and altogether possible" (Foucault, 1982).

Foucault speaks to the response of individuals who experience malfunctions or muffled shocks in

their daily interactions and believe there is an 'urgent' need to change – whether that be

elimination of capitalism, local collective action to address climate change, the legal right to sell

local farm fresh eggs in a public place, or all three. It is a belief that transformation is required in

order to live one's life according to one's values, a lifestyle perceived as fundamentally different

from the one most people live. Foucault's 'urgency' strikes at the core of what I have witnessed

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both in myself and others in our efforts to respond to systems that are profoundly contrary to our core values. The stories told in the following pages reflect people's urgency to transform from a dominant culture shaped by capitalism, to a culture arising from values and an understanding of the world as interconnected.

As a former senior government employee working with communities, and current resident of one of Canada's Gulf Islands, I, like Anna have experienced 'cracks', 'muffled shocks' and 'disfunctionings' in my attempts, with others, to initiate and implement options that support lifestyles that differ from those perpetuating climate change, environmental degradation and economic dysfunction. While there may be support in a community for collective actions on these issues, there are also barriers, resistance and different understandings of the types of community actions required from both institutions and individuals.

I suspect that Anna and I are not alone, in our community as well as in others across North America, in experiencing these 'cracks' while at the same time experiencing inspiration resulting from the creation of spaces for alternative actions and voice. I would like to explore what is at the root of both the resistance and the inspiration. My aim is to shine a light on the 'how' of transformative change in everyday lives, including the influence of governments, corporations and community power struggles and the extent to which discourse and individual agency play a role.

The starting place for my inquiry will be local stories, each with a myriad of perspectives. This approach challenges the traditional counter hegemonic approach of social movements (Carrol, 1997), in which governments, and their apparatus, are seen as the locale for political acts, while politicians are seen as those holding the power to shift systems. In the following

pages I will turn this approach upside down and give voice to those involved in everyday lifestyle and system shift, within self-governed communities that are both ordered and chaotic.

My inquiry takes place within the Salish Sea Islands in British Columbia. The findings are drawn from stories told by forty island residents and others involved in the Gulf Islands, and from text culled from newspapers, internet sites, and relevant documents. The methods used include narrative conversations, participant observation and documentary analysis.

I have chosen the Gulf Islands, located in the Salish Sea, for several reasons. First, these are not centres of financial wealth or of the state. Their distance from corporate headquarters and government centres provides an opportunity to understand if and how transformative change can occur through agency exercised by individuals living according to their values, rather than through state power and financial wealth.

The second reason for choosing the Salish Sea Islands is the unique purpose statement of the local government – "To preserve and protect the unique amenities and environment of the Islands Trust area" (Islands Trust Act, 1996). Within the islands this local government is portrayed in the media as both a saviour and a barrier to healthy sustainable communities. While witnessing the advantage of a local government that considers economic initiatives in light of their environmental impact I have also experienced 'cracks' in my interactions with the Islands Trust. So, as part of this inquiry I aim to shed light on how relevant the Islands Trust, or any local government, is to transformative change.

The third reason is the uniqueness of island communities. How does having water surround a geographical community have an impact on the capacity for transformative change within that community? How are the dynamics between place and space experienced in island communities? The Gulf Islands have a reputation as a location for alternative ways of living, the

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residents sometimes viewed as out of touch with real life. I would like to explore the link between the perceptions, the concept of 'real life' and the lifestyle choices of those living on the islands.

My Role as Researcher

I am embedded within this research – I have the urge to transform, I have been involved in transformative spaces, and I live in the Gulf Islands. I started this proposal frustrated with the apparent paralysis of our governments in responding to the crises of climate change and economic collapse that we are facing. My frustration was combined with inspiration arising from people such as Anna Bauer, the Occupy participants, and many others who are holding true to their values in the face of that paralysis. I have taken on the role of researcher in order to get answers to the 'how' of transformative change.

For most of my adult life I have been aware of a disconnect between our systems and people's everyday lives. Working with Cree and Métis women in northern Manitoba, then young parents living in poverty in East Vancouver, while raising two children on my own, I saw and encountered the various ways in which systems place the priorities of those with wealth and power above those without. I had the urge to transform the system and, at that time, my belief was that the route was through changing the way government operated. The options available to me appeared to be starting or joining a revolution or "trying to change the system from within" (Cohen, 1992). Given the need to support my children I chose the latter.

A Master's degree in Policy and Practice prepared me for the 'documentary reality' and ruling apparatus (Smith, 1987) that engulfed me inside the halls of the British Columbia Government. Although I was involved in interesting initiatives, there was little opportunity to create systemic change. The creation of three thousand new social housing units didn't address

the fundamental inequality of our economic system. Attempts to shift taxes from 'green' vehicles to GHG emitting vehicles resulted in outrage in the newspapers and on radio call-in shows. Even if we had been able to implement the tax shift, would people have changed their addiction to vehicles? While recognizing the importance of government programs such as Income Assistance, Child Care Subsidies, and health services, I experienced government as a recipient of corporate requirements and public opinion (driven by corporate funded mass media), unable to make any substantive changes that would be contrary to the desires of corporations and corresponding public opinion.

My interest in living a small footprint lifestyle has been a deeply ingrained value throughout my life. However, it wasn't until I was employed by the B.C. Government's Green Economy Secretariat that I became aware of the systemic changes required to turn the world away from the potential results of climate change and loss of bio-capacity. So, when my children left home and I was able to leave government I started looking at the option of revolution from an environmental as well as a social justice perspective.

But, what type of revolution will make a difference? When in government I witnessed the mass of protesters walking and chanting up Victoria's streets protesting the actions of government. Government dismissed them, and their protests. Working with others in my Gabriola Island community on issues such as creating safe bike routes, turning waste vegetable oil into biodiesel for a community bus, creating a locally driven GHG inventory, and increasing local food production we interacted with the Local Trust Committee of Islands Trust – and were frustrated with responses tied to bureaucratic requirements and mandate restrictions.

I want to use these years I have left wisely, putting my efforts where they will count the most. I started this doctorate program and inquiry so that I could find clues as to what those

efforts could be – how to shape my part in what I will call a transformation. In the courses and reading to date I have experienced a richness of information, knowledge and ways of seeing the world that take me many steps closer to my objective. The findings from this research will, I hope, inform my actions and others in the years to come.

The Chapters

This introductory chapter has set the stage for a review of the literature to illuminate the problem posed, then to explore the stories, and observe the actions of those involved in transformative change in their everyday life. The following chapters are structured to provide the reader with an ordered progression through concepts, experiences and findings that are, by nature, non-linear.

In *Chapter Two* I outline the conceptual framework that provides the basis for framing the research question, as well as the concepts used to analyze the data. I will explore the concepts of transformation and space, in particular how agency and social relations change within spaces. I will review literature on the relationship between citizens and government, as well as between government and capitalism. I will investigate theories of community self-governance and governmentality to understand how transformative change happens in communities and in relation to governments. To gain an understanding of how local transformative change travels beyond community boundaries, I will review social network theory and Massey's (2005) concept of an accumulation of localisms.

I outline the methodology used to achieve my stated research objective in *Chapter Three*. I describe how stories about transformative change were collected through narrative conversations and participant observation, and analyzed using discourse analysis and

documentary analysis. I outline the iterative process of uncovering the support and resistance in communities, technologies of control, and extra-local influences embedded within the stories.

In *Chapter Four* I provide the context of place and a corresponding discussion about change over time, in place. The history of the Gulf Islands is told from the perspective of the geological formations that created the island, the First Nations people that lived on the land for thousands of years, the years of colonization and early settlers, through to the arrival of hippies, developers, the creation of the Islands Trust, and the four decades that follow.

In the *Interlude* between Chapter Four and Five I shift from the context for the stories to an introduction of the stories themselves and what they tell us about the 'how' of transformative change. I raise questions that will flow throughout the following chapters, with the responses forming the basis for the conclusions.

Chapter Five focuses on the experience of those involved in transformative spaces, acknowledging that the starting point for transformative change starts with the personal. This chapter illustrates, through stories of 'ah ha' moments, how our understanding about the world shifts; the chaotic, unpredictable and cumulative nature of that shift to a different mode of thinking and being; and the link between leading from a place of integrity, and how one thinks, acts, and interacts with others.

Chapter Six illustrates how a mode of thinking and being, premised on an ecological understanding of the world, results in a different lifestyle and a different decision-making process than that found in the dominant culture. Storytellers' approaches to food, building and economics, illuminate the interaction between the two cultures in everyday life, as well as the critiques and responses.

In *Chapter Seven* storytellers describe efforts to shift dominant systems. I briefly outline the dominant culture's approaches to food, building, energy, and manufactured goods. Alternatives to those systems, created and implemented by residents of the islands, are described and analyzed in terms of impact on the environment and community.

Chapter Eight provides examples of different stories in a community colliding with each other, creating conflict. People with good intentions, operating at cross-purposes, form the basis for stories about village pathways and logs on a spit. The Gabriola Commons and the Ecological Learning Centres provide examples of collective visioning. I present stories that illustrate the social relations between different individuals, and between groups within a community, together with how discourse and actions shape the norms and behaviours of these self-governing islands.

Interlude: Place and Space explores the interface between place and space in transformative change. This interlude presents an opportunity to take a breath, between the internal to external interactions that occur in the 'how' of transformative change. The reflections in this section are applicable to each of the chapters, demonstrating how place and space have an affect on the players in transformative change.

The role of Islands Trust in transformative spaces is the focus of *Chapter Nine*. The Island Trust's Object statement is analysed, followed by the different ways in which the storytellers mention the Islands Trust. Three roles of the trustees – facilitators, advocates, and regulators -- provide insight into the extent to which Islands Trust plays a role in transformative change.

Chapter Ten will focus on how those involved in "system shifting" experience government. Stories about uninspected eggs, natural walls, and green roof glue, will form the basis for exploring how technologies of control intrude into the desire to live according to one's

values. Analysis of documents and discourse play a large role in this chapter as I describe the intersection between the 'official' world and everyday life.

Chapter Eleven focuses on extra-local influences and explores the importance, for those involved in transformative change, to link with others who are also exploring lifestyles that are different from the dominant culture. The role of various forms of media as well as face-to-face interactions are used to illustrate ways in which synergies are created within communities, between local communities, and with system shifting in localities around the world.

Chapter Twelve summarizes the findings and, through integrating the different threads, provides insight into how community members create transformative spaces and how they subsequently evolve, and function. The actions of the storytellers are linked to the Occupy Movement and other recent global actions epitomizing cultural shifts and transformative change.

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

To frame my inquiry I draw from various fields of study, including political science, geography and sociology. I start with the relationship between citizens, government and social change and then look to the historical relationship between governments and capitalism to understand the basis for government decisions related to economic, social and environmental factors. I then move into an exploration of literature illuminating the concept of transformative spaces and influences. I examine different ways of understanding community governance, and I delve into "governmentality" technologies of control. Finally, I review social network theory and relate it to transformative spaces and transformative change.

Citizens, Government and Social Change

The literature on citizens engaged in social change is primarily of two kinds, either state-centric or counter hegemonic in nature, with an emphasis on working with established authorities or resisting oppressive institutions, both private and public. What is clear from the literature is that mechanisms established by government bodies to engage citizens meaningfully remain weak (Graham & Phillips, 1997; Rose, 2000; Ableson & Gauvin, 2004). These surveys, advisory groups, community–government partnerships, and deliberative democracy processes rarely result in policy changes when these changes would run counter to economic interests or those of entrenched powers (Wharf Higgins, 1999; Blomgren, Bingham, Nabatchi, & O'Leary, 2005; Dutil, 2007; Bochel, Bochel, Summerville & Worley, 2008; Howard, 2010). However, there is evidence that even within those processes opportunities do arise for citizens to engage in

deliberative rather than responsive processes[1], to challenge the dominant discourse, and to create spaces for alternative ways of understanding or approaching issues that reflect people's lived experiences (Parkins & Davidson, 2008; Janssen, 2009; Roberts, 2004; Scott, 2011).

A strong theme in the literature is education that builds capacity for civic engagement (Lamla, 2008; Sinclair et al., 2008; Schnack, 2008; Schuler, 2010). The 2010 Olympics provides us with insights into the "sidelining" nature of government–citizen participation processes aimed at influencing mega-events (Bairner, 2009; Bourgeois, 2009; Frankish, Kwan, and Van Whynsberghe, 2010). At the same time, civil action demonstrated how such events can become spaces for democratic engagement, in which a range of groups have the opportunity to converge and unite in challenging the rhetoric of governments and corporations involved in mega-events (Boykoff, 2011). Finally, the concept of creating local spaces — by creating culture based on the values of community members, as is being done by First Nations (Hawkes, 1996, Able & Prince, 2006; Nisga'a Lisims Government, 2006) and the rise of a global accumulation of local spaces (Massey, 2005), as depicted by Hawken (2007)—provide hope that spaces can develop from outside government, with citizens leading social change.

Relationship between Government and Capitalism

How and why economic interests and entrenched state powers drive policy within and beyond governments is one of the questions arising from the preceding literature. Karl Polanyi (1957) describes how increased power for nation states was linked to the growth of mercantilism

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[1] Deliberative democracy is one in which the process is deliberation, assuming common interests amongst citizens and thus providing opportunities for discussion, rather than responsive (yes or no responses), assuming conflicting interests.

in the 15th and 16th century and capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries.   Capitalism has been described as an economic system characterized by property rights (Polanyi 1957; Fails and Krieckhaus, 2010; Babie, 2010), waged labour to produce profits for corporations (Polanyi 1957; Marx, 1858; Gibson-Graham, 1996), the requirement of officers of a corporation to serve the interests of the shareholders, defined as increasing their share value (Bakan, 2004), and the treatment of extraction of environmental resources and impact on the environment as externalities, with no recognition that they are a common good and finite (Galbraith, 1996). The result is private corporations protected against domination by the state (Frug, 1980), legally bound to increase profit (Bakan, 2004), exploiting both humans (Davis, 2006) and the environment (Sheehan, 2006) and doing this using their rights as 'persons' (Bakan, 2004). They can do this because the state creates laws, regulations, and trade agreements that provide them with the framework required to function (Polanyi, 1957; Bakan, 2004; Davis, 2006; Fails & Krieckhaus, 2010). Rather than a market free of government intervention the capitalist system is heavily reliant on the state (Polanyi, 1957; Jessop, 2007, 2010a; 2010b). As Jessop argues, by ignoring natural capital processes "even as neoliberal capital and its allies demand decisive state intervention, neoliberalism has undermined the territorial and temporal sovereignty of states and their capacity to resolve these crises" (2010a, p. 43).

In Canada the state holds the tension of supporting a regulatory framework for capitalism while at the same time, providing a social safety net for Canadian citizens. Programs such as Medicare, Income Assistance, Employment Insurance, and Old Age Security were created as economic stabilizers (Cohen, 2009) from the 1930's to the 1960's. During the 1990's a gradual erosion of these programs began and continues to this day (Cohen, 2009; Rice & Prince, 2000).

This erosion, combined with the increased legal power of corporations, has played a substantial role in increasing the gap between the rich and poor (McQuaig, 2010).

There is also literature that points out that both capitalism and statism are not the only form of economy or governance. Polanyi (1957) and Gibson-Graham (1996) describe historical economic systems as well as current day economic activities that are not capitalist-state in design or practice. While acknowledging that capitalism and statism are the current dominant systems their analysis provides an opportunity to see these as movements, and thus the opportunity to imagine space for different ways of governing and trading goods and services (Massey, 2005; Magnusson, 2011).

Local Spaces, Transformation and Agency

Reframing capitalism and state governance as movements, and tying this concept in with the 'local spaces' thread identified earlier, leads me to explore insights into how transformational change occurs within local spaces, and the role of agency in that change. Isin defines being political as "that moment when the naturalness of the dominant virtues is called into question and their arbitrariness revealed" (2002, p. 275). Magnusson (2011) suggests that the context for that questioning is possible when we see like a city (or island community) rather than a state. According to Isin and Magnusson, it is the social relations in local spaces in which we can raise our questions and disagreement with the dominant virtues, and collectively create alternative ways of living and of understanding our relationship with the earth. Magnusson (2011) and Massey (2005) describe how these transformational activities co-exist with other local political authorities, practices of capitalism and governments and their communicated virtues. According to Massey they also exist in relation to people in other local spaces around the globe who believe in different ways of living than the ones we have been sold.

While the term transformation has been used to describe religious experiences and organizational changes, my inquiry focuses on system transformation that responds to the crises of climate change, ecological destruction, and economic malfunction and creates systems that support local, collaborative, low footprint lifestyles, economies and communities. According to M'Gonigle (2003) transformation is about structural change, which reflects Foucault's thinking that transformation is only partial, an adjustment, if it remains within the "same mode of thought" (1982, p. 34). If we think of capitalism or statism as the economy and the government, not as movements, then we miss the opportunity to see the potential for structural change "in and between movements" (Magnusson, 1997, p. 112) because we are operating from the same mode of thought.

I use the word 'space' to depict how transformation occurs. The 'how' is the agency, power and change that occur in social relations within spaces as described by Foucault (1982). Doreen Massey (2005) describes space as a product of interrelations in which identities and, I would add, modes of thinking and being, which we assume are "already, and forever constituted" (Massey, p. 10), are instead relationally constructed and changeable. Massey argues that it is through the social relations in these micro-levels of space that transformation can occur, and different stories can emerge.

Magnusson (2011) and Massey (2005) both describe how the open permeable nature of space creates the possibility for other stories to be told and different trajectories to be imagined. Using the word 'space' provides the opportunity for relevant elements from social movement theories to be in that space: the critique and rejection of a dominant culture and the current structures found in Marxism and counter hegemony (Carroll, 1997; Useem, 1998); reactions against the destruction of local economies due to capitalist forces (prairie protest movement and

the Occupy movement); values and/or conscience rather than deprivation or identity as motivation for change found in resource mobilization (RM) and new social movement theories (NSM) (McCarthy & Zald, 1973; Melucci, 1989, cited by Carroll, 1997); deconstruction of codes and signs of the dominant, and construction of codes for alternative ways of living found in Melucci's version of NSM (Jasper & Poletta, 200; Magnusson & Walker, 1988; Melucci, 1989); and, value dissonance, lifeworld, and everyday social relations as starting points for change, again found in NSM theory (Habermas, 1984; Melucci, 1989).

Agency, the capacity to act in the world and question the dominant virtues, is at the heart of social change movements. Magnusson (2011) has explored the link between agency and being political: "To understand things politically is to focus on what we do, how we think, and interact with one another without assuming either that how we are ruled is the central issue or that how we act is pre-determined by processes that unfold behind our backs. The focus is on human agency and hence on purposive activity" (pp. 41-42). Anna describes herself as someone who would rather dig ditches than pose for pictures, she doesn't own a television set, her primary mode of transportation is her bike, and she is a member of Gabriolans for Local Food Choices, an advocacy group dedicated to seed saving, supporting local farmers, and other strategies to increase local food sovereignty.

> It's not just about eggs; they are like the canary in the mine shaft," she told the Sounder. "We are losing ground in our accessibility to food, as well as our independence and self-sufficiency….Quoting Henry Kissinger she said: "If you control oil you control nations, if you control food you control people," adding "This is about control, not health".
> (Gabriola Sounder, July 23, 2008)

Considered together, Anna's lifestyle choices, and her response to the health inspector are consistent with Magnusson's triad of understanding agency and personal political action. This theory of agency encompasses both creation and resistance (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006) with the starting point a congruent way of being rather than being defined as 'other' engaged with an almost undefeatable and unnameable system.

Community Self-governance

To provide theoretical constructs that illuminate community governance I consider ideas proposed by both Magnusson (2011) and Isin (2002) in relation to community power. Both Magnusson and Isin are critical urban theorists, part of a post 1968 interdisciplinary field of study that "emphasizes the politically and ideologically mediated, socially contested and therefore malleable character of urban space" (Brenner, 2009, p. 198). While those on the Gulf Islands would reject characterization of their communities as urban, the concepts found in Magnusson's and Isin's writings resonate with island living and the transformative spaces initiated within island communities.

Magnusson provides an alternative way of understanding politics—rather than 'seeing like a state' he proposes that we start 'seeing like a city'. He suggests that what we see and experience provides an alternative mode of thinking politically. When we see like a state we see territories and boundaries around those territories, we see hierarchies and we see the person at the top of the hierarchy as sovereign. In the Gulf Islands we see politics as different levels of government—Islands Trust as our local government, the lowest level; then Regional Districts as our regional government; then Province of British Columbia; and, finally Government of Canada as sovereign with veto power held by the Queen of England. The mandates and jurisdictions of these different levels (although described as domains they are perceived as climbing up a

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hierarchy of authority) are found in legal documents. The constitution of Canada lays out the jurisdictional responsibilities of the Government of Canada and the provincial governments. The Government of British Columbia is responsible for the legislation that governs the actions of both Islands Trust and the Regional Districts, including approval of any by-law passed by the Islands Trust. According to provincial legislation the Regional Districts control regional services such as waste and transit and the Islands' Trust is responsible for land use planning.

Magnusson (2011, p. 8) provides five ways in which we see politics from a different perspective when we start 'seeing like a city'. I'll now consider each of these points in an attempt to understand how this approach differs from the state-centric, hierarchical approach of the different levels of government, and how it can inform transformative spaces.

1) "Both particular cities and global cities are self-organizing". Magnusson draws a picture of how each and every individual's pursuits and actions are part of the process of organizing ourselves as humans. "Society has grown or developed as a side-effect of things we have done for other reasons, and it is a much more complex form of order than any we could purposefully create." To that end we don't fit into specific territorial boundaries with our every act being pre-determined by a sovereign authority but rather we are part of a myriad of flows through face-to-face interactions, email communications, bread or shoe purchases at our local store, market or through the internet. One implication for transformative spaces is that they are part of self-organizing governance. A second is that they are situated in spaces in which complementary as well as purposeful actions that may, intentionally or unintentionally, create resistance, are occurring.

I would argue that the term 'particular cities' could be renamed 'particular islands' and the concept still applies, as the underlying premise of self-organization is not based on physical

geography but rather how humans act and interact. Magnusson's inclusion of particular cities (or islands) as well as global cities in this second point makes it possible to imagine how social relations within transformative spaces exist with individuals and groups in self-organized local communities and transcontinental communities, sometimes both at one time. And those social relations do not necessarily include anyone representing one of the different levels of government, although the likelihood of government interactions increases the more locally based the representative is or the more obvious someone is at resisting the mechanisms of government (Anna and the un-inspected eggs comes to mind). Foucault's theories of governmentality are implicated here and I will review those in the following section.

2) "A multiplicity of political authorities in different registers and at different scales is characteristic of urban life". In the context of Gulf Island communities, there are several components to this. What Magnusson refers to as political authorities range from gardening groups to sports groups to the Raging Grannies. He argues that, even though some may not see themselves as political, they are all part of shaping the social norms and beliefs within communities by shaping what is accepted and what is not, and thus are political. 'Different registers' refers to the different types of organizations: charitable, business, social change, and others such as for sports, art, music, etc. Different scale refers both to size as well as distance from home. It is the process of those numerous interactions, according to Magnusson, that create civilized order and public benefits.

(3) "Practices of self-government enable civilized order and produce public benefits both in the presence of sovereign authority and in its absence". What is intriguing about Magnusson's statement is the implication that there could be an absence of sovereign authority in our daily lives. As I attempt to apply this to my everyday life I find it difficult to separate, for

example, the laws that govern private property (created by a sovereign authority) from how they shape the way in which I perceive the world and interact with others. I can imagine elements of civilized order and public benefits without influence from sovereign authorities created side by side, intertwined, with influences and technologies from sovereign authorities. Likewise I can imagine challenging the concept that there are sovereign authorities operating in our world; and, instead acknowledge that there are political authorities with 'discipline' backing them (Foucault, 1991), and we have choices as to whether or not we resist the laws they have created.

   (4) "Order is always temporary and local." Doreen Massey argues that conceptualizing the space in which interrelations occur as open and under construction provides opportunities to understand the space as political; interrelations that are not available when one perceives the space as closed. This echoes Magnusson's description of the open and temporal nature of the political when we see as a city, whether we are considering dominant values or the dominance of particular political authorities within a community.

   Massey suggests that we need to consider space and time together; if you leave a space and return it will have changed. Different people will be there; different conversations are occurring. The political implications found in the social relations within that space are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated. Massey argues that social relations offer the opportunity for alternatives, for new and different negotiations, at the local through to the global. This means we can open up a conversation that is not tied to one historical narrative such as global capitalism, or a dominant virtue (Isin, 2002) such as conspicuous consumption, we are free to discover what kind of interrelations can occur to construct an alternative local, regional or global community.

   (5) "Transformations are non-linear and hence inherently unpredictable." In this final point Magnusson draws from the four preceding points to inform the concept of transformative

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change. If we accept that transformation occurs through social relations in open, temporal spaces in which there is a multiplicity of perspectives, purposes, and stories-so-far, then we understand the unpredictable nature of transformations. If we accept that governance isn't linear or hierarchical, reaching a pinnacle with the head of state, but rather that self-governance is our primary form of governance, occurring within the complexity of multiple scales and registers, we can then understand that transformation doesn't occur through state focused politics but rather through local, messy, multi-purposive spaces. As Magnusson points out,

> This involves a different way of relating to what we study. To imagine ourselves as rulers—which is what the state-centric social sciences encourage us to do—is not appropriate to the task. If anything, we need to be more attentive to the ungovernable and the unpredictable than to the governable and the predictable. Moreover, we have to be aware that the relevant political actors are not necessarily the ones we have in mind. The pattern of transformation will never be exactly what we imagine. (p.11)

In *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship* (2002) Engin Isin provides us with examples that reflect the unpredictability of transformation as described by Magnusson, and the shifting, temporal dynamics of groups and individuals within a community. His description of the solidaristic, agonistic and alienating strategies and technologies used by groups and individuals provides insight into how transformative spaces shift, change and interact with others within communities.

Isin (2002) describes groups as multiplicities, proposing that neither an individualist nor a collectivist view of groups adequately explains group formation (p. 23). The description of Anna Bauer's affiliations with a range of groups comes into play in describing the multiplicities within any group. Each individual is not only part of one group but is also attached to a range of others,

both formal and informal. However each collective has its own strategies for establishing superiority and/or differentiating itself from other groups in efforts to increase their dominance or recognition.

Strategies used to increase the solidarity of a group are premised on establishing superiority. In ancient Greece, aristocrats justified their status by placing importance on their high birth and ancestry, often claiming heroes or gods as their ancestors (Isin, p. 73). In Christian times the Pauline Christian Group established itself as a superior brotherhood with baptism a required ritual for members of the group (p. 118). More recently professions and disciplines founded associations to establish their superiority in relation to other workers (p. 237).

Isin uses the term agonistic to describe the strategies used by groups to differentiate themselves from others. He describes how Pauline Christian Groups "establish[ed] their superiority by virtue of their privileged relationship to God and stigmatized other groups for being estranged from God" (p. 118). The professions of today's world, through both their associations and legislation have ensured that the accreditation required to practice has been tightened and that education to establish those credentials occurs in academic institutions rather than through an apprenticeship.

Isin uses the category 'alienation' as his third form of differentiation and attempts to establish dominance between groups. Implicit in the term, these are strategies aimed at exclusion; Pauline Christian groups using excommunication as punishment is an example. According to Schattschneider (1960) in efforts to ensure one group's opinion becomes dominant, one strategy is to increase the strength and size of the group by couching a particular issue in terms of a broader scope of 'we' and 'them'. On the Gulf Islands the use of the term 'rural' is

used in contrast to 'city' in order to ensure that sidewalks, street lights, and swimming pools, do not destroy the island way of life, and in the process define those who aren't 'true' islanders.

Isin suggests that solidaristic, agonistic and alienating strategies apply to the dynamics within groups as well as between groups. He describes how the flow between groups and the struggles for dominance within groups are based on different forms of capital. He draws on Bourdieu's (1979) concept of capital to describe how groups differentiate from each other as well as how individuals within groups become dominant. The categories of capital Isin describes that influence power within and between groups are martial, economic, cultural, social and symbolic (2002, p. 36). While categories may be too rigid an approach to adequately describe the shifts and changes of credibility, dominance and power, the concept of different forms of capital and their influence in shaping change provides insight into community dynamics.

The movement of people in, out, and between groups, the changing of groups and composition of groups over time, and the social relations occurring in the various shifts, are where transformative change starts to happen (Foucault, 1982; Magnusson, 2003; Massey, 2005). Isin takes us through an historical account of shifting perceptions of citizenship from a Euro-centric context. We not only see that identities are not forever constituted (Massey, 2005), we also see that dominant virtues, lifestyles, group thinking are also temporary and open to change. The preceding strategies, drawn from Isin's account, provide a brief overview of how different visions of individuals within a community may interact—clashing, consolidating, collaborating, and forever changing.

A critical element in the conversation about community self-governance is the nature of the place. Noel Castree (2004) criticises the emphasis on "relational perspectives on place" (p. 133) proposed by Massey and others. He argues for a more inclusive analysis, recognizing the

value of defending place, in particular when "the translocal [is]… strategically harnessed for purely local needs "(Castree, p. 163), such as increased local control over physical, cultural and informational resources. I am curious how the perception of transformation occurring in a 'place' or 'space' influences those desiring transformation, and how place plays a role in community self-governance.

According to Pickerill and Chatterton (2006) transformative spaces contain both creative alternatives to current systems together with resistance to technologies contrary to the lived experience and knowledge of those who have that urge to transform. There is a multiplicity of voices, stories-so-far and future trajectories of individuals, groups and societies in these spaces (Massey, 2005). Those within the spaces interact on a daily basis with the self-governance and chaos within their communities as well as the many local spaces that create globalization throughout the world (Magnusson, 2011).

These local shifts, changes and interactions relate to extra-local interactions. Non-local activism, government technologies, discourses, products, and decisions all influence local spaces. Do they follow similar patterns to those described by Isin? Is globalization the global city referred to by Magnusson?

Extra-local Influences

Transformative spaces are not only situated within a community context they are also influenced by extra local governments as well as individuals and groups in spaces located around the globe. Theories of governmentality and social network provide context for how extra-local influences are experienced in everyday lives.

Based on Foucault's theories of governmentality, Rose (2000) describes how government and capitalist technologies of control, aimed at guiding a population's conduct in order to

achieve certain ends, are experienced in the social relations of everyday life. The regulation requiring farm eggs to be officially inspected before they can be sold in a public space is considered a technology of control, as is any directive, document, law, or communication aimed at manipulating the population to behave in certain ways (Rose 2000; Cruikshank, 1999). As Anna demonstrated, those desiring transformation have the option of challenging the perceived sovereignty of government by resisting if the technology is inconsistent with their beliefs and knowledge (Foucault et al., 1991). And while it may be seen as non-compliance to that government regulation the act of challenging the regulation opens the door for an alternative rationale or reality to become part of the discourse.

Transformative spaces are also contained within a global context. When we speak of globalization we talk about it as an all-encompassing oppression. Global capitalism or other forms of globalization are treated as if they came from elsewhere, not from local spaces. Massey (2005) provides us with an opportunity to rethink global, to see where and how it is located in our daily interactions and acknowledge the local relations in other parts of the world that construct our purchases of everything from olive oil from Italy to shoes made in China. She describes how every decision related to a global or transcontinental exchange is carried out in local places and "urge[s] a politics which takes account of, and addresses, the local production of the neoliberal capitalist global" (p. 101). Rather than glorifying the local and demonizing the global we understand that what is "at issue is the *content*, not the spatial form, of the *relations through which* space is constructed" (p. 101). She argues that it is only when we begin to understand that global is created in the local, can we understand that there is, in that space, an opportunity to change the way in which the global is configured.

In addition to global networks linking capitalist enterprises there are also networks across the globe that connect people and institutions sharing information, knowledge, and lessons learned, aimed at social justice and harmony with the environment (Schuler, 2010). These influences create a convergence of transformative spaces (Boykoff, 2011) - not hierarchical but rather an accumulation of localisms. Social network theory provides insight into the world wide accumulation of localisms through the concepts of symbiotic nodes in which transformation occurs (van Loon, 2006), links sharing information and knowledge (Schuler, 2010), and an open and fluid mesh of links and nodes (van Loon, 2006; Hawken, 2007). How is social network theory applicable to local stories of transformation in the Salish Sea Islands? Anna's knowledge regarding the relationship between local production of food and global food systems was gained through a network in which a sharing of knowledge, ideas, and a discourse different from the dominant discourse of capitalism and state was the focus (Schuler, 2010). Her knowledge and the social capital of local food groups were transformed into agency in her interaction with the health inspector. The symbiotic node created by that transformative space linked into news media, which shared Anna's perspective of global food systems with their audiences.

Summary and Research Objective

This discussion provides a conceptual framework for understanding transformative spaces and the influences flowing in, out and between those spaces. What is clear from this literature is that transformation occurs in our local social relations as people realize they are no longer willing to live with the status quo and transformation becomes urgent, often triggered by some event or response. As they call into question the dominant culture, their local community, extra-local organizations and both dominant and alternative local spaces around the world influence the transformative space they create.

My exploration of concepts, information and analysis to illuminate the problematic outlined in the Introduction, indicates a need for further research into the everyday lives of those creating and resisting based on their values and their urge to transform. Reflecting back to the problematic, I am curious about what role local governments, in particular the Islands Trust with its unique Object, play in transformative spaces. What I also found missing from the literature was the experience of individuals in everyday Canadian life attempting to create transformative change through social relations in local spaces, interacting with the multi-scalar, multi-register political authorities described by Magnusson. My research objective arises from the problematic, literature review, and conceptual framework.

Research Objective

To better understand the 'how' of transformative spaces and transformative change in everyday lives – personal transformation, the influence of governments, corporations and community power struggles and the extent to which networks, discourse and individual agency play a role.

Chapter Three: Methodology

We begin from where we are. The ethnographic process of inquiry is one of exploring

further into those social, political, and economic processes that organize and determine

the actual bases of experience (Smith, 1987, p. 177)

I use an ethnographic methodology, together with case study strategies, to respond to the

research objective and conceptual framework. In this chapter I describe the data collection

methods and then the specifics of how they were implemented for the different components of

this research –1) understanding transformative spaces, 2) understanding community governance

in relation to transformative spaces, 3) determining how extra-local technologies of control are

experienced by those in transformative spaces, and 4) identifying the relationship between Gulf

Island transformative spaces and transformative spaces in other parts of the world. I then

describe the methods used to analyse the data and discuss some of the challenges and as well as

advantages of the approach used.

Ethnographic Case Study and Data Collection Methods

An ethnographic methodology was chosen for several reasons. As stated in the

introductory quote, ethnographic research provides an opportunity for the researcher to start

where people are – their words, actions and interactions - in order to understand cultural

phenomena in their everyday life. The research question is exploratory and focused on people's

experience of transformative spaces, rather than on testing a predetermined hypothesis. The

research approach reflects the multiple realities that are part of any story, rather than an absolute

truth. Case study strategies are used in recognition that this is a theory generating study rather

than a theory testing study. The advantages of a case study approach for responding to the

research objective are described by Yin (1992, p. 353) as "its ability to cover a topic holistically

and to get "close" to the matter being studied. Case studies permit an investigation to examine complex social phenomena, to gain a richness of detail, to focus on concrete events, and to cover events as they occur in the field." This inquiry is both a case study of transformative change in a particular geographic area - the Salish Sea, as well as numerous case studies – the stories – that were initiated within that geographic area.

My research methodology followed the basic principles of social science research by drawing on multiple lines of evidence. There were different kinds of data collected, and each was collected and analyzed using the most relevant analysis method. I followed an iterative approach, with each step building on the preceding step according to information needed and acquired. In this section I describe the methods used as well as the specific process for each of the four components.

Data collection methods. I employed several methods of gathering data for this research: participant observation, interviews based on a narrative/reflexive approach, and documentary data collection. Corresponding to the research question and to the interpretative methodology, the data gathering and analysis were generative rather than aimed at verifying a particular hypothesis. My aim was to create an empowering process for those engaged in this research; with opportunity at any time for participants to decide whether or not they wanted to stay involved or disengage.

Narrative Conversations. I used narrative conversations to capture the stories-so-far within the transformative spaces I explored. I heard stories from the storytellers' perspectives, opening up the conversation to allow the narrator to determine the time frame appropriate for their telling of the story and to use photos if that would support them in telling their story. I used the concept of chronotopes (Lawson, 2008) – time-space envelopes – to provide the opportunity

for a range of voices to be heard and braided together as a multiple-reality story. My role as the researcher in the conversation was reflexive. I responded to the stories with questions regarding the meanings in the story: "These meanings are 'local', in the sense that they refer to 'the language, the meaning, and the understanding developed between persons in dialogue, rather than broadly held cultural sensibilities" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992, p. 8). To capture the depth of the story as it relates to community governance and extra-local influences I searched for particular elements in each of the stories. Appendix C is a guide outlining the various elements I listened for and questioned in the course of the conversations. I received written consent from each of the narrative conversation participants for the use of their narrative conversation comments in my research. On the consent form I indicated that I would ensure anonymity unless otherwise indicated. Many of the participants indicated that I could use their real name in the dissertation. As a result most of the names in the following pages are real, one participant indicated a preference for a pseudonym (*pseudonyms are noted with an asterisk).

Participant Observation. Participant observation is the systematic seeing, hearing and recording of interactions, discourse and behaviours relevant to the research. In my interactions with others I actively engaged in watching and listening for both transformative beliefs and discourse as well as lifestyles and modes of thinking that reflect the dominant way of understanding our world. I looked for a questioning of the dominant virtues (Isin, 2002) and noted the nature of the setting, what people were saying, what they were doing, what interactions were taking place and other dynamics that were occurring. I participated and observed the Velo-village conference, the Island Connections trip, the heat pump social enterprise, the Gabriola Commons, a non-violent protest workshop, the Ban the Tanker protests, and the Gabriola Film

Festival and numerous informal island events. No names were included in the analysis for those observed through the participant observation process.

Documentary Data Collection. The collection of documentary data – websites, organizational documents, and newspaper articles – was carried out in response to the data collected through the narrative conversations and participant observation methods. The documents I reviewed included:

- Documents/websites of the participant or participant's organization;

- Newspapers and documents/websites from community organizations;

- Documents/websites that provide information about a technology of control; and,

- Documents/websites that provide information about extra-local influences.

Data collection process for component one: Transformative spaces. My first step was to identify people engaged in transformative change. When I heard different modes of thinking aimed at structural transformation (Foucault, 1982; M'Gonigle, 2003), when I heard questioning of the dominant virtues (Isin, 2002), when I heard possibilities of different trajectories and recognition of different stories so far (Massey, 2005), when I saw evidence of creative and resistance agency (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006), and when I saw efforts in everyday life aimed at systems that restore harmony with nature and among humans – these were the starting points for the spaces I studied. I learned about transformative spaces through stories, photos, observations and in-depth conversations with people involved in transformative agency. I used Magnusson's (2011) triad of what people say, what they do and how they interact with others', to understand their political actions.

Invitation to participate. I talked to thirty people on six of the islands in the first stage of the research (an additional 10 in the latter stage). They were invited to participate through several

different processes. The primary purpose, whether a group process, individual conversation, or written submission was to hear each person's story about transformative change from their perspective and within a mode of telling that felt comfortable, safe, and interesting to them. I contacted thirteen people directly and asked if they would be willing to participate. Several of those I contacted sent information about my research to others on their island and let them know I was looking for people to interview. Ten of the participants contacted me through this route. I provided information about my research to the editor of the Island Tides Newspaper, a Gulf Islands regional newspaper, and asked her if she could identify people, living on the islands, who were involved in transformative spaces. She sent the research information (see Appendix A) and my contact information to a range of people on the Salish Sea Islands and seven people contacted me, interested in participating.

I phoned and then sent an email invitation to the first eight people, asking them to participate in a conversation (see Appendix B for invitation) about their experience of transformative change, focusing on creative acts, resistance and values demonstrated in their everyday life. I invited them to bring photo(s) to use as the starting point for telling their story to help explain their story. Five of the eight participated in the group sessions and of those three brought photos or pictures. Two wanted to be interviewed separately and one decided to mail her story and photos in to me. Neither of the two who were interviewed separately provided photos.

I received several questions and comments from those initial eight participants. Several indicated that they were having a hard time distinguishing between creative and resistant acts, finding that their creative acts were also acts of resistance. A few participants indicated that picking a photo was helpful in telling their story while others felt that it was more of a side activity and not that relevant to telling their story and one person felt that it was contrived. As a

result of these comments I changed the information that went out to potential participants, leaving the option open for photo or no photo based on the individual's preferred approach. And, rather than specifying creative or resistant acts I used the following description: "I'm looking for ways in which people initiated or took part in a shift away from our current economic system, food system, education system, governance system, or any other system that they feel operates contrary to their values….and towards systems that are based on co-operation, resilience, ecological harmony and social justice." I also left it open for them to decide whether they wanted to participate in a group conversation or an individual one.

Hearing the stories. There were thirteen people involved in the group conversations, ten in face-to-face interviews, four interviewed over the phone, and three who sent in a written story. Each individual signed a participant consent form (see Appendix C). The individual interviews lasted approximately one hour. The script and questions for the narrative conversations are included as Appendix D. In the group conversations people took between fifteen minutes to half an hour to tell their story. The questions for the group conversations followed the same pattern as those in the individual interviews with an additional component; after each story the others were asked what resonated for them about that story. The discussion regarding resonance added approximately fifteen minutes to each story. I recorded all stories via typewritten notes and a recorder. I then transcribed the conversations verbatim using both the notes and recorded version.

The Storytellers. The age of the storytellers reflects the demographics of the islands; ranging from mid-twenties to eighty-five, twenty-one of those participating were in the fifty-five and older range. There were more women than men – 17 women to 13 men. Storytellers came from the following islands: Gabriola (8), Salt Spring (6), Pender (6), Mayne (5), Hornby (1),

Galiano (3), Lasqueti (1). The three different processes each included a range of ages and length

of time that people had lived on the islands and were interviewed March to June, 2012.

Length of time on Gulf Islands	# of participants	Participation Process			Females/ Males	Age range			
		group	ind.	Writing		25-35	35-55	55-65	65-85
Under 10 yrs	6	3	3	0	4 / 2	3	0	3	0
10 to 19 yrs	7	4	2	1	2 / 5	1	2	2	2
20 to 30 yrs	8	1	6	1	5 / 3	1	1	2	4
30 yrs – 35 yrs	5	3	2	0	3 / 2	0	1	2	2
35 yrs or more	4	2	1	1	3 / 1	0	0	0	4
Totals	30	13	14	3	17 / 13	5	4	9	12

The direction of each conversation, whether group or individual, was unique and

dependent upon the people and the stories that were part of the conversation. The focus of the

conversations was on understanding transformative spaces and the urge to transform as well as

different modes of thinking and being, and the extent to which daily lives reflected values

different from dominant values. Storytellers introduced specific examples of moments and

actions that, for them, represented their transformation and/or their desire to create

transformative systems. The range of story topics included personal transformative stories, food,

transportation, monetary systems, ecology, community places and spaces, cooperatives, shelter,

consumption, education and media.

Data collection process for component two: Community self-governance. The second

component of my research focuses on community self-governance in the Gulf Islands in relation

to transformative spaces. I mapped the registers and scales of political authorities (see page 12)

(Magnusson, 2011) that influenced the storytellers. I looked for whether or not community

members created opportunities for transformative discourse as well as indications of solidaristic,

agonistic or alienating strategies (Isin, 2002) to reduce opportunities for such discourse. I also looked for indications of involvement of the Islands Trust in the storytellers' narratives.

The data for this second component were drawn from relevant stories and comments that were witnessed in the narrative conversations and participant observation from the first component. I looked for specific strategies and techniques used by community members and groups within the community to determine barriers as well as support for the transformative actions within the thirty stories. When there was evidence of strong resistance or support I contacted the persons responsible in order to gather their story and thus braid it into the stories told by the advocates of a particular initiative. I looked for indications that the Islands Trust trustees or employees were engaged in any way, supportive or resistant, in relation to the initiatives in question. I carried out narrative conversations with a further ten people. I looked for their 'purpose' in either supporting or resisting the hoped for transformation and their identification with specific groups in the community. Two of the additional participants are/were from Islands Trust – the current Chair and a planner who had left Islands Trust over ten years previously. I included 2010 transcripts from conversations I had held with the CAO of Islands Trust and two Government of British Columbia officials, who were involved in legislative changes to the *Islands Trust Act*, and one had also been an Islands Trust planner. The latter two interviewees were informed that their comments would be included as research data and their quotes have been referenced as 'personal communication' within this document. The demographics of the additional ten people I interviewed for this component are as follows:

Length of time on Gulf Islands	# of participants	Age range			
		25-35	35-55	55-65	65-85
Not an island resident	4	0	1	3	0
0-10 yrs	1	0	1	0	0
10-19 yrs	1	0	0	1	0
20-30 yrs	2	0	1	0	1
30 yrs or more	2	0	0	1	1
Totals	10	0	3	5	2

Data collection process for: Technologies of control and transformative spaces.

The third component of my research involved exploring technologies of control (Foucault et al., 1991; Rose, 2000) in relation to transformative agency. Data collection for this component included statements made in the narrative conversations or through participant observation that indicated the presence of a technology of control – any directive, document, law, or communication aimed at manipulating the population to behave in certain ways, that related to the transformative spaces, either as impediments, or as opportunities for agency.

The statements provided a starting point for collecting the documentary data related to that particular technology of control. The documents collected included the specific directive or control mechanism as outlined in regulations or relevant organizational documents or websites, the rationale behind the technology of control, the source organizations that provided the rationale and any documents available regarding the purpose and composition. In addition I carried out a search for any media reporting on the issue or the technology of control itself.

Data collection process for: Extra local influences on transformative spaces.

The final component of my research focused on the link between local transformative spaces and global influences. I mapped out both the register and scale (Magnusson, 2011) of extra local interactions, through in-depth narrative conversations with those identified in the first and second

components. I then probed for sources of information that influenced research participants and a description of the type of influence on the research participant. I asked research participants to share specific influences on system or lifestyle change that they experienced and describe the impact. The influence could be novels, non-fiction books, films, documentaries, speakers, internet sites, news from other communities, community conversations, or any other influence that comes to mind. I looked for influences received as well as interactions between the source of influence and the research participant. I used the concepts of symbiotic nodes and sharing of knowledge, ideas and actions to understand the social network of transformative spaces (van Loon, 2006).

Data Analysis

In keeping with an ethnographic approach the process of analyzing the data was iterative and grounded in the narrative conversations and observations, as I moved from coding at a micro level – specific actions, words and behaviours on the ground – to themes at a cultural phenomena macro level (Fife, 2005). The analysis was carried out in two phases. Analysis in the first phase was carried out on the data collected for the first component – Transformative Spaces – as described above. The second phase of analysis was based on the subsequent data collected for the second, third and fourth components.

Phase one analysis. The first step in analyzing the initial transcribed stories was to carry out preliminary coding of the data based on what I initially heard and saw as the themes. The preliminary coding included the following: Transformative Spaces, Community Governance, Governmentality, Islands Trust, Place and Space, and Networks. Within each of these themes were numerous concepts, and the concepts were linked to other concepts in the same theme as well as to other themes. The process of coding all thirty stories in detail resulted

in shifts in these themes. The various concepts within each theme were analysed further, identifying common patterns as well as outliers within each concept. Different strategies were used to code, categorize, identify relationships and pose theoretical concepts including axial coding, clustering, and memoing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Two research assistants read through the interviews and also identified common themes. Both had read the conceptual framework. A re-sorting of broad categories as well as specific points under each of those categories occurred based on both the analysis and the themes identified by the research assistants. The themes were as follows, as is evident some are about processes and some about sites of transformation: Personal transformation, everyday living, creating alternative systems, community, saying no to decisions from governments and corporations, local government, networks, place.

The process of writing and rewriting was used for the secondary analysis, in order to understand the patterns (Fife, 2005) within each, and between each, concept and theme. The process starting with the concepts, flowing up to the themes, then back down to the concepts. This iterative process occurred several times with each theme, until no new linkages were evident with the data collected and coded up to that point.

I started this process with the chapter on Personal Transformation as many of the storytellers described that as the starting point for their story. For each chapter, I told the story(s), using the words of the storytellers, then analysed their words to determine how their experience of transformative change, or everyday life, or interactions with others, informed the research question. Each chapter was written, and then re-written several times, as patterns began taking shape through the words of the storytellers.

Discourse analysis was one of the methods used to analyse the data. I noted the discourse used in the narrative conversations, blogs created within Gulf Island communities and other

discourse I experienced on the Gulf Islands over the course of the research. I used Foucault's concept of discourse – analyzing both the words used as well as the "way language works to organize fields of knowledge and practice" (Seale, 2004, p. 374).   I reviewed the discourse used in the mainstream media to describe economic, food and energy systems, in relation to that used by those research participants proposing alternatives to the mainstream. I looked for the creation of new words, or new meanings to old words, to understand the transformation desired and taking place.

I also used documentary analysis, basing it on Dorothy Smith's concept of documentary reality when undertaking documentary analysis of text used in the various stories:

> [T]extual reality construction actively re-presses the lived world. A literal reading of such a text pinions the reader to its version…When we finally encounter the texts it is the power of the textually constructed over the situated reality that the analysis displays… (1985, p. 58)…the study of documentary or textually mediated social relations…the intention is to bring into view a very significant dimension of those practices structuring the daily relations that organize and exercise power in contemporary advanced capitalist society. (1984, p. 73)

Analysis of text starts with tracing the text back to source and then reviewing the characteristics of the source to determine its objectives, composition and the explicit or implicit purpose of the text in question. I identified what was in the text as well as what was left out – what aspect of people's stories was made invisible.

Phase two analyses. This secondary analysis process produced questions as well as patterns. I reached a point, after writing the chapter on community, where it was imperative that I have conversations with others that had been involved in the stories, as well as representatives

from Islands Trust, plus add further documentary data in order to ensure stories were told from the various perspectives (see data collection process for components two through four above).

These additional data were then coded using the concepts and themes developed in Phase one and new concepts were incorporated into the various chapters that had been written to date, as well as data that validated what had been written and identification of outliers to the initial analysis. I then proceeded with writing and rewriting the subsequent chapters, finding patterns within and between the concepts and themes. The phase two analysis resulted in a reconfiguring of the various chapters – adding a chapter on the historical and geographical context (Chapter Four), and Interlude on Place and Space. Feedback from readers resulted in an additional interlude as a transition between context and the stories.

I used the documentary analysis method, described previously, for analysing the data for Chapter 10, the chapter on governments and corporations. I traced the source of the technologies back to the local spaces in which they were created and analyzed how those in the transformative space responded to these technologies based on their perceptions and the documentary trail (Smith, 1984; 1987). I traced each of the technologies of control that produced a response back to its source. I then analyzed the stated purpose and mandate, of the organizational source of the technology, as well as the objective of the technology in question.

The conclusions, in the chapters as well as in the summary, are based on my interpretation of the analyzed data and the literature, part of the conversation described by Fife (2005, p. 139):

> Ethnography can be thought of as a simultaneous conversation between the ethnographer and at the very least two other groups of people. One group is made up of the people with whom we conduct our research. The other group includes the relevant scholars (such as

researchers in anthropology, education, sociology, history, folklore, and so forth) and policy makers (such as government bureaucrats, community leaders, etc.) to whom we communicate our results.

According to Fife (2005), every time a link is identified between one concept and another then theory is being created, and others may have already identified that conceptual link. If that's the case then it further validates that particular theory. My approach when discovering a potential link was to identify that link, and, if applicable, relate it to theoretical constructs that had been suggested previously. The conclusions were thus created from these links.

The overall objective of the analysis was to identify patterns and conceptual links in the stories, recognizing that these were specific to the stories told by the participants, then to consider whether or not the patterns of concepts and themes of transformative change found in those stories might be witnessed elsewhere, in the Gulf Islands and beyond.

Rigour

Research Ethics approval for this inquiry was received February 24, 2012 (Protocol 12-072) for a period of one year. The following principles of qualitative research practice, derived from Sharts-Hopko (2002), Chiovitti and Piran (2003), Guba and Lincoln (2002), and Oliver (2011) have been incorporated into the research process.

1. The research design is connected to a theoretical framework that justifies the approach;

2. The research process is well articulated and sufficiently detailed, such that readers can assess for themselves the study's credibility;

3. How and why participants in the study have been selected is outlined. The implementation, including numbers and actual process(es) used is described in the dissertation;

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4. The participants have guided the inquiry, using processes such as story-telling through narrative conversations;

5. The participants' actual words are used in the analysis;

6. An audit trail is kept that provides a "detailed chronology of research activities and processes; influences on the data collection and analysis; emerging themes, categories, or models; and analytic memos" (Morrow, 2005, para. 12).

7. Sufficient evidence is presented to support relationships between the theoretical framework, interpretations, and conclusions; and

8. The researcher's personal views and insights about the phenomenon explored are articulated (see 'My Role as Researcher' section in Chapter 1).

These points provide the basis for how I conducted this study. In response to point #1 the conceptual framework provides the theoretical context for the research objective, and the ethnographic case study approach – focused on an inductive, exploratory inquiry into everyday lives – responds to that objective. While I believe I have carried out points two through seven, it is up to individual readers to determine if I have carried out these actions in a way that allows them to see the logical flow from the data to the conclusions.

A limitation in any inquiry –whether qualitative or quantitative, positivist or post-positivist – is the influence of researcher bias on participant selection, identification of the preliminary coding themes, choice of quotes and stories, and interpretation of the data. Guba and Lincoln (2000) identified four criteria for trustworthiness in post-positivist research to respond to rigour in qualitative research. Credibility is described in #2 above and dependability is described in #6. A third, confirmability, is aimed at addressing researcher bias and is based on the perspective that the integrity of the conclusions lies in the data and that the researcher must tie

together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (Morrow, 2005).

I personally identified the initial eight people interviewed and there were many others that I could have chosen. My reasons were purposive aimed at maximum variation (Patton, 1990) – attempting to ensure an age spread and a spread in length of residency on the islands. However, another researcher may have chosen different parameters or different participants corresponding to the same parameters. Those that were selected by others or self-selected were also chosen based on parameters and rationale of those selecting. To counter the potential bias there were five different people that identified participants for the study. I used a snowball sampling approach (Patton, 1990), asking well-situated people to identify potential participants for the study. The request for participants and information is transparent and found in the appendices, as mentioned previously, again reducing the potential of researcher bias.

The identification of the preliminary coding themes was, again, an area that researcher bias was possible. The influence from the conceptual framework is evident in the preliminary themes identified. To counter that bias I carried out an in-depth reassessment of those themes plus incorporated the assessments made by two research assistants. Both of these actions produced changes to the list of concepts and themes.

The interpretation of the data, including what quotes and stories would be included in each chapter was also reliant on researcher discretion and therefore potential bias. The individuals quoted and the choice of stories referenced is based on the initial analysis of the themes as well as the secondary analysis arrived at through the writing process. Many of the storytellers focused on particular facets of their story or their stories leant themselves to particular aspects of transformative change, such as lifestyle shift or interactions with

government. Each storyteller's approach to telling his or her story thus determined where it would be located within this dissertation. Several storytellers are featured in numerous chapters, primarily because they provided an in-depth response to the various facets of transformative change or because their example provided a clear representation of certain findings.

Creating conclusions from the data is another area where researcher bias could potentially be present. To counteract that concern I have provided data, in the form of quotes and text, to support those arguments or theories, thus making it possible for readers to follow the logic of the arguments. Where relevant I have included reflections on similar theories found in the literature.

This leads to the final limitation of this type of study. This is not an empirical study that can be generalized to a specific population. Rather, the purpose is to explore the everyday lives of selected individuals who are involved in transformative change and discover patterns as well as outliers in their words, actions and interactions. Out of that process the intent is to identify patterns and theories, which may have been previously identified, and, if possible to create new theoretical constructs that can be considered and restudied using different methods and methodologies to test their validity. This approach is consistent with the fourth criteria identified by Guba and Lincoln (2000) - transferability. It is also hoped that the information in this study can be used by those outside the academic arena, and that the conclusions will resonate with them, or at least make them think about the 'how' of transformative change in their own life and community.

Data and Methodology Table

The following table provides an outline of the how the methods, data, and analysis of data, link to the four components.

COMPONENT	DATA SOURCE	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	DATA ANALYSIS
One: Understanding Transformative Spaces	• Residents of Gulf Islands participating in narrative conversations • Photos • Activities and conversations related to transformative space • Documents (of the individual or collective).	• Narrative conversations (40) • Collection of relevant documentation • Participant observation	• Relating what is contained in stories to conceptual framework • Discourse analysis • Documentary analysis • Identifying further people to interview
Two: Community self-governance and transformative spaces	Above sources plus: • Gulf Island residents who play a supportive or obstructive role in one of the stories. • Documents showing interactions between rest of community and transformative spaces	• Narrative conversations (40) – includes 4 Islands Trust representatives • Document, newspaper and web-based search • Participant observation	• Identifying other voices in the story, • Analysis of stories using Magnusson's description of 'seeing like a city'. • Analysis of stories using Isin's solidaristic, agonistic and alienation strategies. • Analysis of Islands Trust role in story • Discourse analysis • Documentary analysis

COMPONENT	DATA SOURCE	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	DATA ANALYSIS
Technologies of control and transformative spaces	- Sources from component one plus: - Documents from extra-local sources that are identified in participants stories.	- Narrative conversations (40) - Document, newspaper and web-based search - Participant observation	- Identifying technologies of control - Analyzing response of narrator - Discourse analysis - Documentary analysis - Analyzing the source of the technology and purpose for imposing
Extra Local Influences	- Sources from component one - Documents indicating relationship between those in transformative space stories and an extra local influence.	- Narrative Conversations (40) - Document, newspaper and web-based search - Participant observation	- Identifying extra-local sources of influence - Analyzing response of narrator - Using the concepts of symbiotic node, links and mesh to analyze the social network of a transformative space - Discourse and documentary analysis

Chapter Four: Constant Change in the Salish Sea

Change has been occurring in the Salish Sea area for billions of years. This chapter

provides a backdrop to the stories of transformative change told in the following chapters, with

acknowledgement that there are various forms of change operating on different timelines than the

transformative change I focus on for this research. I will describe the history of Wrangellia and

other geological changes that created the present day islands within the Salish Sea. I will touch

on the history and culture of the first people who lived on these islands, the colonial take over,

and the first European settlers. I will then move into the 20th century and describe the change

from resource and agricultural based activities through to the back-to-landers of the 1960's and

1970's, the developers, the creation of the Islands Trust, and the current influx of retirees. Of

necessity this history is brief; however, it provides a sense of the place currently known as the

Gulf Islands.

200 Million Years Ago to 10,000 Years Ago

> I live in a place that has never joined the North American Plate. Around 130 million years
>
> ago, a large chunk of land called Wrangellia crashed into North America after its long
>
> wander from the South Pacific. A shallow sea flooded between the continent and
>
> Wrangellia, and I live on an island in the middle, between Vancouver Island and the
>
> British Columbia coast, protected from the buffeting of the Pacific and the tyranny of the
>
> continental winter. (Penn, 2000, p. 130)

Geological history is told in terms of millions of years (m.y.). The oldest rocks in the

world are over 4 billion years and are located on the Eastern shore of Canada's Hudson Bay.

British Columbia is relatively new in comparison. Around 200 m.y. ago the coastline was

hundreds of kilometres inland (see figure 1). The Islands of the Intermontane Terrane (including

the Cache Creek, Quesnel & Stikine Terranes) collided into the continent, stretching the size of what is known today as British Columbia. Subsequent drifts of the Insular Terrain added still more land. One of the larger land masses of the Insular Terrain was Wrangellia, which formed the basis for today's Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii and the Gulf Islands.

Figure 1: ~100 m.y. ago Insular Terrain
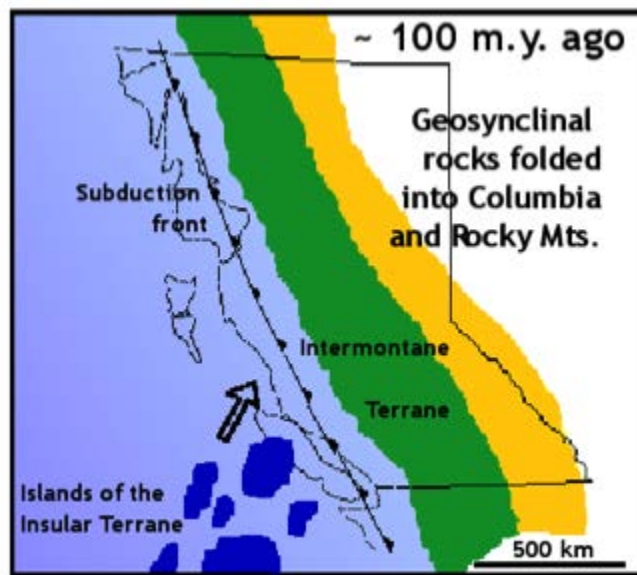
Source: Dr. Steve Earle, University of Vancouver Island

What is not illustrated in Figure 1 is the deposit of the Nanaimo Group of Rocks from the mainland on to the Wrangellia Terrane, 95 to 65 m.y. ago. The alternating layers of conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone form the geological composition of the current Gulf Islands. During the last 65 m.y. there has been both subduction (one tectonic plate moving under another tectonic plate) as well as upward thrusting of slices of crust, creating the westward cliffs featured throughout the Gulf Islands (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Compressional Thrusting of Nanaimo Grop strat onto and adjacent to Vancouver Island.
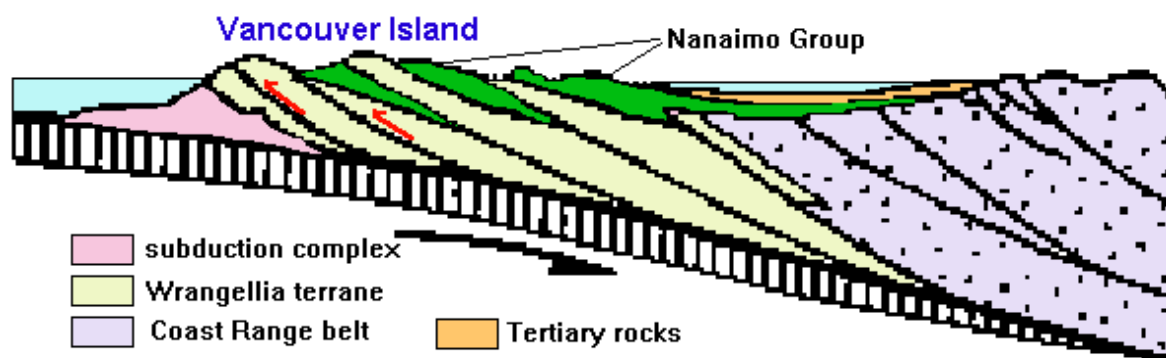
Source: Dr. Steven Earle, Vancouver Island University

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The last ice age occurred between 10,000 to 110,000 years ago and it also had a role to play in creating the Gulf Islands and the Salish Sea. Nick Doe (2012) describes how "The waters that we now call the Salish Sea are drowned valleys that have been scraped out by glaciers in the geologically-recent past."(p. 1). The North South direction of the glacial flow created long strips of islands, situated between the North American Mainland and Vancouver Island. The very existence of the Gulf Islands as islands, and of the points and inlets and cliffs and valleys within them is a product of differential glacial erosion of the alternating hard (sandstone) and soft (mudstone) rocks of the Nanaimo Gp.

Geological changes created the islands that are home to the storytellers in the subsequent chapters. The extent to which the islands were created out of pieces of land that travelled, some from across the ocean (Wrangellia), and others from the continent (Nanaimo Group) is mirrored in the range of voices and stories that currently live on the islands. There is symbolism in the separation from both the mainland and the larger Vancouver Island, and a question regarding whether the water that surrounds islanders has an impact on their desire or capacity to live differently than those living off-island. The time period in which these geological changes happened and continue to happen, provide a different way of understanding change, for those with the urge to transform who feel that change is not happening fast enough.

First Nations

> For thousands of years First Nations carefully managed the abundance of natural resources in the sea and on the land by relying on our knowledge of seasonal cycles to harvest a wide variety of resources without harming or depleting them. Many believed the abundance of natural resources on BC's coast would last forever. They were wrong. (Coastal First Nations, 2010, p. 1)

The first inhabitants on the Gulf Islands were members of over 20 First Nations[2], who lived, hunted, gathered, and fished on the islands and waters of the Salish Sea. For thousands of years[3] First Nation peoples had access to an abundance of food, managing the natural resources found in the land and waters of Vancouver Island and adjoining islands, without depleting those resources. One of the nations, the K'ómoks, called the land they occupied the land of plenty as it provided ample food for their population. Oral history and archaeology describe how salmon, seal, octopus, herring, cod, deer, ducks, shellfish, greens, root vegetables and a multitude of berries fed the K'ómoks people (K'ómoks First Nation, 2013). In 2009 Frank and Kathy Brown interviewed elders who identified the following fundamental beliefs of the Coastal First Nations, attributing these beliefs to the thousands of years of plenty:

Connection to Nature: We are all one and our lives are interconnected.

Respect: All life has equal value. We acknowledge and respect that all plants and animals have a life force.

Knowledge: Our traditional knowledge of sustainable resource use and management is reflected in our intimate relationship with nature and its predictable seasonal cycles and indicators of renewal of life and subsistence.

Stewardship: We are stewards of the land and sea from which we live, knowing that our health as a people and our society is intricately tied to the health of the land and waters.

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[2] First Nations included: Snuneymuxw, Pentlatch, Chemainus, Cowichan, Halalt, Lake Cowichan, Lyackson, Semiahmoo, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Pauquachin, Tsawwassen, Saanich, Sathloot, Sasitla, Ieeksun, Puntledge, Cha'chae, Tat'poos and Penelakut

[3] Archeological evidence indicates that First Nations have lived on the BC coast for ~13,000 years. The oldest sites on the Gulf Islands are approximately 8,000 years old.

Sharing: We have a responsibility to share and support to provide strength and make others stronger in order for our world to survive.

Adapting to Change: Environmental, demographic, socio-political and cultural changes have occurred since the creator placed us in our homelands, and we have continuously adapted to and survived these changes. (Brown & Brown, 2009, p. xiii-xiv)

Their approach to change includes acknowledgement that there is change, and responding to those changes within the context of the other beliefs mentioned.

Figure 3: Change in Temperature 800 AD to 2000 AD
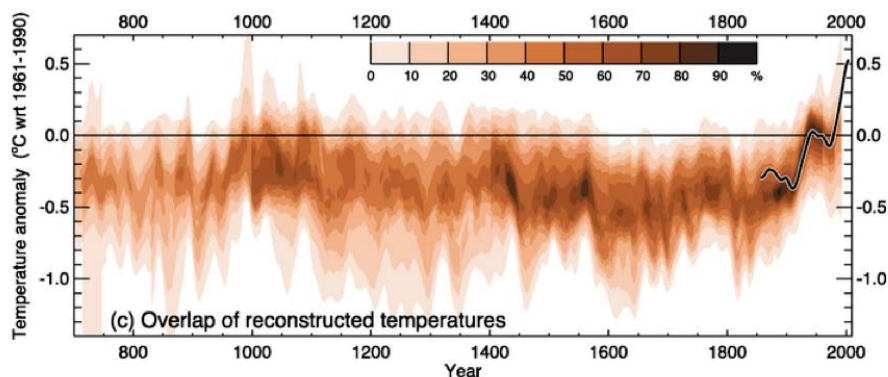
And there was change during the thousands of years that the First Nation people lived beside the Salish Sea prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 1700s. Figure 3 shows

Source: International Panel on Climate Change, 2007

the temperature shift during those years. The close relationship that the Coast Salish people had with nature and its signals, provided them with the information needed to effectively steward the food and material resources that were crucial to their existence during shifts in temperature. Food producing trees and other plants, and key harvesting sites were passed down family lines (Turner & Turner, 2008). Indigenous lawyer, John Burrows, quoted by Foot (2010) describes how First Nations had "clan groups that exercised rights over large territories or prime fishing sites…But this wasn't a system of private property, it was a system of resource and land management." Archaeological remains indicate that the Gulf Islands were home to many of the seafood

harvesting sites and summer villages as well as permanent communities (Carlson & Hoblar, 1993).

Food was shared between groups during hard times and food and material goods were given away to others in the community during Potlatches, reflecting the two fundamental principles of economies outside of the capitalist system – reciprocity and reallocation (Polanyi, 1957). Polanyi describes how the system of redistribution was and is a core part of more traditional economies:

> A substantial part of all the produce of the island is delivered by the village headmen to the chief who keeps it in storage. But as all communal activity centers on the feasts, dances, and other occasions when the islanders entertain one another as well as their neighbours from other islands…the overwhelming importance of the storage system becomes apparent. Economically, it is an essential part of the existing system of division of labor, of foreign trading, of taxation for public purposes, of defence provisions. But these functions of an economic system proper are completely absorbed by the intensely vivid experiences, which offer superabundant noneconomic motivation for every act performed in the frame of the social system as a whole. (p. 41-42)

His description highlights that in First Nation's cultures, as in other traditional cultures, the economy is subsumed under the social rather than the reverse.

The beliefs of the First Nation people identified at the beginning of this section represent aspects of the different mode of thinking and being that is described by those involved in the current shifting away from the dominant culture evidenced in the following chapters. The wealth of food and natural resources that existed when Europeans landed on the west coast provides

indication of how effective the First Nations approach was in stewardship of the natural resources, and adapting to change.

Colonization and Early Settlers

The arrival of Europeans changed the fundamental relationship between humans, and the land and water of the Salish Sea. The new governance model of colonial rulers, and then Canadian authorities, was based on ownership of land rather than stewardship, domination versus living in harmony with nature (Crowshoe, 2005; Van den Berg, 2004).

The islands were, and still are, impacted by influences and changes at regional, continental and global levels. The small pox brought by the Europeans killed up to ninety percent of coastal First Nation people (First Nations Health Council, 2011; Royal BC Museum, 2013). A decision made in Europe in 1794 decided that 'ownership' of the islands is British rather than Spanish (the First Nations living on the land for thousands of years were not considered potential owners). The naming of places by colonial explorers implied ownership and control. During the late 1700s Spaniards and British explorers named the islands and bodies of water, inhabited by First Nation peoples. In 1792 Captain Vancouver named the Salish Sea the Straight (or Gulf) of Georgia after King George III, thus the name Gulf Islands. From 1791-1792 the islands of Texada, Galiano, Valdes, Lasqueti, and Gabriola were all named after or by Spanish explorers. These explorers ignored the First Nation's names on the islands. Sencot'en, the First Nation that started living on Pender Island over 5,000 years ago, named the body of water off Mortimer Spit, xʷəlìsənʼ. It is now called Port Browning (Carlson & Hoblar, 1993).

Many of the changes in the islands reflected industry priorities. Near Mortimer Spit, a location featured in Chapter 8, there was an isthmus that joined what is now North and South Pender Islands. Prior to the arrival of Europeans it was an encampment used by the Sencot'en for

harvesting the food resources of nearby waters and beaches (Carlson & Hoblar, 1993). The isthmus was excavated in 1902 to create a ship canal at the request of the shipping industry (Carlson & Hoblar), and in 1955 a bridge was built to span the divide that had been created, and provide a route for cars.

The 1800s was an era of clearing people off land in order to satisfy colonial and capitalist purposes. In Canada the Indian Act of 1876 created a mass displacement of people from their homeland through the Acts' residential school and reserve programs. The size of traditional hunting and fishing grounds was reduced, as was the transfer of traditional knowledge between generations (Turner, 2008). A similar pattern of displacement was happening elsewhere. Crofters were cleared off their land in Scotland in the late 1700's, then more brutally in the early to mid 1800's, to make way for capitalist profit off sheep grazing (Hunter, 2010). In Ireland the potato famine (1845-1849), created through a takeover of traditional lands by English landlords, combined with potato blight (Sylvester-Carr, 1996) resulted in deaths, as well as mass immigration to Canada and the United States.

According to the census records for Saturna, Pender, Mayne, Thetis, Gabriola, Kuper, Saltspring, and Portland Islands, the people that populated the Gulf Islands in the late 1800s were a mixture of First Nation people (over 50%), people from the British Isles (~25%), the United States (~8%), the East (Japan and China ~4%), Europe (~3%), other British Colonies (~1%), and people migrating west from other parts of Canada (~5%).

Intermarriages were common between the newcomers and First Nation women. Thomas Degnen, who left Ireland in 1849, married Jane Janimetga, the daughter of one of the Cwamichan (Cowichan) Chiefs, and they settled on Gabriola Island. Under Canadian Law

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women lost their status as a First Nation person, a law that wouldn't be changed until 1985. Descendents described Jane Janimetga, who later became Jane Degnen (Harrison, 1982):

> She was an immensely strong woman, possessing a strength of character, of will, and of discipline…She tolerated no nonsense, and ruled the house with an iron will. She brought up a wonderful family who in turn epitomized the strength of both parents. (p. 30)

> While the proportion of English (~12%), Scottish (~7%) and Irish (~4%) immigrants was similar across the different islands there were pockets of immigrants from other countries unique to each island. About half of the first settlers [on Salt Spring Island] were Blacks from San Francisco, who had come to Victoria in 1858 seeking an environment in which they had the same rights as everyone else (Salt Spring Island Archives, 2012). Both Mayne Island and Salt Spring Island were home to active Japanese communities until World War II, when they were taken away to war camps in the interior of B.C. for fear of espionage (Census, 1891; Island Tides, 2012). Russell Island, just off of Salt Spring Island, was host to a small Hawaiian (Mahoi) community (Census, 1891; Parks Canada, 2012). And, while there is only one immigrant from Portugal identified in the 1891 Census, there were 32 Portuguese men listed as fathers of children born in British Columbia and living on the Gulf Islands in 1891, 26 of them in the North Saltspring, Kuper and Thetis Island Census area (Census, 1891). Indications are that some of them were seamen: "Many of our early settlers were young men who jumped ship to escape the grim conditions of their sea life. Such was the case for John Silva, a young man who left his native Portugal when the feared press-gang forced him on to a Spanish Galleon" (Harrison, 1982, p. 65). The most common occupations listed in the census are loggers, fishermen, farmers, homemakers, hunters, teachers, and miners.

This period was devastating for First Nations people, who had initially welcomed the newcomers, then had their population decimated due to the smallpox epidemic. They attempted to negotiate with limited to no success (very few treaties were signed in British Columbia[4]), then were forced to assimilate and stop their traditional cultural practices. One of the residential schools, which ran from 1890-1975, was located on Penelakut Island (named Kuper from 1851-2010). Conditions were described as follows:

> Kuper Island Residential School: 1/3 of pupils died at or after attending the school (TB/Consumption). Medical Experiments caused several deaths (torturous). Island location isolated children from external communities. Several children drowned trying to escape by swimming across to Vancouver Island. (The Indian Residential School Survivors Society, 2012)

> The Potlatch ceremony was banned from 1884 until 1951. The dominant culture on the

islands shifted from an ecological, reciprocal, stewardship based culture, to one in which the Christian religion, capitalist economy, extra-local hierarchical law and governance imposed from England, and Eastern Canada, became predominant. However, the culture of First Nations people

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[4] The Douglas Treaties were the only treaties signed west of the Rockies. Between 1850 and 1854, James Douglas, as governor of the colony, purchased fourteen pieces of land from aboriginal peoples. The Douglas Treaties cover approximately 358 square miles of land around Victoria, Saanich, Sooke, Nanaimo and Port Hardy, all on Vancouver Island. Treaty negotiations by Douglas did not continue beyond 1854 due, in part, to a lack of funds." (Government of British Columbia, 2013)

continued, though some of it underground. And for those living on the islands, far away from the centres of power and money of the dominant culture, understanding how to live with the land was crucial to survival.

Farming, resource extraction, and manufacturing, with limited transportation and no electricity, combined with the World Wars (I and II) and technological changes characterized the Gulf Island lifestyles in the nineteenth and early twentieth Century. Many of the Gulf Island farmers produced enough food to sell to nearby urban centres (Smith, 2006). Farming on the islands was characterized by small-scale operations. Apples, sheep (Salt Spring Island is known for its lamb and heritage apples), beef, and poultry were the most common products. A number of those farms are still in production today, although others were divided up during the 1970s real estate developments.

Resource extraction, logging, mining, and fishing, together with processing and manufacturing, were other aspects of Gulf Island life in the first half of the twentieth century. All of the islands have been logged, many areas several times. While there appeared to be a wealth of trees to those settling the islands, by the latter half of the century logging became a source of intense conflict (Dunsmoor-Farley, 2013). Texada is the only Gulf Island currently operating a mine (limestone). However, its mining history started over a century ago. In 1886, the first iron mine was opened, in 1890 copper was found, and in 1898 iron, copper and gold were mined at Marble Bay. By 1898, the town of Van Anda had become a boomtown, boasting the only opera house north of San Francisco (Texada Island Historical Society, 2013). Many of Gabriola's residents worked for Nanaimo's coal mine, the largest producing pit on Vancouver Island. It ran from 1883 till 1938, and then closed due to competition from oil (Stonebanks, 2000). Gabriola

was also home to a brick manufacturer and a quarry mine that produced millstones for the growing number of pulp and paper mills along the coast (Gehlbach, 2008).

Although Texada Island may have had an opera house, the islands were self-sufficient rather than glamorous. The electrical grid didn't arrive on most islands until the 1950s (and still isn't on Lasqueti and many of the smaller islands). Wells and septic systems rather than piped water and sewage were, and still are, the norm for the islands. Travelling from one's home island was typically done by rowing or sailing until private ferry companies entered the picture in the 1920's and 1930's. For a brief period of time, prior to the Depression and the World War II, people with money travelled to the islands for vacations and retreats. However, the population and island life remained relatively quiet up until the 1960's.

These local, regional, continental and global changes describe a world that is constantly shifting with influences that are not orchestrated from a central source but rather interwoven stories and purposes that interconnect and clash and create conflict as well as order. There were many changes during a relative short time period, from the arrival of the first explorers in the 1700's to settlements in the first half of the twentieth century composed of people from a wide range of, primarily, European countries. First Nation communities all but disappeared in many places as small pox and government policies took their toll on both culture and numbers.

Settler Families, Hippies, and Developers

The next population surge on the Gulf Islands was the group born after World War II, arriving in droves in their late teens and early twenties to live off the land. Real estate developers also saw the potential of the islands, not as a way to reject the establishment, but rather as a way to make money. The combination of farmers, loggers, baby boomers, waves of American

immigration and developers created ideological conflicts, which erupted over land use decisions, and the norms and behaviours of everyday life on the islands.

Starting in the mid 1960's the baby boomers changed the culture of the islands by their sheer numbers. In 1966 the total population of the islands was 4,400. In the next 10 years, the population had more than doubled to 9,500 (Lamb, 2009). Sharon Weaver studied the back-to-the-land movement on the East and West coasts of Canada. According to Pitman (2011):

> On the West Coast, most back-to-the-landers ended up buying small plots of land ─ 10 acres or less ─ on the small islands near Vancouver Island, and many turned to selling crafts or planting trees rather than farming for income. There were also many more of them. Their culture came to dominate the islands where they lived. In fact, on those islands today you can still see structures that reflect the back-to-the-land values and presence. (p. 1)

The newcomers were a shock, and in many ways unfathomable to those who had been farming or involved in resource extraction or other industries. One long time resident describes walking out to his fields (he raises cattle and other livestock), and finding a field full of young adults picking and sampling the 'magic' mushrooms. Bewildered he turned and headed back rather than confront them; "He eventually covered the fields with chicken manure, which he believed killed off the mushrooms" (Dunsmoor-Farley, 2013).

There were several characteristics and behaviours of the different types of anti-establishment baby boomers (hippies) that changed the culture of the islands. Howard (1969) describes the visionaries, who posed an alternative to existing society, the drug heads, who surrounded the use of drugs with an elaborate mythology, and the 'plastic' hippies who entered into it as a fad but had only the most superficial understanding of the ideology. Pekala (2001, p.

1), describes how the "Boomers…were heavily involved in self realization, whether by means of education, meditation, or self-help. They said, "We are the world, we are the children. We believe that the world revolves around us." The Gulf Islands also became home to many of the draft dodgers escaping the Vietnam War and "pursuing a dream—that of a different kind of life than the one offered by Nixon's supply-side economics" (Luna, 2012, p. 1).

Those that arrived as part of the back-to-the-land movement in the 1960's and 1970's were not afraid to challenge clear cut logging practices, pesticide use and other activities that were harmful to the environment, "When the logging companies wanted to spray pesticides, for example, the new residents fought them and won (Pitman, 2011). However, their belief that the world revolved around them, combined with their challenges to people who had been living on the islands for decades, created conflict, "the community was very divided back in the 1970s" (Pitman, 2011).

A third faction also entered the mix in the 1960's – the real estate developers who began subdividing the islands (Hardy, 2006). The parcelling off of small island lots, combined with a University of British Columbia study predicting "rapid, intensive private development" on the Gulf Islands were two of the contributing factors to the 1969 Social Credit government 10 acre freeze for the Gulf Islands (Lamb, 2009).

Extensive subdivisions were created on Mudge, Pender and Gabriola Islands during the 1960s and there were plans underway for subdivisions on Bowen, Salt Spring and Mayne (Lamb, 2009). Frank Ney, outside of his role as Mayor of Nanaimo, created subdivisions of half acre lots on both Mudge Island and Gabriola, with no consideration for the terrain or availability of water. Island residents recall Ney's real estate company selling these lots across the country at

the Pacific National Exhibition, Canadian National Exhibition and the Calgary Stampede (Jones, 1994).

On Pender Island 1200 lots, average size about half an acre, and an artificial lake were created out of 600 acres and called the Magic Lake Estates, located on an island with a resident population of less than seven hundred (Jones, 1994): At the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver you could buy a Magic Lake Estate on North Pender for $50 down and financing to follow (Sweet, 1988, p. 61). Many of the young anti-establishment newcomers to the islands bought properties for the $50 down, which was possible even if you were a struggling artist, musician, or on income assistance. During the five months, between the announcement of the 10 acre freeze in November 1969 and March 1970, there were 2,500 new lots created as developers rushed to get in before the freeze took effect (Jones, 1994).

The 1960s decade brought many changes and fundamentally shifted the culture of the Gulf Islands. The interaction between four groups - settler families, anti-establishment hippies, American draft dodgers and non-resident for-profit interests – provides the context for the stories found in the following chapters. While many of the cultural shifts introduced by the hippies echoed First Nation's beliefs, such as living in harmony with the land and communal living, there was also a battle mentality – us against the establishment, which included corporations, government and anyone over the age of 30.

The Islands Trust and the Last Four Decades

The Islands Trust was created to preserve and protect the Gulf Islands. However, as with other local governments, the relationship between the provincial government and the Islands Trust is hierarchical. The Trust is there at the whim of the Government of British Columbia, which has the authority to change the Act or the governance model of the Islands Trust, as it sees

fit. The Islands Trust and the culture of the islands has shifted over time as changing demographics interacted with global influences.

Concerns raised by island residents regarding development on the Gulf Islands, supported by the UBC report mentioned earlier, were behind the 10 acre freeze and eventual creation of the Islands Trust. Paul Murray suggests there was another factor contributing to the 10 acre freeze: "Premier W.A.C. Bennett, who at times seems bent on blacktopping the entire province, had made a specific exception for the Gulf Islands. They should be preserved just as they were, he declared. "It was only coincidence, of course that Bennett had recently bought a summer place on Salt Spring" (Paul Murray in Homesteads and Snug Harbour, quoted by Jones, 1994, p 11). Whether or not this reason was behind the creation of the Islands Trust, the statement reflects how people from powerful and moneyed positions, who were either permanent or summer residents of the Gulf Islands, would step in to intervene with government on island issues over the next four decades.

While the 10 acre freeze was in place, a federal MP proposed a national trust and a US/Canada joint commission proposed that the Gulf Islands (Canada), the San Juan Islands (USA) and Point Roberts (USA) would make a great national park. The Capital Regional District then put together the *Gulf Islands Options Study*, which suggested that the islands be linked to each other and the mainland by a series of bridges and highways (Lamb, 2009).

In 1973 an all-party standing committee of the BC legislative assembly was established by the provincial government to review the current situation within the Gulf Islands and make recommendations for their future. In their final report the committee stated "the islands are too important to the people of Canada to be left open to exploitation by real-estate developers and

speculators." (Standing Committee Report, 1973) The 10 acre freeze was lifted and the Islands

Trust Act was then enacted in 1974, with a unique legislative Object:

> To preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the
>
> benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation
>
> with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and
>
> organizations and the government of British Columbia. (Islands Trust Act 1:3)

Figure 4: Islands Trust area, Source: Islands Trust

The Islands Trust area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and Vancouver Island, stretching from the border of the United States as far north as Hornby Island. The islands covered under the Islands Trust Act include all of the Southern Gulf Islands and a portion of the Northern Gulf Islands (see Figure 4). Major Gulf Islands not included are Cortes, Quadra and Texada. The undocumented story regarding the exclusion of these islands is that
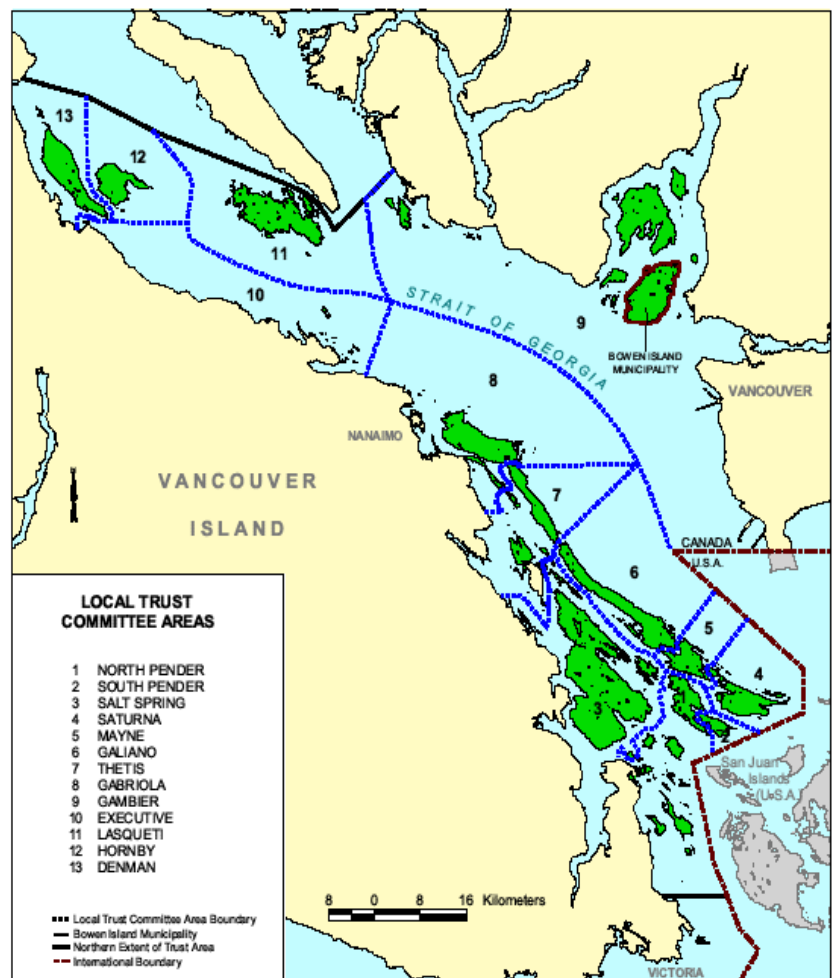
Texada mining interests were not consistent with the Islands Trust Object (Linda Adams,

Personal Communication, November, 2010), and the process was too rushed to include Cortes

and Quadra Islands (Susan Yates, Personal Communication, November, 2010). The Gulf Islands

are situated between metro Vancouver, the largest urban centre in British Columbia, and Victoria, the provincial capital of the province with Courtney/ Comox to the North, completing the triangle.

The thirteen major islands and more than 450 smaller islands in the Trust area are populated by approximately 25,000 people. While there are some similarities each island is distinct and has its own culture and demographics. The following table provides a statistical picture of each of the 13 major islands drawn from the 2006 and 2011 census data:

Regional District	Island	Population (2011)	Median age BC 40.8 (2011)	ferry trip to Vancouver or Vancouver Island (VI)	Abor- iginal % of pop.	Median income/ househld 2005	Moved in 2000-2005	Sq. km.	Post secondary educ. (15 yrs +)
Capital	Saltspring	10,234	62.1	35 min (VI)	2%	$57.6 K	41.3%	183	62.7%
	North Pender	2,035	58.3	1-2 hrs (Van)	0	$41.6 K	38.2%	52	60.8%
	Galiano	1,138	59.0		7%		37.5%	60	
	Mayne	1,071	61.5		2%		40.7%	22	
	South Pender	201	57.0		0		27.5%	9	
	Saturna	335	60.6		4%		31.8%	36	
Comox/ Strathcona	Denman	1,022	57.5	10 min	4%	$35.9 K	32.7%	52	65%
	Hornby	958	58.2	10 min ferry, 20 min drive, 10 min ferry(VI)	3%		33%	30	
Powell River	Lasqueti	426	52.5	Passenger only ~1 hr(VI)	3%	$16.4 K	42.2%	73	40%
Cowichan	Thetis	340	60.2		3%	$61.4 K	31.3%	32	44.6%
Sunshine Coast	Gambier	275	57.1	2 ferries 40 min + 30 min	6.3%	$46.5 K	nd	87	62.7%
Vancouver	Bowen	3,402	46.6	20 min (Van)	4%	$73 K	36.5%	50	64.5%
Nanaimo	Gabriola	4,045	57.3	20 min (VI)	4%	$37 K	50.4%	57	61.5%

*Vancouver Island

According to the 2006 Census, there is a slightly lower number of people in the labour force (57.2% is average across islands) compared to B.C. (65.6%), likely due to the high number of retirees. There is also a high rate of self-employment relative to other parts of BC (40.4% compared to 14.1% in BC). The most common occupations are retail, accommodation and food, health care, construction and professional consulting. The percentage of people with graduate degrees is one of the highest in the province.

Since its inception the Islands Trust has had an interesting and rocky history. The Trust began with limited authority and an Objective that challenged the status quo of profit before environment. There were various attempts to reduce that authority or eliminate the Trust altogether. In 1985 one of the planners was working on a couple of potential subdivisions, owned by friends of Bill Ritchie, the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In response to the Object statement of the Islands Trust the planner recommended decreasing the extent of both subdivisions. As a result Bill Ritchie decided he wasn't going to pay for the Executive Director's staff (B.C. Hansard, 1985) and he tried to fire the planner involved in the two controversial subdivisions (Osborne, personal communication, 2010). He then created Bill 30, which would have effectively brought Islands Trust staff under the direct management of his Ministry. The NDP opposition members responded:

> He wants to destroy the effectiveness of the Islands Trust. He wants to destroy their ability to regulate and control reasonable and acceptable development in that unique area. He wants to be able to make the decisions. He wants to decide where the logging will take place, where the industry will go, where the housing developments go and how dense they will be. And why? Well, he says he has no developer friends (B.C. Hansard, 1985).

While the opposition, the media and the trustees challenged and criticized this step, the legislative amendment went ahead.

When Rita Johnson became Minister she requested a study to look at governance options in the Islands Trust area. In 1987 the Select Standing Committee on Economic Development, Transportation and Municipal Affairs undertook a comprehensive review of the Islands Trust focused on:

> (1) the object of the trust; (2) governmental structure within the trust area, including representation; (3) provision of local government services within the trust area, including land use planning and zoning; and (4) matters arising out of the proclamation of section 3 of the Islands Trust Act [Trust Fund]. (Johnson, May 22, 1987)

The Mercier Report, named after the chair of the committee, recommends that the Islands Trust become a regional district to provide for more efficient and coordinated delivery of services. The Islands Trust, represented by Nick Gilbert, the chair at the time, rejects the recommendation:

> There was a fear on the part of many of the trustees that it would water down the mandate of the Trust to be involved with all the nitty-gritty servicing issues that a regional district has to deal with and it was rejected by the Trust council. It was also rejected by some of the key regional districts. (Quoted by Jones, 1994, p.171)

The Islands Trust was in agreement with a study and report produced by students at Simon Fraser University, under the tutelage of Michael M'Gonigle (1986), that recommended greater autonomy and resources for the Islands Trust, while describing the concept of the Islands Trust becoming a regional district as a subversive way for the province to eliminate its unique mandate. This response was appropriate for 1986 given the actions by Ritchie in 1985. When

reviewing the 1989 changes to the legislation it is evident that the recommendations from

M'Gonigle's study were the ones acted upon by the provincial government. The Islands Trust

received greater autonomy and did not become a regional district.

Since 1989 various tools have been developed, some initiated by the Trust, and some by

the ministry responsible for local government, that have greatly increased the ability of the

Islands Trust to achieve its objectives. The Trust Fund initiatives have resulted in 975 hectares of

protected eco-systems, partnership agreements achieved some required commitments, a protocol

agreement for municipalities within the Islands Trust area ensures continuation of the Trust's

Object in the event of incorporation by an island community, and planning tools that support

sustainable, ecologically based land use decisions have all contributed to protection and

preservation of the Islands Trust area.

There have also been challenges. Many of the partnership agreements with provincial

ministries are not being honoured, as ministries indicate they no longer have the resources to

respond to their commitments. The BC Ferry Services Inc. carries out business as usual in the

islands with limited or no consultation with the Islands Trust.

Island history in the last four decades is not just about the Islands Trust. As we will see in

the following pages, the Islands Trust played a side role in the changes that occurred on these

islands. Global influences such as climate change, peak oil, neo-liberal governments, and the

economic recession, all intruded into island life during the four decades after the creation of the

Islands Trust. The gradual aging of the baby boomers also created changes, as those living off the

islands start buying land for cottages and then retirement. The retirees, moving from other

locations in Canada (with a few from overseas), become a substantial force in shifting cultural

norms and behaviours on the islands, and tensions developed between those that arrived in the

1960's and the more recent newcomers. Those who had arrived as part of the hippie era, raised

children, moved from communes into their own homes, some continuing to fight corporate and

government interventions, while others left to explore life paths elsewhere. Several of the islands

have internal battles as logging companies challenge density policies of the islands. And, the

conflicts between the hippies and settler families shifted: "On the West Coast, despite the

somewhat fractious beginnings, there's less and less difference between the back-to-the-landers

and the locals. The families have intermarried."(Pitman, 2011) These shifts and changes speak to

the continual change from year to year, day to day, moment to moment, that occurs in any

community:

> The London you left just half an hour ago…is not the London of now. It has already
>
> moved on. Lives have pushed ahead…it has begun to rain quite heavily; a crucial
>
> meeting has broken up acrimoniously; someone has caught fish in the Grand Union canal
>
> (p. 118-119).

 The demographic influences on the islands, together with the Islands Trust changes, are shifts

experienced daily, with peaks and valleys of collaboration and conflict as tensions regarding who

has final decision-making culminates and climaxes.

Summary

The order in these islands is and has been "temporary and local" (Magnusson, 2011). The

change over time is evident when reviewing the history. The land currently under our feet has

been shifting for millions of years, and continues to shift. The beliefs and lifestyles the First

Nations practiced for thousands of years demonstrated a way of living on the islands that ensured

a continual food supply, environmental protection, and a sharing of resources with all residents.

The initial colonization of the islands, started under three hundred years ago, brought a range of

stories from the far corners of the earth, and devastation to the First Nations. It also brought a culture of hierarchy, capitalism, land ownership rather than stewardship, extra-local governments, renaming of places, resource extraction, and domination over the environment. The last fifty years has seen the invasion of the back-to-the-landers (now considered old timers) and developers, creation of the Islands Trust, conflict over logging practices, and a shifting demographic creating new tensions and cultural norms on the Gulf Islands. From personal transformation through to interactions in community and with government, the preceding history not only provides a backdrop, it plays a role in community change and system shifts.

Interlude: Between Context and Stories

Chapters One to Four have provided the context for the stories that unfold in the following pages. Chapters Five to Eleven hold these stories – with a corresponding analysis linked to the conceptual framework as well as themes and concepts that arise out of the stories themselves. Several of the initiatives found in the following chapters are described below to provide grounding for the types of actions undertaken by the storytellers, and explain the complexity of those organizations with multiple facets. Here is a brief outline of: the Gabriola Commons, the Mud Girls Natural Building Collective, the Gulf Islands Centre for Ecological Learning, the Hornby Island Cooperatives, and the Island Tides Newspaper.

The *Gabriola Commons* is a 26 acre piece of land near Gabriola Island's village core. It is owned, cared for and stewarded by the community and is accessible to all island residents. The purpose of the Commons is "a) To hold, protect and steward the property on Gabriola Island known as the "Gabriola Commons" as a public amenity, with green spaces, hiking trails, and public exhibition, performance and meeting spaces for the use and enjoyment of the pubic in perpetuity, b) to preserve the ecological qualities of the Gabriola Commons, and c) to promote and demonstrate sustainable agricultural practices" (Constitution of Gabriola Commons Foundation). The property holds a multi-purpose community building, approximately 100 community garden plots, a Yurt that provides space for creative workshops and activities, an "under construction" community kitchen, a Sustainability Centre, and a range of community programs. The story of the Commons is explored in Chapter 8, while Judith and Victor, two of the key players are featured in several of the chapters.

The *Mud Girls Natural Building Collective* is a network of women builders that specialize in using local, natural, and recycled materials. They work for people wanting to build

cob cabins, ovens, benches, or install natural insulation, earthen floors and wall plasters. They work with clients to facilitate work parties, in which they share the skills of natural building with participants, while working on the client's natural building. "As a collective, the Mud Girls also organize workshops in which they share skills and facilitate the learning of natural building with their participants" (Mud Girls Natural Building Collective, 2013). The collective was started by a resident of Lasqueti Island and currently includes women living throughout the Gulf Islands, Vancouver Islands and Vancouver. In the following pages Rose, one of the Mud Girls, shares the story of this collective, as well as her own experience as part of the Mud Girls network.

The *Gulf Islands Centre for Ecological Learning* (GICEL) **"**connects people with nature within the natural environment of British Columbia's southern Gulf Islands" (GICEL, 2013). Activities – summer camps, school programs, family and adult events – on five of the Gulf Islands provide opportunities for people to develop a direct personal connection with their natural environment. The approach used is facilitative rather than teaching and exploratory and hands on rather than classroom learning. Some of the principles developed through the GICEL are being used in the Gulf Islands School District (covering the Southern Gulf Islands). Michael, the creator behind the GICEL tells us the story of the creation spiral and subsequent links that created the current network of learning.

The *Hornby Island Cooperatives* is not an organization but rather a reflection of the culture on Hornby Island to respond to collective community needs by creating buildings and organizations that are built by members of the community and collectively managed. A couple who arrived on Hornby Island in the 1930's initiated the first cooperative and were key players in many of those that followed. Doug provides us with the stories of the various cooperative ventures from pathways to community halls.

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The *Island Tides Newspaper* is an independent newspaper serving the Salish Sea region. The paper was created in the early 1990's and has provided a voice that reflects the culture of the region. Articles cover topics that are serious as well as celebratory and fun – providing information and critique on international, national and local news. The paper is delivered to the mailboxes of Gulf Island residents. In addition the newspaper attracts readers throughout the coastal communities of Vancouver Island, who are looking for an alternative to mainstream, corporate owned newspapers. Christa and Sara provide their thoughts on island culture.

The preceding provides a glimpse at what will follow - a journey through the how of transformative change, starting from the personal then shifting outward - to everyday living, system-shifting initiatives, community, governments – and finally, cultural shifts created by the accumulation of localisms. Through this journey there are threads and questions. I will be tracing some of those threads through the following questions, and in the final chapter will conclude this dissertation with findings that reflect these threads of inquiry.

1. Does degrees of separation from the environment and people have an impact on personal transformation, if so, how?
2. How does support for living a different lifestyle or creating a local alternative to the dominant system, play a role in system change?
3. What underlies resistance to cultural shifts and what are the elements of transformative spaces that reduce resistance?
4. What is the relationship between personal agency and authority?
5. What form(s) or characteristics of governance encourage community change and system shifts?
6. What factors increase the likelihood of transformative spaces in a community and how many are present in the Gulf Islands?
7. What is the relationship between recent uprisings and the Salish Sea stories?

Chapter Five: Inner Compass

The personal stories described in this chapter are about people who are moving away from outside control from extra-local authorities, and towards the internal voice of integrity. Two words used throughout this chapter, 'story' and 'agent', are used in particular ways to describe these personal transformations. I use the word 'story' both as a metaphor for the ways in which we understand the world and our reaction to it, as well as the stories in their ordinary sense of actual stories that are told by those who participated in this research (the storytellers). And, while the words 'agent' and 'agency' often conjure up pictures of bureaucracies, I use it to describe personal agency, the capacity to act in the world.

An advocate and activist for a community bus, renewable energy systems, community gardens and a local gathering space was asked what inspired her to get involved in community activism. Judith thought for a second then responded with the following story:

Ah…that's a really good question. When I was a parent at the school we had a pretty good Parent Advisory Committee. The principal changed and I thought the new one was fantastic and the kids adored him and a lot of the parents really liked him….but the teachers were threatened by him because he was demanding a different way of being from the standard classroom…rule and conquer. That's exaggerating, but the teachers, became so nasty. I'd never seen anything like that before. You would see little groups of teachers plotting and signs would go up every so often in the staff bathroom. There would be "we're going to get him" kind of posters on the bathroom door. This was definitely something that had been manipulated by a group of people to get this guy out. In the end a group of us went to the superintendent and we said something really, really ugly is happening. And I thought wow; this is cool – people actually taking action instead of just

saying "gee, that's too bad"… And for me that was a new experience. I guess that was

one of those moments… you just hate to see injustice happening – it's just that simple.

And then that leads to thinking – okay we need a bus here, why don't we have a bus….

As reflected by Judith's story the focus of this chapter is about personal transformation, a different mode of thinking about who we are and how we relate to others and the world around us, characterized by a questioning of the dominant virtues (Isin, 2002). The stories I heard throughout the Salish Sea describe how personal transformation is the starting point for large-scale change, how it is unpredictable as to when and how it will happen, and involves cumulative experiences resulting in changed stories about the world around us, and a different understanding of ourselves in that world. Some story-tellers described how personal transformation is a shift to a different mode of thinking and of being. Others described how a conflict between deeply held values with those of the dominant culture created their urge to transform. The stories illuminate how actions and interactions with others and the natural world arise out of these modes of being that are different from the dominant culture.

When asked why she was involved in system change in the community Judith references her own personal transformation regarding agency rather than the rationale behind why we need a bio-fuel bus or community gardens. She is not alone in this response. Over half of the storytellers referenced personal transformative moments, and/or a conscious aligning or realigning with their inner values, when describing their reasons for being involved in system change.

Opportunities for Personal Transformation

Personal transformation is unpredictable. Judith did not deliberately place herself into a transformative space. She was involved in a traditional organization, a Parent Advisory Council

(PAC), and through that bumped up against what she experienced as 'injustice happening'. She was in a space that held many stories, including the teachers', the principal's, and her own. What we hear is the story from Judith's perspective. However, rather than the conflict between teachers and principal, it is Judith's experience in the form of witnessed and experienced agency that I will focus on for now. The idea of challenging something that felt wrong, standing up for something that felt right and asking for a response was not part of her mode of thinking or being at that point in time.

How are unconscious stories, stories that are the basis for our understanding of the world and who we are in that world, created? From early on in our life we read signs around us that tell us how to act and what to think. Judith shines light on how her unconscious story vis-à-vis 'speaking up' was created:

> I was raised in "colonial" Victoria, where an Oxford accent brought any speaker instant acknowledgement of superiority and status; where the prime directive was "don't make a fuss"; where you are trained from birth to recognize subtle body language indicating disapproval and you respond, creating a shell to "live" in safely, as invisible as possible.

Judith learned early on about who had authority and was deemed as expert. She learned that her role was to be invisible, to not create waves, to be quiet.

The transformative experience may just drop into our lap unexpectedly, as Judith discovered. Or, transformation to a different mode of thinking may be due to seeking out new stories, alternative ways of thinking. Victor's story describes the latter route. He explained how he became a vegetarian when he was 16:

The transformation began over forty years ago, when I read Upton Sinclair's The Jungle[5] while still in high school. From there, curiosity led me to Frances Moore Lappé who opened my eyes to the global consequences of a meat-based diet. Then spirituality began to filter into the equation and by age twenty-four, I had stopped eating flesh of any kind. I reasoned that if I was unwilling to slaughter an animal, disembowel it, skin it and cut its body into manageable pieces for consumption, then why should I let someone else do my dirty work for me?

Victor read The Jungle and then he sought out further information on the mode of thinking suggested by what he had learned. Other storytellers experienced transformative spaces that led them to explore an alternative way of understanding their world, a different story from one they had unconsciously accepted.

Whether they sought out new ways of thinking, or opportunities dropped into their lap, each transformation involved the storyteller being faced with stories about themselves, an event, or a series of events, arising through their everyday social relations, which were unlike the story they unconsciously held. The experiences of Judith and Victor, described above, are worlds apart and yet there are common elements, providing clues about the 'how' of personal transformation.

Transformative Spaces

As depicted by Judith's and Victor's tales, hearing and experiencing different stories about the world in which we live, our relationship to others, and who we are in the world provides the starting point for personal transformation. Storytellers described the context, the

[5] Sinclair wrote *The Jungle* (1906) to change working conditions in the meat-packing industry. Thousands of people became vegetarians after reading it (Iacobbo and Iacobbo, 2004).

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transformative spaces, that encouraged them to personally shift to an alternative mode of thinking and being.

For example Cate described how tragedy triggered a personal shift in her life:

Loss of family, mother and sister, was personal, also being faced with cancer – a personal episode where that whole horizon that is life – decades out there, it almost feels like it is infinitive, changes to "is it tomorrow? Or next week?" – for me that was a gift to look at that horizon in a place of fear – and then I didn't have to accept it – but understanding that the present is so precious – so that goes with the species diversity is so precious – the ability for…us to meet here right now, full of potential every moment.

Cate's transformation arose out of tragedy and the fear that came with that tragedy. Her ability to rise up out of the fear was linked to her shift in determining what she would accept and what she didn't have to out of the stories that had been embedded in her unconscious up until that point.

J.G., a teacher and coordinator for the high school outdoor club and global club, reflects on how transformations can arise out of hands-on experience in nature. Members of J.G.'s outdoor club camped in the wilderness and experienced their capacity to survive in wilderness as part of a team. Years later J.G. is still hearing from students how transformative those experiences were for the students. Tragedy, joy, collision of different stories or ways of understanding the world, community connections, experiences with nature, doing something new and challenging, traveling and living in another culture, witnessing or experiencing cracks in our current systems, alternative information, and witnessing actions that resonate with internal values, were all mentioned as context for a personal transformation.

Several people described how hearing more than one story in the same space was a catalyst for a transformative shift. Judith, reflecting on her experience with the principal and

teachers, and her current work on the Gabriola Commons stated: "the different worlds are coming together – that's where transformative change happens – because new ideas come there. You know that certain discoveries are almost always made by people on the outskirts of a domain". Judith's description of new discoveries arising out of different worlds in the same space echoes Massey's (2005) argument that recognition of different stories so far leads to the potential of alternative trajectories and futures. The availability of more than one way of understanding oneself or the world, being ready to hear a different story than that embedded in our unconscious, and shifting one's mode of thinking if the new story resonates with internal values, were all elements in the transformative spaces illustrated by the storytellers.

Being Ready for Personal Transformation

Yet, even if the conditions people describe as encouraging a transformative shift are present, people may not be ready to hear other stories.

> I do believe that we can affect people – then when something comes up then maybe
>
> people get more courage…I think in order for this to happen people would already be
>
> ready to step and stand up. A little nudge. But they would already be there. (Anna)

But why are some people ready and others seemingly are not? There are many different factors and one mentioned by several of the storytellers was fear of loss. Cate's story of death and fear of death, mentioned earlier, reflects how deep feelings of security and fear relate to readiness to hear a different story. While in Cate's case fear and addressing that fear were at the root of her transformation the following stories demonstrate how fear can also be at the core of resisting change.

Jean, a member of the Raging Grannies[6] and other protest organizations, describes power as a factor in resisting change: "It's really, really hard for some people to let go of power." She then tells the story about working with a group protesting Nuclear Armaments in the Nanoose Bay area:

> For example in this group there was one guy from Cumberland who came down for the meetings that he usually chaired, and one day he was late so I said I'll chair the meeting. And the others said okay. And we were doing it and then he came and he sat down. And he was being so disruptive it was just awful –I said "Bernie stop, what's the matter with you?" And he said "oh, well if you let me be the chair I wouldn't do this."

It seems that if hearing a different story means a loss then the likelihood of allowing that story through depends on how important it is to hold on to that which would be lost. In Bernie's case his actions indicate that he felt he would lose power and control and wasn't willing to let that happen. In Judith's story the teachers were threatened by the principal's approach because they would lose their right to run their classrooms as they always had. Victor's church story, which occurred around the same time he read The Jungle, provides another example of people not ready to hear an alternative way of thinking and being:

> The church that we went to – it was old old, it was antiquated – the building itself had been built before the Civil War, so it was an old old church and at the time it was built it was the suburbs and downtown Nashville was a full mile away right. But by the time we

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[6] The Raging Grannies are peace, social justice, and environmental activists who dress up in 'granny' clothes and sing songs at protests. They write the lyrics themselves, putting political messages to tunes of well-known songs.

were going there in the 1960s it was more or less downtown. And the suburbs were almost all gone and what had grown up around the church was a housing project and it was mostly black people and the congregation was mostly white and we got the preacher – Brother Barnes was his name – and he just went out into the neighbourhood and started inviting people in the neighbourhood to come to church – which was a ballsy thing to do because it was pretty rough. Now, that neighbourhood – the cops don't even go there at night because it's definitely not safe - and in the daytime they'll only go there if there are two in the car. But even then it was rough – so he put on his collar…and just went around knocking on doors. And so people started coming and to make a long story short the congregation fired him. They booted him because he'd brought black people into the church. And so I just went to my parents and I said look – I'm sorry – I don't think JC would do it that way and it's not right and I'm not going back...They said – you're right – so, I didn't go back.

The introduction of Brother Barnes unexpectedly introduced a different story into the congregation and even though Victor was ready to hear the new story, others weren't. Members of the congregation held a story that black people shouldn't be part of their church. Whether they believed they would lose status, or security, or something else, is not clear and dependent on each individual.

The fear of change, of losing what is familiar, was mentioned in several stories. Diane*, a thirty year resident of one of the islands told me how wonderful it was on the island when her children were young (they are now in their late twenties). She complained about how, these days, newcomers are changing all that. According to her the island is getting too crowded, a medical

clinic that isn't needed is being built – change is destroying the lifestyle she remembers. So, for her, change is not welcome.

There are many stories in which what is right for one person is not for another. In the stories I heard both a conscious and unconscious balancing process – determining what is lost and what is gained if we hold on to a story or if we hear a different story, making a balance sheet as it were. Diane believed in the 'rightness' of the old story. From Victor's perspective he had more to lose; if he stuck to the old story about black people not being welcome in his church, he would be part of something he felt was 'not right'.

Another factor in readiness was how often a new story had been heard or experienced. J.G., the outdoor education teacher mentioned earlier, describes being ready as a response to a culmination of alternative ways of thinking:

> I always like the story that an alcoholic decides to stop drinking after one single friend talks to them. But without the last friend or the friend before that…it takes all of them, cumulatively. When you decide yourself that you have to change it is not one specific person. Rather it is the culmination of all kinds of events and people that leads to a pivotal moment.

Several of the story-tellers describe a growing consciousness about a particular story, an unease that eventually became the moment they began "to be unable, any longer, to think things as one usually thinks them" (Foucault, 1982). For others it felt instantaneous. Tsiporah, the coordinator of an island film festival, was watching the documentary The Singing Revolution when she "had this major realization …about how it can be all of us" that are part of system change and standing up for what we believe, "not just the politicos, revolutionaries and super radicals". What she saw was thousands of people holding hands and singing through villages and across country

boundaries. She felt the power of many, standing together in their stance and doing it in a way that felt fun and rewarding. While she may have heard the message that she could play a role through past experiences, what she saw on screen resonated internally, and became that pivotal moment in which a different mode of thinking occurred.

Judith, the PAC member who stood up for what she perceived as injustice, provides us with the history that brought her to her pivotal moment.

I didn't realize how disempowering our WASP world is until I returned home after living for10 years in France…As I absorbed the French way of being, of interacting with others I learned a different way of communicating than I had known: passionate conversation, with direct eye contact, daring to express alternative opinions, challenged to defend a point of view – it was heady stuff. It felt as if I had been thrown into a river of society and somehow not only survived but came to love it.

At the same time, through her readings and field trips in one of France's universities, Judith was learning first-hand about the horrors of the industrial revolution – the inhuman living conditions:

…the legislation brought in to oblige factory owners not to make women and children work longer than 14 hours per day, the explicit planning of worker tenements in order to prevent any stair landings or passageways large enough to permit people to gather for conversation (i.e. potential political unrest!). A profound sense of the injustice that had been perpetrated on all of these people began to grow.

She started exercising her capacity to speak out against injustice, which was welcomed in the French culture. She was shocked when she came back to British Columbia and discovered that speaking up was still frowned upon. She went back into her invisible, not making a fuss mode. However, when she came across injustice in the school system and witnessed a speaking out

within Canadian culture the speaking out against injustice she had learned in France provided the

basis for that final pivotal moment:

> We like to think that we are free here, free to think, to speak our truth, but it takes guts to
>
> do it here, unless you come from elsewhere and aren't trained to register and respond to
>
> the disempowering body language of disapproval inherent in our culture.. Anyway, then
>
> the Parent Advisory Council experience worked its magic. (Judith)

Judith's process describes the challenge of shifting into that different mode of thinking and being

when all around you are signs and symbols that tell you that new way is wrong. The resistance to

change that most of us experience highlights how the unconscious stories we hold were created

for a reason. Judith received disapproval for speaking up. Most of us receive approval if we

exhibit the traditional symbols of success – a large house, new fashionable clothes, an important

or powerful position, and indications of wealth. If we listen to that internal voice and, and as a

result, decide to quit that important job or stop wearing new clothes, then we may feel that

disapproval, experience the very reaction that was part of our unconscious story initially. While

the shift into a different mode of thinking doesn't necessarily result in giving up those traditional

symbols, the questioning of the dominant culture and shifting actions to correspond to an

alternative decision-making process changes the reason for being in that job, or building that

house. For many people transformation is a difficult process as they are giving up many of those

behaviours and symbols of survival and success that they learned early in life. They are making a

choice; one that they believe is the best choice for them. However, that doesn't mean it is easy. I

will be exploring this aspect of transformation more fully in subsequent chapters.

Being ready also involves recognition that a range of realities and understandings of the

world can co-exist in the same space (Massey, 2005). This factor is echoed by Cate, who had

experienced a close call with death, "being open to new ways of existing and thinking – trying to understand how to allow multiple realities." Thus, another readiness factor for personal transformation is being open to the possibility of stories other than the ones that are consciously and unconsciously held.

Another storyteller discusses the natural inclination to resist change and how that collides with transformational change:

Transformational work is always about change, you're transforming something, and so you have to in some way grapple with this whole question of change and how best to approach change. It is human nature to resist but change is natural – it is the nature of the universe, we're dealing with what is inevitable.

The storytellers depicted readiness to change or ability to hear a different story as an unconscious process of determining what would be lost if one didn't hold on to a story, and whether or not an internal 'this isn't right' occurred. Attempting to understand these personal unconscious and conscious choices people make when they resist or engage in change is crucial for those involved in system shifting work.

Several of the story-tellers emphasized that we can't follow a prescriptive formula to create a transformative space for someone else and we won't likely know whether or not a space has been transformative for someone. Shoshana, an activist in her early twenties spoke to this challenge: "it's hard to know if anything you do, or are, as an activist has an impact. Sometimes laws get changed and that's a nice quantifiable one – but in terms of behavioural – it's so hard". Even if different stories are in a space, even if there have been cumulative stories so far, even if there is no obvious loss, the person may still not be ready.

Being ready for personal transformation requires openness to hearing different stories, a willingness to let go of power, security, status, or whatever is hard to lose, and an accumulation of the same message reaching a pivotal 'ah ha' moment. And for those wanting to transform others there is a need to recognize that transformative spaces cannot be deliberately created for others due to the readiness factor.

Transformation and Inner Compass

'A different mode of thinking,' 'a different mindset,' 'people's heads were shifted,' 'different ways of existing,'– these phrases were used by the storytellers to describe personal transformation, reflecting Foucault's 1982 description. Their transformative experiences changed both how they see themselves and how they are seen by others in everyday social relations. Their transformation involved a questioning of the dominant virtues (Isin, 2002), and a replacement of the unconscious stories created by the dominant culture with conscious stories that resonate with internal values. Jackson (2008) described transformation as follows:

> The phrase 'learning to think differently' is often used today and in a variety of contexts… it is a process in which all our inherited assumptions about the world and ourselves are questioned, thus clearing the ground, so to speak, for the construction of an alternative set of assumptions (or worldview) that is more appropriate for our times. Not only is the substance of our thought (basic assumptions) changed but even the mode of our thinking. (p. *x*)

The transformation, the different mode of thinking and being, differs depending on the various stories in a space at a given point in time, and what new story someone is ready to hear. Some comprehend a new story in relation to their sense of self. Others described a shift in

understanding the interconnections between themselves and the natural world, institutions, and others.

Shoshana, a storyteller in her twenties, spoke to the shifting sense of self: "There's something, definitely something really powerful about realizing that you don't have to be who you have been". For Shoshana the values her family held were already contrary to the dominant culture.

> I'd valued simple living and non-materialistic and stuff like that all my life – my family's values. I got that, but I never understood that you could actually display that, present that, and be inspirational to other people. I'd always been like an armchair activist until that point.

The transformation she experienced did not relate to letting go of the dominant systems' values, instead she experienced a shift in how she saw herself. Rose, a young woman in her early thirties described a similar shift: "It has changed my whole world view about what is possible and what I want to do with my life." Their shifts were of empowerment and of realizing they could change who they had been. Rather than Shoshana's fatalistic approach prior to her 'ah ha' moment, "like, yeah, I can do these things but what difference does it really make in the world", her new story was about the potential inherent in living life according to her values and about understanding how, in her interactions with others she could be someone different than she had been. Shoshana and Rose's experience of changing who they had been echoes Massey's (2005) description of space as a product of interrelations in which identities, which we assume are always and forever constituted are instead changeable.

A changed identity or sense of self is also evident in some of the earlier stories. Cate's tragedy and brush with cancer shifted her relationship to life, the present moment, and death. She

started to live and savour each moment rather than be trapped in her fear of the end. Judith, in standing up against the teacher's behaviour, experienced a new way of understanding her personal power. She was able to start seeing herself and acting as an agent of change. Tsiporah, through watching *A Singing Revolution*, also saw herself as a valuable player in system change, rather than someone who was sidelined because she was neither skilled politically nor a radical. Some of these experiences happened through direct interactions with others, some happened through witnessing agency in others and understanding the potential within oneself.

One woman described how, waking up one morning on a deserted shore she looked out of her tent and saw wolf footprints. Her way of understanding the natural world shifted. Describing moments in which we are 'with' the natural world is a challenge and yet these moments have the potential to transform how we act in relation to our environment.

In leaving the church and becoming a vegetarian Victor's shifts were about interconnectedness. He realized how he was connected to the food he ate. He also understood his connection to the black people being invited to the church by Brother Barnes. His transformation was about his own role in how those connections were realized and epitomizes Shoshana's theory of change "first, the blinders – you have to take off the blinders to look at what the reality is – and then you need to mirror, see how you are part of the problem, so identifying your own choices, and then empowerment and action". Victor saw how he was part of the problem and then made his choices – stop eating meat and stop attending a church that wouldn't welcome black people.

Paul's shift (Paul's activism focuses on monetary reform) was about his relationship to society's institutions, in particular economic systems. His recognition that the current systems are destroying the environment and increasing the likelihood of storms and droughts brought

about by climate change is at the heart of his passion for change. He emphasizes: "That [the] driving force to protect nature from human kind has been one of my main motivations." Attempting to understand why the environment was being destroyed took him to the economic system: "Being involved in environmental things and then noticing that the economy was underlying the environmental issues – and seeing that unless the economy grows more than a certain percentage then everything falls apart". His passion for the environment and a different mode of thinking about the cause of environmental destruction led him to a comprehensive study of the monetary system, both the system itself as well as the power and wealth elements that perpetuate a system that is environmentally destructive. Paul's work over the last ten years has been to illuminate the underlying tenets of our current monetary system and propose alternative systems. When 9/11 happened his sense of what he could do in relation to dysfunctional systems shifted – he had the urge to transform. While Paul's response to 9/11 was to dig deeper into the political and economic factors underlying the event others have responded to this event in other less constructive ways, e.g. demonizing Muslims. Once again, why people respond to triggers in different ways seems to relate to their particular unconscious stories and the readiness factors mentioned previously.

During transformational periods, old stories are replaced by stories that resonate with one's values. "Those stories that really don't work very well anymore - You have to replace things with something else – I think that's it – you can't just have nothing, you have to have something" (Cate). Tsiporah, the film festival coordinator, replaced the idea that she wasn't radical or important enough to change systems with the recognition that everyone can play a role. Cate replaced her story about the end of life with the preciousness of the moment, and Judith, the Commons activist, replaced the 'can't do anything about injustice' with agency, her ability to

stand up and change what she didn't feel was right. The new stories resonated internally for each of them – their values and conscious being at the heart of their transformation, reflecting aspects of both the resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zale, 1973) and new social movement (Melucci, 1989) theories of social change.

The new stories were also based on a questioning of the dominant way of thinking and being. The stories highlighted those moments in which "the naturalness of the dominant virtues is called into question and their arbitrariness revealed" (Isin, 2002, p. 275). Paul, the monetary reformist, questioned the premise that the economic system was a positive structure for ordinary citizens. Victor, the vegetarian, questioned the meat eating culture as well as social segregation between blacks and whites. Judith, the bus activist, questioned the acceptance of governments as omnipotent authority. In all these cases, their questions led them to a rethinking of the dominant way of understanding the world and corresponding way of living. Their rethinking led them to different ways of acting and interacting with others.

However, some of the shifts, the urge to transform, arose out of a 'going back' to values storytellers held as children, rather than transformation to a way of thinking or believing that they had never experienced. Paul's urge to transform the monetary system arose out of a passion for protecting the environment that he had felt as a child. Michael described how his creation of environmental learning opportunities for children, youth and adults, started from his childhood passion:

So, all my life, ever since I was a little kid I was passionately interested in virtually everything there was. I wanted to learn everything there was about everything. So, nothing, there was nothing that disinterested me. So, part of that was being a collector, an

avid collector of everything – from obscure things like matchbooks to insects and spiders

and reptiles and eggs, and nests, and everything that was part of the natural world.

Michael didn't experience a transformation – instead, he had the urge to transform based on his

inner compass, drawing from values he had held since he was a child. Shoshana, while

experiencing a shift in understanding her own authority and power, acted on internal values

rather than a transformed way of understanding the world.

For some of the storytellers in this research, personal transformation created a different

understanding of who they could be in the world, and how they could be in relation to others, the

natural world and society's institutions. Their changed sense of self relates to empowerment,

understanding a role they can play in system change. For some storytellers their urge to

transform arose out of deeply held values, and a desire to act based on their internal compass.

Self-righteous, Evangelical or Flaky

One of the challenges of describing personal transformation experiences is the danger

that they will be perceived as self-righteous, 'flaky', evangelical, or self-absorbed. I will analyze

what I learned, about the storytellers and their stories, in light of these descriptors to determine

the extent to which these criticisms might be valid.

First, I'd like to emphasize that I was asking people for their stories, and, as part of that I

probed into the underlying reason why people were living a lifestyle different from the dominant

culture, or had the urge to transform some aspect of the current system. The personal stories were

offered as a response to my questions rather than a desire to pontificate about how righteous they

were to live the way they did. In one case, a storyteller sent two stories ahead of time. Then,

when sitting with the group, decided to withdraw one of the stories because he felt as if it might

be perceived as preaching. And approximately half of the storytellers wanted to tell the story

about the system change they were engaged in but they did not go into their personal reasons for being involved.

Nonetheless the quotes reflect a 'born-again' element. Those who have shifted to a new mode of understanding the world may want to share the excitement of that shift. They believe that their shift is a positive shift, both for themselves and for the world. What I witnessed was an excitement in collectively sharing both the enthusiasm as well as the challenges of that different mode of thinking with others. Rather than a sense of righteousness, what I heard from storytellers when describing their personal shifts was a struggle and a coming to terms with being different: with having values and an understanding of the world that was not consistent with the messages from television, and found in most societal institutions. What they shared was a small portion of a path taking them in a direction that identifies them as different from the norm. The majority who shared the personal stories mentioned above, in particular the men, indicated that they had rarely talked about their shifts and transformation with others.

Being on the receiving end of someone describing their transformation, without it being a collective conversation, can be experienced as uncomfortable and the speaker perceived as self-righteous. One of the storytellers described a musical duo. One of them played with a beautiful smile on his face, radiating good will and humour, without saying a word about his experience of playing. The other described at some length how he had risen to a higher spiritual place through his playing. Those listening responded to the former's inherent joy and reacted uncomfortably to the latter's pontificating. In the same way, many of those who have shifted to a different mode of thinking and being described the importance of not talking about it – "just doing it".

However, there are challenges explaining why one is making certain choices, choices that are contrary to the 'norm'. One islander described her frustration at being perceived as self-

righteous because she was choosing not to shop at big box stores in a city off-island. She described a conversation with a group of women on the island that loved heading over to Nanaimo in order to get deals at Costco and SuperStore: "They asked me why I didn't shop at these stores and I explained that I wanted to support local businesses, and in particular those that funded island community groups. And the big box stores don't do that. I also don't like spending time and money heading over to Nanaimo. I could tell by their response that they thought I was being self-righteous. All I was doing was explaining why! They were the ones that had asked, after all." Why did the narrator feel she was labelled as self-righteous? I talked to someone who shops at one of the big box stores in order to shed light on the narrator's experience. She suggested that the Nanaimo shoppers would have been aware that the narrator had made a conscious choice. Therefore, they might assume that she judged their choice as lacking awareness or community values. The Nanaimo shoppers may have felt guilt, or a need to justify their actions. They may also have experienced discomfort at values about community support entering the conversation. The narrator had challenged a behavioural norm of the group she was part of, and one that is consistent with the dominant culture - shopping is fun and the aim is to get good deals, supporting or not supporting your local community is not one of the considerations. There is a dissonance between the two different sets of actions so both parties end up feeling uncomfortable if comparisons are made. One of the challenges facing the narrator, who made the choice to shop local, and others taking actions different from the societal prescribed norm, is the potential to be perceived as self-righteous. The most common response by storytellers was choosing to just do it, and not speak to it, other than to those with similar behaviours.

There are people choosing an alternative lifestyle choice who come across as self-righteous, they want the world to know what they are doing and they want to be praised; in the same way someone, believing in the dominant culture's success indicators, mentions the type of vehicle, or watch or clothes they own.

If stories of personal transformation are told, without corresponding action that reflects a different mode of thinking and being, it would be easy to dismiss the stories as 'flaky' (a colloquial term used to describe someone who is unreliable, a procrastinator, and a careless or lazy person[7]). However, storytellers were chosen for this research because they were actively involved in system change. All of those I talked to put in hours of volunteer time working with others to create systems that supported healthier relationships with both the environment and each other.

These volunteer actions challenge the descriptor 'it's all about me'. Storytellers are involved in change that includes and benefits other members of their community. In their stories they do not focus on what they personally would get out of the change, except to the extent that it is consistent with their values and way of understanding the world, and thus provides them with a context that resonates. However, two storytellers emphasized how important their own role was when creating the new or altered system. The need to emphasize one's own importance is a characteristic consistent with a hierarchical understanding of success, with a higher level of role importance being a virtue in the dominant culture. The dominant virtues of being in positions at the top of hierarchies, winning 'us against them' battles, being featured in the media, and being in positions of power, were evidenced in the stories of some of those involved in creating system changes. These dominant culture virtues were still part of people's behaviour, and the

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[7] UrbanDictionary.com definition of flaky

corresponding actions created barriers to community or system change when interacting with others.

While I have highlighted everyday shifts in behaviour from the dominant to the alternative, there are also times when the storytellers are still engaged in the dominant culture mindset. Shifts tend to be iterative; some people have a different mode of thinking related to the environment, others to social justice, and others to interacting with others. The criticisms of self-righteousness, flaky or self-serving are behaviours that are found throughout society, in those pursuing an alternative lifestyle, as well as those embedded in the dominant culture.

Thinking, Acting, and Interacting

The phrase ' different mode of thinking and being' also resonates with one aspect of Magnusson's (2011) triad of being political – "how we think" (p. 41), and leads into the two other aspects – "how we act" and "how we interact with others". The link is personal responsibility – a conscious understanding of the role one does or can play in that different mode of thinking.

Judith, reflecting on her activism with the community bus and the Gabriola Commons, also illuminates a change in how she acts as a result of an alternative way of thinking: 'But it's a whole different mindset – for me it was. You're not worried about saying are we allowed to do this – "no" doesn't matter. If it feels like it needs to be done you do it." She had moved from the understanding that she could stand up to authorities and speak to injustice within the system to understanding that authority can arise from within herself. Instead of looking for approval from government or a distant authority, she now does what she feels should be done, and it comes from her internal authority. And yet she, like storytellers who told of struggling with shopping habits that intruded into their new mode of thinking, has experienced that falling back into a

pattern of bowing to formal authorities. For example, when part of a group initiating some non-motorized pathways, her first response was to try to identify the authority that would 'let' the group proceed. She quickly dropped that response when others questioned why there was a need for approval from an external authority, but the old habit and rationale was still embedded somewhere in her consciousness. What her suggestion did was raise the question about how best to engage government authorities in a way that supported the establishment of the pathways.

Within the stories told there were more references to how a different mode of thinking changed the way people acted than there were to how it changed the way they interacted with others. When interactions were mentioned they were described as one of the most difficult aspects of personal transformation. Challenges identified in this respect included working through dissimilar opinions, and the difficulty people had listening to other peoples' sometimes very different opinions and empathizing with their stories.

However, there were several stories illustrating how people attempted to address interaction challenges. Jean, a member of the Raging Grannies, told the story about a non-violence training workshop with forty other activists. During the course of the workshop one of the men made a nasty remark to one of the women. So the woman asked that they all take part in an exercise in which the women sit on one side and tell their stories about how they feel working as activists, and then the men do the same. The women talked about how they weren't listened to, how they wanted to work with the men, but be heard and not shouted at or put down. Jean believes that the experience was transformative for all who took part. I asked her if the men listened and she said "yes, they did". According to Jean it was the combination of being able to tell their experience, and have it heard and felt by the men, which was transformative for the

women; and, it was listening to and empathizing with women's experience of men's behaviour that was transformative for the men.

Several of the storytellers acknowledged the multiple realities within a space, existing side-by-side with their own perception of reality. For some, including the men in Jean's story, the new way of thinking included recognition that there were many stories in the same space. Others created a new mode of thinking, discarded the old story and replaced it with a new one. Then the new story immediately becoming the 'right' one, and the only one – they were unable to hear other realities. While over time there is usually recognition of the multiplicity of realities rather than the 'truth' being embedded within one story there is danger that a fanaticism evidenced with the old story becomes fanaticism of the new story without leaving room for other realities.

Judith, the Commons activist, describes how an alternative mode of being can permeate into "the way we think about everything – how our society is structured – economically, politically…and how critical are the threats to the natural world around us". Several people identified how a personal transformation in one area of their life transferred to a shift in another part of their life. Whether a rethinking in the realm of meat-eating for Victor led to a rethinking in the realm of religion or the other way around is not clear. However, they both happened around the same time and elements of his response to Christianity filtered into his switch to vegetarianism. He described one connection between the two as his distaste for Christian preaching because, "Those darn Christians just don't practice what they preach", and a desire to never preach about why he became a vegetarian. Underlying both decisions was a shift in his mode of thinking from accepting the cultural ways of being he had grown up with to sourcing his decisions from an inner sense of what was right for him.

A growing commitment to listening to that internal compass rather than stories we have been told and sold seems to increase the probability of questioning the old stories and shifting to a different mode of thinking related to those that don't resonate internally. Over one hundred fifty years ago Walt Whitman described the process as follows: "Re-examine all that you have been told... dismiss that which insults your soul" (Walt Whitman, 1855). Several narrators depicted how, as more and more of the stories are shifted from old ones to new ones that resonate with their values, a point is reached where the framework for understanding the world, the universe and one's place in that universe, also shifts. Two people described this framework as a new cosmology. Cate, reflecting on the transformation she underwent when tragedy hit her and her family, emphasized that "while I may have one cosmology – I also understand that there are so many around that work for people." Another storyteller described it as "just a matter of rethinking everything." There were some story-tellers who did not mention a changed framework or cosmology. They may not have experienced it or they may have decided not to include it as part of their story.

Although there were many ways in which the storytellers experienced personal transformation, a consistent theme was how old stories were replaced with ones that resonated with their values and how an alternative mode of thinking and acting and interacting resulted. There was evidence that for some of the storytellers that there was a transfer of a different mode of thinking and being from one part of their life to another and for some there was a new framework arising from an accumulation of new stories. The response to personal transformative shift involves both a shift towards conscious moment to moment living as well as actions taken to create the type of world that resonates with one's internal values. The decisions about what actions to take derive from those values, from the new mode of understanding.

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Summary

The stories I heard epitomize the expression 'the personal is political', a phrase launched into the public consciousness by Carol Hanisch in 1970. Being political[8] starts with being in transformative spaces, spaces in which there are opportunities for hearing new stories about ourselves and the world around us. Transformative spaces may be unexpected or sought out and they cannot be deliberately created by others, although certain elements in a space may increase the potential of a shift to a different mode of being happening. Transformation arises out of a wide range of experiences including tragedy, new experiences, connecting with the natural world, witnessing a different way of being, becoming aware of multiple realities in the same space, and experiencing disconnects between systems and personal values.

Transformation only occurs if one is ready to become aware of different stories about oneself and the world in which one lives. And that readiness involves responding to stories that resonate with internal values, being willing to let go of what will be lost, allowing multiple realities, and a culmination of the same message being heard or experienced in a myriad of ways. Transformation is a different mode of thinking and being, a change in sense of self, a replacement of old stories with those that resonate, and a questioning of the dominant virtues. For some an accumulation of new stories creates a different life framework. Thinking, acting and interactions flow from that different mode of being, creating conscious living and systems that resonate with internal values.

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[8] Using Isin's 'being political' as "that moment when the naturalness of the dominant virtues is called into question and their arbitrariness revealed" (2002, p. 275).

Chapter Six: Everyday Life – Escaping Society?

In this chapter I will explore how different values and ways of understanding the world lead to alternative lifestyles and cultures. I use the following definition of the word 'culture' – the norms, behaviours, beliefs, and meanings given to symbols in everyday life (Swidler, 2003). Basing one's everyday life choices on internal values that differ from dominant values often creates behaviours that are unlike those in mainstream society. Due to the all-pervading influence of those dominant values, living life according to one's internal integrity requires being conscious of daily decisions. This consciousness, plus a recognition and application of personal agency, shapes those aspects of everyday life that differ from the norm. Storytellers described how their awareness of being interconnected to others and to the environment, within a larger ecology, shaped their approach to food, shelter and economics. Their actions illustrate a cultural shift as ecological accountability creates different norms and behaviours than those created by an economic-thinking accountability. Criticisms, from those embedded in the dominant culture, such as 'irresponsible' and 'escaping society', arise from these diverse approaches to accountability. Storytellers describe strategies that support their path of alternative decision-making and reduce the potential that they will be shamed or seduced into buying into the critiques.

Conscious Decision-making

I initiated the narrative conversations with a request for stories about transformative space and system change. As noted in the previous chapter, many people described their personal transformation when asked why they were engaged in system shifting. Their different mode of thinking begets a different way of acting and interacting with others and a growing

consciousness about new stories as well as old ones that they incorporate into everyday

decisions.

That consciousness brings awareness to each moment. Leah, a storyteller involved in

local food and cultural initiatives, described the experience of rethinking everything:

> The thinking has changed and eventually the thinking, things that were accepted before,
>
> taken for granted before…the more I feel like I wake up to every little choice I make.
>
> Actually moment, to moment, to moment is about this out here – it's not just about me
>
> making my choice. (Leah)

What does Leah mean when she says 'this out here'? She is referencing the interconnectedness

between the changed mode of thinking and being to the world around us – to other people, other

species, the natural world, and the complex systems that currently construct our society. Leah

illustrates the concept of conscious decision-making when describing how a shift to a different

mode of thinking changed her day to day actions:

> It brings it to what does it actually mean to be present, I mean hyper, super-duper present
>
> – in the most so-called mundane – the day to day to day mundane, day to day stuff. Am I
>
> going to buy this or am I going to buy that - My habit is to buy this – and I have a whole
>
> laundry list of reasons why that feels like the right thing to do and yet, that's the change –
>
> it's a whole shift into a different belief in how our moment to moment decisions affect
>
> everything.

She described how she is now reassessing whether to buy honey that is inexpensive or honey that

is local, recognizing that the decision to buy local has a positive impact on the environment, on

the local economy, and on people that she has come to know and care about. At the same time

she is very conscious of the deeply held laundry list of reasons that created her habit of buying

inexpensive honey from the big box store, not least of which is the financial cost. Her description of how challenging it is to change habits based on the new mode of thinking highlights how elements of our previous rationale may still be present as we attempt to shift our actions. Getting deals in order to save money, ease of a plastic bag over remembering the cloth bag, eating oranges flown from Florida and China because we need to treat ourselves, or we need oranges in our diet, are all part of the shopping list of reasons that may prevent us from acting in that new mode of thinking and being.

Without some consciousness of new and old, alternative and dominant stories, decision making that translates into behavioural shifts would not occur. However, it is rare for people to be fully aware of all of society's created stories. Everyday decisions on the part of the storytellers reflect some consciousness about some of these stories, although there is also the continued presence of narratives constructing the dominant culture. This awareness leads to choices in everyday life that, when acted upon, illustrate whether stories from the dominant culture, or an alternative culture, are informing the decision.

Everyday Life Choices

What does this different approach to decision-making look like? I will feature the lives and the choices made by several of the storytellers in order to illustrate norms and behaviours that reflect a cultural shift from the dominant way of living using, as examples, their choices in food, shelter and economics, made in light of their values and beliefs.

Rebecca is twenty-eight years old. She grew up on one of the islands, completed her degree at a university in Eastern Canada, and then moved back to the island with her partner Alex. Together, "we are ditching the dominant system which dictates that we should have a great

big house that we go into massive debt to obtain". Instead they live in a Yome[9] while building a

house as eco-friendly and sustainable as possible within their budget. "We are building as-we-

can-afford", mortgage free, using our own sweat, blood, and sometimes tears to get this done so

that we can truly enjoy it when it's done." Their decision to 'ditch' the dominant system speaks to

their awareness of the dominant narrative, and the potential for alternatives. Their choice also

speaks to agency, their recognition that they have internal authority. They did not bow down to

the cultural expectations expressed through mainstream media. They understand that there is

more than one story about success - they don't have to buy the big house and incur massive debt,

instead they have chosen a lifestyle that fits with their values. Their approach frees up time for

"'good scenery, good food, and good company'. These are all the things that I really, really

value, and try to include in my everyday life on a regular basis" (Rebecca).

Robb also made decisions about his home based on his desire to choose value based

pleasure time over status symbols. In his early twenties, after completing a physics degree, he

realized that he could rent a $100 per month cottage for six months, do some contract work then

head off travelling for the remainder of the year. In his late twenties he moved to one of the Gulf

Islands, found inexpensive accommodation and continued the pattern: "Six months on, six

months off eventually evolving to 20 hours a week which I do now. I never had the intention to

save up lots of money or buy property." One of his homes was a small sailboat, which he also

used to travel throughout the Salish Sea. Then in his mid-forties he bought a house:

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[9] A Yome is a hybrid between a yurt and a geodesic dome. The Yome Rebecca and her partner live in has a
250 square foot footprint.

In spite of my not working too much I ended up saving money anyway because I hardly

spent any money. So in the long run I had enough money to acquire some material

possessions and end up being a little bit part of the system, buying a house.

While Robb took a different route than Rebecca and her partner, he was aware of the dominant

culture's consumer culture in his early twenties. Hoffman (2011) describes the consumer culture

as "Any culture that is based on the consumption of things, in which people use materials to

identify themselves and to communicate, socialize, and relate to others". Robb's rejection of

material status symbols, including a big house with a corresponding mortgage, allowed him to

choose a lifestyle focused on enjoying life: I'm not doing this for altruistic reasons – you know,

I'm going to live miserable because that's the right thing to do – I do this because I get great

pleasure." Rebecca and Robb demonstrate how agency, and conscious decision-making based on

a different understanding of the world from that found in a consumer culture can produce

lifestyles based on values, and pleasure. Both of these storytellers decided to reject the

acquisition of dominant culture status symbols, and the work required to pay for those symbols.

Their limited consumption of goods and services reflect an understanding of the

relationship between their decisions and the environment. Being low impact on the earth also

influenced shelter choices for both Robb and Rebecca. Size is one of the components – the Yome

floor area is 250 square feet, the live-on sailboat was approximately 100 square feet, and the

current house that Rebecca and her partner are building is just over 800 square feet. The rationale

- a smaller footprint leaves more of the natural earth intact, uses less materials and less energy.

The type of materials used is another factor. Rebecca and her partner used stick framing like a

normal house, but the infill is made from waste wood chips, gathered on the island, together with

clay from their property. Their choice of materials include an electric on-demand water heater,

primarily recycled windows with a couple of new windows from Buy and Sell, pillars instead of a full foundation to reduce use of concrete (one twentieth of what it would have been if a full foundation had been poured), rain water harvesting, and plans for solar hot water heating. There was minimal waste - only two bags of garbage at the end of the framing and roofing process.

Briony, another islander, describes her home on Salt Spring Island as a 100 mile home (referencing the 100 mile diet popularized by McKinnon and Smith (2007)). Local salvaged fir and cedar were milled for her home and various materials, such as slate shingles and a clawfoot bathtub, were obtained from local demolitions and renovations. She refused to use any materials containing chemicals harmful to the environment or humans, while still complying with building code regulations. One example – she had hoped to use sheep wool insulation but the building code required the wool to be sprayed with a fire retardant, so instead she found some used Rockwool insulation (consistent with the building code) from a local supplier of recycled construction materials.

Rebecca and Robb's conscious decision-making, based on ecological values, is also evident in their food choices. Good local food is a value and pleasure mentioned by both Robb and Rebecca. Robb describes food as "one of life's delights – I eat great food - no shortage of variety and flavours… I am very passionate about local food." He wildcrafts[10] and works in friends' gardens in return for food from those gardens. Rebecca chose a photo of food from her garden for the photo component of the research: "The picture [Figure 1] shows how my everyday life reflects my values. The food in the picture is from our garden.

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[10] Wildcrafting is the practice of gathering plants, herbs and fungi from their natural environment.

Figure 5: Food from Rebecca's garden

Rebecca has a garden in the Gabriola Commons community gardens and one planned for her own property. She recently took a permaculture course in order to learn more about self-contained agricultural systems, modelled after natural eco-systems, and works for pay in islanders' gardens (which she combines with other part time work). As with their approach to shelter, both Robb and Rebecca are conscious of the impact on the earth of their various food choices and, whenever possible, choose the lowest impact while maintaining the pleasure of good food. Local food, grown in a way that incorporates community and stewardship of the environment, plus opportunities to purchase local products, shifts the culture of food from a global food market, with corresponding world-wide transportation, to a local relationship based culture.

The term economics comes from the ancient Greek word 'oikonomia', a word combining 'house' and 'rules', which refers to the management or administration of a household. Rebecca's and Robb's stories reflect an approach to economics that is closer to the original meaning than the current use of the term as shorthand for economy, and thus for capitalism as the dominant form. Their approach to oikonomia responds to the needs of their household, without corresponding to societal norms regarding consumerism and economic growth.

The approach to shelter and food depicted in the preceding stories also reflects the word ecology, another word with oikos as the root. Literally translated the word ecology means study of the house. Webster-Mirriam (2013) provides the following definition: "a branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their environments." The choices that Robb and Rebecca have made regarding their shelter and food include management of household

needs in order to achieve a lifestyle corresponding to their values, together with a consciousness and consideration of the interrelationship between their decisions and the environment. "We try to achieve these things in a sustainable way that doesn't involve spending tons of money on "stuff" (Rebecca).

They use this same oikos or 'eco' approach when it comes to transportation, entertainment and clothes. Rebecca's prime modes of transportation are bike and walking, while Rob uses an electric vehicle and his sailboat in addition to walking. Rebecca describes how she gets her "entertainment from the beauty of our surroundings and from spending time with our friends and family". Both Robb and Rebecca attend house concerts held in local homes. Rebecca clothes herself using a combination of second hand clothing stores, clothes swaps, creating her own clothing, and infrequent purchases of new clothes.

Many of the storytellers described how living life to the fullest, fun, and singing were core aspects of their life. Contrary to the message from mainstream media that we have to give up a life of pleasure if we live in an ecologically sustainable way, storytellers described a way of life that was less stressful and full of joy and laughter:

> So having pleasure in life is a big part of my shift. I think that is a shift from the normal culture – because I see a lot of people involved in the rat race focused on acquiring wealth or status and in doing that they give up a lot of free time and they give up a lot of simple pleasures. (Robb)

Storytellers felt that their choice of simple pleasures compared favourably with what they perceived as the societal norm of accumulating possessions and gaining status through big homes and wealth. Their choices led them to a range of economic practices, with a weighting towards non-capitalist practices (See Figure 6). The graph is Rebecca's estimation of the goods and services flow in her life and reflects her belief about relationships as well as stewardship. Most of her economic practices fall into Gibson-Graham's (1996) description of the many forms of economics that are not

Figure 6: Estimate of Rebecca's economic practice
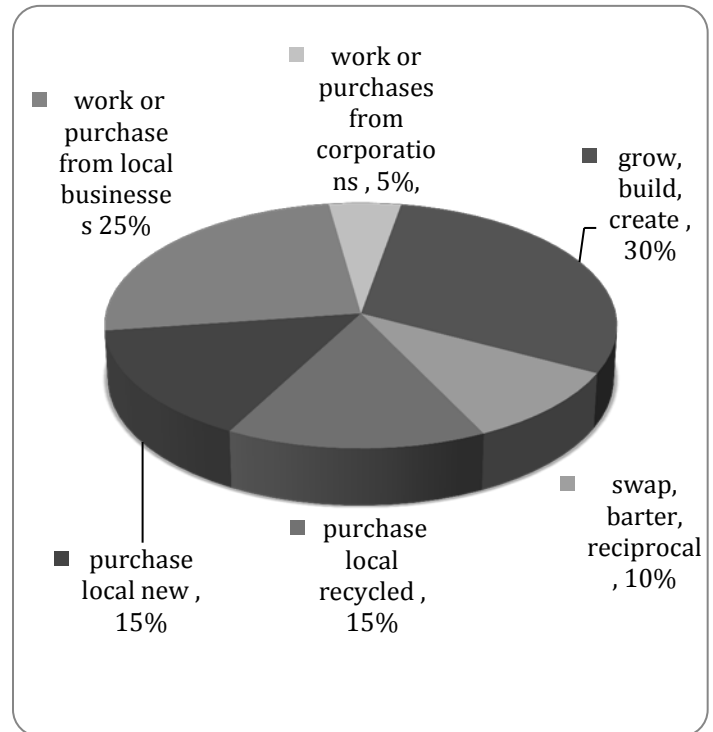
capitalist, including reciprocal exchange of goods and services, growing one's food, using pre-used clothes and other materials, and creating one's own entertainment. Both Rebecca and Robb still make purchases that are part of the capitalist system, buying some building materials, tools, and a small amount of clothes and food. Acknowledging the forms of economics that are not capitalist, and recognizing that they can exist side by side with capitalist purchases, provides the opportunity to envision and increase forms of non-capitalist economic practices rather than feel tied to capitalism because it is the current dominant form.

Storytellers demonstrate how a key side effect of an ecological approach to one's lifestyle results in reduced capitalist practices and an increase in economic practices that create connections with others, as well as more time to enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Magnusson

(2011, p. 128) provides some thoughts about the challenges in thinking from an ecological perspective:

> Whereas economic thought begins from the human and moves outward, ecological thought goes in the opposite direction. To think ecologically is to suggest that the human oikos, however conceived, is only one element in an oikos for all beings… To be realistic, we must gain a better sense of our own limitations. But, even in economic thought, the order appropriate to us emerges behind our backs. Our immediate purposes are self interested and materialistic.

While acknowledging areas in which there is wavering and blind spots, the storytellers try to make decisions that reflect their belief that they are only one element in the larger ecology, and thus their decisions need to incorporate the impact on those other organisms. This belief results in growing and consuming local, naturally grown food; creation of shelters that have a low environmental footprint; and, economic practices that veer away from capitalist practices and towards local, recycled purchases or exchanges. In the following sections within this chapter, and within subsequent chapters I will use the terms economic-thinking and ecological-thinking to reflect Magnusson's comments in the preceding quote regarding the characterization of these different modes of thinking.

Cultural Shift creates Criticisms

As reflected in Rebecca's and Robb's lifestyles, and as noted in the previous chapter, many perceive the Gulf Islands as a location for alternative living. Comments that islanders often hear, from family and friends living elsewhere, is that islanders are escaping society, are irresponsible and spend too much time in self-analysis to the exclusion of broader or more productive concerns. In this section I shed light on the everyday lifestyle described as an escape,

and reflect on stories that create different interpretations of global issues and their relationship to everyday life. I also explore strategies used by storytellers to counter the impact of acting in ways that diverge from the 'norm'.

The word irresponsible has been used to describe the everyday life of Robb: "I've had a few people say that they didn't think I was especially responsible" (Robb). Dictionaries define the word 'responsible' as being accountable, capable of rational or reasonable decisions, and able to pay one's debts (Dictionary.com, 2013; Mirriam-Webster, 2013;). The origin of the word is recent, used by John Stuart Mill to describe responsible government in the middle of the nineteenth century, and Max Weber, in the late nineteenth century, to describe the need for morally responsible politicians (Williams, 2006). In the twentieth century, philosophers used the word 'responsible' in relation to free will and determinism (Williams). To understand the stories originating from both the criticizer and the criticized I will analyse dominant and alternative lifestyles in relation to these different aspects of the word 'responsible'.

Who is one accountable to when referring to one's lifestyle? According to Robb he has "way less impact on earth – and also supporting…community and supporting friends. So I would say in most ways I've been extra, maybe even compensating…extra responsible." He sees himself accountable to the environment, to his community and to his friends; and, in that light, he sees himself as responsible. Robb and Rebecca have carbon footprints under 1 tonne CO_2e whereas the average carbon footprint for Canadians, using the same calculator, is 20 tonnes CO_2e. Both Rebecca and Robb volunteer with community organizations that provide services and supports to others in their community. In my conversations with them, both mentioned how important maintaining positive connections with friends and family were to them.

Who, or what, are people accountable to in the dominant culture? One form of accountability is the protestant work ethic, which emphasizes hard work, frugality and prosperity, as key to Christian salvation (Weber, 1904). In this case it is God or Christ to whom one is accountable. John Lutz (2008) describes how the "willingness to work long hours, to sacrifice leisure, and to pursue wealth beyond his/her basic needs" (p. 7) were standards arising from this belief system. Stott (1978, 1974) argues that this approach to wealth differs from the basic tenets of Christianity, in which the focus is on 'loving one's neighbour as oneself' and working enough to satisfy basic needs, rather than increasing personal wealth (Keller, 1976). Instead, the use of the term protestant work ethic, as described by both Weber and Lutz, reflects the beliefs underlying the capitalist movement and the current consumer culture. If judged through the lens of the capitalist work ethic, Robb and Rebecca might be considered irresponsible, due to their lack of focus on prosperity and accumulation of goods beyond their basic needs.

In mainstream media, the 'accountability' phrases used reflect a belief that one needs to participate in the capitalist economy in order to make everything function, provide jobs, provide taxes for social programs, and keep the products and food flowing to consumers. In former President Bush's nationwide speech responding to the attacks on the World Trade Centre his key request to the American people: "…your continued participation and confidence in the American economy would be greatly appreciated" (Wallace-Wells, 2003). And five years later on Cable News Network (CNN): "Bush asked Americans to go shopping, and they did – bringing an economy shattered by the attacks back to full speed within a few years" (Tanneeru, 2006). Galbraith (1996) describes how all industrial countries exhibit "a firm commitment to the consumer economy – to consumer goods and services – as the primary source of human

satisfaction and enjoyment and as the most visible measure of social achievement" (p. 3).

Dermody (2011) links consumerism and capitalism:

> [Consumerism] is an economic ideology for global development, in which unfettered
>
> consumerism reinforces and increases capitalism—and its power—on a global scale. It is
>
> a political ideology that has facilitated the emergence of neoliberalism, where the market,
>
> market mechanisms, choice, and consumer dominate to provide an exciting and
>
> interesting blend of products and services that appeal to our functional and aspirational
>
> needs and desires. (p. 86)

Rebecca and Robb believe that consuming more than they need would be behaving

irresponsibly, as any amount of consumption draws from the earth's finite resources, and the

processes to create those products are often detrimental to life and the environment (Boulanger,

2011). Their beliefs about consumerism include Aristotle's concept of natural and unnatural

transactions. He described natural transactions as those aimed at satisfying needs, the

corresponding wealth limited in quantity by the purpose it served, while unnatural transactions

were aimed at monetary gain with the wealth they yielded becoming an end in itself rather than a

means to satisfy needs (Aristotle, The Politics, Books 1). Many of Canada's First Nations also

believe that actions aimed at increasing wealth for wealth's sake are vices rather than virtues. It

is custom to give any accumulated wealth away during potlatches.

The other elements of the 'responsibility' definition are rational decision-making and

paying one's debts. Regarding the latter element, both Rebecca and Robb have chosen to stay

away from financial debt. Regarding the former, the Mirriam-Webster dictionary (2012) uses the

phrase: "able to choose for oneself between right and wrong" adding a moral dimension to

decision-making. Given the preceding discussion, which highlights how the different modes of

thinking about what is right and wrong determine one's approach to accountability, I argue that the concept of right or wrong in this case is dependent upon the way in which one understands oneself in relation to the environment, capitalist economy, community, friends, and family. These different ways of understanding responsibility are embedded in diverse belief systems, in different stories about the economy and the surrounding world.

Another criticism that links to different understandings of the world is one that I heard from my sister when I first moved to the islands – the idea that islanders are 'escaping society', that they 'aren't living in the real world.' Several islanders I talked to have described similar comments from their families. If we go back to the definition of society outlined at the beginning of this chapter it is easy to understand why this criticism arises. People like Robb and Rebecca have, literally, escaped some of the perceived requirements of being part of mainstream society. They are free from the belief that wealth, power, big homes and fashionable clothes are symbols of their success in society.

However, I am still within the dominant society, as are Rebecca and Robb; and, as a result, we may be viewed as strange or a failure by those who believe that the world is currently structured the 'right' way or the only way possible. There is a challenge, for those who feel that they fit the dominant culture, to understand that there is another way, let alone why anyone would want to live differently. In a similar vein, Smith (1984) describes the challenge men face in acknowledging the world of women: "The discourse of male inhabitants of the ruling apparatus has no alternative standpoint. It is hard therefore, for men to look behind or beneath or around the corners of the ruling apparatus (p. 12)". In the same way Greek men, who were citizens of the polis, believed that they were living in a democratic society, even though women, slaves, and men who weren't born in the polis, had no voice in decision-making (Isin, 2002).

Some of the storytellers described feeling like an outsider, not part of society, their inner compass at odds with the norms and behaviours of the dominant culture. As a result many focused their attention on connecting with like-minded people. Victor, who travelled from Tennessee to the Gulf Islands to find like-minded people – "What we all need is more vitamin T – and T stands for tribe…and that's what you get at the Commons is a big old dose of vitamin T right up your arm." Robb described the importance, to him, of connections in his community: "The transformations that I want to be involved with are actually the friend's gardens, the local community projects".

However, each one of these storytellers is still part of the larger society, with governments, laws, corporations, systems and media that tell stories of capitalist economic growth as progress, consumerism as a sign of well-being, and hierarchical power as an indicator of success. In today's world those influences flow into everyone's life and community. Some islanders, in particular those who often travel to urban centres for work or family, describe the discomfort as well as the seduction of the larger society. The discomfort arises out of interacting in spaces, in which the type of alternative lifestyle they are living is not as accepted. Instead, people question and often ridicule their lifestyle. While this primarily occurs off island it also happens on the islands, although not as often. There are communities within the larger centres in which the lifestyle and values are similar and therefore accepted. The seduction, "oh but sometimes that world is so seductive, it is hard to resist" (anonymous), is the consumer goods and services, often combined with the status or power that island residents may have experienced or be experiencing in previous and/or current positions. The discomfort and seduction create lifestyles that waver between the two cultures. Robb touched on this in his discomfort about being part of the system when he bought his house. Most of the storytellers, while creating shifts

in their everyday lives based on their values, still make some choices and decisions that are contrary to those professed values and reflect a foot in the door of the dominant culture. Sometimes storytellers make those decisions because they believe there are no other choices, and other times because of that discomfort or seduction.

The behaviours of those in the dominant culture as well as those living an alternative lifestyle reflect Isin's (2002) technologies and strategies of differentiation and cohesion. The criticism of the lifestyles described above as irresponsible and 'an escape from the real world' is used to solidify the superiority of those adhering to the norms and behaviours of the dominant culture and imply inferiority of an alternative culture. The 'tribe' that Victor spoke about is an "insurgent form…found both in organized grassroots mobilizations and in everyday practices that, in different ways, empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas" (Isin, p. 265). Some members of that tribe use criticisms of the dominant society in order to establish their own solidarity. The process on both sides creates an 'us against them' conflict, and resistance to understand the 'why' of the difference.

However, the sense of 'tribe' also provides support and encouragement to those feeling the pull of dominant societal myths. Habermas (1984) argues that the state apparatus intrudes into the lifeworld[11] thereby creating stress and contradictions in our daily lives in its incongruence with our natural way of living. The response to the dissonance has been social movements emphasizing values different from those emanating from the state apparatus. The various storytellers echo that desire to live according to their own values, supported by others thinking and being in that same mode, thus reducing the stress created in the contradictions described by Habermas.

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[11] Habermas's lifeworld is the lived experience of individuals.

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When I first heard the criticism - 'escaping society' – I was surprised. My perception of islanders was that they were very much engaged in society – through their headline hitting critiques, challenges and protests of corporate and government systems. What has become evident through this analysis is that those challenges and critiques are part of the so-called escape, based on protecting the liberty of living life differently than the dominant culture. The criticism is part of alienation strategies on the part of those wanting to maintain their dominant culture norms and behaviours, while the tribal response is part of the solidaristic strategies of those creating alternative lifestyles.

Ecological Accountability

Other strategies used by storytellers, aimed at increasing the ease of living a lifestyle based on ecological accountability, include development of physical connections to nature. Michael's story, which I started in the previous chapter, depicts the creation and impact of opportunities for increased awareness of the natural world.

Michael's story is a spiral – winding through time from his childhood of exploring the natural world, to a university degree in ecology, to raising a family and engaging his children in naturalist clubs in order to support their explorations. When his children were young he engaged in the resistance battle against a subdivision coming on to the island, and then realized that for him, the approach didn't work.

> At the meetings we were the ones advocating, ranting is the word. So, through that I was finding that that model wasn't working. So that's when I started creating with others these community celebrations of our natural environment – so we would have stations on the fresh water, marine, forest and we would do that with different activities and there were other people in the community getting involved.

His aim was to provide opportunities for people to experience the natural world and see the ecology in their own back yard so that when decisions were being made about whether or not a subdivision should be created then more people would be aware of the impact on the ecology and would incorporate that into their decision about the proposed development.

He then expanded the provision of ecological learning experiences to school children, an interest that originated in the support for exploring he had received in his childhood. "I was doing multi-sensory walking outside, all these things with kids to get them to experience their natural world in all the different ways possible. His purpose: "you have a different way of thinking – if you've got a connection, a visceral connection with something in the natural world… you have a different respect for it." In 2001 he started ecological learning centres based on this same philosophy and they are now operating on four of the Gulf Islands and have provided almost 1500 children and youth with experiences in the natural world. In 2005 Richard Louv, in his book entitled "Last Child in the Woods", introduced the term 'nature deficit disorder' along with his observation that children, in North America and elsewhere, were becoming disengaged from direct experiences with nature, and the ecological knowledge that those experiences provide. "Since the 1970s the area in which children may roam without supervision has decreased by almost 90%. In one generation the proportion of children regularly playing in wild places in the UK has fallen from more than half to fewer than one in 10" (Monbiot, 2012). An element of Louv's argument is that physical connections with the wild increase ecological considerations or accountability in decision making. According to Michael, the goal of the ecological learning centres is to instil "ecological consequences as part of [the participant's] decision making."

The philosophy underlying Michael's program is replicated in the School District for the Southern Gulf Islands. Sarah teaches the Shared Ecological Education program at Salt Spring Island's middle school. The program is 'place based, personalized as much as possible…we get outside as much as we can…cooperative learning, so multi-age students, sensory awareness and exploration." Sarah describes how exploration and facilitated learning about the local natural world increases student's understanding of global environmental issues: "

> They understand their connection to this place. I think that when we're discussing issues from elsewhere and they bring in global issues then they are really good at comparing the issues they might have somewhere else in the world with issues we have here…they can relate to it somehow because they know about things that are going on here that might be similar.

Part of my conclusion is that increased awareness of ecological systems, and the interconnections between organisms within an ecological system, illuminates the extent to which one's decision can have an unintended impact on another organism. The preceding stories involved organisms in the wild. However stories, such as the one about local stores rather than big box stores, emphasize how the impacts of choices are just as relevant in the context of humans and their constructs, and on a global as well as a local level.

Summary

This chapter is about a culture shift in everyday lives. I argue that the shifts in beliefs mentioned in the previous chapter create shifts in the norms and behaviours of everyday life, in one's relationship to food, shelter and economic practices. These shifts reflect the values of connections with nature and community, the recognition that one is part of a larger ecology, and the need to be conscious of how decisions impact other organisms within that ecology. The

rethinking and corresponding actions take storytellers out of the meta-discourse of 'economics is capitalism' and the corresponding necessity for economic growth. Instead the economics they practice challenge the concept that the mode of capitalist production, and its' corresponding social relations, morality, and ideology, is the only way to satisfy human society's material needs. Because the cultural norms and behaviours of the storytellers are different from the current dominant culture then there is what Foucault would call, 'muffled shocks' in relationship to the dominant culture as well as a wavering between the two cultures. Criticisms, such as 'irresponsible' and 'escaping society', reflect the different world views and corresponding understandings of accountability that shape the different cultures. Alienating strategies by those wanting to maintain the superiority of the dominant culture are countered by solidaristic strategies by those attempting to live a different lifestyle. Developing a personal connection with nature, and engaging with other community members, strengthens the capacity to make decisions from an ecological perspective. As will be seen in the following chapters, these differing world views play out when that urge to transform intersects with community self-governance, local governments, and technologies of control stemming from corporate/government directives.

Chapter Seven: System Shifting

System…network or assembly of parts that form a whole (Collins, 2004)… an organization forming a network especially for distributing something or serving a common purpose… a form of social, economic, or political organization or practice. (Mirriam Webster, 2012)

Shift…To exchange for or replace by another…To change the place, position, or direction of…To make a change in… (Mirriam Webster, 2012)

This chapter is about shifts in systems. I describe dominant systems, created on the premise that humans (and corporations) make decisions based through economic-thinking, as described in the previous chapter. I then describe how alternative systems are created, some tightly interwoven with the dominant systems, and some peripherally linked; providing options for those making decisions based on relationships within an interconnected world. In this Chapter I will examine initiatives that arose out of a different mode of thinking and being and the resulting urge to transform. I will explore and compare dominant and alternative systems for food, shelter, energy, and manufactured goods.

The systems described here are illustrative rather than all-encompassing, and my descriptions barely brush the surface of their complexity; however, the approaches, behaviours and beliefs illuminate how and why alternatives are developed. The systems that storytellers have created correspond to their inner values and ecological-thinking that factors other organisms into the equation. These types of initiatives are not unique to the Gulf Islands. Rather, they reflect a decision-making mode, found in people throughout the world, which differs from North America's dominant culture.

Food Systems

Food is a basic necessity of life. How our food is gathered or grown, processed, distributed, consumed and then either recycled or disposed of, is called our food system. The Gulf Islands once supported its inhabitants with foods from the land and sea. Over the last sixty years there has been a movement away from meeting food needs through local food production; and a corresponding shift towards increased imports. It has been estimated that 85% of food eaten on Vancouver Island now comes from off the island (McNair, 2004) and on the Gulf Islands as high as 95% (Grignon, 2013). For many consumers, the advantage of this system is access to a variety of inexpensive food from around the world, grown by others.

The dominant food system consists of food shipped from around the world grown by large mono-culture agricultural businesses; the use of chemical fertilizers, crops containing genetically modified organisms, intensive farming, and low wage labour. The impact on the environment includes:

[S]ignificant greenhouse gas emissions through heavy use of fossil fuels and nitrogen based fertilizers (McMichael et al., 2007; Carlsson-Kanyama & Gonzalez, 2009); polluted water and lands from extensive agrochemical use (Moss, 2008; Kurtz, 2005); contamination of crops with genetically modified organisms (Belcher et al. 2005); and, loss of biodiversity on and off farm resulting from reliance on single species crops and intensive agricultural practices (Francis, 2004; Goland and Bauer, 2004; Thrupp, 2000). (Vancouver Island Community Research Alliance, 2011)

In addition, the projected impact of climate change on this global system includes damage to crops through floods, storms and drought, resulting in reduced food supplies and corresponding price increases. The 2008 food price crisis caused, in part, by droughts in grain

producing nations (De Schutter, 2010), foreshadows future impacts. Forecasts of higher oil prices due to reduced access to easily available oil (Deffeyes, 2005) indicate higher costs for transporting food, a cost already incorporated into the price of imported food.

And, while economists tout the advantage of a system that produces inexpensive food, over one billion people in the world are going hungry (FAO, 2009). In Canada access to food is also an issue, "in March 2010, 867,948 people were assisted by food banks in Canada. This is a 9% increase over 2009 - and the highest level of food bank use on record." (Food Banks Canada, 2010, p. 2)

To counteract the impacts described above there is a growing movement, not just in the Gulf Islands but throughout North America, to increase local organic food production and consumption. Examples on the Gulf Islands include backyard gardens, community gardens, farmer's markets, small to medium sized organic farms, distribution systems for local products, learning forums and increased storage and processing capacity.

Within the last five years the number of people using the community gardens on Mayne Island jumped from seven to thirty-three. And, the results of a survey carried out in 2010 (Table 1) indicate strong support for local produce, whether buying or growing, on Gabriola Island:

Table 1: Local Food Results. Source: Gabriola Well-being Survey (2010)

How often do you do the following?	All of the time	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
Choose local food when available	40.1%	37.0%	22.2%	0.7%
Grow your own food in summer	36.3%	19.2%	23.1%	21.4%

There is a range of information and teaching support on each of the islands and in the Gulf Islands Regional newspaper, the Island Tides. Dan Jason, the owner of Salt Spring Seeds, presents at gardening groups throughout the islands. He demonstrates threshing, seed saving

strategies, and links climate change, peak oil, and the need to increase food security and food sovereignty on the Gulf Islands. All of his seeds are open-pollinated and non-GMO, ensuring that the seeds are safe to reproduce next year's crops. He also provides free samples of grain seeds at his presentations. His aim is to support the re-establishment of Gulf Island self-sufficiency in grains. As a result of his generosity I am now growing amaranth, while others on Gabriola are growing flax, barley, Ethiopian wheat, buckwheat, and rye. Ostry's (2011) analysis of food self-sufficiency in the Vancouver Island Health Authority Region (Table 2), includes the Gulf Islands, and indicates why Dan is focusing on increased local production of grains.

Table 2: Local Self--Sufficiency Index (%) for Major Food Categories in VIHA Region based on Ostry (2011)

Food Categories	Self-Sufficiency Index (%)
Vegetables	17.3
Fruit	8.8
Grain (human consumption)	1.0
Meat, poultry	16.0
Dairy	40.6
Eggs	53.0
All Above Food Categories	22.3

Farmers' markets and farm gate sales, as in other Canadian communities, make it possible for islanders to buy local produce and other local products. While farmers' markets and fall fairs have existed on the islands for over sixty years, they played a declining role in supplying produce to consumers when grocery stores began to stock inexpensive year round produce. However, a renewed interest in local produce has resulted in a number of new vendors and consumers (Sanderson, Gertler, Martz & Mahabir, 2005).

Two islanders have turned their value of local organic food into a business. Henny and Tom have created an organic farm on Galiano Island, called Cable Bay Farm, aimed at providing affordable organic food for Galiano residents (as well as off-island residents) in an environmentally, socially and financially responsible manner. They have involved the local food program group – Galiano families have plots in the community section of the farm, and donate produce to the food program, in return for volunteers who help plant, water and weed a portion of the farm.

Tom and Henny's approach leads us back to the previous chapter and the concept of ecological decision-making. They have not only incorporated consideration of the environment into their enterprise by growing organically, they have included other community members, acknowledging that their farm is only one element in a larger *oikos*. Cable Bay Farm is now a cooperative, synergistic part of the community, not just another traditional vendor/customer business.

Another food enterprise on the islands is Lulu's Locals. The board members of Lulu, a performing arts group, were discouraged by their reliance on erratic government funding for the arts. Leah describes how it got started:

> The roots of Lulu's local started a few years ago when we partnered with Longwood pub and created Lulu's lager... it felt like a way to hold art in community in a different kind of way. Even someone who doesn't go to a concert might buy a product and participate. And then it moved into collaborating with Margot – she made soap – the whole thing was fun, and interesting and lively...and we talked about connections and we talked about community and we talked about the way – just noticing – it wasn't just that we were selling products, in concert there was a whole world that was swirling around it that felt

really good – enjoyable. That moved to talking with Wayne at Village Foods [grocery

store] and asking if we were to collaborate with a bunch of artisan products from the

community and beyond would they be interested in letting us set up a stand in the store

and he said that he thought there was a niche to fill… a need for a distributorship in the

region that would focus on local producers and local vendors. There are a couple of

people that are doing that but they're distributing to a much larger region. So, we

basically explored the idea for a couple of years… looked at feasibility and then just

decided to jump in and see if it actually was feasible…so that's when we launched the

pilot.

Any profit from Lulu's Locals goes to funding the arts on the islands. In the meantime a range of

local artisan products are now available in grocery stores year round, providing island residents

with access to locally produced artisan food and bath products.

Lulu's Local operates from a different mode of thinking as well. According to Leah,

connections are a core component of this social enterprise: "just going around and seeing how

people live who are working in community and land –it's not just the beauty in seeing how

people connected to place but it is the conversations that come up around it and the

connectedness that comes up that I experience. I get to go to the tea farm. We're on hugging

terms. That's really cool!" From Leah's perspective this approach flips the traditional way of

doing business on its' head – instead of profit being the overarching goal, "the larger umbrella or

the larger container is around culture – it supports our cultural economy, both artisan culture and

food economy, we're trying to hold it in that space." Out of this work she has come to realize the

challenge of producing and buying local within the current regulatory system. Processes that

make sense for multi-national companies, or even large non-organic farms, don't make sense for

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the small local artisan or farmer. One example: "The whole labelling process itself. I wonder if it is deliberately made cumbersome and expensive."

Another type of food system a growing number of people are using is the one created by nature, based on the hunter/gatherer model. Individuals throughout the islands are eating foods directly from the wild, hunting, fishing, gathering berries, such as salmonberry and blackberry, picking greens such as miner's lettuce and nettles, and harvesting shellfish off the beaches and mushrooms from the forest. While many North Americans may have picked blackberries or fished, there is an interest expressed by some of the storytellers in understanding the broader range of foods available through the hunter/gatherer approach. "So when I do my green smoothies, half the time I'm out picking salal shoots and blackberry shoots and pine needles and miners lettuce and nettles, you know all the stuff that goes into my smoothies" (Robb). There are some (Olson, 2012) who believe that we need to eliminate our agricultural practices and relearn how to live from the wilderness, leaving no impact on the earth.

The current global food system was created based on generating profit for large agricultural businesses, supported by national and international policies. While the current system provides cheap food from the four corners of the earth to consumers, it also produces polluted water and soil, emits greenhouse gas emissions, and severs the link between the growers and community. Like others in North America, islanders are creating local food systems through community gardens, farmer's markets, and addressing gaps in the local food supply. Cable Bay Farm provides us with an example of how an organic farming enterprise incorporates community. Lulu's Locals reminds us of the importance of connections, as well as the challenges in the current regulatory system for local farmers and artisans. The alternative systems range from living off the land as hunter/gatherers, plus backyard growers, all operating outside the

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capitalist system, to organic agriculture and distribution of local products integrated into the community, and connected to the dominant economic framework.

Building Systems

Shelter is also a necessity of life. It protects us from the elements and provides space for eating, sleeping and living. The Coast Salish people built homes, just over 3000 square feet in size, which housed several families. They used local cedar for these communal spaces, with no private ownership of the building or land. There was a relationship with the earth embedded in their approach, the Coast Salish perceiving their role as stewards and their relationship as interconnected, rather than dominating the land. Early settlers on the Gulf Islands used wood cut from their homesteads to build their homes and families lived in homes under 1000 square feet. They did believe in property ownership, and resource extraction and farming were the primary occupations, illustrating the colonial perspective of dominion over the land (Lewis-Harrison, 1982).

As reflected by Rebecca's statement in the previous chapter, large houses are perceived as a sign of success. In 1975 the average size of a Canadian house was 1,050 square feet, while in 2010 new homes being built were an average of 1,950 square feet. At the same time, the number of people living in a house dropped from 3.5 down to 2.5 (Canada Census, 2012). The average size of a new single-family house in the United States was 2,438 square feet in 2009 (US Census Bureau, 2011). While a larger size provides more indoor space for living, it requires more fuel to heat it, more furniture to fill it, and more building supplies to build it. One advantage of the new houses is that they are built to much higher energy efficiency standards – the 1000 square foot house of 100 years ago may have required the same amount of heat as today's 2000 square foot house. Decisions about sourcing building and finishing materials are usually based on price and

quality – on economic-thinking, rather than whether they are locally or sustainably produced – ecological-thinking.

Throughout the world, many people cannot afford to buy a house due to the high prices

Figure 7: Housing Prices Gabriola Island 2001-2008 (Weller, 2009)
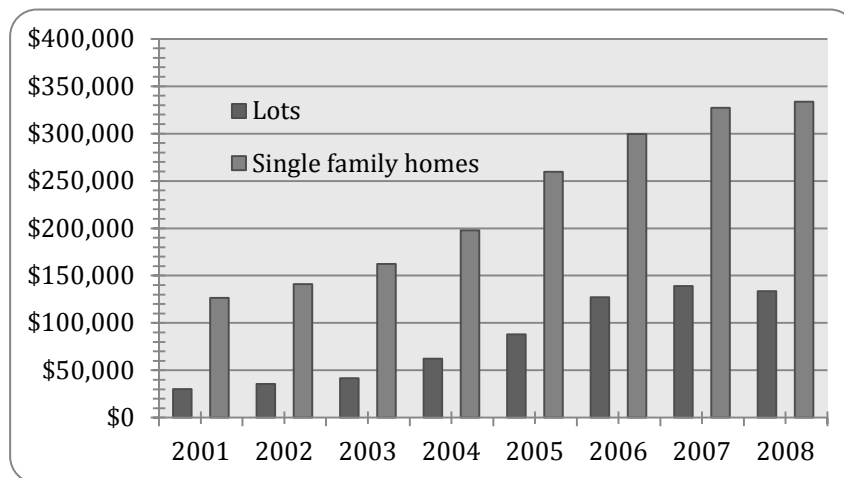
that have resulted from real estate speculation. The challenges of affordable housing are complex and find their root in our economic system and the speculative nature of the real estate market. In Canada,

the federal, provincial and local governments have all, at various points over the last 50 years, initiated programs, studies, and policies in an attempt to respond to the issue. In the Gulf Islands, corresponding to the rise in prices elsewhere in the country, the price of land has more than tripled within the space of seven years - Gabriola Island provided as example (Figure 7). As described in Chapter Four, people bought those lots for a $50 down payment back in the 1960's and 1970's.

There are a growing number of people throughout North America choosing to create their shelter in a different way than the norm described above. The homes Rebecca and Briony built, described in the preceding chapter, are examples drawn from the Gulf Islands. There are also groups of people collectively reshaping shelter options, building materials and structure, as well as composition of those sharing the space and property ownership.

Figure 8: House built by Mud Girls Natural Building Collective

Source: Mudgirls.wordpress.com

I talked to members of the Mud Girls Natural Building Collective, a group of women living throughout the Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island who use only local natural materials to construct natural buildings (Figure 8). They build homes for clients; hold workshops, and trade hours between themselves to build their own homes. The majority of the homes they build are small and thus don't require permits. As a result, the Mud Girls can apply the principles of natural building without being tied to regulations designed for traditional forms of construction. They use rocks on site for the foundation; dirt, clay, straw and woodchips for the walls; driftwood and other salvaged logs for the wood components of the structures; recycled windows; and, recycled glass bottles as stained glass windows. The purpose of the collective, described by Rose, is "to use natural and recycled materials and to empower people and ourselves". As much as possible the collective stays outside the regulatory system – "You know – don't ask permission." Rose describes the need for both a "try to stay under the radar" combined with a pure natural building approach, as well as working within the system for natural building regulatory change, with some compromise of natural building principles:

> Some people – like Ann and Gord Baird, have taken a completely different approach –
> they have chosen to work with engineers and they've actually worked for policy change,
> they work to educate people and they've built a cob house to code – their approach is
> completely different and they've had a lot of success with it – they've built a beautiful

house and that kind of work is very important because they have worked to change

building codes and to make more and more engineers and city workers aware and open

minded. (Rose)

While they provide the option for owners to build outside the regulatory system, the Mud Girls

Collective also build with permits, the decision resting with the owner of the building and

dependent upon the use and size of the building. They have had some interesting interactions

with regulations and officials enforcing the regulations, which I will describe in more detail in

the Chapter on 'Standing up to Government and Corporations'.

The Mud Girls Natural Building Collective is a "consensus-run collective of individuals

who choose that way of earning money as part of a collective." They create and refine their

policies through a group process at the beginning and end of the season, "We call them 'boots

on' and 'boots off' – our own form of boot camp (there is a lot of humour in this – that's huge –

that's possibly the key that holds it all together)". At the meetings they "hash out the policies. We

go over what worked and what didn't work and what all of our experiences have been, who our

clients have been. At every workshop we clarify at the beginning what our goals are." They

decide who will work on specific jobs through, what they call, 'the computer':

So each year we update what our interests are, what our new skills are, and those all go

into the 'computer' - it's like a point system…It's a system based on skills, location,

willingness, whatever- but as we all become more skilled it's more difficult for the

computer to figure out who should get the job. Then when the coordinator is hired then

they figure out what skills are needed on the job and how many jobs there are and then

that gets posted and we all apply.

Different members of the collective take on different roles. Rose, the woman I spoke to was the contact person for requests coming in from their internet site. Another woman is the 'vibes watcher'. Her role is to identify issues to address before they create problems amongst the Mud Girls, or workshop participants:

> We sit in a circle and go over together what is going on…sometimes one person might be in a mood – you know, feeling too rushed… so it's not necessarily – you're a bitch, or whatever. Instead, what are the circumstances this person is dealing with? Are they feeling pressure from the client? And then statements are made and there are hurt feelings. They're rushing everyone and then everyone is feeling it. That kind of stuff can happen. Once you just acknowledge it – it dissipates on its own to a large extent. (Rose)

The importance the collective places on effective communications is evident in their requirement that everyone have some training in non-violent communication.[12] "We try, if there is a conflict that comes up…if there's ever a small accident or someone gets hurt or there's an emotional issue or a conflict, you know – we all, we are conscious communicators"(Rose). When I asked Rose to clarify a comment she'd made on wealth hierarchy (see next paragraph) related to other cob building workshops, she responded with "I don't have a ton of experience as I haven't actually been to those other workshops. So it's just how I've observed it, my sense of how it is." Her response demonstrates the principles of non-violent communication through her recognition that she can only speak from a place of experiential knowledge about what she has personally

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[12] Non-violent communication, also called compassionate communication or collaborative communication, was developed by Marshall Rosenburg in the 1960's and focuses on a) self-empathy, b) empathy, and c) honest self-expression.

been involved in and she can describe another situation in terms of observation but not from a place of knowing their story. Reflecting back on the previous chapter, recognition of other peoples' realities and the different stories in any given space reflects Massey's (2005) analysis and the point made by one of the storytellers that we need to understand how to allow multiple realities. I would argue that we also need to understand how to live with and respond to those multiple realities. While Rose was able to describe the Mud Girl's response, this capacity was not evident in some of the other stories, and resulted in the friction and conflict described more thoroughly in Chapter Eight.

Rose's comment about wealth hierarchy was in reference to the way in which the mud girls charged for workshops (what they call work parties) relative to other natural building organizations:

Something that we saw in the natural business industry is … people hold workshops and people pay a thousand dollars and they are paying builders to build someone else's house and that's kind of confusing – like why would a home owner have other people pay to build their house – you're already a landowner – it's sort of a strange wealth hierarchy – these people that want to learn are working for you and paying.

In the traditional approach to cob building workshops the owners don't pay for their house to be built. Instead, workshop facilitators charge approximately $1000; they teach the participants through the hands on work of building the owner's house. The owners don't have to pay for the labour that is provided by the participants and the facilitators are paid through the participant fee.

That's a really common way to do it so we do not do that. Our clients pay us – we keep our wages relatively low, fair, for our own needs.

In the workshops put on by the Mud Girls the homeowner pays for the food, the cook, the childcare and the mud girl wages (as teachers/facilitators and builders). The fee that participants pay covers the cost of food and the cook's wages. A different mode of thinking creates a different wealth distribution model and ensures that the work parties are affordable and accessible and homeowners don't make money off of those building their home.

There is also evidence of a different mode of thinking in their barter system, approach to child care, and emphasis on empowerment. They base their barter system on work carried out by members of the collective, on the cob[13] homes of the other members of the collective, exchanging their labour in return for future labour on their own home. Child care is an important component of the barter workshops and the work parties. Rose describes how child care is valued as an equal contribution to the building and facilitator roles:

> There is a tendency in our culture for child care to be minimum wage and we don't think that's fair – they make an equal contribution to the job being done, because without it we wouldn't be able to do it and we don't want strangers taking care of our children either so we recognize that it's a really important job – it's a tremendous responsibility.

The structure of the collective and work parties reflect acknowledgement of the historic structural and cultural challenges facing women. They have agreed that they are a woman's collective, not to exclude men, but rather to support women's learning:

> It would be hard to deny a gender dynamic that can exist in our culture with women tending to be a bit self-conscious, especially if it is in a male dominated type of industry –

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[13] Cob refers to a mixture of clay, sand, straw, water and earth. It is fire proof and resistant to seismic activity.

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they tend to defer to men's opinion on things like that and so we just want to avoid that all together. (Rose)

Their work parties include both men and women. However, having women as the cob home builders supports a culture that counteracts traditional gender behaviours: "usually it's a lot of young women [in the workshops] who have never done any building before – not exclusively but primarily and they've expressed that it's a supportive environment" (Rose). Some of the participants have described the work parties as transformative, "people have told us – they have quite a profoundly enlightening experience…a lot of people have expressed that their life has changed" (Rose). And many described feeling empowered, "because they are usually doing a lot of physical labour, maybe stuff they've never done before – it's not just mixing mud with your feet– they may be learning how to cut down trees and, use power tools they've never used before, as well as just being part of building a house" (Rose). The confidence to rely on oneself rather than experts, a different approach to wealth distribution, and a way of communicating that emphasizes self-responsibility and allowing multiple realities rather than an 'us against them' or victim response, all stem from a different way of understanding the world and a desire, on the part of the Mud Girls, to take action based on their values rather than a desire for profit. The story of the Mud Girls brings another element into system shifting. When operating from a different way of thinking and being, from a place of ecological decision-making rather than economic self interest, then ways of governance and management shift as well. The traditional hierarchical approach is not congruent.

Hornby Island provides numerous examples of cooperative building. The residents have built a store, school, community hall, recycling centre, senior's housing, and seniors' centre

using a cooperative, community based model. Affordable housing, based on a land trust, donated land, and a cooperative model, is in progress.

The Hornby Island Cooperative store was established in 1955. Today, $110 provides you with a membership and a share in the store. Doug, from Hornby, tells the story: "It's called a co-op store and that's exactly what it is. People provided donated funds and then also loaned funds and they went ahead and did it." It is also a gathering place, "the core of Hornby Island – we all meet each other at the store." The shares are investments, used for upgrades and maintenance, with any profit made returned back to the members based on their patronage. Members also vote on the management of the store.

In the late 1970's there was a rise in the number of school-age children on Hornby Island that resulted in another cooperative building effort:

> This is going back a bit. The schools, there were lots of hippies reproducing like mad I guess. There were tons of kids, so they applied for an addition to the school and were told it was going to take a couple of years. So the people just went ahead and built one and the government agreed to rent. That's called Room to Grow – it's still there and it's being used for community computers now.

The attitude of 'let's just build this as a community' is evident in other buildings shared by residents of the island. The community built the Hornby Island Recycling Depot (HIRD) in 1978. The limits of a small island became evident to some of the residents as the population expanded and 'there was no such place as 'away' when it came to garbage" (HIRD, 2012). In the same location as the former 'dump' the free store was established in a shed constructed by community members. At the forefront of the recycling movement the recycling centre became a model for other communities throughout British Columbia and the world (HIRD). Another

cooperatively built structure was the Community Hall, "a unique looking building, really, really hippy looking. And we just added an addition to it 16-20 years later, and it just keeps going on – another cooperative effort by just people." The residents use the hall for community gatherings, music concerts, meetings, and potlucks.

Hornby Island community members have also initiated seniors and affordable housing projects. They used a Community Land Trust model to support the financing, with funds donated from both residents and visitors to the island. "The senior's housing: It just went ahead. A group of people formed a society – The Elder's Housing Society – and they started raising funds. And we raised funds for a number of years and finally bought a property. And then we started building a unit, then a second unit, then a third unit. As the rental came in from the earlier units that helped pay for the 4th, 5th and 6th units. So that has been a great success". As in co-housing and cooperative housing models elsewhere, the residents work together collectively, with the society, to manage the five-acre property.

Hornby's approach to addressing community needs through cooperatives and collaboration, without government involvement, speaks to the order created by community self-governance (Magnusson, 2011). While governments – such as the Islands Trust, Comox Regional District, provincial and federal governments – exist as part of the official governance structure, these bodies have little to do with the planning, building, funding and management of all of the buildings described above. They may play a side role – providing building inspections and permits, or zoning the land, but they are not the key players. "We've been here 20 years and long before that Hornby's noted for an area that people have worked together for things – it's probably the only way people ever got things done is that they just went ahead and did it" (Douglas). The Hornby Island community has created a culture, in which the norm is to

collectively own and cooperatively build structures that respond to the needs and values of community members.

Energy Systems

Energy is needed to operate the dominant culture. The percentage of energy used for the various systems are industry (37.1%), transportation (30.2%), residential (16.7%), commercial and institutional (13.9%), and agriculture (2.2%). Table 3 shows Canada's 2010 production of energy found in nature before conversion or transformation). Approximately 28% of the energy produced is exported to other countries (Natural Resources Canada, 2012).

Table 3: Canada's Production of Primary Energy, 2010. Source: Natural Resources Canada 2012.

Source	Percentage
Crude Oil	41.4%
Natural Gas	36.5%
Coal	9.2%
Hydroelectricity	7.5%
Biomass	3.5%
Wind, Tidal & Solar	0.1%
Nuclear	1.9%

Over 87% of our energy production is from fossil fuels, non-renewable sources of energy, that are now becoming depleted and more difficult to extract – oil, gas and coal that were formed millions of years ago from the remains of plants and animals. The extraction and use of fossil fuels in the last century has resulted in demand outstripping the supply, commonly called Peak Oil (Deffeyes, 2005). Potential responses to Peak Oil include a) pay the higher cost involved in extracting those fossil fuels that are difficult or more energy intensive to extract (oil sands, deep sea sources), b) increase the renewable sources, c) reduce energy use, or d) a combination of the above. While there is evidence of all four responses in government and mainstream media communication, the current focus in Canada is on a) for example, Alberta's tar sands (NRCan, 2012; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2012).

In addition to the likelihood that we will soon run out of cheap fossil fuel, these energy sources create greenhouse gas emissions and harmful particulates when used. For the past two decades the International Panel on Climate Change scientists have been predicting that the current level of greenhouse gas emissions will result in severe weather and rising sea levels. In May, 2012 James Hansen, Director of the United States NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Goddard Institute for Space Studies, wrote an op-ed article in the *New York Times* entitled Game Over for the Planet:

> Canada's tar sands…contain twice the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by global oil use in our entire history. If we were to fully exploit this new oil source and continue to burn our conventional oil, gas and coal supplies concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would reach levels higher than…2.5 million years ago, when sea level was at least 50 feet higher than it is now…Twenty to 50 percent of the planet's species would be driven to extinction. …
>
> Over the next several decades…Economic losses would be incalculable. More and more of the Midwest would be a dust bowl. California's Central Valley could no longer be irrigated. Food prices would rise to unprecedented levels. (p. A29)

The quote from Hansen illustrates the interconnection between systems and global relationships. Whether the oil from the tar sands is used in China, the United States, or Canada, the impact will be the same – a concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that will change the planet. And, just one example of the relationship between global food and energy systems – climate change induced lack of irrigation in California's Central Valley will result in reduced access to vegetables and fruits in British Columbia. Seventy percent are currently imported from California (Ostry, 2012).

The connection that individuals have to energy use is direct, for example driving cars or heating residential buildings; or indirect, such as purchasing goods in which energy has been used to extract the resources required, manufacture the product, and then transport it. Storytellers provided examples of how they are addressing the direct use in the areas of personal transportation and heating. Some initiatives reduce energy use, such as car stops and a heat pump social enterprise, while still requiring an energy source. Others are off-grid, such as cycling and solar power, and don't require the continued supply of non-renewable energy sources. Discussion of indirect use of energy is found in the food section, above and the material goods section, below.

Barry, a member of a local transportation group invented the car stops on Pender Island. He describes how he came up with the idea:

> …with a population of approximately 2,200 it occurred to me that we would never have a bus - it just wasn't going to happen - economically it just doesn't work unless you have a really good ridership. So, I thought rather than bus stops why not have something that looks almost the same and call it car stops.

Car Stops provide places for people to wait if they require a lift; marked by a Car Stop sign (see Figure 9) and, in some cases, a bench. To address liability issues the following is noted on the sign:

> Drivers don't have to take the first in line;
>
> You're not obliged to accept a ride, that's fine.
>
> You accept a ride at your own risk,
>
> But the ride is free, so consider it a gift.

The aim was to provide an alternative to single

Figure 9: Car Stop on Pender Island source: www.barrymathias.com/car_stops.htm

occupancy cars, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion. The Car Stops are entirely voluntary: people take rides and give lifts as they see fit. Hans, a resident of Pender Island describes his experience using the car stops:

> A small red car stopped. The driver, a little white-haired lady who could barely see over the top of the steering wheel, beckoned me to get in. Turning to her companion, another elderly lady, she asked with a mischievous grin, "Do you think we'll be safe with him?" "I hope not," giggled her friend.
>
> I was hitching a ride using the car-stop system recently established on Pender Island…As our family car is often in my wife's possession, the car stops offered me a way to get around. But new on the island, I was initially hesitant to use them. Before long, however, I was hooked… they are a wonderful way to meet people. I have been picked up by construction workers, lawyers, retirees, young and old, rich and poor. Their vehicles have ranged from a luxurious Mercedes SUV to trucks to heaps held together by duct tape. I seldom wait more than three cars, and once aboard we chat about the approaching fall fair, water shortages, the recent infestation of raccoons and rats on the island and local gossip.

Barry describes how there has been a change in who uses the car stops, at first just students or those travelling by boats used them, not the seniors or others who usually drove their car. "But little by little that's broken down." There has been a culture shift "there's now a feeling on the island that it is okay to give people lifts," and it is okay to receive them.

While there has been a culture shift regarding giving and receiving lifts on Pender Island, the car stops are still part of the car culture, which is one of the primary contributors to greenhouse gas emissions (Zehner, 2012). The question arises, with this initiative and others

deeply embedded within the current systems, does it make sense to have transition initiatives that

are tinkering around the edges of the current system rather than full system change? Robb gives

us his thoughts on this:

> With that different mode of thinking you can either create a new system or you can shift
>
> the existing system. You can still use the new way of thinking in the old system and in
>
> some cases that's effective or efficient. A lot of times it's efficient because there's huge
>
> infrastructure built up…So, we're going to get rid of all the cars and we're going to keep
>
> those roadways because they're great bike pathways…we're not going to tear out all the
>
> roadways and make new bike paths.

As noted in the preceding chapter, the shift to ecological rather than economic thinking is not a

straightforward shift. Wavering between two ways of being, due to dominant culture stories still

embedded in one's decision-making (even after that flip to a different mode of thinking)

indicates how transition options can be a pathway towards an alternative system. In addition, for

those that have not shifted their mode of thinking, a car stop experience might introduce a new

story into their consciousness.

John Rowlandson is working with others to shift Salt Spring Islanders towards a cycling

culture. From his perspective "we want to strengthen and deepen

cycling culture on Salt Spring". So, when the international cycling

conference, Velo-city, was coming to Vancouver he approached

them and suggested a Velo-village conference for Salt Spring

Island that would focus on rural cycling. Moreover, he engaged

unrelated parts of Salt Spring society in the project. The artists

hosted a pART project, producing a range of art pieces that

Figure 10: Machines for the Correction of Political Errors by Martin Herbert

depicted and used various bicycle parts. For example, one artist produced a mobile (see Figure 10**Error! Reference source not found.**), comprised of The Spin Decoder, The Muzzle By-Pass, and The Bitumen Eater. The first bicycle-only BC Ferries crossing from Vancouver Island to Salt Spring Island was another part of Velo-village. School children decorated older bikes that organizers provided: "They brought the four bikes for us and so we're going to be painting them up and giving them back so they've already brainstormed what they want to do for their bikes. They have their different ideas – so one will be a rainbow unicorn bike, others - a salt spring hippy bike, a random recycle bike, and a light bike (Sarah)". In addition, the invitation went out to other small communities throughout British Columbia and beyond. Over 1,500 cyclists showed up at the cycling event and Salt Spring Island had more bikes than cars on the road for a brief period in time. Does that brief one or two day period produce culture change? John believes that it gives people insight into the potential of a cycle rather than car culture.

> We want to demonstrate what it looks like – if we can bring 1500 cyclists here over the three days, there's a good chance that most of them will be riding a bike rather than driving a car, right? And so, when people ask – what do we need to do to make this a more cycle friendly community where cars are not as dominant – they just need to be standing in town by the 1000 bike parking lot, which will take up about $1/10^{th}$ of the space that 1000 cars would.

His aim is to shift the culture in order to shift the system, "we want to strengthen and deepen cycling culture on Salt Spring" (Gulf Islands Driftwood, October 19, 2011).

Energy use in buildings is another direct energy area targeted to reduce personal or community fossil fuel use. In British Columbia a range of energy sources are used for heating, the most common being gas, electricity, wood, and oil. I will describe a social enterprise that

provides air source heat pumps and an off-the-grid island to demonstrate the range of ways the fossil fuel energy system is being replaced or shifted.

Of the energy sources for heating, described above, the source that emits one of the lowest greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia is electricity, as approximately 88% of the provincial utility's (BC Hydro) installed generating capacity is hydroelectric, which emits no GHG. The remaining 12% is fossil fuelled and is used for meeting peak demand in winter and supplying remote off-grid locations.

The heat pump social enterprise arose out of a combination of serendipity, government programs, a growing awareness of energy efficiency, financial common sense, and retirees who wanted to give something back to the community without the need for a pay cheque. Chris, a retired telecommunications executive, was advised by a friend that he could get some grants that would reduce heat loss in his house if he had an energy audit carried out, and then implemented the recommendations. One of those recommendations was the installation of an air-to-air heat pump. He attempted to buy one from a supplier in the city of Nanaimo (20 minutes away by ferry), but they would not sell him one without coming over to the island. In addition, they were going to charge Chris $500, due to ferry cost and travel time, whether or not Chris wanted the heat pump. The heat pump itself would be an additional $5000.

Chris figured there must be a better way and after extensive research found the model that was the most energy efficient. His enthusiasm resulted in two more friends asking him to buy them units. He then found a wholesaler for the model online and "there was a little button on the website that said – do you want to be a dealer." Chris clicked the button and was soon talking to the wholesaler, who, after hearing the story of the Nanaimo supplier and the number of units Chris wanted to order, designated him a dealer. Chris provided the units to his friends at the

wholesale cost (approximately \$1,700) and, due to reduced heating bills (by up to 2/3 in some cases) and government grants they were able to pay off their heat pumps within a year. The word travelled, as it tends to do on the islands, and three years later Chris's 'dealership' has provided over 100 heat pumps to island residents.

One of the early purchasers was Bob, a retired engineering professor, also one of the authors of the greenhouse gas emission and energy audit report for the island. He realized the GHG reduction benefits that would result from the uptake in heat pumps as electricity was the source for 35% of the documented heat generated for buildings on the island (47% was from wood and the rest from fossil fuels). He suggested turning Chris's dealership into a social enterprise by having all purchasers donate \$200 to the local sustainability non-profit organization, with the intent that it be directed primarily at reducing energy use on the island, in particular fossil fuels. Both Chris and Bob continue to put hours of volunteer time into supporting the acquisition and installation of heat pumps for islanders and the non-profit organization has benefitted from the donations.

Patterns from previous examples are also evident in this initiative. As with Lulu's Locals one system change supports shifts in other areas. The heat pumps reduce energy and provide funds for sustainable activities, while Lulu's Locals increases local food options while supporting artisans and the arts. Similar to the car stops use of the current road and vehicle infrastructure, the heat pump initiative is still part of the purchasing system and electricity grid. Chris used these systems, not to make a profit, but rather to provide an alternative for people and organizations to decrease their energy use.

While most of the tiny islands that are in the Salish Sea are not part of the electricity grid, one of the larger islands, Lasqueti, was in line to receive BC Hydro power lines but refused. In

1978 BC Hydro attempted to run power lines, and use Lasqueti as the stepping stone between the mainland and Vancouver Island. Lasqueti residents did not want the transmission lines and, at a public meeting with BC Hydro held on Lasqueti, "at one point or another, the total population attended that meeting. Here is the amazing part: those meetings went on for two solid days, and there were just as many people there during the last hour as on the first day." (BC Hansard, 1978). The Islands Trust and two of the regional districts played a support role to the residents and the proposed route of transmission lines was stopped.

Lasqueti Island residents are still off BC Hydro's grid, and use a range of sources for their energy needs including wood, solar, wind, diesel and propane. Not having access to either a natural gas or electricity energy grid forces residents on the island to look for alternatives. While some rely on fossil fuel generators for primary or back-up energy[14] others create alternative systems. Vannini and Taggart (2012) describe how one Lasqueti Island resident created an off-the grid system without a back-up generator:

> Indeed building a homestead as a whole is an exercise in choreography. From making the most of a water stream for micro-hydro power to integrating passive solar into a house heating system, building and maintaining an efficient off-grid homestead is like line-dancing with nature and technology. (para. 20)

Living off of the electricity grid requires awareness of each kilowatt of energy used relative to the energy that is available, a consciousness of whether the stream is low or full and generating hydro power, or whether the sun is shining brightly or has been behind clouds for several days.

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[14] Approximately 79,175 litres of fossil fuel (Fall, 2011) were used to power generators (both back-up and primary source of household energy) by the 426 residents of Lasqueti Island (Stats Canada, 2012).

The closer connection to the actual source, and thus the need to understand nature's patterns, is evident in some of the previous alternative systems discussed. Alternative food and shelter systems are shifts towards being aware and working with the environment, with one degree of separation from nature rather than multiple degrees.

Manufactured Goods

This section is about the material economy – manufactured 'stuff' that we buy: Clothes, dishes, cars, building materials, computers, furniture, appliances, jewellery, and etcetera. Our reasons for buying goods include comfort, warmth, and fashion, ease of eating and travelling. Our purchases also represent how we want to be seen, and may symbolize our success or failure according to cultural values (Hoffman, 2011). Annie Lennox (2007) created a short documentary entitled The Story of Stuff. In it, she comments on the dominant culture's linear resource consumption in a world with finite resources, describing how the current extraction, production, distribution, consumption and disposal of material goods are destructive to the environment and humans. Natural resource extraction and manufacturing of those resources has resulted in deforestation (Furniss, 2005), desertification (Briassoulis, 2005), extinction of species (Raven, 2000), forced migration (Briassoulis, 2005; Davis, 2006), soil erosion (Davis, 2006), ozone depletion (BC Ministry of Environment, 20008), greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution, health problems (Galbraith, 1996; Davis, 2006), and military oppression (Downey, Bonds & Clark, 2010). Lane and Watson (2012, p. 1254) describe the resource use and corresponding waste in today's material economy:

> Over two centuries of modernisation and industrialisation the increasing scale of resource use has been accompanied by increased waste as materials fall through the gaps in industrialised processes of production and consumption…Current modes of social

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organisation in affluent industrialised countries are profligate in their use and disposal of finite material resources.

Lennox (2007) references the 2.04 kg per day of waste, per capita, in the United States. Canada doesn't fare much better, producing 1.34 kg of waste, per day, per person (Boyd, 2001). In addition, Canada produces 190 kg of hazardous waste per year and "49.3 kg of nuclear waste per 1000 inhabitants" (Boyd, 2001, p. 21).

The dominant culture is one of consuming and disposing. In 1955, Victor Lebow described the system that is in place today:

> Our enormously productive economy…demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption…we need things consumed, burned up, replaced and discarded at an ever-accelerating rate (quoted in Priggen, 2007).

Only one percent of the material goods consumed are still in use six months after purchase (Lennox, 2007; Hawkins, 1999).

As demonstrated in Chapter 6 some of the storytellers are reducing consumption and the resulting waste. The recycling depots found on many of the islands provide a meso-scale approach (Lane & Watson, 2012) to the problems inherent in the consumer/waste cycle described above, a system shift. In 1978 Kathi Linnman, a resident of Hornby Island, became the coordinator for Hornby's innovative recycling centre. Kathi describes the rationale behind the centre on the centre's website (2009):

> The motivation for the island to try recycling was economic and I applied for the job for economical reasons too. I didn't want to see all that useful 'stuff' shipped off the island and become inaccessible. Where would we go to find a tail light for our vehicle or a

damper for the stove, or a curtain rod, or ? There was little space at the Co-op for hardware, trips to town were infrequent and if your neighbour didn't have what you needed, there was always 'the dump', a great resource for all kinds of things. Here was a chance to organize other people's garbage into something useful to someone else and to keep our stuff out of someone else's landfill. (para. 2)

While many of the other islands followed suit there was a behavioural shift to overcome – the disgrace of buying used goods. As one of the storytellers points out, "once upon a time no one would wear anything that was second hand or they would never admit it, because they would be ashamed of it - because it meant that you were poor…However, I think we are shifting." There has been a cultural change as second hand becomes an accepted and valued way of accessing everything from clothes to building supplies. 'Trashion' and recycled fashion shows, in which models dress up in outfits made from trash and used clothing, provide a forum for changing second hand from stigma to fashionable. Transformative spaces that provide an opportunity to hear the story 'second hand means cool' rather than 'second hand means poor' are created through these shows, recycling centres with items on display, conversations, garage sales and a growing number of media sources. The system change works in tandem with the cultural shift to create different norms and behaviours.

Summary

System shifting involves continuums that range from relationship based initiatives fully embedded within dominant systems, through to activities that don't require current systems. Community partnerships, relationship to nature, and connectivity are key elements in enterprises such as Cable Bay Farm, Lulu's Locals and the heat pump initiative. And these initiatives also function within our current economic and regulatory systems, creating space for shifts in those

dominant systems. The Mud Girls Natural Building Collective, community gardens, Lasqueti's experience off the electricity grid, and Hornby Island's cooperative buildings, while operating alongside the dominant systems, are alternatives to those systems. Moreover, as the community on Hornby Island demonstrates, self-governance rather than legislated governments can meet collectively identified needs.

A key in system shifts is the cultural shift to norms and behaviours corresponding to the alternative system rather than the dominant one. On Hornby Island the community created a culture, in which cooperatively built collectively owned structures that respond to the needs and values of community members, are the norm. The Car Stops created a cultural shift on Pender Island so that people now look forward to the idea of sharing rides with other community members. The different mode of thinking and being, described in the previous chapters, provides the opportunity to create a new system, shift the existing system, and generate new cultural norms. There is recognition that transition options, such as car stops, can be a pathway towards alternative, off the grid, systems as well as a transformative space that opens up the possibility of hearing stories different from those in the dominant culture. Opportunities, such as Velo-village, stretch those spaces beyond the actual participants, providing people with insight into an alternative culture. The ecological way of being, examples of how one system change supports shifts in other areas, highlights how all of our actions interrelate with other elements of the larger ecology. Cable Bay Farm providing community garden access to low-income families, Lulu's Locals providing funds for arts and cultural activities, the heat pump initiative providing funds for community sustainability activities are all examples. The alternative systems are all shifts towards an increased awareness of the environment, moving towards one degree of separation

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from nature rather than multiple degrees, thus more in tune with their impacts on the natural world.

The different examples, in particular the Hornby Island Recycling Centre, demonstrate how system change works in tandem with cultural shifts to create different norms and behaviours. And, as the management of the Mud Girls Natural Building Collective reveals, a different way of thinking and being – from a place of ecological-thinking rather than economic-thinking – creates alternative ways of interacting and of governance. In the next chapter I will focus on the dynamics that occur as system shifting and other changes intersect with the multiple authorities, purposes and interests found in a community.

Chapter Eight: Cultural shifts in community

There are many different definitions of the word community. For the purposes of this chapter, I use the word to describe the group of people who call a defined geographical area their home. Within that context, community is a shared space, in which support intermingles with differences. The creation of local systems in a community, which are consistent with one's internal values, intersects with the myriad of purposes, stories and norms within a community. I argue that community cultural shifts, which require changes affecting others in a community, are unpredictable, often cumulative and can create conflict. Conflicts are inherent incompatibilities between the objectives of two or more individuals or groups. They arise when there are different ideas and beliefs about whether or not a community needs a particular change, and concerns about not having a voice in the decision-making process. Changes in a community take time and it seems they happen most readily when there is a respect for the natural resistance to change. Proposed changes provide a forum for multiple perspectives and corresponding strategies to create support for, and opposition to, the change. Community change arises out of building on what works in a community; transformative spaces, opportunities for dialogue about different stories, and support plus acknowledgement that everyone, even those resisting, can play a valuable role in creating cultural shifts.

Cumulative and Unpredictable

Storytellers depicted cultural change in communities as cumulative and unpredictable, mirroring the descriptors for personal transformation. Several people described ideas that were recycled several times before the time was ripe for a particular change. In one of the group conversations, the idea about cumulative attempts was explored after Helen told a story about a co-housing proposal that didn't happen. The group talked about how the introduction of an idea

into a community may not result in the idea coming to fruition the first time round. Often the concept is introduced into people's thinking and may surface later. As with personal shifts in accepting new stories, people may hear an idea several different ways and times before there is an acceptance of that idea. Michael, a facilitator of ecological learning, whose story we heard in Chapters Five and Six, suggests that "some things may be treated as an incompletion but it actually is a cycle…don't lose that, bring it back in and sometimes it will just all fall into place." Vicki, another member of the group, tells the story of community gardens that weren't functioning well when she arrived on the island:

> When I came over to the island, I like to garden and the circumstances of where I was at didn't allow me to do that. And there was a space over at the community centre but very poorly set up … well, the infrastructure was there but there wasn't any gardening happening because it was trying to be developed on an individual basis. You bought the wood and you brought in the soil and then it was your little plot and then you were responsible for your individual container. I think it had been going for a few years and there were seven people who had plots and most of the ground was unused and there were blackberry brambles all over the place, and someone loaned me one of these plots.

It was evident that someone had made an attempt to set up community gardens prior to Vicki's arrival on the island. But why did the attempt not live up to the potential? Vicki proposed the following reason:

> I was looking and thought, "Gee, there's so much potential here, but this needs a group of people, it's just not going to happen this way. It's daunting for people to try to do that and it also needs a whole different way of managing it, that these people didn't feel they had

private ownership over something. Instead, they needed to see themselves as contributing

to the whole, not just to their plot.

She then worked with others to restructure the management of the gardens, and raised funds to

make it work as a shared effort. The number of people using the garden jumped from seven to

thirty-three. Louis, a former trustee with the Islands Trust, believed that other reasons also

contributed to it finally 'working'. "So what made the time right for the gardens – what had an

influence? That was when the 100 mile diet came on, then that whole concept of food security

and growing your own food. And yeah, before that nobody was doing as much gardening." What

Louis touches on is the extent to which influences from off the island contribute to the dialogue

on the islands. *The 100 Mile Diet* is a book written by a Vancouver couple (Smith and

McKinnon, 2007) about their experience of eating only food grown within 100 miles of where

they were living. National Radio programs hosted discussions about *The 100 Mile Diet* and it

was on the best seller list in Canada[15]. In 2009 a television show called *The Hundred Mile*

Challenge, featured six couples attempting a diet consisting of food grown within 100 miles of

their homes. People across the country, including the Gulf Islands, became part of the discussion

about global food systems and the value of eating locally grown food

Brian, who had been involved in creating local food community dinners around the same

time *The 100 Mile Diet* was published, suggested that there are ways in which members of the

community "can create the 'time is right' by advocates trying to get a critical mass going." From

his perspective it was the synergy of a range of factors, the community dinners and restructuring

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[15] The book was on *MacLeans* (a Canadian magazine) non-fiction best sellers list for five weeks and on The *Vancouver Sun*'s best seller list for 20 weeks.

of the community gardens, lining up with *The 100 Mile Diet*, that created the increase in local food growing.

Ideas and Conflicts

The extent to which an idea takes hold in a community is about the process, the extent to which people are engaged in planning the change, and the extent to which the change is consistent with people's values and vision of their community. Brian not only worked on community dinners, he was also involved in a proposal to create paths in the island's village area, a story that provides insight into the differing visions in his community.

It started with an idea, "the development of Miner's Bay" (Brian, Mayne Island). The use of the word 'development' is an interesting choice, as it is a word that represents what many on the islands have been fighting since they arrived on the island. A couple of years after I became a resident on the islands I was in a conversation with a well-known island advocate and politician. I used the phrase 'community development' and she responded in a visceral way to the word development – the context didn't matter. Brian's use of the word development was a forewarning of what would happen to the idea of developing Miner's Bay. Brian continues with the story:

> Bob came up with the idea – he had gone and surveyed it quite a bit. This came to the community Chamber of Commerce – so we had a meeting with Bob who had some big drawings – and also with highways [Ministry of Highways]. Bob's idea was, with all of the road allowance (the roads were narrow) and with all of the congestion in Miner's Bay…people were trying to go from the shopping centre to Wayne's store and the garage and down to the Spring Water or whatever… Highways would take this road – and… turn it into a boulevard and put a big row of trees down the middle. And then … they could go on the far side of the shopping centre side they could put a pathway.

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The proposal included widening the road and putting in a boardwalk from the village area, which included a community hall, an agricultural hall and a shopping centre, down to the ocean. The plan also included a parking area.

> It was clever, very clever – it wouldn't have cost the taxpayers anything – you don't need anybody's permission and Highways would do that because it was all Highway land. And the Highways guy said– "we are willing to take this on – we will put it in and we will do our funding over several years. And he said "This looks fine to me – as long as there is support". (Brian)

From the perspective of Brian, and others involved in the planning stage, the idea and implementation were win-win for everyone. The funding was in place, as was the approval from the government regulatory body. The result would be a boardwalk pathway through the most congested part of the island. However:

> The amount of opposition was enormous – all of the people from Minter's Drive, Sunset Drive, Dixon Road, the bottom of Village Bay Road, Maple Drive – all came out and said no! People who lived there all said no. Because – this was a little quiet rural community and they wanted it kept the way it was – and if you make it better then more people will come, tourists will come and there was no way that they wanted that. (Brian)

Those proposing the change had not anticipated how the community norms and behaviours would result in the opposition that transpired. Brian notes the reasons given for the opposition. The first reason features the words 'quiet' and 'rural'. As will be seen in subsequent stories, there is a desire to keep the quiet and rural character of the islands, and that desire is presented as being at cross purposes with some of the storytellers' initiatives.

For some people, putting a boardwalk in place to prevent vehicle congestion would increase the quiet and the rural nature of the community, while others disagreed. The advocates of the boardwalk described how people would be able to walk between the shopping areas and down to the ocean rather than driving or feeling at risk from cars if they did attempt to walk. Environmentalists might see this as a positive initiative, as it would reduce the use of vehicles, and encourage more people to walk from building to building and down to the ocean. From Brian's perspective it was a lost opportunity, "and Miner's Bay could have been one of the most beautifully located villages in the world. You look right out at Active Pass; you look right out at the sunset. The whole setting is stunning."

Those in opposition felt that it would dilute the quiet and rural nature of their community because it would encourage more people to come to the island, both as residents and as tourists. There was also a strong sentiment expressed about keeping the island the way it was. Why change what, to them, had been working just fine for a long time. For some, "their roads were their trails". Both groups were concerned about the impact humans were having on the environment, demonstrating a shift from the dominant culture's historical lack of inclusion of the environment in decision-making. However, they had different opinions on whether or not the proposed change would achieve the goal of reduced environmental impact.

The boardwalk was not built. "The manager of the Highways said – "I'm not going there, it's too hot – I can't touch it, end of discussion" (Brian). What the manager witnessed was different perceptions of the potential impact of the project on island life, combined with a response to a community decision-making process. One Mayne Islander believed that many of those in opposition did not feel as if they were part of the process: "You didn't ask us…the local people were not involved in this." When we look back at the process we see that there was a

select group making decisions and arrangements, and while a public meeting was set up it was after most of those discussions had taken place. Those living near the proposed boardwalk were not asked what they thought in the early stages of planning, and they turned out in full force to voice their disagreement with the plans. Even though both groups were local, there was an 'us' against 'them' division established between those for and against. It is interesting to note that those against used the word 'local' to infer that the proponents were either from off island, newcomers, or didn't understand the local culture.

The words 'rural' and 'quiet', also in use to define the opponents, was evident in a survey carried out on Gabriola Island (Gabriola Health Care Society, 2010), which has a population four times that of Mayne Island. In response to the question "what do you like most about Gabriola?" respondents frequently mentioned the words 'quiet' and 'rural'. Ninety-eight out of four hundred people mentioned 'quiet', or a synonym of quiet. Forty-five people mentioned 'rural'. These words are used in the preceding, as well as the following story, to increase the numbers of people that will identify with the opponents to the change proposed.

Some of the same elements in the village pathway story are also evident in a story that

Figure 11: Mortimer Spit and the canal between North and South Pender Islands from: www.BritishColumbia.com

occurred on another of the Gulf Islands: Mortimer Spit [Figure 11] is this little bit of beach area on South Pender right in between the two islands. It's a very low, natural spit. People drive onto it – drive onto the spit to park at the end to watch the sunset or go swimming. As people drive onto it potholes form and as they avoid the potholes they drive more and more to the side and

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so the spit was becoming a giant parking lot. So, all the natural vegetation was getting

worn away, the spit was being worn away and turning into this mud hole.

My friend and I thought – let's haul in a bunch of logs which we'll collect from the water

and beaches. Get a machine to lay them along the drive - so now there's a narrow…cars

are limited to a narrow thing. And we did this under the radar – had to go a little bit above

the radar in order to get a machine in but we didn't have government approvals. We got

this lovely set of logs – probably 50 logs that weighed between 200 and 1000 pounds

each hauled by our little putt-putt motorboat in the middle of the night. And the machine

came and laid them along the spit so that vehicles could drive between them.

(Anonymous)

The main reason the two decided to do this was to protect the natural vegetation on the spit. They

thought everyone would welcome the change because they had heard so many concerns

expressed about the degradation of the spit. They carried out their activities in the middle of the

night, thinking that this would be an anonymous gift they could give to the community.

However:

…there was outrage in the community that we had done this to the spit and changed the

way the spit could be used. There were only a few voices but they were so public and so

loud – nasty posters all over the place – that in the end, [Parks Canada] arranged to have

all of the logs removed.

Because those few voices were nasty, people were afraid to step up and say that they agreed with

the placement of the logs to protect the vegetation.

There are some elements in this story that echo the Mayne Island story about the village

boardwalk proposal. First, there was a belief that this action was consistent with the community's

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environmental protection values. Second, there was no conversation with community members ahead of time due to a belief that the action made sense based on perceived community values. In the former, there were different perspectives on whether or not there was a problem to be solved. In the latter there appeared to be agreement on the problem, but not on the solution. Third, there was opposition. In the Mortimer Spit story the response was nasty; "enormous opposition" was the term used in the pathways story, and in another story, the narrator used the word vitriolic. These words and terms speak to an underlying anger. One reason may be that people did not feel part of the decision. The feeling of exclusion from decision making, together with a resistance to change in the community and people's desire to keep their community the way it had always been, contributed to a vitriolic response.

An added factor, drawing from the story on historical change on the islands, is that the 'us against them' wars with logging companies, developers, Vietnam, consumerism, and mainstream culture that many residents were and are still part of, has created a behavioural norm of battle mode on the islands when anything new is introduced, especially if it is perceived to come from newcomers (and thus the city, or mainstream culture). Veronica, who moved to the island in the 1980's to get away from the dominant culture's consumerism and damaging resource extraction, notes: "I was against [the health clinic] – I don't know why – maybe because they were all new people." Many people on the islands believe that their constant battle mode is needed in order to keep the island's alternative culture as well as ecology protected. So, even when there is opportunity for people to engage in conversations in the community about a new idea that may arise from an ecological-thinking framework, such as making biodiesel from waste vegetable oil, or initiating a community bus, there are people that go into battle mode because it

is change. To them, change implies damage to the culture and ecology that they have worked so hard to protect.

Multiple Political Authorities in Different Registers

On each of the islands there is a multitude of groups, or political authorities (Magnusson, 2011), each with strategies and technologies aimed at achieving their purposes and maintaining or increasing their group status. Islanders are also members of political authorities that stretch across communities, across countries and across continents. As mentioned in the conceptual framework, various political authorities, such as book clubs, garden groups, service organizations, or recreation groups, may not see themselves as political. However, because their behaviours are part of the threads that create the weaving of norms and behaviours in a community, they are, in effect, political. Isin's (2002) solidaristic, agnostic, and alienation strategies and technologies, provide us with a framework for understanding how political authorities interact in a community.

Solidaristic strategies are aimed at giving people a sense of solidarity within a group, identifying ways in which they are similar. We see examples of solidaristic strategies in the two groups that were at odds over the village pathways. There is evidence that members of the group in favour of the change saw themselves as experts in planning that change. Their belief in the professional expertise they shared enhanced their solidarity – from Bob who did the survey, to the Chamber of Commerce board members, to the representative from the Ministry of Highways. The maps and drawings, the appropriately elected Community Chamber of Commerce Board with assumed authority over activities such as pathways in the village, the Ministry of Highways representative with a state authorized jurisdictional mandate for the roads on the island, are all

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solidaristic technologies indicating the right of this group of people to plan for road and pathway change.

Those opposing the pathways also had a sense of solidarity, a belief that they all understood the danger of changing the quiet, rural nature of the island. They were solidly together in believing that they needed to stop the island from being a tourist magnet. In addition, the pathways were planned for their neighbourhood. The key technology they used was 'over the backyard fence', spreading the word of discontent with the planned pathways. According to Louis:

> If you want something done you talk to the right people who'll support it, and tell their friends in a quick little four or five word comment, and I think that's very much the key to the Miners Bay thing; which was, you know, that was neighbour talking to neighbour and each of them supporting each other.

The group opposed to the pathways not only created solidarity within their group, but they also used alienation strategies and technologies to differentiate their group from those planning the boardwalk. The group proposing the pathways were classified as outsiders trying to change the nature of the island, while the neighbourhood group saw themselves as protectors of the island. They used the island in its current state as a partner in their alienation strategy to oppose the planning group. The question arises whether conversations ahead of time with the neighbours, either the way suggested by Louis, or other ways that would ensure the neighbours were engaged early in the process, would have prevented the alienation and opposition witnessed at the public meeting. As Vicki (the community gardens advocate) notes, "I can see why Highways walked away from that. But that stopped the community conversations – giving and listening to those people and objections and how can we work together to achieve a goal that is

satisfactory to everyone but will make it safer and will take advantage of – but it is a long process."

While the change to Mortimer Spit was carried out without engaging the community in a conversation about the proposed action, the immediate jump into alienation strategies by those challenging the change to Mortimer Spit left no room for a conversation about how best to stop the ecological damage. As the architect of the log protection notes, "It was a kind of a sad moment. We all wanted the spit to be preserved in some way – but because our way was a little bit different from theirs than it ended up…it was interesting." The alienating response took what was meant as a gift, but was experienced by some as an imposition, and virtually eliminated the chance for dialogue about a solution.

Change, whether it is transformative and system changing, consistent with the dominant culture, or neutral will be resisted if people feel that they are not part of the conversation about the change. These stories illuminate the need for conversations in the community about what the 'problem' is, and therefore what the varying solutions might be, rather than applying a solution based on an assumption about both the problem and solution. The stories also emphasize the need for those in opposition to ask or initiate that conversation rather than turning it into a battle – "us against them" – that prevents the opportunity for a dialogue. A key source of resistance in the Gulf Islands stems from trying to keep the mainstream culture and ecological destruction off the island. To that end those resisting need to ask: a) whether or not the new idea comes from an ecological-thinking paradigm, b) whether their resistance is based on 'the newcomer' perception, or c) whether it is an automatic reflex from a story they have about their role in protecting the islands. Whether one is initiating a change, or hearing about it and ready to resist – dialogue

about the objectives of the various groups, how they are at cross-purposes and whether or not there is an approach that works for both sides, may reduce the vitriolic response that occurs.

Including Multiple Perspectives in Future Trajectories

If we go back to the process used by the Mud Girls Natural Building Collective (Chapter 7), we see the importance of engaging all of those involved in any potential tension at an early stage. While there may be challenges doing this in the larger community rather than a discrete group the evidence in these two stories points to the need to have a conversation with those impacted, and to start that conversation before substantive plans are in place.

A key element of the process used by the Mud Girls is empathy – being willing to listen and trying to understand the other person's story-so-far, as well as what their desired future trajectory is (Massey, 2005). Buki (2012, p. 1) reflects on the importance of empathy, and how that is often missing from processes such as charrettes[16]:

> The charrettists think that a week of intense meeting jammed into a public space merry-go-round fashion suffices for sitting and listening over a beer over the course of many weeks, and maybe many months. From the former come matrices and charts and diagramma, whereas the latter may at least crack open the door for accessing the single most important ingredient for addressing heavyweight challenges: empathy.

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[16] Charrettes involve intense, multi-day meetings involving government officials, developers and residents. The approach aims to achieve joint ownership of solutions and defusion of typical confrontations between residents and developers.

Facts without empathy do not inspire reflection. Plans without empathy do not inspire

ownership. Designs without empathy do not mobilize a community to stretch. Change

that is needed will not materialize without reflection, ownership, and stretching.

The conversations need to include an understanding of the underlying stories and fears that

create the responses evidenced in the preceding stories. For those wanting to implement change

there is a need to understand what underlies their own desire for the change.

Storytellers provided several successful examples of community conversations. Judith

describes the Gabriola Commons experience:

In the beginning there was no word for what was about to happen. In fact there was no

clear beginning. Before the days of the Weldwood conflict, before Folklife Village, by the

mid 90's the island was growing, infused with vitality, and when the goat farm came on

the market, it was obvious to think of it, not only as beautiful land, but as a home for a

library, for the doctors' office having trouble, for the large home-schoolers group, there

was over 300 at one time - quite different than now, for PHC who was just in a little

place above Suzie's then, for an Islands Trust office – they had no space, for the arts

group – they had been borrowing space at Camp Miriam for a long time.

In fact it was recognized during the writing of the Official Community Plan of the time

that this parcel of land, the Goat Farm was destined to become a non-commercial

community space. It was written in the OCP that we've just outgrown. A group formed to

consider making this happen, but the price tag was a little daunting.

Of note is the reference to the initial interest in having an Islands Trust office as part of the

Commons – they were seen as one of the various community groups on the island rather than a

distant government to be avoided. And the story continues:

Enter Amazing Grace Ecological Society ten years later (in 2005), with a dream and enough capital to secure the down payment and sustain mortgage payments for over two years. Heide and Shelagh [AGES board members] had the imagination and courage to welcome the community into a three-day forum, recognizing that their initial vision for the property might not be supported by all – they took a chance, they said what if no one wants to do what we've imagined happened. They said, okay if they don't want it we'll listen to what the community says. The community response was extraordinary, generating a steering committee which was to meet bi-weekly for two and a half years to create what all could see was an unusual project.

The community had identified this specific location as a potential community space in the OCP prior to the visioning session that took place in 2006. This cumulative process is consistent with the cyclical description discussed at the beginning of this chapter, an idea brought back repeatedly. The 'time was right' – when a long time resident of Gabriola died he gave the land to the community, held in trust by AGES, an organization holding several properties. By allowing two years of funding to cover the mortgage costs there was time for many conversations – an initial visioning session in which everyone from the community was invited and all stories and ideas were welcomed. Out of this session and based on the ideas created through the visioning process a group formed to consider various options of how the land could be owned by the community and accessible to all. This approach reflects the preventative approach taken by the Mud Girls Natural Building Collective as well as that proposed by Bulki (2012) – an emphasis on long-term, empathy-based conversations covering the range of community visions. Subsequent to the initial vision there have been different perceptions of what activities should be

happening at the Commons, and what the governance model should be, which illustrate how good intentions at cross-purposes create tensions. I explore these later in this chapter.

The second example of a process that ended up in buy-in rather than conflict is the Ecological Learning camps described in Chapter 5. Michael's creation of the learning camps was in the thinking and processing stage for quite a while:

> I was wondering if we could actually create a separate path where you deliberately used nature as the classroom - and provide the kids with an opportunity to explore all kinds of things using nature as your, kind of, tool. So, I have thrown that idea around and around and around for a long time and it was 1999. I can remember that because my daughter said, well if you're going to do it why don't you just do it.

Michael approached the chair of the Southern Gulf Island School District at a local event, and they discussed the ecological learning idea. "She said that the whole school district has been talking about doing this…so short story – they asked me to come in – I talked to the superintendent, they found some money for me to write it up as a feasibility." Michael took a year to develop the proposal and held a community visioning session as part of the process:

> It was an all islands meeting that we hosted, and the school district funded, held on Salt Spring. There were representatives of all of the islands and we had it facilitated with a visioning guide, and it was really good actually, and there was a small sub group that came up with the vision from that group which we still hold today. It's even in our society document – we use it as our vision.

The dialogue allowed Michael's group, the school district, and people from the various islands to work through what they were trying to achieve and how to implement it. As mentioned in the previous chapter over 1,500 youth have attended the camps and the School District has

incorporated many of the principles – facilitators rather than teachers, nature as a location for learning science, connections, natural history, music, and art – into regular classes. However, the measurement of success is elusive, as it is behaviour change that counts rather than how many children attended, or whether there is a physical structure:

> Whether what we thought we would be doing is actually played out when these children become young adults and start making decisions for themselves… make decisions as if nature matters.

Michael is referring to the personal transformation explored in Chapter 5. He echoes the recognition, noted in that chapter, that, while we may incorporate elements that support transformative change into a space, the extent to which personal change occurs is dependent upon the readiness and willingness of each individual to hear a different story and let go of previous stories. He describes in more detail the type of change they are hoping to achieve:

> But it's really that they use what they know about ecological process and limits and all that in making their life decisions. They recognize that there are consequences for every decision they make, and there are many factors, ecological being one of those, economic or social, there's all kinds of different consequences of decisions.

His description echoes the ecological-thinking storytellers demonstrate in the last two chapters.

Both the Gabriola Commons and the Ecological Learning Centre provide us with examples of cultural change initiatives achieved by first, recognizing that they are the result of cumulative efforts, and second, taking time to engage people in decision-making. However, given human nature and the nature of change, shifts and tensions occur between those involved, as well as between those implementing system shifts and other community members.

Tensions and Support

Storytellers talked about how conflicts arose when they were engaged in system shifting, and how this got in the way of moving that system forward. They also talked about the importance of people, places and spaces of support to ground themselves in, to maintain their ecological-thinking mode. Support and tensions were an integral part of the various stories, and evidence of their presence differed depending upon the extent to which they challenged the dominant and island cultures.

Susan provided a list of different places that she experienced as supportive in maintaining her shift towards personal transformation. She described these as "spaces that mean something, places that I feel good in, something important, I feel drawn to and comfortable in, I don't feel threatened by authority figures, rules and regulations, and I feel useful." Susan describes a couple of places on her own property. One of them is the outhouse, "A very practical (and beautiful) solution to the summer shortage of well-water and rainwater on Gabriola" as well as the cistern "The mural painted on the exterior is now 15 years old and fading, it was done by my 12 year old daughter and her best friend." Susan was involved in creating these spaces without authority figures, rules and regulations. Instead, she created them with family, working with seasonal changes in the environment rather than under a regulatory regime. These spaces are in direct contrast to Anna's experience with the Health Inspector and some of the other stories appearing in the next two chapters.

For Susan, spaces in which there is support for that different mode of thinking and being are crucial. One example she gave was the Gabriola Commons:

A public space stewarded by the community…A place for learning about alternative and sustainable ways of living, and a place to come together for work and celebration."

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Because there were others in the same mode of thinking there was a feeling of being comfortable in that space – welcomed and able to talk and be from an ecological-thinking place without fear of being criticized or ridiculed. The Gabriola Commons was set up to welcome everyone in the community and yet there are tensions. I will analyze some of the comments I heard from people who have been involved in the Commons.

The Commons used a collective consensus decision-making process: "It was really slow at the Commons; it took at least 5 meetings to do pretty much anything bigger than digging a hole." Efforts to ensure that everyone had a say in decisions at the Commons has resulted in decision-making that takes time. Those just wanting to 'do it', make it happen, dig a hole or put up a fence became frustrated and some of those volunteers have left. As Judith notes, there's a learning curve: it's how to work together, learning to work with people and so it takes more time. And most of the teams are getting things done with a minimum of process time, whereas others are bogged down by the different personalities and different perspectives on how something should be done.

Another quote: "It's so bureaucratic now – every 't' needs to be crossed and every 'i' dotted – even though everyone knows it's a 't' and an 'i'." There has been an increase in those focused on financial management joining the board of the Foundation – due to the need to have the accounts balanced and the mortgage paid off. Unfortunately, some of those joining have an economic-thinking mindset rather than an ecological one and are trying to reshape the processes from that mode of thinking. Due to recent federal legislative changes related to charities the board is worried that they will have their charitable tax status rescinded if they don't cross every 't'. Those on the receiving end of this approach wonder whether there is a way to go back to the

magic of the early years, when there was a feeling of creation, rather than the heaviness of bureaucracy.

In addition, there was a power struggle: "There's a power struggle going on between those that started the Commons, and people that want to be part of it now." One of the financial management members of the Commons sent out a long email to everyone on the Common's distribution list, criticizing those who, he felt, were holding onto the power. What he proposed was moving from the collective process that was in place to a hierarchical one in which the board, of which he was a member, would be the final decision-maker. The struggle was about different ideologies as well as individual egos and their desire to have power.

One of the differences in ideology was about paid work. The group that sat on the initial steering committee and first board believed that no one should be paid for the work they did on the Commons. They felt this set up a power dynamic and differentiated those that volunteered from those that were paid. They believed that paying someone would likely create a sense of ownership in the person that was paid, contrary to the principle of community ownership.

People for a Health Community (PHC), the primary social services organization on the island, rent half the main building on the property. The Executive Director of PHC, knowing people who were struggling to find paid work, felt that the Commons should change this policy. Other volunteers, who were younger and looking for work, believed this policy should be changed. The Executive Director of PHC used interesting and telling language when she described some of the projects funded through her organization that used the land and buildings of the Commons. She claimed ownership over these projects, describing them as 'belonging' to PHC and resented decision-making that required approval through the 'slow' collective process required by the Commons, even though the land and buildings were part of the Commons. Her

language reflects the thinking that the early creators of the Commons were worried about. Some members of the community started joking about how the Commons was really just a subset of PHC. Discussions between the boards of the two groups have started addressing some of these dynamics but tensions remain, and PHC is looking at buying a building of their own so that they can be free to work in the way they feel fits the objective of their organization, as well as their ideology.

During the worst of the struggle, solidarity, agnostic and alienation strategies and technologies were evident. People took sides, and framed their superiority in moralistic terms. The PHC group described themselves as caring for the unemployed and young people in the community and described the 'other' (who, by implication, did not care) as retired baby boomers who maintained their power on the Commons due to their available volunteer time, which overwhelmed those who had to work. The original Commons groups described PHC and some of the new board members as people unable to understand the ideology of the Commons, looking for ways to change it back to dominant culture principles, such as hierarchy and paid staff.

The struggle epitomizes the various purposes that underlie the ideologies and framing of the differences between the groups. Each side feels right about their aims, without necessarily understanding how they have come to be at cross-purposes with the other group's aims. Even though the various goals could have worked together rather than been situated as polar opposites, those involved ended up in conflict. Similar dynamics of joint decision-making occur in every organization:

> I've worked with different groups, various people in those groups. And I'm one of the people that might drop a bomb or be the passive one this week. We all act out in certain ways around organizing.

What Veronica is describing are the strategies and technologies that are used within groups, mirroring those used between groups. One of the dynamics is the extent to which people are identified with other political authorities, or groups, within the community. "I left [the Commons] because of old feelings left over from Weldwood." 'Weldwood' was a conflict that centred on a logging company and the response from the Islands Trust, which had happened fifteen years previously. People who had taken different positions are still not speaking to each other (Dunsmoor-Farley, 2013). And even when they do, the feeling of being in two different camps lingers: "it's just that, ok, you *are* the other side. And it's really weird. It's not that it's anger, or anything. It's just that something slips out."

Alienation strategies are also used within groups. At the height of the struggle between those who had created the initial Commons structure and the 'financial management' board, the trustees supported hearing the voice of the PHC Executive Director complaining about members of the original group, but did not open the door to hear the voice of those named in the complaints. There is still residual feeling left over for those not given an opportunity to tell their side of the story.

For an idea such as the Commons, which holds out so much hope of working in an alternative way, these various tensions may feel discouraging. Veronica's insight into the tensions:

> Ego-based thinking – we've been brought up to think that we are very special and in the old cultures – it was the group that mattered the most – it's the old thing about thinking of the collective instead of the self. So, we are *so* ego-based.

Veronica emphasizes how the culture of individualism – pleasing the individual, the success of the individual, egos – is creating challenges to working collectively. She suggests that we need to

relearn how to work together collectively, for the good of the group, in order for tensions to decrease in initiatives such as the Commons.

One of those locations for relearning is the Commons itself. The council and various Commons' teams represented at the council, including the Foundation trustees, are creating a process that is based on collaboration rather than hierarchy. According to Judith they are attempting to address issues that have arisen in the first couple of years of implementing the council decision-making process. Previously the teams (farm team, sustainability centre, infrastructure team, etc.) would report their proposed activities at the monthly council sessions and council decided whether they could proceed or not. That decision would then go back to the team, and then implementation could happen. For some, there was a feeling that too many meetings were required for decisions (as noted in one of the previous quotes).

Several clarifications have provided an easier flow and empowerment for the teams. The majority of activities do not require approval by council: "decentralized decision making is practiced at the most appropriate, practical and empowering level, and in such a way that it models the ability of natural systems to self-organize" (Commons document, 2013). The decisions requiring council discussion are those that will affect other teams. In addition, when making decisions at council there is a request that council members trust those on the teams to make good decisions, appropriate to their situation, rather than be directive.

There are still occasions when four or five meetings might be held before an issue is resolved. Judith believes that this occurs when two different stories are located in the same space, and each believes firmly in their story. As the philosophical basis of the Commons is based in ecological-thinking, she and others with the Commons feel that it is important to hold on to that

way of thinking when working through issues, especially in the face of dominant culture economic-thinking.

Transformative spaces can be a mixture of support and tension. As noted in Chapter 5, they occur when different modes of thinking collide, and they hold the excitement of people thinking in different ways. They may hold support as well as tensions for those moving towards ecological-thinking, as the importance of the individual ego is challenged to think and be collective.

Summary

Tensions and support exist side by side within transformative spaces, as island cultures are shaped and reshaped through a self-governing process. System shifting occurs through activities that are accepted by others in the community in a cumulative, spiral-like process. Just as people need to be ready to hear a different story for personal transformation, people need to be ready to hear a different story for change to happen in communities. Part of that process is taking time to hear from people who are from a range of political authorities, hear what their response is to the change, recognize that understanding their story, and their objectives, are part of the necessary dialogue. Conflicts may arise because ecological-thinking decisions differ from economic-thinking objectives, or they may arise from a perceived need to resist any change. Conflicts also arise as individuals, with their needs to be right and be seen as aligned with a particular group, or be seen as successful or important, override the capacity to work collectively. Groups, such as the Mud Girls and the Gabriola Commons, provide opportunities for people to learn how to work collectively, despite the individualism embedded in our culture. For those involved in system shifting who are acting from an ecological-thinking framework, support from other like-minded people is crucial. Spaces that welcome the opportunity to think, act, and

interact from that different mode of thinking increase the capacity of those doing the work to continue and not walk away because of the tensions, criticism, and slow progress. The places in which these social relations occur play a role, through their history and through their configuration of people and geography.

Interlude: Place and Space

In Chapter 2, the conceptual framework, I raised a question about place and space and how these two concepts are situated relative to personal transformation. I would argue that they are intricately linked to each other and to the potential for ecological thinking and will explore this through storytellers' comments on both place and space.

Some places have a wider range of stories about the world than others. 'Stories-so-far' is a phrase that Massey (2005) uses to describe people's histories. When a range of different stories-so-far intermingles, there is opportunity for people to rethink the stories that they unconsciously hold. Some places are home to generations who have lived in one place for many years; and, the culture – the norms and behaviours – are very difficult to shift as there have been very few alternative stories that residents experience. Cate, who described in Chapter 5 how she experienced personal transformation out of tragedy, describes her thoughts on the difference between the West and East coasts of Canada:

> I think it's a fact that so many of us have transitioned here from somewhere else – so we bring perspectives from somewhere else but because we've moved to a new place we are also open enough that we consider everyone else…
>
> As opposed to on the East Coast where those families, you know - they are hundreds and hundreds of years in that place so the way they do things the way they figure things – always has been and always will be and any of us to move into that area – we will never fit in there. Whereas, on the west coast it's so different that way – people have come from somewhere else and in moving away from family we tend to reach out and make connections in community.

The creation of norms and behaviours in a community arises out of interactions like those described in the previous chapter. Self-governance occurs as people bring their unconscious and conscious stories into spaces in a community. A culture, based on anti-establishment, communal and back-to-the land, was created on the Gulf Islands due to the sheer number of hippies who arrived on the Gulf Islands in the 1960's and 1970's. The proportion of newcomers overwhelmed those living on the islands prior to the 1960's. While there were battles (described in Chapter 4), there was also an intermingling, of both families and culture. Local, self-sufficient, communal characteristics, which both groups hold in common, are still strong today.

Place, the rock, soil, water and other material evidence, is integrated into the culture in two ways. The place holds the memory of stories-so-far, of social relations between all of those who have lived and interacted in a place and how they have changed the physical community. When I see the middens near a beach and when I walk beside the various petroglyphs on the islands I see evidence of the Coast Salish who came before me. When I see the deserted quarry and the millstones used as property markers, and the logged forests, I witness other groups of people who have left their mark.

A water threshold is one of the unique physical characteristics of small islands. One has to cross the Salish Sea to arrive in any of the Gulf Islands. There is a period of waiting, without driving, as one travels over the water, whether by plane or boat. The travel over the water differentiates one community of people from another. For those travelling the ferries by foot there is a communal process of getting on, waiting, and getting off the ferry, often a time to talk and connect with acquaintances that happen to be on the same ferry (Vannini, 2011). There is also a shift from one culture to the island culture on that ferry or seaplane. Speaking very generally, the clothing is more informal and many people do not lock their doors. There are also

thresholds in urban or suburban places – for example between Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and business district, less than a mile apart. Less noticeable, but the shift is there, is the threshold between the staid and more affluent Oak Bay and the funky but less affluent Fernwood in residential Victoria. However, there is not a place/time interlude between these locations, such as that experienced travelling to an island. Some of the storytellers described that interlude as a defined separation from the 'other', from the city, from corporations, and potentially from governments.

Place is integrated into a community's culture through the relationship between the residents and physical aspects of that place. Certain rocks that one sits on at the beach, or a particular log in the forest, are engraved in our understanding and relationship with place. We celebrate the nature of a place together – when the whales are travelling close to the island, email and social media communication bring islanders to the shores and windows to marvel at the graceful beauty of the Orcas. Before Michael created the Ecological Learning Centres he provided opportunities for island residents to create a relationship with place through "Illuminating your neighbourhood" walks through fields, forests and shorelines. Many of the island blogs focus on the natural world – on finding a particular rare flower in the forest, a hidden edible mushroom, or tracks of an unknown creature – and other islanders check in with their identification of the creature, or point out another site for the rare flower. We start to share a common language through place. We talk about the solstice events at Drumbeg, someone mentions the Edgar farm, and even though the Edgar's are long gone, people know the farm. The 'tunnel' describes the long stretch of evergreens canopying one of the main roads on an island.

Space, where support and tensions are located, in the social relations between individuals as they negotiate the cultural norms and behaviours of a community, occurs in, or in relation to,

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the ferries and various places on the islands. Some people have moved to the Gulf Islands because they believe there is more support for ecological thinking. They believe that they won't have to constantly deal with the criticisms coming from the dominant culture as they move towards a lifestyle consistent with that different mode of thinking and being:

> The biggest change I've made so far is immigrating to a new country, Canada. On a small island in British Columbia's Salish Sea, I've found more tolerance for progressive ideas and hundreds of inspiring, like-minded individuals. (Victor)

Some of the cultural norms that were created in the back-to-land era are now being embraced as those – wanting to live life based on ecological-thinking – look for like-minded people. In Chapter Six Victor described this as finding 'tribe'. And many are engaging in island activities:

> As I approach the big six zero, my volunteer hours are at an all-time high, divided between a twenty-six acre community farm, a public bicycle program, an inter-island transportation initiative and other community projects, any and all of which I'll be proud to pass on to the next generation.

> However, for many retiring to the islands, living near the ocean is of more importance

than the ecological-thinking culture. One storyteller described it as the English Invasion. She equates her reaction to these newcomers to the reaction of those rejecting the hippies when they first arrived:

> If you went into the Grande [an island pub] and went in there they wouldn't serve you [if you were a hippie]…They wouldn't serve you if you didn't belong there.

> And I'm getting there, I'm getting there – who the f*** are you? I know I'm getting to be the old curmudgeon. You're so used to your own little niche and you get something new and so you get like…

While we all have some resistance to change, it is harder to change if we are used to our own little niche and someone attempts to change that. Many of those farming and working on the land when the hippies arrived did not want them there. In the 1960's 'old-timers' burnt down one of the island houses rented out to the early hippies. As noted in the quote above, one of the local pubs refused to serve the anti-establishment newcomers. Some of the same people coming to the islands in the 1960's through to the 1980's are now resistant to accepting newcomers. In these instances place becomes a barrier to change as the incumbents, who have created the norms, behaviours, and the culture of the place – feel ownership. In Isin's (2002) language, they see themselves as citizens. From their perspective, newcomers are not yet citizens. People who have lived on the island for more than 20 years feel a sense of ownership over the island and resent suggestions from the 'other': "They come here and they want to tell us what to do and it must be exactly how the First Nations must have felt when the first Europeans came" (Veronica). One element of that ownership is protection of the culture, and protection of their citizenship – their right to determine the norms of that culture.

For some, it is also protection of the ecology – because they have little trust that newcomers will know how to steward the natural world. "The people who are really upset about [steep slope regulations] are the ones you know that want to do whatever they want with their land, without thinking about it. I just can't believe some of the people who move here – it is the Wild West, where they can get away with it." The lack of trust relates to events that have happened. Veronica describes how: "Like the eagle nesting tree – prime example. Wealthy people come in – they buy the property. The realtors say this is a protected tree. They find out it is a protected tree and they take it out because they don't want to be bothered by it. We don't

want to have to take care of that." Distrust, anger, and frustration regarding newcomers are created out of these experiences.

There are people who have been on the islands for over twenty years, who accept newcomers easily, especially if they are from a similar mode of thinking and being. Many of the storytellers who had lived on the islands for many years recognized that newcomers can also be attempting to shift to ecological-thinking rather than dominant culture economic-thinking. These storytellers were open to hearing different stories and ideas about system shifting that were consistent with their ecological-thinking, and they understood themselves to be part of the larger world, with links to others in faraway places that are all attempting to shift systems away from economic-thinking and towards ecological-thinking. They understand that ecological-thinking includes the complex relationships between humans and the natural world, and that alienation strategies used against those that have a dominant culture perspective of the natural world rather than an ecological one, will not improve the relationship. Their focus on space, on shifting systems through the social relations that occur when different stories collide, does not exclude place. Instead, it recognizes that part of ecological-thinking is about a closer relationship with the natural world. They also understand place as a location for support from other like-minded people, and as a location to work collectively with others.

This interlude has described how place and space intermingle with culture, and thus personal and community change. Patterns of change and resisting change in a community relate to the history of a place, as well as the opportunities to hear different stories-so-far, and different modes of thinking and being. Our relationship to place involves connections to the natural world. A place can also create a sense of separateness in relation to other peopled communities (due to natural thresholds such as water), or permeability (if no natural threshold). For some islanders

the water threshold provides the opportunity to create a separate culture, one that protects the ecology, the culture, and their citizenship. Some see it as a protected place to be with like-minded people, away from the criticism of the dominant culture – as in the drawbridge metaphor.

Creating collective knowledge about place occurs through the interplay between place and space. There is a naming of places that occurs through official state processes and there is a naming that occurs through knowing a place, an informal naming - for people who live there or an event that happened there. Interplay also occurs when people living in a place share 'happenings' about natural world occurrences. Both of these interplays between space and place create a collective sense of community. From what I heard from island residents the stronger the relationship to ownership over the culture of a place – the more resistant to change and protective of what is there. The stronger the relationship to space – to hearing different stories and different ways of thinking and being – the easier it is to engage in collective processes that allow alternative ways of understanding the world, with corresponding shifts in lifestyles and systems.

Chapter Nine: The Islands Trust and Transformative Change

Storytellers rarely mentioned the Islands Trust (IT) as a key player in transformative change and system shifts. When it was mentioned, a couple of people described its role as supportive, several expressed mixed feelings about the IT, and some described their interaction with IT as frustrating. In this chapter I will explore how its purpose, and tools to achieve that purpose, influence IT's role in the community, and how the community culture surrounding the IT both supports and creates barriers to system change. I will outline the ways in which people described the IT's facilitative and advocacy roles in system shifting. Finally, I will discuss the IT's regulatory and decision-making roles, and how legislative requirements and lack of service provision function, influence its approach and corresponding impact on island communities.

Local Government Structures in British Columbia

Regional Districts and Municipalities are the two key local government structures in British Columbia. The provincial government incorporates Municipalities, which provide a range of services. In British Columbia the legislation is permissive rather than prescriptive, thus a municipality may provide any service that council considers necessary or desirable, and may provide it directly or through another public authority, person or organization (Bish & Clemens, 2008). Typically, the services include planning, sewage, water, fire, police, roads, building permits, waste, and transit. Each municipality is governed by a mayor and 4-10 counsellors; the number of counsellors dependent on the size of the municipality. Regional Districts are a collective of municipalities and unincorporated areas within a region. Their governance structure is comprised of a board made up of a combination of municipal counsellors and regional directors elected from the unincorporated areas. Their focus is on providing regional services as well as municipal type services, such as waste and building permits to unincorporated areas.

However, for unincorporated areas, police services and responsibility for roads falls to the provincial government.

The three most heavily populated Salish Sea islands – Salt Spring, Gabriola, and Bowen – have all voted on whether to incorporate as a municipality. In 1999 Bowen Island voted yes by 57% and became the first municipality in the Islands Trust area. It remains the only municipality, as subsequent votes on Salt Spring Island and Gabriola Island firmly rejected the idea at 70% and 87% (with a 70% turnout) against respectively. At the time, calculations were done that demonstrated taxes would increase up to $200 per year for the average household, due to the high cost of maintaining the high kilometres per capita road system, if incorporation occurred on either Salt Spring Island or Gabriola Island.

The Islands Trust is an anomaly in the local government structure. Because their only municipal type service is land use planning, the other services need to be provided either by the adjacent regional district, or in the case of roads and police, by the provincial ministry responsible for transportation. There are nine regional districts responsible for certain services on islands within their jurisdiction (see page 56). The Islands Trust structure consists of Local Trust Committees, comprised of two locally elected trustees and a third trustee from another island; and, the Islands Trust Council, made up of the 26 elected trustees from the 13 major islands (some include smaller islands within their jurisdiction). There is a Council executive, which includes the Chair and three vice-chairs, elected by the other trustees for a three-year term.

The Islands Trust Object

The Islands Trust has a unique legislated Object to:

Preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation

with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia." (Islands Trust Act 1:3)

The Islands Trust Act was established in 1974 due to concerns about large subdivisions and over-development in the Gulf Islands (Lamb, 2009). A report by the provincial standing committee, established in 1973 to respond to these concerns, stated "the islands are too important to the people of Canada to be left open to exploitation by real-estate developers and speculators." (Lamb, 2009, p. 4)

The Islands Trust, when first created, had an advocacy role and a passive veto role relative to decisions that impacted the Islands Trust area, made by regional districts. In 1977 the land use planning function moved from the regional districts to the Islands Trust, along with a planning and regulatory function for the IT and responsibility for each island's Official Community Plan (OCP), which lays out advocacy statements and by-laws governing land use. In subsequent years the addition of the Islands Trust Fund, used to protect parcels of land, plus discretionary funds increased the tools available to the Islands Trust to carry out a facilitative role. These three roles – advocate, regulator, and facilitator are aimed at achieving the Object of the *Islands Trust Act*, within the confines of the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*.

The key terms in the original Object for the Islands Trust, developed for the 1974 legislation, are still in place. I will review each of the terms in the Object statement, highlighting the various opinions about the wording, from both the legislature and community.

Preserve and p**rotect**. The use of this term reflects the approach advocated by the environmental movement in 1974. Government tends to respond to environmental concerns in ways that reflect the dominant culture thinking of the time. The first response in British Columbia was based on preservation and conservation, which resulted in the park system (started

in 1911) and conservation officers (in 1905) respectively. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,*
published in 1962, is credited with starting a 'protection' wave of environmentalism, opening
people's eyes to the damage to water systems, forests, wildlife, air, and ecosystems throughout
the world, done in the name of economic growth and prosperity. Protection was the focus of the
legal environmental movement in the 1970s (Gunningham, 2009). The USA Environmental
Protection Agency was established in 1970; as was Canada's first environmental legislation of
note, the *Canadian Waters Pollution Prevention Act*. Regulation was the tool used to protect
natural resources from the destruction caused by industry (Gunningham). An evolution has
occurred in the environmental movement, from one of preservation and protection, through
regulation, to rethinking how we as humans live in relationship to the world around us. In 2007,
Paul Hawken wrote, "Sustainability is about stabilizing the currently disruptive relationship
between earth's two most complex systems —human culture and the living world*"* (p.172). This
concept of sustainability is closely aligned with First Nations' cultures of living in harmony with
nature, using resources without harming or depleting those resources. In this definition,
sustainability goes beyond the concept of preserve and protect, emphasizing the need for a
cultural shift in human behaviour.

How does this relate to the preserve and protect objective of the Islands Trust? According
to a provincial government official:

> The term preserve and protect is based on the thinking and terminology of the
> environmental movement of the 1970's. If a conversation with Ministers [of the Crown]
> happened today about the purpose statement then the wording would be more likely to
> reflect the concept of sustainability proposed by Brundtland.

In 1994 the Islands Trust Policy Statement was established and included Section V: Sustainable Communities, defined as:

> …human communities that have achieved a balance between environmental, economic and social systems and which respect the carrying capacity of the supporting environment.

However, the wording in the object statement is still 'preserve and protect', not sustainability, creating conversations played out in local island media:

> … Now we get to the root issue, is the "Preserve and Protect" mandate of the Islands Trust conservation or sustainability? Are we setting up our community for long term sustainability, by maintaining the creative community and young artists, or are we forcing expensive retirement houses for the elderly and wealthy? How can we afford to keep the ferry running? How can we get bicycle paths instead of road goop? All of these questions need rational discussion, and changes to the scope of the official community plan to actually make it a sustainable community plan rather than a conservation mandate. (Young, 2008)

…countered with demands that the Islands Trust stay within the confines of 'preserve and protect':

> …in 2004 the Executive Committee…chose to replace the tagline to read "Preserving island communities, culture and environment". I am sure that some Trustees at least will see the inference of a shift in priorities which would in turn distort the interpretation of the mandate, in fact even to the point of misrepresentation…I am of the opinion that the "To Preserve and Protect" tag line, and its intention, is a decisive component of the Trust's ideology and should be duly retained. (Eastick, 2010)

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Has the shift in tagline resulted in a shift in priorities as Jacinthe Eastick suggests? Chris Bowers

provides the perspective of Sheila Malcolmson, the current chair of the Islands Trust Council:

> " The 1994 Trust Policy Statement (part 2) interprets it [unique amenities} as including
> island communities. I'm not personally interested in trade-offs - I believe community can
> only flourish with an intact natural environment"… As for the tagline, Malcolmson said:
> "I'm not influenced by the tagline, and suggest that the biggest influence on trustees is
> the Islands Trust statutory documents (the Trust Policy Statement, the Official
> Community Plan (OCP), the Land Use Bylaw), rather than the letterhead". (Bowers,
> 2010)

> Whether this is an Object statement or a mandate statement is another question that arises

in the preceding discussion. In both Eastick's and Young's letters they describe the Object as a

mandate. A former Islands Trust planner provides his perspective on this debate:

> Now, there isn't the word mandate in the legislation – the word that is used is object –
> object is "to preserve and protect". So, I interpret that to mean that the provincial
> government said "as you exercise the powers we are giving you we want you to exercise
> them with this objective in mind.

The definition of object (in this context) is: "The goal or end of an effort or activity"; while the

definition of mandate is "an authorization to act" (Mirriam-Webster, 2013). By using the word

'object' rather than 'mandate' the provincial government indicates that the Islands Trust does not

have the authority to override other government decisions that are contrary to the stated Object,

but rather that they are tasked with trying to achieve their objective with the tools available to

them.

Unique. The British Columbia Hansard of 1974 provides insight into different responses to the use of the word unique in the Islands Trust Object Statement. Social Credit MLA Williams' perspective:

> To suggest that the islands are unique is to deny that the Cariboo is unique, that the Kootenays is unique, that the Queen Charlottes are unique. And to suggest that this paternal legislation - or maybe I should say maternal legislation - is going to be the solution for these islands and their uniqueness, is absolutely beyond belief.

NDP MLA Ms. Brown responded:

> One of the things the Member said was that to say the islands were unique was to say the Cariboo wasn't unique or the Okanagan wasn't unique. This is a strange kind of analogy because "unique" is just an adjective. In the same way, to say that the Hon. Member for West Vancouver-Howe Sound (Mr. L.A. Williams) is a man is not to say that all the other representatives from his party are male. All five of them; not one woman sitting over there. All male. So to say that you are a male doesn't mean that all the rest of you are male because you all are. (Hansard, 1974)

The 1973 Report from the provincial all-party Standing Committee reflects the need to tie the "uniqueness" of the Islands Trust area to its perilous (in terms of trying to prevent over-development) location between two growing urban areas, in order to understand the reasons for the *Islands Trust Act*. At the time the government implemented the *Islands Trust Act*, other ecological systems in British Columbia were considered unique, but they were not perceived to be at risk of overdevelopment. Since 1974 certain areas outside of the Gulf Islands have been heavily developed, and the question arises as to whether or not putting in place legislation that protected them could have prevented the devastation to those ecological systems.

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Amenities. Hansard records of 1974 and 1977 show little discussion regarding the word amenities. The politicians appear to have understood the term and accepted it, or it wasn't perceived as important to challenge. However, the word 'amenities' has recently come under scrutiny by some islanders concerned that the Islands Trust is veering away from the original intent of the *Islands Trust Act* (Island Tides, January, 2010). Tony Law, one of the trustees, carried out an off-the-record analysis of the legislation, Islands Trust Policy Statements, and court decisions, and produced the following statement in 2010:

> … a picture emerges of the "unique amenities" of the Trust Area as being a variety of qualities and features (natural amenities) - such as outstanding scenery and recreational resources - combined with community character (or unique character).

Environment. The Islands Trust area forms a unique ecological region in Canada, supporting many rare species of plants, animals, birds, fish and diverse marine and intertidal life. The Trust Area provides habitats for more than 200 types of migratory birds and holds a disproportional number of sensitive ecosystems due to the high density of rare species residing in the region. It is also one of two areas in which the greatest loss of natural eco-systems has occurred due to development pressures (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2010).

The 10 acre freeze on land in the Gulf Islands (described in Chapter 4, pp 53-54), preceding the establishment of the *Islands Trust Act*, was put in place by the Social Credit government, recognizing the extensive damage that was occurring to the ecological systems in the Islands Trust area at the time (Lamb, 2009). Key elements, in the pro-active work of the

Islands Trust to preserve and protect the environment, are mapping of ecosystems, and protection of natural land through the Islands Trust Fund[17].

For the benefit of the residents of the trust area and all British Columbia. The dual responsibility of the Islands Trust to all British Columbians and also, specifically, to island residents has created tensions regarding who should govern the islands. When the Islands Trust was enacted in 1974, the NDP government put in place a three-member trust committee, all appointees of the provincial government. Two of the trustees were to speak for 'all British Columbians' and one for the island residents. Rosemary Brown, NDP MLA (Hansard, 1974) provides the following rationale:

> The trust does not mean a development freeze which will benefit only established landowners; it means a positive approach to maintaining the scenic beauty of the islands for the benefit of all British Columbians…Those islands are not the private preserve of the people who live on them; those islands are loved and cherished by a lot of us - people who live here, people who live in the rest of Canada and people who even live outside of Canada.

The Social Credit opposition members were outraged. Hugh Curtis called the proposed Islands Trust a "remote agency, government-controlled, government-appointed" (Hansard, 1974). He was concerned about the imbalance in the quorum of two British Columbia representatives to one local representative, as well as the right of the locally elected trustees for each of the populated areas to determine what was local and what would go to the triumvirate of trustees.

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[17] The Islands Trust Fund protects more than 975 hectares of land through voluntary land donations, conservation, covenants, land purchase, and stewardship education programs (Islands Trust, 2013).

tokenism … of local trustees for local affairs, because those local trustees will not even have the opportunity…to decide what, in fact, is a local affair. The chairman of the general trust, one of the three appointed government trustees, is going to be able to say: "That is a local affair. This is a general affair. (Curtis, Hansard, 1974)

Changes to the 1977 legislation require the three general trustees to be elected from the 26 locally elected trustees, rather than appointed by the provincial government. According to Lamb (2009), this time the NDP opposition forced the amendment to the legislation. While the governance model moves to a more locally based approach, the question of what 'benefit' to residents or British Columbians means, other than who has the most powerful voice, is not discussed in the legislative changes. The Islands Trust Policy Statement provides its interpretation of this phrase:

> The Islands Trust is responsible to the present and future residents of both the Trust Area and the Province of British Columbia. Their needs can only be met and sustained within the limitations of the natural environment and the island communities of the Trust Area. A balance must be established between the needs of all stakeholders.

In cooperation with other agencies. The full phrase reads "in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia" (*Islands Trust Act*, 1996). From 1974 to 1977, cooperation with relevant government organizations was one of the Islands Trust's only tools to achieve its object statement (veto over Regional District land use decisions being the other one). From 1974 to 1994, it had the authority to enter into agreements with provincial government bodies. After 1994, it was able to enter into agreement with other government bodies, and in 2000, the act was amended to allow the Islands Trust to enter into agreements with First Nations. Outside of the

'other persons and organizations' there is no mention of how community members play a role in achieving the objective of the *Islands Trust Act*.

Summary. Several aspects of Islands Trust governance can be pulled from the preceding conversation. First, the Islands Trust is a creation of the provincial government and any changes to its governance model are determined by the provincial legislature. Second, there are limited tools to achieve the objective of the Islands Trust – the core roles played by the Islands Trust Council are a) advocates, b) regulators, and c) facilitators. Some members in the community believe that the IT has a mandate and authority rather than an objective with limited tools.

Finally, in addition to the tension between over-development and preservation that the Islands Trust Act was created to address, there is a tension between a focus on the 'preserve and protect' object and addressing the inter-relationship between human systems and ecological systems. These tensions are located within communities in which residents do not hesitate to express their views, ensuring that various tensions rise to the surface and are witnessed in the local media.

The Islands Trust as part of Community Culture

The Islands Trust is part of the culture on the Gulf Islands, whether one loves it, hates it, or is ambivalent. Although storytellers rarely mentioned the Islands Trust as a player in system shifting, the Islands Trust is featured in close to 50% of local newspaper coverage. Community members know the local trustees – they attend local events, shop in the grocery store and wait in the ferry line-up. Moreover, the local trustees are often perceived as the face of government decisions even though zoning decisions and by-laws are their sole service area.

John, a former planner with the Islands Trust, who has analyzed the contradictions of the Trust, provides some insight:

But I think what tends to happen –I would criticize the organization a little bit. They

portray [the Object] as a mandate that might be perceived as going beyond the powers

they have been given. I think that's one of the real challenges of the Islands Trust – it is

seen as local government but it is not the local government. The regional district is really

your local government as the regional district provides local government services.

The question becomes, who has the tools and the capacity to 'preserve and protect' or to address

the relationship between humans and the environment. When we look back to the everyday

lifestyle system shifting stories in the two previous chapters it becomes evident that the largest

force in achieving the object statement of the Islands Trust is the residents themselves. While

there are times that a government body may provide some support, this tends to be limited.

Due to their local presence, the trustees are caught in a trap of not being responsible for

government services, other than planning, yet they are seen as the face of government. While the

Islands Trust is able to prevent any development over and above what has already been put in

place through previous zoning, they can't do things like reduce car use, change BC Ferries

policies, and address water, sewage and road issues. Some further thoughts from John:

But you have two or three Islands Trust trustees – they come to the island and hold a

meeting and they appear to be your local government when in actual fact they're not. So,

that sets up all sorts of tensions. And then the trustees are always saying – we can't help

you there, we can't do that, we can't do that. It is not part of their responsibilities or

they're not empowered to do that.

Sheila Malcolmson, the current chair of the Islands Trust Council (ITC), describes the

experience:

We're more at risk of getting too close to the issues, [interviewer: *taking on the identity of all governments?*]. And that can happen for sure and it is a bit of a losing battle - because you can try to pass on someone's concerns about potholes in the roads. But it is a lose-lose proposition to me, really, because if it doesn't get fixed then you're associated with it. And my sense has always been is that it gives people a false sense of confidence. I think it is much better to say go and talk to [the MLA] about that. But regardless we do have an intermediate role and that's part of ….It is harder to thwart it – harder to push it aside.

The challenge for the Local Trustees is that people see their Local Trustee as the go-to person for government related issues. They do not want to wade through or even understand the roles of the myriad government bodies – the regional district for waste, building permits and transit, the Health Authority for health services and septic systems, the School Board for education, and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for the road systems. Due, in part, to the confusion between mandate and objective, some residents see the Islands Trust as the dyke preventing big government and corporations from flowing onto the islands – based on the belief that the Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the islands environment and amenities through its authority over the population. The ideology underlying the belief in the Trust's 'mandated' authority is consistent with state-centric social movements, and the belief that the location for political action is with governments. Some look to this local government as the protection from other government and capitalist forces out there, it is there to 'save' the islands, and they are tough on the Trust when they feel that it is not fulfilling its 'mandate' (as in Eastick's letter, above). Others, who believe that the Islands Trust object gets in the way of economic growth, try to change the Trust or get rid of it (as evidenced in the stories I describe later in this chapter).

However, the Trust's objective describes them as a partner with individuals, and other agencies, in 'preserving and protecting.'

The trustees are not only perceived by some as the go-to politician for island residents when dealing with any government, they are expected by some residents to ensure that the islands are preserved and protected, with no recognition by those residents of the complex relationship between humans and the environment. Fortunately, some trustees understand that they can play a role in facilitating system change through community efforts, rather than trying to achieve it through regulations and enforcement of by-laws.

The Islands Trust as Quiet Facilitator

A couple of the storytellers described ways in which the Islands Trust supported implementation of system shifting actions, and one of the trustees identified facilitation as one of the Trust's three main roles. I will describe these various stories, including IT support for initiatives such as cycling and car stops, creation of parks and protected areas through by-laws, and creation of special zoning for community groups.

Two mentions of Islands Trust support came from those initiating the Velo-village event and the car stops program. A policy statement on cycling and rural mobility, drafted by the community organization responsible for the Velo-village event, was presented and approved at an Islands Trust Council meeting (26 trustees), as well as at Salt Spring Island and Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee meetings.

> So, it began with that policy piece…at the Salish sea statements on cycling and rural
> mobility. Scope of what's possible and converting that into a municipal resolution that we
> send out to 159 communities asking for provincial investment in rural cycling
> infrastructure. The Islands Trust Council has passed it, Salt Spring Island's council has

passed it – Gabriola passed it in February… It's been passed by places like Quesnel,

Tofino, and Sydney…

The Gabriola Island Local Trust committee also provided funds for islanders to travel to the

Velo-village conference, and in return received a report about how Gabriola Island could apply

conference learnings. What is evident in the preceding quote that identifies Quesnel, Tofino and

Sydney, all communities outside of the Gulf Islands, is that in this particular instance the Islands

Trust is operating no differently than other local governments in British Columbia.

The second Islands Trust mention was in the story about Car Stops. Barry mentioned the

Islands Trust twice – "I had the full support of the trustees", and "Car stops are really the taste of

the month with the Islands Trust. They think that it's an excellent way of moving around."

Funding for the car stops program came from the regional district and from the Ministry of

Transportation and Infrastructure. However, for Barry, the support from the local trustees was

important, as it represented, to him, approval by the local community.

I asked Doug, who provided the stories about Hornby Island self-sufficiency and

cooperatives, whether or not he found the Islands Trustees supportive. His response:

I don't know how the Island's Trust fits in at all. Nearly all the things are just individual

projects. I guess some of the things you have to get permission from Islands Trust to

reallocate what land use is for.

Community members, not the Islands Trust, initiated the system shifts described by storytellers.

However, in some of the stories the Islands Trust played a supportive role; and, although a small

role, it was part of the success of the initiative. Sheila, the IT Council chair, affirms that system

changes arise from the community, and it is important for the Islands Trust not to take credit, and

recognize that this type of support is possible under any local government:

So there's kind of some good honest, good island thinking – not taking the credit where it

is not due. [Interviewer: *What you're doing is being part of a process?*] Any local

government could do the same – that's not special about the Islands Trust.

Sheila emphasized the importance of the Official Community Plan (OCP) in facilitating

community identified initiatives:

That's what your OCP should do – is identify your community long-term goals.

Throughout all of the island communities - Because community members are so engaged

in the OCP processes and in a small rural area we need to use whatever tools we have.

So, I think the kind of decision-making that is happening is all about what is upwelling

from the community and what is supported by the community. That's what we're

spending our time on… in the official community plan reviews…we can identify – what

are those community needs, identify the framework for decision-making – a little bit

different on every island.

From Sheila's perspective, the OCP plays a big role in whether or not she, as a trustee, would

support any initiatives created by community members or other groups. She used several

different examples of links between statements in the OCP and subsequent support and action:

So, you can point to things on the island now - Like the 707 Park, the campground

property, Cox Community Park – they were all things that were in the OCP. Part of the

community goals was to have significant waterfront parks and significant forested inland

parks. Then when someone put in a development application to do those things it was

rated especially highly in the planner's recommendations to the trustees.

She also reiterates that these different initiatives come from community rather than from the

Islands Trust:

…and frankly it is a little awkward to…it's not the Islands Trust that has built the library or bought the park. It was individual tax dollars, and Friends of the Library and other community people that made it happen.

One of the examples of facilitated support of a community-initiated project is the Gabriola Commons (the Commons). The land was zoned single family residential and was in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). In addition to satisfying the requirements of the ALR Commission, the society formed to manage the Commons needed to work with the Local Trust Committee to develop appropriate zoning, so that the various community activities that were envisioned could be carried out on the property. Many of the concepts and activities did not fit easily into land use zoning regulations.

> The idea is much bigger than a land use by-law. Sometimes you need a space or a facility to enable those conversations. But transformation is never going to happen inside a regulatory zoning tool. (Sheila)

One of the original members of the Commons was elected as a trustee and struggled with the contradictions:

> I remember she drew this cartoon when she was first a trustee about this great big beautiful idea of the commons and her as the trustee wrestling it in – kind of pounding it down with her copy of the OCP. (Sheila)

The process of creating a zoning by-law that allowed the majority of proposed activities to happen took a couple of years and substantial work on the part of community members and the IT planners. The by-law went to public hearing and changes were made as a result of input from the community – in the end it was approved. One of the volunteers working on the by-law process with the Islands Trust was so frustrated and exhausted by the end of the process she

stopped volunteering at the Commons. However, the person telling the original story about the Commons did not even mention the by-law process, instead she focused on the community process of creating a space that moved away from land ownership and moved towards stewardship, in the spirit of those who lived on the island before colonization. Her story was about the system change aspects of the Commons, not the regulatory.

The role of facilitating system shifting initiated by community members is often a quiet or silent activity for the Islands Trust. There are some aspects of the work carried out by the IT that Sheila describes as an absence of something:

So it's like you don't have a pulp mill next to your village or we've got another example. Here's this beautiful bay, everyone's like: "This is such a beautiful bay it epitomizes this island, it's so fantastic." Then the land use planner will say, "The reason that it is such a beautiful bay is because the zoning doesn't allow private docks". But you're not going to put a sign up going "this dockless bay brought to you from the Islands Trust". That's what I mean by the absence of something.

The support that a community group or individual may receive from IT – for a project – can be understood as symbolic of general community approval, as the support often stems from the OCP or is based on comments the trustees hear from community members. The assumption that the local trustees will reflect a balanced perspective of community opinion is a facet of island culture – is held by some islanders but not by others, as will be evident in the section on IT's regulatory role, below.

Advocacy

The Islands Trust is also an advocate for island residents, as outlined in the *Islands Trust Act:*

Because Islands Trust Act specifically invites us to try to influence the policies of other levels of government to carry out the object of the trust, to preserve and protect, that gives us a special in. I think the other sort of leg is that we have so few tools to carry out the mandate we really need to lean on the advocacy side. (Sheila)

Examples of advocacy in 2012 include letters and statements to BC Hydro regarding proposed Smart Meter installations, and to other levels of government and Commissions regarding a potential increase in tankers carrying bitumen, from the oil sands, traversing the Salish Sea. Community members brought these issues forward to the Islands Trust as well as to the local media, and the Islands Trust responded by advocating the position they heard from community members.

How effective is the advocacy role? BC Hydro ignored the requests from the Islands Trust and other local governments, as well as a resolution at the Union of BC Municipalities, to put a moratorium on installation of the Smart Meters. It is proceeding with the installation. Advocacy on the part of the Islands Trust is not going to be the key to stopping the pipelines and tankers. However, what the advocacy does provide is a measure of support for those in the community protesting these government/corporate decisions. They are, as described above, part of the community – one of the political authorities described in the community chapter. IT's stand on these issues can provide support for community members, who are taking a public stand on a particular issue.

The Islands Trust as Regulator

Some of the tensions that have occurred with the Islands Trust have been the result of people frustrated that, from their perspective, the Islands Trust Object gets in the way of business

interests. The following statement regarding growth, development and economic opportunities is found in the Islands Trust Policy Statement:

Directive Policy

5.7.2 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address economic opportunities that are compatible with conservation of resources and protection of community character.

A protest on Salt Spring Island in the summer of 2010 highlights some of the different interests that occur on the islands within the Islands Trust area. The Local Trust Committee turned down a request by a local company, *Salt Spring Coffee*, to expand its business within residential zoning. More than 200 people attended a protest, requesting the elimination of the Islands Trust government, saying it has gone too far in its' "preserve and protect" mandate and is destroying island economies. In addition, a petition was created demanding a review of the *Islands Trust Act*. Media turned out in droves and the protest became a headline story in the *Vancouver Sun* (July 3, 2010). The story was featured on the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* (*CBC)* as well as other British Columbia media sources. Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of Islands Trust Council, responded to a newspaper article, criticizing the Islands Trust for destroying island economies:

For the past two terms, the Islands Trust's strategic plan makes "healthy communities" a top priority…Residents are providing a wealth of ideas about how to maintain our islands' socioeconomic diversity. We are amending bylaws and attracting funds for affordable housing – no small challenge for any community. Many island communities have reviewed zoning regulations to support islanders who wish to work from home, while managing impacts on neighbours. The 2006 census showed 37 per cent of islanders

were self-employed compared with 14 per cent in B.C., and that our economies are diversified and resilient. (Malcolmson, 2010)

A family that has lived on Salt Spring Island since the early 1980's owns Salt Spring Coffee. They started out as organic farmers and in 1996 opened the doors to their first roasting café. They were successful, the owner describing the line-ups in the first few days as "crushing". The coffee is 100% organic, and 100% fair trade, and the operation is 100% carbon neutral: a great fit for the Islands Trust's environmental objectives (outside of the distance the coffee has to travel from the growers to the consumers).

Their success resulted in a desire for expansion. They developed "plans for [a] proposed roasting facility [that] included an organic garden, a coffee educational centre and more than 30 jobs for residents of the normally idyllic holiday island" (CBC, 2010). The location for the planned facility was in a residential zone, and near Ford Lake, a protected wetland. Surrounding residents expressed concern regarding the odour coming from the roasting facility as well as the potential damage to Ford Lake (CBC). Interestingly residents near the Salt Spring Coffee roasting facility in Richmond, a Greater Vancouver suburb, were expressing the same concern regarding odour.

Sheila Malcolmson (chair of Islands Trust Council) describes how the Local Trust Committee attempted to find ways to keep Salt Spring Coffee on the island, while satisfying concerns of neighbours and residents. As quoted in the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper:

One of the few no votes denied the now famous coffee company re-zoning. Any community in B.C. would struggle with accommodating a business that bought rural residential land in hopes of changing the zoning to suit industrial purposes. If the process was more drawn out than it might have been elsewhere, it reflects the local trustees' effort

to explore options for the popular coffee roaster, despite steadfast and legitimate concerns from neighbours. The Saltspring trustees even struck a community task force to identify suitable industrial land. (Malcolmson, 2010)

The no vote has resulted in a decision by the company to move to Vancouver. They recently found a location in Richmond that suits the industrial and odorous nature of the operation.

The real story here is how the petitioners used this decision to challenge the viability of the Trust. A petition to the provincial government to carry out a review of the *Islands Trust Act*, a "Coffee Party" modelled after the famous "Tea Party" from the American Revolution, naked men on tractors driving through the streets of Salt Spring, a list of economic stories in which the Trust has made "inappropriate" decisions, and numerous media stories depicting the 'horrendous' actions of the Islands Trust towards the local coffee company were all part of the response.

The petitioners hadn't realized the Act had been reviewed and amended numerous times since it was enacted in 1974 (Lamb, 2009). Nonetheless, the petition and the protest reflect a reaction against the Islands Trust, their processes and policies. When reviewing the comments from those who signed the petition three main concerns are expressed. First, there is a belief that a select few are behind the Islands Trust decisions

I believe this mindset is directly linked to the selective by-law enforcement which gives Trustees and their friends the power to bully whoever doesn't fit into their narrow eco-fascist world view. (Gulf Islands Citizen Coalition, Petition)

There is a wave of wealthy retirees who have been arriving on the islands and with them come some different values (Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation). Those that participated in the "Coffee Tea Party" appeared to be primarily men with some level of power in current or past positions. Senator Larry Campbell, the former Mayor of Vancouver,

spoke at the rally. The person leading the initiative and petition was a lawyer from Hornby Island. In contrast, anecdotal comments from residents of three of the islands indicate that the power behind the Islands Trust on those islands is primarily conservation focused residents who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. They are the likely target of the "eco-fascist world view" comment. The traditional tendency to run the local government with a profit/entrepreneurial attitude does not appear to be happening in the Islands Trust area, and, as a result, there is frustration on the part of those that have been in power positions in their previous communities. John, the former IT planner, provides a different description of the newcomer retirees: "They were counter-culture in the 70's, then oil executives and now they have returned to the counter culture…and with more vigour and vehemence than the others. Unfortunately Islands Trust and the object, 'the preserve and protect' – they are so easily aligned with the retirees." John's take is obviously different from those signing the petition. What John and the petitioners don't acknowledge in their categorization is the mix of ideologies, stories-so-far, and lifestyles in the three constituent groups. However, they do highlight dynamics that play out in community decision-making, as explored in the chapter on community.

The second element expressed in the petitioners' comments is a belief based on a classic understanding of the economy and what is required in order to make it function well.

> Young people on the islands have no place to work because any and every form of commercial enterprise is destroyed by the Trust or never gets off the ground in the first place. Small businesses are completely and totally undermined at every turn and so the end product is that the 'locals' are all unemployed or underemployed or on social assistance. (Gulf Islands Citizen Coalition, Petition)

If one believes that the economy is about encouraging industry so that there are jobs for residents then the move of Salt Spring Coffee to Vancouver due to its planned expansion is devastating. If one believes that industry and jobs need to serve the well-being of community and the environment, rather than the other way around, then the move is unfortunate but not devastating. In this instant, the Local Trust Committee was attempting to implement a decision premised on an ecological understanding of the world – the acknowledgement of environmental and community impacts that would arise if the coffee roasting company expanded.

The third issue highlighted in the comments from the petitioners is the issue of property ownership versus the public good. Property ownership implies owners have control over their property and have the right to decide to do whatever they see fit, providing there is no damage, provable in court, to neighbours. Those feeling disenfranchised with the Islands Trust on the issue of property ownership were in evidence at the coffee protest and as signatories on the petition.

> A regulation that disallows a landowner of 160 acres to build a home on his/her land is shameful. Where else in Canada would you find a similar restrictive regulation? (Gulf Islands Citizen Coalition, Petition)

Zoning and land use planning are the legal land management tools of the Islands Trust. However, the Salt Spring Coffee Company made a decision to expand on its land knowing that it was zoned residential, not industrial, and that neighbours would be negatively impacted by the odour. However, what this situation triggered was a reaction from Galiano land owners regarding their inability to build on land they bought that is in forest land zoning. The dominant economic culture places great importance on our rights of possession and much of the anger displayed in the petitioners' comments regarding land use reflect that culture. The Islands Trust is tasked with

a challenge – a stewardship role within a legislative framework in which private property ownership is a lynchpin.

The Salt Spring Island Coffee decision epitomizes the difficulty of making decisions in which there is more than one opinion and vocal non-government political authorities, as described by Magnusson (2011), hold those opinions. Any local government faces this challenge when making zoning and regulatory decisions. As evidenced in Chapter 8 it is easy to forget the importance of engagement, time necessary for that engagement, and the need to not come in from the place of 'expert' over residents. As the story below illustrates, these elements of community decision-making are as important for the local government as they are for any other political authority in a community.

On one of the islands a recent attempt by the Islands Trust to regulate any building on properties with slopes resulted in outrage by many of the residents, due to what many perceived as a top down approach used by the planners and trustees. The LTC held a public information session and over two hundred residents showed up to express their concerns about the process, as well as the proposed regulations. One of those attending wrote the following letter to the trustees:

> [T]he meeting held on January 17th should have been for the sole purpose of sharing with the community the rationale for undertaking this work, the criteria that you have been using to determine slope hazards and the options considered for addressing the problem. Instead what was presented was a fait accompli; the letter sent to affected property owners was not consultative it simply asked us to tweak the plan you had already developed. Planning that could have such a negative effect on property values, insurance costs and freedom of use should never be concluded without actively involving those affected from the very beginning. (Farley, 2013)

The reaction echoes the response to the village pathways on Mayne Island and the logs placed on Mortimer Spit. The Islands Trust, like any other political authority on the islands, needs to pay attention to effectively engaging people in decision-making. As a result of the response, the Local Trustees eliminated those properties with low and moderate slopes and have committed to finding an effective process to work with those who have steep slopes.

Sheila Malcolmson acknowledges the need for community dialogue in a community prior to an issue becoming part of a regulatory decision, in which the choice is 'yes' or 'no':

> It's not until things have started to go off the rails that people say we need to take more time with this– but by that point positions have hardened and the advice we get is that this isn't particularly recoverable…In an ideal world we would go into everything that's going to result in a by-law we would have the fabulous full dialogue and we'd have a mediator and there would be a wonderful community process that we would use for issue identification. And we wouldn't get ourselves, at any level, into conflict. But there's only so much money to go around and so many competing projects.

When I asked Sheila whether or not that could be something others in the community could take on, given the trustees' quasi-judicial decision making role, she considered the possibility:

> But if there was a separate Institute of [Island name] Dialogue – that would be really neat. Maybe work-shopping stuff and having all kinds of free flowing conversations that would maybe be – maybe the trustees would go and listen but we wouldn't have any chance of getting involved in micro-management at a level that would compromise our ability to be quasi-judicial, which is what we really need to be.

There is potential for innovative approaches with community working with local government; however, there may be resistance from the local trustees regarding an area they feel is their

jurisdiction. An editorial in the *Gabriola Sounder*, a local paper, described the response a local community group received when they approached the Islands Trust about working together on a local issue:

> Sustainable Gabriola (SG) has basically been told thanks, but no thanks (for now) by the Islands Trust when it comes to helping organize the stakeholders in further discussing the vision for the Village Core…The SG members have done their due diligence though in stating to the trustees they would like to see more discussions by the community for the Village…And unless someone decides to look for a re-zoning or variance on the properties in the core, there is little left for the Trust to do in working on that vision. The zoning is already in place. What is left now is speaking to the other governmental bodies who have authority there… If SG thinks it is the group to spearhead discussions which lead to more property and business owners meeting with each other, it should make those meetings happen. As evidenced by the success of the clinic, when Gabriolans decide to not wait for bureaucracy to catch up, great people show up and amazing things can happen. (Kilbourn, 2012)

The local trustees told those presenting from Sustainable Gabriola that the proposed actions were really the responsibility of the Islands Trust staff; however, because of limited staff resources and low priority for this issue, it wouldn't happen in the near future. This was an opportunity for the trustees to provide support to a community group that was willing to open up a dialogue in the community about an issue that everyone had opinions about. However, in this particular instance, the trustees' ownership of the issue prevented that from happening.

There are examples where public meetings about activities on specific properties, such as affordable housing projects, are carried out by local community groups without Islands Trust

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involvement or endorsement. If these processes are similar to those described in Chapter 8 for the Gabriola Commons, and the Ecological Learning Centre, then there is less likelihood for conflict when it arrives on the doorstep of the Islands Trust, with the need for a 'yes' or 'no' answer and battle lines drawn:

> But all it takes is one person. And luckily the Commons folks went slow enough. That was more like a year or two - from the Agricultural Land Commission application to the final thing. The commons really saw the long view. So, they didn't put the pressure on and that made all the difference.

Summary

The Islands Trust is both a political authority within each island's creative and unpredictable self-governance and an organization that falls under the authority of the provincial government. The early debates in the legislature regarding the Object of the Islands Trust highlight the conflict between an Object that has aspects of ecological-thinking and the economic-thinking objectives of some MLAs. This conflict is also in evidence on each island, when zoning decisions and regulations that are ecologically oriented in nature, rather than strictly economic, bump up against those on the islands who hold dominant culture ways of thinking about economics. The local debates to do with the preserve and protect mandate versus sustainability shed light on both the concept of Mandate versus Object and place versus space. For some residents, 'preserve and protect' implies that the regulatory role of the Islands Trust will be able to preserve and protect both the culture and the environment through the force of the tools of authority given to the Islands Trust. There is an assumption that changing the relationship between humans and the environment in order to protect the environment will occur through government (Islands Trust) intervention rather than through shifts in culture through

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community self-government. As the 'in community' face of government, the trustees are expected by some to take on the job of protecting the culture and environment with limited tools – facilitator, advocate, and land use regulator – while at the same time being the 'go-to' person for all levels of government intervention. While there is indication of the facilitator role and advocate in a few of the initiatives described by the storytellers, it is evident that the Islands Trust is on the sidelines of system shifting, rather than an instigator. However, its actions speak to how a local government can support system shifts in the community – whether through advocating against proposed oil tankers in the Salish Sea, supporting Velo-village through policy and funding support for participants, or creating zoning requirements that allow for the Gabriola Commons, a location of system change. However, as is applicable for any political authority on these islands, it is crucial for acceptance of any change that the Islands Trust pays attention to effectively engaging people in decision-making rather than applying a top-down approach. It also needs to be open to community groups providing a space for conversations to happen about potentially divisive issues, so that people with different opinions and stories can find ways to agree on a common route, without having to take 'us' against 'them' stands.

Chapter Ten: Interactions with Government and Corporations

In this chapter I describe how government/corporate 'technologies of control' (Foucault, 1978) are experienced as long intrusive arms by those carrying out value-based actions that are contrary to dominant culture norms and behaviours. Foucault (1978) explains how these technologies are embedded within the 'art of government' and are aimed at guiding a population's conduct in order to achieve certain ends (1991). I explore how the dominant culture creates laws and regulations, and makes decisions consistent with belief systems that reflect the priority of economic self interest, including corporate self interest. Due to the authoritarian nature of our government structures, these technologies are imposed and interjected into people's everyday lives, including the alternative systems that are created in communities. The government or corporate rationale may be based on intent to achieve a positive result for society; however, it is also based on a corporate culture system and knowledge, and thus can have negative unintended consequences. For those living life according to their internal compass, and making decisions based on an ecological premise, these technologies create a muffled shock. The options are to accept, to negotiate, to refuse and request a change, or to just refuse. The acts of refusing or negotiating are acts of agency, reflecting a belief that the ultimate authority rests not with 'government' but with individuals and with community. A refusal or negotiation provides opportunities for new stories to enter into the dialogue about the particular technology of control, and may result in conflict, a shift in the discourse, and a change in the directive itself.

Rationale and Source of Information

Evidence of the long arms of corporations and governments is found in the interaction between the food inspector and Anna. When the Health Inspector handed Anna the official notice, informing her she could only use eggs that had been officially graded, she was at the

receiving end of a 'technology of government'. In the case of the un-inspected eggs, the government's aim was to reduce the incidence of salmonella in the population consistent with Foucault's term "bio-politics… the strategic organization of power and knowledge to manage health problems and needs, among other issues, in the life of individuals and of the population" (Prince, 2004, p. 63). The technologies used to reduce salmonella include: regulations requiring official inspection and grading of all eggs sold to the public, security in the form of health inspectors ensuring implementation of the regulations, and the language used in the public domain providing the rationale.

Nikolas Rose (2000) declares that "language is not secondary to government, it is constitutive of it" (p. 144). The rationalization and corresponding language that created the 'truth' from government's perspective is embedded within the dangers of salmonella and the government's corresponding duty to prevent negative health impacts in 'the population.' According to Dorothy Smith (1984), understanding what language is used, as well as what is absent, is fundamental when analyzing any documentary reality created. The government's regime of rationality for the problem of salmonella includes records of food contaminated by food handlers and problems with ungraded eggs (Canada Food Inspection Agency, 2011) but doesn't include the impact of battery egg operations or antimicrobial inoculation on the incidence of salmonella.[18] What flows from the language of rationalization, then, are government

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[18] A study by the Soil Association (2011) found that battery egg operations produced five times more incidences of salmonella than organic farms. A Quebec study (Government of Canada, 2008) found that reducing the use of antimicrobials in poultry reduced the incidence of salmonella.

technologies designed to address the problem as stated without addressing the problems absent from the text.

The dominant discourse of the administrative state, "an organization of knowledge, based on values, interests and practices associated with the market economy and medical science" (Prince, 2004, p. 64) is also present in mainstream media and fed by those interested in maintaining and promoting the "regime of rationality" that supports their own particular cause or causes. The following quote is from the Nanaimo Daily News (February 17, 2009):

> Restaurants and grocery stores can now sell ungraded, farm-fresh eggs after a policy
>
> change by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, but businesses that choose to do so
>
> could be putting the public at undue risk, warns the B.C. Egg Marketing Board. (para. 1)

The headline is "*When is Produce Safe to Buy*?" The article is consistent with how news media construct health topics "in terms of risk, by credible sources using strong language" (Berry, Wharf-Higgins and Naylor, 2007, p. 35). The B. C. Egg Marketing Board (BCEMB) represents the interests of its members who are registered egg producers averaging 17,000 chickens per farm. In 1967, it was given the mandate to "promote, control, and regulate the production, transportation, packing, storage, and marketing of all eggs in British Columbia, including the prohibition of all or part of these activities" (BCEMB, 2011). Industry, whether to do with eggs or oil, knows the message they place in the general public domain and the government's domain, is crucial to their bottom line. Of interest regarding the preceding statement of a Health Authority policy change, is why the Health Authority shifted its rationale to one that took precedence over the discourse of the BCEMB.

This dominant discourse is a form of ideological practice in which 'knowledge', from interested sources, overrides people's everyday experiences. The information from industry

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groups is about numbers and dollars— how many eggs, chickens, farms, producers and how much money the industry 'contributes' to the provincial economy. "Ideological practice detaches the concept from its ground and origin in real individuals…It becomes then a way of thinking about the world which stands between the thinker and his object" (Smith, 1974). According to Smith, government decision-making texts create documentary reality from this form of ideological practice, the text then becoming the rationale for decisions or 'truth'.

Rose (2000) describes how government technologies are aimed at shaping the conduct of the population through a range of methods: "a form of budgeting, a method of training, a practice of confession, a type of census, the architecture of a schoolroom" (p. 146). We can see evidence of what Foucault describes as a pastoral mode of governmentality (1991, p. 104) in the Health Authority's actions to look after the health of the population through technologies purported to reduce risk of salmonella. Paraphrasing Foucault, Dean (1994) describes the conflict between autonomous agency and pastoral governance:

> [T]he ideal of a welfare state is bound to the difficult relationship between pastoral and citizenship elements, between the individualizing and totalizing dimensions of government that construct human beings as both autonomous agents within a political community and clients to be administered, governed, and normalized with respect to specific governmental objectives. (Dean, 1994, p. 160)

Foucault describes the historical shift "from a regime dominated by structures of sovereignty to one ruled by techniques of government [that] turns on the theme of population" (p. 101). From his perspective the focus of sovereignty is on maintaining and increasing the wealth and power of the sovereign while the focus of governmentality is on managing the population by "invoking the capacities and powers of the self-governing individual, while at the

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same time undertaking to foster, shape, and use those same capacities and powers" (Dean, 1994).

However, according to Foucault, although the target is population, sovereign authority isn't necessarily eliminated, nor are the accompanying apparatuses of security required to enforce the will of that authority (Foucault, 1991). In Anna's story, the regulations and fines, together with the health inspector and his demands were part of the apparatus of security that was used to enforce the will of the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

The process, from identifying the problem through to proposed solutions, follows logic embedded in the relationship between government and industry. As mentioned, the rationale behind government's regulation requiring eggs to be officially inspected was to reduce the incidence of salmonella in the population. Although the high rate of salmonella arising from practices within the large scale egg industry was behind the need for this regulation, mention of these problems was absent from the official text describing the rationale. Instead, the handling of eggs – an activity that applies to pasture fed backyard chickens as well as egg 'farms' with over 17,000 chickens – was named as the key culprit. The stated problem is arrived at through information fed from the industry. The corresponding solutions, in the form of government technologies, support the industry's practices. Security apparatus tools are used in order to enforce these solutions created through the joint corporate government rationale.

Enforcement, Support, and Agency

The definition of sovereignty found in the Mirriam Webster Dictionary (2011) is "*one that exercises supreme authority within a limited sphere*". The assumption of sovereign authority is embedded within the legislation and corresponding regulations of the various governments, and once a law is created then we, as subjects are supposed to abide by that law. If we don't, then

enforcement arrives: in Anna's case the Health Inspector, with the weight of potential fines and arrest behind him.

This brings us to the intersection between government technologies, with corresponding security apparatus, and agency. The disconnect Anna experienced between the Health Authority's regulations and her belief that Gabriola farm-fresh eggs should be used at the Farmers' market references differences between the technologies of government (and other institutions) and an individual's experience and knowledge of the world (Foucault, 1982; Habermas, 1984; Smith, 1987). Anna describes her interaction with the health inspector and her attempts to let him know that she could not, in good conscience, sell inspected rather than local pasture fed eggs:

So when this started – it was in my 7th year of doing the Agi Hall market kitchen– and until then I had not been bothered by anybody. And I would just use local ingredients if I could get them, you know, as much as I could and then this inspector showed up and told me that everything I could use had to be bought …from official places, not farmgate, nothing like that and I thought uh, huh. I said that includes eggs…oh, yeah.

So anyways I told him that I would not oblige him with that and he could choose to be warned. Because I understood that he had a discretionary clause and he didn't have to do everything to the letter. I understood that someone with his job would have that– they don't have to be antagonist.

He responded… in an extreme way – and he said as long as he had that job there was no way that he could ignore that because of the health risks. So then I said "you must know that the health risks are worse on the other side" but he couldn't go there. And he urged me to respect the regulations – and I said no way – he chose the wrong person to do that

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battle. He wasn't going to get concession. But I just wanted to be clear about that - I didn't want to lie about it.

Smith uses the term bifurcated consciousness to describe the difference between the academic discourse of child development and her experience as a single parent raising two children (1987). Anna's decision to continue to sell local eggs and refuse to comply with the health inspector's orders arose from her experience and knowledge about the difference between farm fresh eggs and inspected eggs, an understanding of how the regulation is linked to larger systemic issues, and a belief that she had the right to say 'no'.

> Because of that I couldn't get a permit, which was used against me. And without the permit to run the kitchen, which I'd never needed before, all of a sudden I had to pay a fee of $120 to get the permit. But I could only get the permit if everything came from official sources – it circled. So I chose to operate without the permit. I told the Agi board and they accepted me and they said 'do it, do whatever".

Anna used local self-governance, in the form of the local community group that ran the farmer's market, to resist the inspector's use of permits as an enforcement tool. Because the Agriculture Hall Board (Agi Board) supported her rationale for using local uninspected free-range eggs, they were willing to stand up against the government's security measures.

> Personal support in the community was evident in the face-to-face interactions between Anna and the Health Inspector. When the Health Inspector arrived at the farmer's market with a letter aimed at shutting Anna down, a number of fellow islanders showed up in the kitchen in support of Anna.

> I think in the end there were seven people there. And so he told me this – he ordered me to shut down the operation. So I said, "Okay I won't oblige and what is the next step". So

this was a warning and there were four stages with the final one being, you know, not the

police but the equivalent, a few heavy handed men would come. And I said, "okay, I'll go

with that because that will be really good PR" …and I said, "I don't mind".

Anna exercised her agency, and having others around her provided support for that position. Her

interaction with the health inspector represents a specific moment when socially constructed

identities changed. In the health inspector's mind Anna was a subject of the sovereign state and

he, as a representative of the state, was there to ensure she complied with the public good as

determined by the state. By exercising her free will, or agency in the space constructed by the

social relations between the two of them, backed by friends supporting her position, a change in

those identities occurred.

So, then he got really upset and shoved me. And at that point Jenny said, "Take your

hands off her – that is assault". But he was also heavy handed with Signe who was taking

pictures of that – and he pushed her – so he had completely lost it.

 The health inspector's response indicates his anger, frustration, and bewilderment at not being

acknowledged, respected, and feared as the official authority on public health. The seven people

gathered in the kitchen in support of Anna's stance did not believe that his actions promoted

better public health; they recognized Anna as the authority in this interaction, not the health

inspector.

The identity change between Anna and the Health Inspector expanded to a challenge

from the island community to the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) regarding best

practices in public health:

There was petition – a lot of people signed…The pot luck was organized because during

that time what we also discovered was that public potlucks were illegal. You cannot just

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Figure 12: Illegal egg potluck. Photo courtesy of Chris Bowers

invite the public - you have to have a food safety plan and all that. So we did that as a protest. And it was very well attended.

Over 300 people signed the petition and, as evidenced by the photo of the potluck (Figure 12) the 150 people that illegally protested the egg and potluck regulations do not fit the image of those committing illegal acts.

Public Opinion and Policy Change

The challenge became a news item that quickly spread from local to national media:

Someone had called [the editor of the local paper] so she came but she came after all that had happened and that made the news. And then it just kind of went from one thing to another – it made national news without me doing anything.

Some of the people I had as regular customers were connected to CBC, especially one – he and his wife came every single Saturday and Sheilagh Rogers also came occasionally and Sheilagh's husband was also a regular. So, if it wasn't for them I don't think it would have gone …so, it was just one of the lucky coincidences I think.

Anna Bauer was invited onto the CBC and featured in news media across Canada; all critiqued the government's policy. Apparently, her beliefs about selling local free-range eggs are echoed by many others across Canada. The resulting change to Health Authority policy highlights the potential that "even in the context of strong state and corporate interests, the opportunity for critical discourse" (Wharf-Higgins & Weller, 2012) and shifts are possible.

In *A Political Space: Reading the Global through Clayoquot Sound* (2003) Warren

Magnusson provides a clue as to why the Health Authority egg inspection policy changed:

> Given its double authority, as both landowner and sovereign government, it is not
>
> surprising that the BC government expected its 1993 Clayoquot Land Use Decision to be
>
> respected as the final resolution of the conflict. The government soon discovered,
>
> however, that it had no sovereignty in the relevant sense…Not only did the
>
> environmentalists mount blockades, but they did an end run around the government by
>
> appealing to global public opinion and lobbying consumers—both corporate consumers
>
> and end-consumers—in the United States, Europe, and Asia. (p. 115)

Just as environmentalists had redefined the political space around clear cuts in Clayoquot, "from

the space of provincial sovereignty to the space of global public opinion" (Magnusson, 2003, p.

115), on a smaller scale Anna and others had redefined the political space for selling un-

inspected eggs at the local farmers' market.

Documentary Reality

A technology of control was also experienced by a client of the Mud Girls Natural

Building Collective. This one came directly from the corporate world:

> We had a client on Salt Spring who had built a conventional house insulated with dense
>
> foam insulation and hired us to put natural plaster on the inside wall. When he later went
>
> to insure the house the little form they have said 'what's your wall material?' and they
>
> didn't have a place for him to put a check mark for natural plaster. So they were
>
> suggesting to him that they weren't able to insure the house…which would mean that he
>
> wouldn't be able to keep his mortgage.

Three areas to explore arise out of the preceding statement. The first questions are how and who created the wall material list. The insurance company or association likely created it, and corporate manufacturers would have ensured that their wall product was included in the list. The majority of the materials listed have some harmful environmental impacts. In the process of developing the list, a documentary reality (Smith, 1984) is created that does not include natural plaster as an insurable wall material. The second set of questions has to do with why the insurance broker assumed that he could not insure the house just because the form did not list the material. Why didn't he question whether the list was incomplete? Why didn't he explore further to determine if there was any research on risk factors of natural plaster? Instead, there was a blind acceptance that the list provided all safe wall materials.

The third area I explore is the link between home insurance and mortgage that Rose references. Canada Mortgage and Housing (CMHC) as well as an independent mortgage provider back up her statement. CMHC states "Your home must be fully insured before mortgage lenders can release the funds for your purchase. This protects both you and the lender." The homeowner is now placed in a challenging situation, all because he made a decision, based on environmental values, to use natural plaster for the walls in his conventionally built home. His options include replacing the natural plaster with traditional wall material such as drywall, selling his home, or negotiating with the insurer.

He decided to negotiate through demonstrating the extent to which natural plaster is fire safe relative to drywall, an accepted wall material:

> So what he did - He made up another batch of the same plaster we used, he plastered
> some foam with it then put a dry piece of drywall and he stacked all of these around a
> bonfire and then he videotaped it and the drywall completely crumbled and cracked and

semi-exploded and the natural plaster with the dense foam just had a bit of char on it

(Rose).

He then took the video to the insurance company and "he was able to get an exception – they're

not able to do this for everyone but for that particular house they approved his insurance" (Rose)

Why wouldn't they do this for everyone who used natural plaster after seeing the video

evidence? The insurance company was not ready to let go of the story that the 'truth' was evident

in the company's forms.

Negative Side Affects

When a client asked the Mud Girls Natural Building Collective to build a green roof they

also experienced the arm of the government/corporate apparatus. They discovered that, due to

the growing popularity of green roofs, the government had added a new requirement to the

construction process that produced some negative consequences.

Like an example would be…the green roofs… living roofs. We've done quite a few of

them using a pond liner on the roof – you use the slope and soil, whatever, to weight it.

Then all of a sudden there becomes a code for how to do a green roof and now you can't

just lay the liner down you have to use this glue.

Technologies of control often feel as if they appear out of thin air because they are not created at

the local level but rather, as in the story of the eggs, they are created from an extra-local place

and aimed at the broader population. When tracking down the origin of the change I discovered

the involvement of the provincial government's Home Protection Office (HPO). A recent report

(2008) on green roofs stated that: "a number of local governments have been considering

mandating this type of roof in new construction of various types." Four out of the five Home

Warranty Companies, approved to offer Home Warranties under the Home Protection Act,

informed the HPO, in 2007, that they would not provide warranties for buildings with living

roofs. The HPO appointed a task force, comprised of representatives from the warranty industry,

condominium owners, green building industry, installation contractors, developers, architects,

and local government. There was no one representing individuals building their own home. One

of the group's recommendations, and the only one implemented immediately, was "Advise local

governments against mandating extensive green roofs in residential construction at this time"

(HPO, 2008). The letter to all local governments in British Columbia included the following

statement:

> The task group noted that, while it is technically feasible to design, install and maintain a
>
> green roof properly, the probability that this would be done is considerably less than
>
> certain at this time. This is due to factors such as the lack of experience with these
>
> systems in British Columbia, the limited supply of skilled labour, the absence of accepted
>
> standards and minimum levels of quality control and the inability to ensure that strata
>
> corporations discharge their responsibilities for maintenance properly. Although there are
>
> proprietary green roof systems available in British Columbia, the market penetration of
>
> these systems is quite limited at present.
>
> Consequently, the task group identified a number of risks that would arise from failure to
>
> design, install and maintain green roofs properly. These include the failure of the
>
> membrane leading to water penetration, the destruction of plant material through drought
>
> or other influence, economic losses for homeowners if failures are not covered by home
>
> warranty insurance, liability claims for local governments and catastrophic failures for
>
> home warranty insurance providers if green roof failures were widespread.

The statement reflects the various interests represented on the Task Force. Local governments each responded in their own way to the preceding concerns. Due to the risks identified in the letter, the regional district responsible for building permits for Salt Spring Island implemented a policy requiring a warranty for green roofs.

> We were working on a small cabin on Saltspring, and they wanted a cabin with green roof that was to code – so, in order to make this happen now you have to buy the glue from the pond liner company and to lay the liner down you have to use the glue. (Rose)

The Roofing Contractors Association of British Columbia (RCABC, one of the HPO Task Force members) provides the British Columbia Green Roofs warranty. Their warranty is only valid if the installer carries out the directions provided by the supplier of the liner and glue: "Only waterproofing membrane systems that are fully adhered and have an accepted protection layer installed above qualify for coverage under the RGC Guarantee Program." These guidelines make sense from a risk and warranty perspective. The regional district and the RCABC want to insure that they are not on the hook for problems created by the unknown dangers of green roof construction, just as the insurance company in the preceding story was concerned about the risk of insuring an unknown material. Moreover, the company wants to ensure its products are purchased:

> So, in order to make this happen now you have to buy the glue from the pond liner company and to lay the liner down you have to use the glue. So, on a hot summer day a couple of the mud girls are trying to lay this pond liner down and this glue is bubbling and rippling and it is impossible to get it smooth – horrendous fumes – first they feel giddy, then they feel headachy, then by the end of the day they're just totally sick from the fumes. …..something that would have taken an hour to lay it down and smooth it out

and put the dirt on top now takes an entire day and they're poisoned from it basically.

They had a hangover the next day – it had that kind of lingering affect.

When setting the policy that required the glue, not one of the regulatory bodies appears to have considered this negative side effect of that policy. However, from the perspective of the Mud Girls Collective, the result was detrimental in terms of both time and health, and didn't appear, to them, to make any difference to the end result. While the Mud Girls carried out the policy for the cabin on Salt Spring it is unlikely that they will accept any future work involving building green roofs to code if the glue requirement is still in place.

Company's Profits Take Precedence over Not-for-profit Goals?

The corporate world has informal as well as legal systems to protect those making a profit. The air-to-air heat pump social enterprise described in Chapter 6 is part of the dominant wholesale purchasing and distributing system. However, the system is used, not to make a profit, but rather to provide an alternative for people and organizations to decrease their energy use. The Nanaimo distributor responded to an article about the social enterprise by rallying together other distributors, and attempting to get the wholesaler to dethrone Chris, the manager of the social enterprise, as a dealer. Their rationale – the social enterprise approach takes away business from those making a legitimate profit off the units. They used the fact that Chris was not a registered air conditioning refrigeration technician (a requirement for one component of the installation) to persuade the wholesaler that he shouldn't be a dealer.

Even though the wholesaler was making more profit from the social enterprise initiative (at that point the social enterprise dealership had sold 50 units compared to less than 20 from all the other British Columbia dealers combined), the wholesaler was concerned about offending the Nanaimo distributor. Chris negotiated with the wholesaler and they agreed to move the

dealership over to the company doing the refrigeration component of the installation, while still maintaining the social enterprise aspect of the initiative.

When told about the Nanaimo dealer's reaction and the final arrangement, Gary*, one of the heat pump purchasers, indicated that he could understand the response from the other dealers. Chris had broken the informal agreement amongst the dealers that they would keep their mark-up prices around the same level so that all the dealers could make a good profit off the heat pump units. According to Gary*, the dealers' approach was part of regular business practices, and part of a healthy economy, and such practices need to be supported. Gary's concerns reflect the dominant culture's belief about economic self interest trumping environmental or social goals. The social enterprise reflects an ecological way of thinking, with Chris and others volunteering their time so that the heat pumps are affordable, thus more people are able to use them and reduce their energy use, thus reducing negative environmental impact, and in the process reducing their monthly expenses. In 2012, the manufacturer informed Chris that he had 'sold' more heat pumps than any other British Columbia dealer.

To Protest or Not to Protest

In addition to government and corporate intrusions into daily living and community initiatives, there are decisions made by governments and corporations that may be contrary to one's way of thinking and being; however, refusing to oblige won't stop them from happening. Storytellers put forward a range of opinions on how much energy to put into protesting government decisions versus creating alternative systems, as well as different ways to protest.

One storyteller, who felt that protests were a valuable place to expend her energy, emphasized how important it is to have fun when physically confronting, or protesting government or corporate actions. She told me the following story:

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One of the things we did locally was trying to get rid of the base at Nanoose Bay, because of the nuclear submarines coming in. That rubble that's at the bottom of the ocean is from their actions. There's apparently a very deep bay around Winchelsea Island and they're shooting things back and forth under the water. Anyway - the Raging Grannies went to that. And there's a picture of me getting arrested there. It was so funny because they wanted to arrest us and we wouldn't stop singing. So they finally arrested us… and we got our papers. We were arrested because we stepped onto Winchelsea Island. We were trespassing. Then it got into the papers that they've arrested all of these Grannies and of course a lot of people responded - So, anyway they didn't press the charges…So, what we did was we took our ironing boards up to the courts and our irons and our charges and we said press the charges. Those are the kinds of things I like to do. (Jean)

Jean preferred being involved in large protests, such as Clayquot Sound, military actions, and the proposed pipelines and tankers for the oil sands. After being involved in one of the vitriolic local conflicts, she decided to stay away from local political action. However, many of the storytellers indicated their preference for exerting their energy on local system shifting rather than protests. For many of them, protesting had been their way of challenging the system in the past:

Coming out of university I was very much a protestor. So that's been an evolution for me – to move away from the protesting. In those years I was out getting arrested on the hill [in Ottawa] protesting the nuclear submarines. Now, I'm not so interested in going out and protesting. I am interested… [in] building new gardens. So it's a shift from protest the negatives of the old system to now promote the positive system. (Robb)

There was also a recognition that certain decisions made by government were worth challenging and protesting. However, fun and singing, as described by Jean, was one of the preferred approaches:

> Well if I am going to protest I like her technique– be out there singing. Smilingly chain myself to the tree. I do believe there are cases where you have to stand in front of a bulldozer. But I would rather do that in a positive way rather than an angry confrontational fight.

Jean's and Robb's comments are reflected in some of the recent protest movements that have swept across Canada – specifically the Occupy Movement and Idle No More. Leanne Simpson, an Anishinaabe academic and writer, argues that a spirit of celebration has generally characterized Idle No More gatherings:

> "One of the things the round dances have demonstrated to me is that there's a joyfulness to this movement," she says…"It's strategic and it's serious and it's multifaceted but, at the foundation, it's not coming from a place of anger. It's not coming from a place of want. It's coming from a place of joy and connections to our homeland and our cultures."
>
> (CBC, 2013)

Joyful protests can also increase the connections between people with a similar ideology, one that is outside the dominant culture. Veronica talks about how protests can bring members of a community together: "It was about the ferries, something that we can all agree to on this island. It is really good that if we can agree on an issue that we come together and practice going out on the streets, our commonality on that. Otherwise we are all individuals and that's what the dominant society has made us."

Another aspect of the recent gatherings and protests is that people and groups are coming together for a common cause. There isn't a need for a leader at the top of the hierarchy outlining the specific demands of the movement. Instead there is a convergence of interests (Boykoff, 2011), a collective belief that change is needed, whether that be changing the gap between the rich and poor or changing the living conditions and local control for First Nations. Criticisms that there are different opinions within the protests/celebrations have been levied at both the Occupy Movement and Idle No More. Yet, in many ways that is one of their strengths – different voices have an opportunity to be heard, rather than only the voice at the so-called top.

Another approach is to use the government processes in place to change the discourse, to ensure that an ecological approach to decision-making was included in the documentary reality of the proceedings. A number of people from the Gulf Islands participated in the Northern Gateway hearings to lodge their disagreement with pipelines carrying oil from the Alberta oil sands, and tankers then carrying that oil out into the treacherous and environmentally sensitive waters off the British Columbia coast. The following statement is from one of the islanders who presented at the hearings into the proposed pipeline:

> In my quarter-century of study and practice in education, the biggest lesson I have learned is that everything is connected to everything else. Whenever we change one thing, other things change too. In just the same way, we cannot make changes in our economy, in the social structure or in our environment without anticipating that there will be changes, often unpredictable, elsewhere as a result…
>
> We cannot see our selves as "inside" or "outside" the "directly affected area." We are all on the same planet; our atmosphere and our oceans are all directly connected. We cannot extract huge amounts of bitumen from beneath the forests of northern Alberta and ship

them to China without having an impact on our planet. The notion of affected and not-

affected areas suggests a lack of understanding of basic geography, and basic ecology.

Mary's statement was one of thousands that epitomizes a way of understanding economics, inter-

connections, risks, and impacts, that are different from the belief system that created the decision

to send bitumen in a pipeline through pristine wilderness, so that it could be shipped to lucrative

Asian markets. Her comments were included in the local media, as were many other speakers at

the hearings; those comments then become part of the larger public discourse on the pipelines

and tanker traffic.

Summary

For those who have a different mode of thinking than the dominant culture, and are

attempting to act consciously based on their internal compasses, and then it is natural to say no to

government directives that are not compatible with their beliefs. These directives use

technologies to control the behaviour of the population in order to address a problem identified

and defined through a specific process. A documentary reality is created that defines the problem

and the solution, drawing on information from corporations and other bodies of the state

apparatus. Those implementing the solution, whether it is the health inspector or the insurance

agent, believe in the rightness of the process as well as their authority to enforce. They are,

therefore, at a loss when interacting with someone who has different understanding of the

problem, solution and authority. A different story then enters the official discourse, and if the

public opinion is strong enough, then the directive, and thus the technology of control, can be

altered. Placing a different story into the discourse of market economics, such as the heat pump

social enterprise, can also result in a shift in the business culture as well as people's acceptance

of normal business practice. While many people are replacing protests – a familiar practice for

the baby boomer generation – with creation of system change at the local level, many that are involved in mass demonstrations are focusing on the joy rather than the anger. In addition, the use of official processes to register a different way of understanding economics related to a government/corporate decision results in that discourse being part of both the official documentary reality and the public discussion.

Chapter 11: Accumulation of Localisms

This chapter is about how networks connect ecological thinking, on islands, between islands, and beyond islands. I explore the concept of an accumulation of localisms (Massey, 2005), in which local system shifting in places around the globe – changes cultural norms in each of those local communities, and how it is through the accumulation of these shifts that there is an opportunity to change the way in which the global is configured.

Connecting on Island

After reading Chapter 8 on 'Community' the reader might wonder why anyone would want to become engaged in community activities. However, intermingled with the stories of conflict were stories of collaboration between disparate groups, with feelings of joy arising from working with others, a sense of being part of a large argumentative, boisterous family. Whether coming together to celebrate, to protest, to mourn, or to create there are opportunities to hear different stories and be part of cultural shifts.

On Mayne Island carolling around a bonfire and massive tree provides an opportunity for old timers and newcomers, young and old, ecological-thinking and economic-thinking, to sing, laugh and celebrate together. The idea started with Gary, a tree faller who lived on the island:

> Gary Hickman was a tree faller but he also used to do tree-shaving. He climbed trees... And Gary was looking at the big tree that was in the field in Miner's Bay and he said "that would make a great Christmas tree - this thing is 100 miles high. But, he said it's in the right location because its right in the middle of the village and you can see it from Active Pass... So Barry Wilkes turned that idea, brought it to the Community Chamber of Commerce and said is there some way we can help. (Brian)

The Community Chamber of Commerce raised money for the lights and:

… a lot of this work was done with Barry because he was pretty keen – so he went and

talked to Gerry at the Spring Waters and he said "can we run this cord from your place".

And they agreed …so anyway Gary climbed the tree, then he had to get permission from

the Bennets because it was on their land…We made the cross – we just put it up and there

were lights and we just plugged it in. (Brian)

A key aspect of this story is how the different players, one a tree faller, another from the

Community Chamber of Commerce, the owner of the nearby Inn, and the owner of the property

in question worked together to make this happen. The theatre group then became part of the

event:

So, then a couple of weeks later and I was meeting with the theatre people and they said,

"Well, are we going to do this singing [Christmas carolling that had started the year

before]?" And I said "why don't we just do the singing around the Christmas tree". So,

again we went back to Freddy and asked if it was okay. And he said, "Sure, sure, you can

go in and use the field just make sure the sheep don't get out". So, we went and this time

there must have been 30 or 40 people and we all met around the tree and did some

Christmas carolling. (Brian)

The event has grown, and as described by one of the other storytellers from Mayne: "this

is very much an institution on Mayne Island – it is an opportunity for all of the community to get

together – there are about 300" (Helen). Brian: "if the weather's good you get 300/350. If it's

raining about half that." And, it is an opportunity to connect with island residents who aren't part

of one's circle of friends normally:

It's nice to hear where there is cross fertilization, it's not the same group of people, I

mean – I run into this group of people over and over and over again… but I don't run into

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Barry Wilkes so much and there's lots of people that I don't run into. So, what I like about this story is that it is incorporating people who aren't in this…circle. Because I think that's the healthy step that we need to work towards. (Vicki)

Creating opportunities to 'know' others in the community increases the potential for people to have conversations about different opinions, rather than turn it into vitriolic 'us' against 'them' battles. In Chapter 8 I quoted Buki (2012), who suggests that empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, plays a key role in supporting change in community. He describes informal conversations over a beer (substitute singing Christmas carols around a massive tree) as a way to get to know people who have different stories, and move towards understanding the stories they hold.

Several storytellers on Salt Spring Island mentioned the coming together of community members to prevent the Texada Corporation from clear cutting and developing a large piece of land:

When it became clear what Texada planned to do – which was clear cut 10% of the island and then sell it off in 10-acre parcels. It had been owned by a sustainable, remote landowner, a prince in Germany. It didn't take much for Texada to be able to maximize profit in the shortest amount of time, which was what they planned on doing.

So it brought a lot of the community out because it struck a chord – for me anyway. It struck a chord in my heart that this was fundamentally wrong. And I'd never been an activist before – I always thought that you have to walk in someone's shoes – before you criticize them. But they were doing something I fundamentally didn't agree with. (Cate)

In addition to Cate, both John (Velo-village) and J.G. (outdoor education teacher) mentioned the various ways in which Salt Spring Island residents worked towards protecting the

land. J.G. emphasized that it was the whole community rather than a group trying to change something:

> I was here for all that – it was really fun and I agree with everything you say about that creativity – I know that we were all angry – but that's not what I remember about it. What I remember was the fun and the creativity and how– I think it was the first time that I was involved with a whole community and, not just with a group trying to change something, but the whole community.

John's points included the way in which a non-hierarchical model worked, noting as well the potential for community to 'make things happen'.

> During the Texada event when the prince sold it to a couple of carpetbaggers – major clear cuts. You had a core group of people that were trying to move in a particular direction and a whole pile of cells around that that were kind of going in their own direction and it all kind of worked. This one guy discovered the corruption. So that's been part of our plan all along is that at some point the island would start to rise up on its own and make things happen.

Cate describes how everyone had a role, with no role was more important than another. The idea was that all actions were collaborative and every action was part of the whole response.

> People acted out in all of the different ways, everyone could be doing something different that worked for them - some people were baking, some people were holding monthly meetings, some people were doing posters, some were making tea and coffee, some were strategically meeting…

Both Cate and J.G. describe the creativity and the joy of working with others on something they all agreed on. The relationships that developed through the efforts to stop the Texada Corporation

(and they did stop them) created the potential for empathy and conversation in the future, between people who may have disagreed about certain change in the community prior to the Texada actions.

Judith described a potato-harvesting work bee in the rain on the Gabriola Commons that created similar feelings of community togetherness:

That's what makes the heart just sing, working with people and half of them you don't know, you've never worked together before – and everybody - you feel just so damn good. We had one Saturday – harvesting the potatoes because Brian Minter[19] had said this is going to be a really difficult winter – you've got to get those potatoes out of the ground or…so we called for the work bee and it was raining and it was miserable. And a lot of people came to that one, 10, 12 people out in the kitchen garden taking potatoes and it was yucky but it was fabulous and you just could almost have heard the singing and the music coming from this – it was great.

The three events described above are part of system shifting. They provide examples of the importance of placing collective and community before ego, the cross-fertilization of different-stories-so-far, and the creation of empathy through collective working on celebrations or protests together. They epitomize the collaborative relearning Veronica mentions in Chapter 8 and they increase the likelihood of different modes of thinking and being entering into community spaces. The cross-fertilization is not only between those with different ideologies or histories, it is also between those working on different initiatives and, when coming together

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[19] Brian Minter is a CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) gardening expert with a weekly radio show on gardening.

through the types of events mentioned above, there is opportunity to share activities that are happening in the same community, as well as share the idiosyncrasies of an ecological-thinking lifestyle. A matriarch on one of the islands links a variety of people, who are attempting to live a life aligned with ecological principles, through dinners. Several of the islands have groups or blogs that share ecological-thinking activities happening on their island. Examples include the Salt Spring transition group, Pender Community Transition, and Sustainable Gabriola.

Connecting between Islands

One of the challenges facing those living on the islands is the difficulty connecting with people on the other Gulf islands about responses to issues such as climate change, housing, food security, transportation, and water shortages. The ferry system is structured to link islanders and tourists to the mainland or to Vancouver Island but not to each other – although the latter have more in common. In comparison, non-island communities have more opportunities for face-to-face cross-fertilization of ideas across different communities. However, I will describe two examples of cross-island connections and knowledge creation. The first is face-to-face and the second is via media.

The Island Connections project began in the spring of 2010. An invitation from Galiano Island to the Gabriola Commons farm team resulted in a boat trip with 10 Gabriolans travelling to Galiano Island, with ideas shared about food security and community gardens. Then, as word travelled, a Galiano boat joined in and the two boats headed to Pender Island, again to share local food initiatives occurring on the three islands represented. The groups discussed the need for more inter-island sharing and collaboration on ideas and issues related to sustainable living on the islands, the motivation being to bring relevant ideas back to their home islands and implement them. Thus, the collaboration was born. The following year people from the various

islands made three trips to other islands to share ideas and thoughts about how to collaborate, and an all-island event took place in the summer of 2012.

Approximately fifty people from five different islands came to the all-island event, held in Montague Harbour on Galiano Island, the location of First Nations meetings held in the islands centuries before. Several groups sailed down, one person rowed, and another boat was fuelled with a mixture of recycled vegetable oil and diesel. A range of speakers provided information about ecological-thinking island initiatives. One person spoke about innovative co-operative, affordable, small-scale housing, another about the challenges of derelict vessels in the Salish Sea. Others described the Save Our Shores initiative aimed at stopping the increase in oil tanker traffic, the heat pump initiative (described earlier), island hopping cultural events, and the Pender Community Transition activities. Potential collaborations were explored as those attending shared food and music.

Participants described the event as inspirational, many ideas to take back and try out: "Great ideas put forth…fantastic gathering, we need more of these…very interesting to take part in a discussion about the many aspects of building a transition community and about connecting island communities" (Island Futures, 2012). They felt a part of a larger community of people who were living lifestyles fundamentally different from those in the dominant culture. They felt less isolated and more enthusiastic about different ways in which they could work on system shifting related to the ideas they had heard. By experiencing other localisms face-to-face, they were able to imagine the myriad of other localisms in communities outside the Gulf Islands.

A second example of something helping islanders to connect is the Islands Tides, a newspaper that serves the Gulf Islands and some of the coastal communities on Vancouver Island. Generally, the media plays a large role in creating the stories of the dominant culture – the

importance of economic growth and the need for products in order to be successful. *Island Tides* provides an alternative to dominant culture newspapers.

The creator and current publisher of *Island Tides* understood the importance of both connections and witnessing when she started the paper. She moved to Pender Island over 30 years ago, and one of her first projects was: "a guide to artists and artisans on the island. Then we did the inner-outer islands ferry schedule." Work on that project was one of the experiences that persuaded Christa that it was important for people on the islands to feel connected to each other and to inform one another. This was in the mid 1980's, during which time there was a concern about developers that, in spite of the Islands Trust, were intent on creating subdivisions on the islands.

> These islands need a newspaper. I could see that we needed to share knowledge and we needed to share expertise or else we would just be picked off by developers – we were so completely innocent and the development on Galiano was a prime example of what would happen if we didn't let each other know what was going on here.

The philosophy of sharing information and expertise continues to this day. The January 31, 2013 edition includes headlines about the pipelines and oil tankers, local initiatives, and thought provoking articles that provide a different take on reality than that found in the Globe and Mail or National Post. The headlines include: *Kinder Morgan will now ask to triple pipeline capacity, Salt Spring challenges pipeline PR, Gabriola Radio appoints 1ˢᵗ spoken word director,* and *Grassroots and community networking*. There are articles from island reporters investigating the pipeline issue and reporting on local events, from a First Nations woman analyzing the

housing crisis and Attawapiskat[20], from Murray Dobbin – a writer known across Canada for his critiques of dominant culture political systems – and from Elizabeth May – the leader of the Green party and MP for the Southern Gulf Islands. Sara, the editor of Island Tides, describes her approach to choosing stories: "we try to find the balance – the international, national, provincial, regional, local. And telling those local stories but also linking them to a larger sphere – that is Canadian society."

The inclusion of local stories provides inspiration and connections between islands: "I've had people tell me that they really like to hear about what's happening on the other islands. It provides the connections – we're separated by water but we have so many similarities and people doing similar things." (Sarah) The 'letters to the editor' section feature opinions and thoughts from islanders as well as those living in nearby communities that find the *Island Tides* resonates with their way of thinking. In the January 31st edition referred to there were letter writers from Maple Bay, North Saanich, and Nanaimo (cities and suburbs outside the Gulf Islands). A statement from the North Saanich writer: "Recently we've seen considerable focus on individual rights carried too far, this leads to an erosion of our traditions of cooperation, inclusivity, compassion, and environmental care…We can do better" (Jack Thornburgh).

The *Island Tides* provides a space for people to share thoughts from an ecological-thinking perspective without the fear of being criticized for not abiding by dominant culture rules or perceived as self-righteous for living an alternative lifestyle. Sara explains how, when battles

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[20] Attawapiskat is a First Nation community located in Northern Ontario at the mouth of the Attawapiskat River at James Bay. The community has been the centre of attention due to the living conditions in the community and protests to and about the Canadian government.

are brewing on the islands, often with island based newspapers front and centre in creating a community divide, *Island Tides* attempts to create a forum for positive discussion:

What Christa's [the publisher] philosophy is and I stand behind it too – is to not engage with negativity. And sometimes you can't avoid it. Occasionally there have been, not many but a few, people – a select few – who would write letters that we would consider rude and they would be upset if we would not publish them. At that point we had to clarify that we are legally responsible for everything that is written in the paper. We are not here to inflame arguments – we want to promote creative discussions and solutions.

I mentioned Christa's interest in witnessing when introducing this story. She describes how others witness a person's actions, and that witnessing affects both the person being witnessed and the one witnessing. Those telling their stories and providing their thoughts in *Island Tides* are being witnessed by readers. From Christa's perspective, this process of witnessing "is a support system" for those coming from a different mode of being, as well as an act of presenting oneself to the world as someone who thinks and acts differently than that promoted by the dominant culture. We have all experienced how, if one person voices a thought that challenges mainstream thinking, it is easier to pose another contrary opinion. In the same way the actions and thoughts presented in the *Island Tides* provide space for readers to hear a different story than the one they might unconsciously hold, or to speak up and act upon a deeply held value previously repressed due to dominant culture rhetoric.

Both the face-to-face meeting at Montague Harbour, as well as the connections created through *Island Tides*, provide those engaged with:

a) Links sharing information and knowledge as described by Schuler (2010), and

 b) A convergence of transformative spaces as described by Boykoff (2011).

The connections are non-hierarchical, open, fluid, and not perceived as defined networks, reflecting van Loon's conclusion that "Network intelligence, then, is perhaps most astute if it is most ignorant of itself" (2006, p. 313).

Extra-local Influences from Off-island

The cumulative information and knowledge that may shift us into a different mode of thinking and being comes from a wide range of influences. In this section, I will focus on those influences created off islands, in local places elsewhere on this globe.

Some of the most powerful and influential documentaries I have experienced are ones that I have seen on my home island at the local film festival. Seated amongst fellow islanders, I have watched documentaries depicting how a family, located on a small suburban lot in California, created an organic garden that not only feeds them, but provides a plentiful surplus, which is sold to local restaurants. I have watched how the vast tar sands in Northern Alberta have impacted the surrounding land, efforts to clean up the Ganges in India, Cuba's response to the oil embargo and, in *The Economics of Happiness,* a critique of our current economic structure.

Tsiporah organizes the film festivals and her enthusiasm for finding them and sharing them is evident as she walks through the posters of the various films shown over the years. Many of the posters hold personal memories about the relationship between the films and the audience: "This was *Betrayed* – this was exciting. Elaine [Briere, the director] came for the showing – women in their late seventies and their eighties – they wanted to see this, this was their story, and they came up – solidarity – they carried Lorna Pence on each arm – she gave the Victory sign." The movie "shows that globalization doesn't just happen. It is constructed and developed in a deliberate manner…. [The film] connects the dots from the destruction of progressive unionism

in the fifties to the dire situation facing working people today." (Mark Achbar, Director/Producer The Corporation).

Tsiporah describes Scared Sacred as "Biggest movie, a turning point for me… I heard about this movie maker – he changed his name to Velcro Ripper – he is artistic, sensitive, brilliant. This was at the community hall, this was like the big transformative – we had – October 2005, we had 100 people – that was exciting to see 100 people come and see a movie." In the 2013 film festival Tsiporah showed Velcrow Ripper's *Occupy Love*, a documentary about the Occupy movement.

This information and knowledge about what is happening in other local spaces and how others are understanding the world we live in, combined with sitting with others in an island community hall, provides an opportunity for people to feel connected to what is happening off the island, while at the same time being involved collectively, with their friends and neighbours, witnessing the actions of people in other local spaces. Conversations afterward relate both to the stories in the documentaries and the relationship between those stories and what is happening on the island. There is both a witnessing of alternative modes of being and a support for continuing to act from an ecological-thinking place.

We live in a world in which social media, blogs, Twitter, the internet, email – are increasingly a common, if not preferred, form of communication. Schuler (2010) argues that community networks created through the internet increase civic intelligence, a core capacity required for citizens to influence social change:

> The organizational structure of global civic intelligence becomes a vast network of
> people and institutions all communicating with each other and sharing information,
> knowledge, hypotheses, and lessons learned. This network is necessarily composed of

dissimilar institutions and individuals who cooperate with each other because they share

values and commitments to similar objectives.

Some of the storytellers I interviewed were knowledgeable about how to access the information

described by Schuler, and were skilled at finding new and different ideas that could be tried out.

Many also tapped into the various online news sites, such as the *Tyee, Rabble.ca,* and *Democracy*

Now, which provide reporting more in tune with their way of understanding the world. When I

asked storytellers about external influences that shifted their thinking, very few identified

websites or social media.

Yet, most storytellers used email, many were on local or regional list serves about

specific topics, and several used social media. List serves on each of the islands are becoming the

'go-to' place for music, plays, art exhibits, speakers, and events. Many islands have community

bulletin boards and social media discussion pages that are well used – for letting people know

something is going on, for discussions (that can get heated), for selling used items, and for

emergency information such as missing people, ferry problems, storms, and police radar.

How does the presence of social media have an impact on system change? I argue that it

is a sideline factor, a useful tool rather than a driving force. For those shifting their lifestyles

there are ideas on how to grow food through the winter, and plans for composting toilets, solar

power systems, and creating clothes from scraps. There is a website providing information about

the family growing food on a suburban lot in California, with an accompanying blog. There are

opportunities to have conversations about events and initiatives happening in one's community.

However, there are also sites featuring the latest fashion, gas guzzling trucks and cars for sale,

and sites describing why human induced climate change is a fiction. The conversations I held

with people engaged in system shifts referenced face-to-face interactions, with the cyber world used as a tool rather than a primary means of connecting.

The final arena I will explore, in which islanders connect with people off island, is the connections with families, colleagues, clients, friends and acquaintances. For many, these are spaces, in which two worlds collide, with neither world understanding the other's story. They can also be places for personal transformation.

An islander travelling to another place may witness something that unlocks an unconscious story. In *Chapter 5: Personal Transformation*, I described a range of experiences that were the catalyst for personal transformations. Some of these moments happened on the Gulf Islands and some happened in other places. One storyteller described how living in Japan for several years, immersed in a different culture, made her question and then leave behind many of the unconscious stories she held.

The extent to which any interactions influence those engaged to take another look at unconscious stories, to question whether the stories held are still valid, depends upon a person's readiness to be open to different realities, and the presence of a different story. Connections with those off island, similar to those on island, may result in transformative shifts, or may simply provide one more straw to a different story than one unconsciously held, but not necessarily the final straw.

Connections with influences from off the islands are part of the open network described previously. Documentaries produced elsewhere can provide inspiration and serve as the basis for collective pondering and discussions of local implications. Social media and cyber space tools can be used to support personal transformation. Interactions with people islanders meet; when

they travel off island have the potential for transformative shifts – in both those they connect with as well as themselves.

Islanders Influencing other Local Spaces

Connecting with others outside of our home communities not only creates a sense of support, being part of a larger shift, there are also ways in which ecological-thinking activities created by the storytellers have influenced people in local spaces elsewhere on the globe. In this section I will describe how Paul Grignon's documentaries on the money system, Shashona's participation in Otesha, and all of the everyday interactions between the storytellers and people from elsewhere, open up the potential for personal transformation – an opportunity for people to hear a different story and let go of unconscious stories that no longer resonate.

The underlying reasons for Paul investigating the money system are mentioned in Chapter 5. In 2006, his explorations led him to produce a documentary entitled *Money as Debt.* Paul is also an artist and he used his skills to create an animated cartoon that made the concepts he presented easy to understand. A well-known folk-singer who lives on the island and a neighbour of Paul's, Bob Bossin, offered to narrate the documentary. As Paul notes, the enthusiasm for Paul's work translated into practical support: "I've never paid out anything – people have volunteered or we've done a trade."

Elizabeth Kucinich (wife of Dennis Kucinich, a former USA Democrat Congressman), is heavily involved in the monetary reform movement, and she put the word out about "Money as Debt":

I have worked for a long time looking into monetary reform and after 10 years, finally someone has produced a DVD entitled "Money as Debt". It is a fabulous fun yet powerful introduction to the issue of monetary reform…The topic of DebtMoney is THE issue of

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our times. It forms the basis to every nation's areas of core material and spiritual concerns

such as economic development, employment and environmental sustainability.

The documentary has been translated into 24 different languages. Paul made custom versions in

French, Hungarian and Italian. The others are all pirated versions made by anonymous

volunteers.

While the documentary has its critics, most of them with much to lose if the current

monetary system is changed, there are others that talk about how their unconscious story about

the monetary system has changed:

> ...many people in my workplace have seen Money as Debt and, to a person; the scales
>
> have really begun to fall from their eyes because of it. Most of them, after they get over
>
> the shock at how our money system works! are starting to wonder now about what can be
>
> done and how to do it. (Darren Dauncey)
>
> Once again Paul Grignon has taken a taboo subject and turned it into an entertaining
>
> easily understood topic. 'The truth will set you free', it is said, but first it will make you
>
> angry! Once you know the real story you can never go back to your mythical beliefs.
>
> Similar to the feeling you had, once you found out the truth about sex. The birds and bees
>
> story lost its appeal! (Catherine Whelan Costen)

And Money as Debt has been seen by millions of people due to the internet: "The number of

people looking at Money as Debt is amazing - At one point when Google was giving the daily

statistics – 5000 to 8000 per day. In 2007 it was 420,000 per day, then it went up to 2 million."

(Paul)

Paul created several more documentaries, each building on the previous ones. Money as

Debt II was nominated by Fan Recommendation to the American International Film Festival

(www.aiff2010.com) and won the Best Documentary Feature award for October 2010. His latest,

Money as Debt III: Evolution beyond Money suggests an alternative to the current monetary

system. Paul spoke about his ideas on a European tour, as well as at Vancouver's Occupy sit-in

and Salt Spring Island's local currency forum. He is co-authoring papers with economics

professors from European universities, to be presented at international conferences – each of

these potential opportunities for someone to rethink an old story.

Shoshana was also involved in presenting alternative stories through her participation in

Otesha, which uses theatre, experiential activities and storytelling to engage audiences in

rethinking unconscious stories and ways of living.

I was in Toronto visiting my family, and my dad said – come with me to this presentation,

so I went with him. And it turned out to be a group of youth who were cycling from

Vancouver to Newfoundland – giving presentations, which were a skit, a humorous,

comedic skit about how all our daily choices affect the entire planet.

The project was started by two young women who went to Kenya and "were shocked and

abhorred by the discrepancy between their world and ours. Sort of like – this is insane – we have

to change something." What they did was create a bike tour from coast to coast and:

…co-wrote this incredible play 45 minutes long - and it went through the morning in the

life of a teenager. Going to the bathroom and using water, so it talked about water choices

and what…"Oh, we have so much water in Canada – the question of water treatment, and

circulation and aquifers, and just basic respect…then went onto clothing and about fair

trade sweat shops and other ways to purchase your clothing – how to swap with your

friends – you know it was really fun… and they talked about vegetarian – they talked

about organic, talked about coffee, fair trade and there was a whole section on being a

conscious media consumer.

For Shoshana, who at the time was in her early 20's, it was exactly what she was looking for:

"So, I was like…my jaw dropped…I was like OMG – I want to join them." And she joined them

for over one and a half months.

We made all these presentations and people would be so exciting and so pumped – we

visited a lot of high schools and they would be as excited about the fact that we were

these young people doing this big adventure.

Was there an impact? Shoshana recognizes that it is hard to tell what difference the presentations

made for those that were part of the audience:

And then we tried different presentations and different follow-up techniques with the

schools that we presented at to try to understand what impact we were having. It's hard to

say, you know. Most of the time you got the really enthusiastic responses from…the

people that would have been part of the global awareness club. You got them from all the

kids that were in the environmental program, you know – yeah!

There is a sharing of excitement – it is hard to know how long standing any of those

impacts are – you can only hope. But if they see that and then they see something else…

Those watching the presentation could decide that the Otesha group was being self-righteous, or

they could watch, listen, and hear another story. The choice was up to each of them. Again,

Chapter 5 provides insights into the extent to which these influences might or might not make a

difference.

For Shoshana the key element that provided her with sustenance and continued

enthusiasm was the group she was part of:

I was part of a community that focused very much on transformative change –for an
intense period of time… that joy that comes out of collective action is part of the
transformative change on a personal level.

She is now part of an intentional community on Salt Spring Island. Her experience from
Otesha made her realize the importance of a supportive community when thinking and acting
from a different place than the dominant culture. From that place, she can live the lifestyle
consistent with her internal values, including engaging in community system change such as the
local currency system.

We are in a committed community, several people that understand and we're all
supporting each other to make it work together – it is so isolating to be faced with the big
stuff. And I know that being a part of the supportive community really - It set me up for
being able to be more of an activist in the long run too.

In addition to Shoshana's experience, as described above, there are interactions that occur
out of local efforts that enter into local spaces off the islands. Anna's refusal to comply entered
into the discourse within the Health Authority, as well as national media. A request from Barry,
looking into the liability issues with the car stops, resulted in conversations with students at the
University of Victoria's environmental law office, and then an article in the New York Times.
The workshops put on by the Mud Girls Natural Building Collective draw people from all over
the world:

In general people have expressed to us – they have quite a profoundly enlightening
experience, an amazing time – we get a lot of really good feedback - a lot of people have
expressed that their life has changed. We have had people go away and build projects on

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their own property; we've had people who have moved from where they're living. People come from all over North America and Europe.

In communities across the world innovative, ecological-thinking approaches to living and to systems are being created and shared with others. The Gulf Islands are just some of the many local places that are shifting away from economic-thinking. For those encouraging different systems and different ways of thinking, such as Paul, Shoshana, and other storytellers, having a base of support for ecological-thinking from which to create and witness, is crucial.

Is the Dominant Culture too entrenched to Shift?

The preceding stories and analysis all provide a picture of a world shifting to ecological-thinking through an accumulation of localisms. However, some of those I interviewed felt that it was difficult, if not impossible to shift that culture, and the best approach was to keep the dominant culture out of the Gulf Islands so that at least 'home' could hold on to ecological principles: "I think that we want to keep this place safe. I don't want to broadcast about what we're doing so that it will bring people here – the whole thing of tourism…I don't want to do that."

Is it possible for a culture shift, for transformative change, given the wealth and power of those that are behind the current governments, corporations and media? As an ecological-thinking culture mingles with an economic-thinking culture is there danger that those thinking from an ecological perspective will be seduced and persuaded that the dominant culture is preferable? Some of those interviewed believed that was possible: "Well, I still have this thing where I want to be sucked back in, right, into the system" (Veronica). However, Veronica is clear that she doesn't like that system:

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You look at the women that are made up these days and they all look the same - the same collagen-injected lips, the same dyed, streaked hair, the same makeup, and the same clothes. Everyone's in black, they're all the same. You might as well be in a Russian gulag all dressed the same. They are all becoming the image of what the corporate world wants. They've been totally brainwashed.

However, she did feel the impact of not fitting in: "And you're not conforming to that and so, that's not okay." However, there were other storytellers that described a shift evident in families and friends embedded in the dominant culture: "I've seen a dramatic shift over the last five years – everywhere I go people are talking about transformation, about the need to reconnect with the earth and with each other." Slight shifts in culture, such as an increase in local and organic food purchases, urban gardens, cycle commuters, purchasing only wild salmon, foregoing Christmas gifts, the fad of used clothes, and composting programs all add up to a system shifting from pure economic-thinking into increased consideration for the ecological.

If we look at Isin's stories of cultural shifts from the time of the Greeks to present day we start to see the possibility of transformative change that starts with gradual shifts. As more people shift to ecological-thinking, because they believe doing so is in their own self interest, more people start to consider how their decisions have an impact on other organisms in the larger ecosystem, and thus on themselves. I postulate that when enough do this there is a cultural shift.

Occupy and Idle No More represent the growing number of people dissatisfied with the current systems, and not willing to let the "poor stay poor, and the rich get rich" (Leonard Cohen) continue. The Keystone pipeline protests, together with the Enbridge protests and hearings, signal how far people are willing to go to stand in the way of government decisions that negatively impact the environment. There are many reasons people want to hold on to the

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dominant culture's economic-thinking paradigm. However, there are also many reasons for people to consciously make decisions from an ecological perspective. Whether or not there will be a major cultural shift from economic-thinking to ecological-thinking, in the years ahead, is only something that time will tell.

Summary

This chapter illustrates how symbiotic nodes, links, and mesh networks are part of system shifting. Van Loon's (2006) concept of symbiotic nodes - "[I]n symbiosis, it is not the integrity of the nodes that matters but how they redefine themselves and each other through an intensive 'exchange'" (p. 313) epitomizes several aspects of personal transformation. One aspect is how people's relationships can change from 'us' against 'them', to neighbours and fellow islanders through events such as Christmas Carolling, digging potatoes, and attempting to protect land from outside developers. I claim empathy for the other and a willingness to hear the other's story arise out of these exchanges. The second aspect of a symbiotic node exchange, as illustrated in the preceding stories, is how a sharing of ideas arising from ecological-thinking can change a feeling of isolation into a sense of being supported and part of a larger shift. Schuler's description of the links between symbiotic nodes as *"a vast network of people and institutions all communicating with each other and sharing information, knowledge, hypotheses, and lessons learned"* (2010, p.297) is illustrated through the Island Connections forum and the *Island Tides* newspaper. A third aspect of a symbiotic node is the exchange that occurs as people question unconscious stories that are created by the dominant culture, through the introduction of ideas such as Paul Grignon's *Money as Debt*, the Otesha Project, alternative films, or a cob building workshop. The mesh of these connections and interactions is neither organized, nor predictable, nor hierarchical. Instead it is loose, informal, and unpredictable, and creates cultural shifts.

Chapter 12: Conclusions

My research objective was to understand the how of transformative spaces and transformative change in everyday lives. I posed a number of questions in the Interlude between Chapters 4 and 5 that highlight various aspects of this objective. To synthesise the conclusions of this research I will respond to each of those questions, drawing from the findings described in Chapters 5 through 11, the concepts outlined in Chapter 2, and recent literature that explores the global uprisings that have occurred between 2010 and 2013.

One Degree of Separation and Empathy

Do distance, or degrees of separation from the environment, people and governments have an impact on personal transformation – if so, how?

What role does the distance between people and the products they buy, or people they interact with, play in a cultural shift towards ecological thinking? The preceding chapters have highlighted how a relationship based on developing a deeper understanding of the 'other' – whether that other is the natural world, one's neighbour, or someone who has a different opinion about village pathways – is a core element of community change and system shifts.

The stories reflect Massey's (2005) observation that our relationship to the food we eat, people with whom we communicate, and those corporations and governments that impact our lives, has grown increasingly distant due to changes in transportation and technology. She emphasizes the importance of the "*content*…of the *relations through which* space is constructed" (p. 101), thus preventing us from glorifying the local and demonizing the global. I would argue that it is consciousness and empathy, rather than distance, which determines a person's capacity to shift to ecological thinking; and, as several of the stories demonstrate, local knowledge (Smith, 2011) can increase the consciousness regarding the content referred to by Massey.

This is true in our relationship to nature as well as our relationships with people. Most of us have never met the politicians who make laws that force us to buy inspected eggs or have oil-filled tankers travelling past our homes. Few of us have met the CEOs that decide whether their store or manufacturing plant or fracking operation will be located near our homes. However, we do meet and get to know people who live in our community. We meet them in the store, on the street, in restaurants, at work (whether paid or volunteer) and at events. Magnusson's (2011) emphasis on the myriad of interactions between political authorities in local spaces reflects the importance of these relationships in creating localisms that, together, create the global.

However, what Magnusson (2011) describes as 'messy' occurs in local spaces. There are often visceral disagreements between people working on the same project, even though they are one degree of separation from each other. Isin's (2002) solidaristic, agnostic and alienation strategies are in evidence in the community stories. There are numerous examples of people who harm the ecological systems they are working in or visiting. Being side by side with the environment or another person provides the opportunity for understanding, but the closeness does not automatically result in that understanding. Instead the multiplicity of political authorities, described by Magnusson (2011), creates a multitude of intents that are often at cross-purposes and thus visceral reactions rather than empathy occurs.

The difference, as reflected in the preceding stories, lies in the willingness to pay attention to what is happening for the other person or the ecological system. M'Gonigle's (2006) concept of place-based consciousness and commitment is witnessed in the Lasqueti Island resident who uses wind and water power to provide electricity, watching for signs in the environment that tell him how to adjust his energy systems in order to produce the electricity he needs. The Mud Girls vibe-watcher needs to pay attention to any signs of tension or resentment,

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instead drawing out and exploring the personal stories behind that stress before the lack of understanding leads to hostile disagreement. In the course of system shift in a community, conversations – in forums, the grocery story, and over a beer – all provide opportunities for empathy, for understanding the various stories that may be at cross-purposes with that system shift; thus, providing opportunity to work with those other purposes rather than against.

What appear to work against achieving empathy are many of the success factors in the dominant culture – individualism, self-importance, and winning, being an expert, ownership, and being right. Shifting away from these factors, when they have been promoted as societal values, is a challenge and requires a continual awareness or consciousness of one's own behaviour, as well as what underlies other people's behaviour. It is difficult, if not impossible, to be aware of how choices and behaviour impact the environment and others if there is no empathy or understanding of their context and stories, and instead the focus is on being right, winning, or gaining ownership.

To answer the question posed at the beginning of this section, proximity does play a role in personal transformation. However, it is the willingness to understand how the natural world functions or the stories that people hold, which results in a positive impact on a cultural shift towards ecological-thinking. That understanding is easier to achieve if there is less than one degree of separation – a belief in the interconnection between all living things and empathy for organisms in the natural world as well as fellow human beings, a finding that has been described by Sinha (2010) as well as Vieten, Amorok and Schlitz (2006).

Support is Key

How does support for living a different lifestyle or creating a local alternative to the dominant system, play a role in system change?

Support is a key element threaded throughout the stories - whether the stories are about personal transformation, lifestyle, system shift, interactions with others in community - or in relation to governments or corporations. Support, which comes in many forms, helps and encourages people to stick to their inner compass, provides the joy of sharing and exploring a different mode of thinking and being, and the needed strength when faced with opinions and technologies that run counter to their own beliefs.

It is challenging to live a fundamentally different lifestyle from one's neighbours, families, and friends. There is the sense of being an outsider – in Isin's (2002) terms a non-citizen. There is also the potential that someone will feel judged if different choices, based on values, are made. Either party may feel that they are not understood, or that their values are judged as inferior. Being free to share the everyday struggles, challenges and joys of living an alternative lifestyle, without fear of being judged and without judging, increases the likelihood of shifts to ecological-thinking.

Support from those engaged in ecological-thinking lifestyles can also provide opportunity for exploring different aspects of system change. One person may have extensive knowledge about food choices and practices, while another may be experienced with natural buildings or off-the-grid power sources. Supporting each other to explore these different aspects of ecological-thinking increases the likelihood of system change as the number of people engaged in a range of alternative practices increases, reflecting van Loon's (2006) description of an open and fluid network of symbiotic nodes, and Castells's (2012) networked social movements.

If the majority of people one comes into contact within one's community are supportive of a lifestyle that is different from the North American status quo, then it is much easier to shift to that alternative lifestyle than if one is living in the midst of the status quo. The norms and

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behaviours in a community start to become more reflective of ecological-thinking than of mainstream culture. People in that community who lean towards economic-thinking over ecological-thinking may feel the influence of norms and behaviours that are alternative and, due to an innate human desire to be accepted, they may start to follow those new norms. Their 'readiness' factor for personal transformation may also be activated as they come to understand they have less to lose in terms of success factors.

Support from others was an important factor in the policy reversal regarding uninspected eggs. Anna was going to refuse to follow the requirements for inspecting eggs, whether or not there was support in the community. However, due to support, both in the community and across the country, the Vancouver Island Health Authority eventually backed down and a policy shift occurred.

The shift reflects Magnusson's (2011, p. 8) comment that "order is always temporary and local". As norms and behaviours shift in a community through an increased number of people operating in a way that is different from what has gone before, then a cultural shift happens. If the norms and behaviours are premised on a different mode of thinking and being, then transformative change happens. A factor at play in a cultural shift towards ecological-thinking is the strength of the purposes and influences that might create a shift in the opposite direction in relation to the strength of ecological-thinking convictions.

Resistance and Challenges

What underlies resistance to cultural shifts and what are the elements of transformative spaces that reduce resistance?

"Most psychologists today recognise that it is difficult for all of us to think outside the cultural box we grew into" (Mullholland, 2013). This assertion was part of a recent letter to the

editor in a local Gulf Island newspaper, and reflects what is at the core of resistance to system change. The storytellers provided numerous examples of the challenges involved in letting go of old stories, especially when those old stories provided safety, power, and indicators of success for the resistor. This is true whether the cultural box is the dominant culture, or whether it is the island culture created by the mix of back-to-landers and settlers in the 1970's and 1980's. The elements of transformative spaces that reduce resistance illuminate the challenges of thinking outside the cultural box.

As noted in Chapter 6, culture is comprised of the norms and behaviours of the society in which we live. People in any society have grown into certain behaviours, and they have built their lives in such a way that they adhere to those norms. To endure, a new way of thinking will either resonate with their integrity or provide them with some benefit – whether power, status, money, or relationships. The perceived benefits will need to outweigh the perceived negatives.

There are many reasons people become firmly entrenched in their cultural box and find it difficult to change. Some people may have lived for many years in the same community and the norms and behaviours have been passed down through the generations. When the back-to-landers started farming on Canada's East Coast islands they were few in number compared to the residents who had lived there for years, many for two or three generations. According to Sharon Weaver (Pitman, 2011), those original residents saw no need to consider shifting their behaviour. Instead, they expected the newcomers to learn and live according to their ways. Their response echoes Isin's (2002) commentary on groups associated with dominant virtues throughout history.

However, in communities where there are an overwhelming number of newcomers, different cultural manifestations are almost unavoidable, reflecting stories of shifting citizenship (Isin). The culture of continual norm shifting due to new stories entering into a community can

create openness to hearing different ways of thinking and being. This doesn't mean that people who have been residents for a long time will want to embrace the new stories. However, their voices will be one of many different responses rather than the primary response.

People moving to a new community (geographic or social) from a community that was well inside the dominant culture box may find it difficult to accept alternative cultural norms and behaviours in their new home. Factors that decrease the ease of understanding the different norms are again comparable to those in Isin's history of citizenship, and include: a) success according to the dominant culture, and b) reinforcement of dominant culture values through support networks as well as reliance on mainstream communication. However, openness to rethinking behaviours and a desire to live by inner values rather than external success indicators can increase the capacity to hear those different stories. Transformative spaces provide opportunities to rethink the cultural box one has grown into, often through an experience that shines light on the discrepancy between the accepted norm and one's inner compass – reflecting Foucault's muffled shock or Isin's questioning the naturalness of the dominant virtues.

There are times when resistance to change is positive – when it stems from listening to that inner compass and rejecting change that is damaging to the environment or to others. There are obvious examples, such as preventing someone from cutting down a tree with an eagle's nest in it. A less obvious example is the conflict between an objective to find work for community members by one organization and the non-wage principle of another organization. A challenge occurs when there are at least two different opinions about what the outcome of ecological-thinking should be related to a particular issue, when the different political authorities are at cross-purposes (Magnusson, 2011). For example, can the village pathways on Mayne Island be

created in such a way that the rural nature of the roadways is maintained, while pedestrian safety and ease of walking is increased, thus reducing vehicle use?

Determining what response might work most effectively requires a consciousness about how the decision will affect the ecological system, and intersect with the multiple realities in the community. I witnessed people automatically jumping into certain 'camps' on any issue – "If so and so is saying that, I'll go along with that" – without looking at the issue from their own inner compass or considering other realities. Isin (2002) and Schattschneider (1960) both describe this pattern in their descriptions of power strategies. Shifting the community norm to personal consciousness rather than creation of an "us against them" reduces the negative impacts of resistance while helping to ensure ecological thinking/consciousness is part of the final approach.

The current economic and monetary structures also play a role in resistance to change. We are deeply embedded in a financial system that envelops us and creates patterns of behaviour. The concept of material conditions, which links the economic activities required by human society to provide for material needs to the mode of production that creates the underlying context for societal social relations, situates this challenge. As demonstrated by Rebecca and her economic practices, it is possible to reduce the extent to which one engages with global capitalist practices. However, the default economic transaction in North American culture is engagement with the capitalist system due to the limited options available outside capitalist practices, and perception that there are no other options.

The economic practices of Rebecca and Robb highlight the types of actions that are available to counter the resistance created by the default monetary system. These actions reflect a circular rather than linear path for transactions, occurring within community and circling back. Robb works in the neighbour's garden in exchange for food, the food is sold at a roadside stand

and provides cash that is used to pay the musicians at a local house concert. Rebecca works at the local coffee shop, owned by island residents who support community initiatives such as a community bus system by providing waste vegetable oil to fuel the bus, which Rebecca can use to reduce her costs and her use of fossil fuel. As people realize the benefits to themselves and their friends and neighbours, of keeping their transactions local, they are more likely to increase those actions and reduce the linear transactions, which don't find their way back to support their community. M'Gonigle (2006) speaks to this circular process:

> Centralist tendencies emanate from hierarchical institutions, the operations (and culture) of which depend on linear throughputs of resources and wealth from distant sources. Territorial tendencies are embedded in locales characterized by more circular (low throughput) processes (and values) situated in participatory social relations that self-maintain with local resources. (p. 338)

Thus, resistance is about the cultural influences as well as the systems that are embedded in our culture. I will further explore M'Gonigle's discussion about territorial tendencies under the question of governance.

To respond to the question posed – transformative spaces hold open opportunities to counter resistance to a personal transformation from economic-thinking to ecological-thinking. A multiplicity of different stories in the same space, as described by Massey (2005) and Magnusson (2011), creates the potential to rethink one's cultural box, whether it has been created by previous generations or through dominant culture systems and influences. Transformative spaces also create opportunities to see the arbitrariness of dominant culture norms (Isin, 2002). By building on the characteristics of transformative spaces described above, and rethinking

authority (as I will explore in more detail below) it is possible to create community norms that

shift us towards ecological thinking and decision-making without going into battle mode.

Agency and Authority

> *What is the relationship between personal agency and authority?*

One of the shifts I noticed in those carrying out system shifting initiatives was the

movement away from the belief that governments and the current legislative frameworks are the

only authority for action and only location for being political. Instead storytellers recognized

their own role and agency in system shifting – and their capacity to "question the arbitrariness of

the dominant virtues" (Isin, 2002). The authority that storytellers are shifting towards is their

inner integrity, together with awareness or consciousness of how one's actions and decisions

impact others and the natural world.

There is a tremendous amount of energy used to fight and try to change government.

Politicians are well aware that they are elected to represent the values and cultural norms of the

voters in their ridings, and they can only speak to an ecological-thinking approach to decisions if

people in their ridings support that approach. I posit that shifting systems through local

initiatives, which, when combined with other local initiatives create cultural shifts, support those

politicians willing to argue for ecological-thinking decisions within the Canadian parliament, the

provincial legislature, or in local communities. A shift in the mode of thinking is a move away

from 'seeing like a state' and shifting towards 'seeing like a community' (Magnusson, 2011) –

seeing from where we are located rather than the territorial map with specific boundaries

representing government power.

Gathering with others to put forward alternative solutions in relation to those proposed by

a government/corporate amalgamation is valuable in supporting transformative change in a

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couple of ways. First, it places that alternative approach in the public eye and mind, comparable to what happened with Anna's uninspected eggs and the Clayoquot Sound protests (Magnusson & Shaw, 2003). Second, it creates the sense of support mentioned previously, the opportunity to be with others who are also visualizing a different future than that proposed by government/corporate decisions. As noted by the storytellers, and echoing Isin's (2002) solidaristic strategies and Castells' (2012) networks of outrage and hope, there is a sense of strength and celebration when gathering with others who believe that the ocean habitat should be protected from potential oil spills and other pollutants and nuclear weapons should not be tested in Salish Sea waters.

Storytellers emphasized that each person needs to choose the roles that work best for him or her in moving towards an ecological-thinking lifestyle that resonates, whether it means joining a protest, working in the garden, or creating a community space. These choices take us back to agency, and the recognition that authority lies within, and is linked to the connections with other elements in the larger ecology. Each person's choice is a part of the larger whole in the cultural shift, a structure that is a non-hierarchical collective or a mesh of symbiotic nodes (van Loon, 2006). Agency lends itself to non-hierarchical approaches with people working together, each person taking on tasks or roles that work for them, with no need for an authority to lead and direct. This approach was evident in the majority of initiatives described by the storytellers.

The concept of symbiotic nodes provides insight into how people undertaking different approaches to cultural shifts can connect, "redefine themselves and each other through intensive exchange" (van Loon, 2006, p. 313), and then reach out to others, who are also redefined through a transformative space, with the process continuing. Learning occurs through agency and openness to hearing and acting on other stories and approaches – rather than through a teacher or

other form of authority. The mesh is permeable rather than containing boundaries, perhaps

because there are no authorities identifying rules to define those boundaries, thus allowing for a

spreading of new ways of thinking and being.

Collaborative, community-based agency was the underlying spirit of the cooperatives

created on Hornby Island. Instead of looking to government or some other external authority to

respond to collective needs the residents of the Hornby Island community decided to work

together, build the structures, and create governance structures to collectively manage. They

believed in their own capacity to take action without requiring approval from an authority. Their

thinking, actions and interactions reflect Magnusson's (2011) definition of agency. Building

permits were required, as was rezoning of some of the properties, in the same way the Gabriola

Commons required special rezoning and the Velo-village event required an approved safety plan.

The storytellers saw these as sidelines to the real process, regulations that they would participate

in as long as they were not contrary to the intent and the values of the initiative. Their agency

and corresponding actions existed side-by-side with these particular government regulations.

Is it agency that allows someone to follow their own path, that different mode of being, in

the midst of dominant culture systems and norms? Whether designing and using different

monetary systems side by side with capitalism, creating collaborative non-hierarchical ways of

working together in the midst of organizational charts that are topped by a president or Chief

Executive Officer, or creating local food systems while the global food system still exists.

Storytellers did it because of their agency, their free will to determine the paths they are taking

and the lives they want to live.

Governance

What form(s) or characteristics of governance encourage community and system change?

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If authority is found in one's internal compass, then where is governance situated in a shift towards ecological-thinking? Self-governance, national and provincial governments, regional health authorities, and the Islands Trust have all been mentioned in the preceding stories. In these islands, as is true elsewhere, there are many factions that contribute to a community's governance.

As evidenced in the chapters on system shifting and community, Magnusson's (2011) self governance occurs through the dynamics played out as some purposes conflict, some are synergistic, some local, some from away, and the players jostle for a role in determining what takes precedence. People within each community are creating the norms and behaviours of their community through this process of self-governance, and that process is echoed on a global basis through the accumulation of local cultures and networking between those cultures (Magnusson, 2011; Massey, 2005).

If people exercise their agency, and shift towards ecological-thinking, then they tend to respond to those purposes that are consistent with their inner values and challenge or refuse to abide by those purposes or directives that are not consistent. Thus, the more people in a community that exercise their agency, and look to themselves rather than government as the authority, the more extensive the role self governance will play in those activities traditionally perceived as the jurisdiction of governments, and the less likely government's technologies (Foucault, 1991; Rose, 2000) will determine their actions.

As identified through the analysis, governance characteristics that support community and system change, whether self-governance or formal governments, include dialogue open to hearing all voices and stories, taking the time needed for that dialogue, recognizing the

cumulative and unpredictable nature of change, understanding the historical context and the current cultural norms of a community, and a collective, non-hierarchical structure and premise.

In communities and cultures geared to individualism and winning, shifting to this type of governance is challenging. There is a need for community members to relearn how to interact when faced with differing opinions in order to shift the conversation away from a battle and towards a collectively created decision. As with any cultural shift, the potential of changing this behaviour pattern relies on a belief by those in the community that the end result will be a positive shift for them and will support their values.

What does this mean for governments? First, the 'one-degree' of separation applies. Of all the governments, local government staff and elected officials have the highest likelihood of understanding what the local culture is and what the 'neighbour talking to neighbour' response to an issue will be. The analysis in the preceding chapters raises the question regarding whether or not the hierarchy of national and provincial governments over local governments should be reversed, with communities directing local governments, who then direct extra local actions through votes on issues affecting regions, provinces, countries, and the world. While recognizing that the topic of government structures, and whether or not they are even needed, is outside the realm of this research, I would argue that the findings support those who advocate increased collective local community decision-making as the basis for governance. Bookchin's (1990) proposed approach to governance resonates: "A new politics of citizenship. We must recover the meaning of politics in its original Hellenic sense as the self-management of the polis or community by the people." (p. 19) He suggests a confederation of local governments as the basis for governance.

According to the stories and corresponding analysis, the most effective approach for any government is to work as a facilitator of collectively determined directions formulated by community members, rather than as an authority that regulates and enforces in order to keep people in line with government-set objectives. The question is whether or not the current government systems can or will shift away from ties to corporate and capitalist discourse and funding, towards a role that facilitates community identified directions. The challenge for government staff and elected officials is in moving away from roles as authority and expert, and shifting towards that role of facilitator of community decisions, recognizing the power inherent in self-governance and the capacity of communities to "enable civilized order and produce public benefits" (Magnusson, 2011, p. 8) without governments.

Town hall meetings, held in several states in the USA provide one form of community initiated governance. In the State of Vermont, town hall meetings, held every year on the first Tuesday in March, provide an opportunity for citizens to put forward resolutions and voice their opinions on issues they deem as important. In 2005, 48 towns voted against the Iraq War and made a call for the State's National Guard to come home (Goodman, 2005).

The shift I am proposing reflects the movement away from seeing like a state and towards seeing like a community. On page 263, I quote Michael M'Gonigle's statement regarding a shift from centralist to territorial economic practices. The types of circular practices proposed come from seeing like a community, however the word 'territorial' gives mixed signals. One of Magnusson's (2011) descriptors of seeing like a state is: "the world is divided into states, each of which has its own territory and claims sovereignty in relation to it" (p. 3). Mirriam Webster (2013) defines territory as "a geographic area belonging to or under the jurisdiction of a governmental authority", as well as "an indeterminate geographic area'. The use of the term

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territory also relates back to the discussion in *Interlude: Place and Space* (p. 174) and the potential to feel ownership over a space in a way that can be counter to system shifting. I would argue that while a component of the change proposed is territorial (as per the second definition), such as local cultural shifts and creation of circular economic patterns, there is a danger in situating system change strictly within a territorial context due to the impacts outside the territory and the implied ownership. Ecological-thinking includes the impacts beyond the local – the acknowledgement that ecological interconnections, such as greenhouse gas emissions, are global. In addition, our understanding of the word 'territory' implies boundaries, sovereignty, and warrior defense, the 'us against them' mindset described earlier that prevents system change from occurring and can prevent information and support flows between territories. Instead, there is a need to be grounded in place (M'Gonigle, 2006), seeing like a particular community, as well as the global community (Magnusson, 2011).

For many storytellers the world of the state, in which territory is claimed and defended, creates a bifurcated consciousness. They could see like a state, with its territorial boundaries, legislation, enforcement mechanisms, and political parties to vote in or out. However, their mode of being and corresponding actions resonated with seeing like a community, as described by Magnusson's five criteria. Their challenge was to continually locate their way of seeing in the community rather than be persuaded by media messages that they must 'see like a state'.

System change, that different mode of thinking and being, does not come from government structures, although there may be people within those systems who support system shifting, and ecological decision-making. According to the storytellers, together with Foucault (1982), Magnusson (2011), and Massey (2005), system change comes from people in communities operating under the steam of their own agency, people who are working

collectively with others to create systems that correspond to a fundamentally different lifestyle than that in the dominant culture. Individuals in government have the choice of facilitating and supporting that change, stepping out of a 'seeing like a state' mindset, or trying to stop it through regulations and enforcement. However, the extent to which a cultural shift happens in a community is based on self-governance with the characteristics noted above – open dialogue, non-hierarchical, and timing that acknowledges the cumulative, unpredictable nature of cultural shifts.

Transformative Spaces and the Gulf Islands

What factors increase the likelihood of transformative spaces in a community and which of those factors are present in the Gulf Islands?

The factors that promote transformative spaces, identified in the stories and corresponding analysis, include: connection and empathy, agency that arises from living life according to one's integrity, the acknowledgement of multiple realities, support from others for personal transformative shifts, a culture that promotes a questioning of the dominant virtues, governments that recognize and acknowledge their relationship to local self-governance, and opportunities for respectful dialogue.

Due to the ocean threshold, the small populations, and the range of community activities, it is easy to develop connections with other community members in the Gulf Islands. The protection of nature and promotion of ecological preservation and restoration, combined with access to nature through public beaches and trails provides opportunities to develop connections with the natural world. There is also a culture of self-sufficiency that has developed on the islands, originating with the First Nations, and continued with the settlers, and current residents.

This culture includes belief in the power of community to make things happen, and acknowledges the dependency on the natural world in order to be self-sufficient.

A challenge on the islands is the willingness to shift towards empathy for other people and their stories. I am not suggesting that there is less empathy in the Gulf Islands than elsewhere, rather that lack of empathy is an element that prevents transformative spaces in the islands, creating vitriolic responses rather than attempts to understand the other's story. Core to achieving this empathy is recognition of the multiple realities in any situation and the willingness to listen.

The residents of the Gulf Islands hold multiple ways of understanding the world. While the dominant North American culture is evident, many have rejected that culture. Few people living on the islands were born on them, and everyone has brought their stories-so-far (Massey, 2005), their family histories and the culture they have grown into. There are two gaps in this diversity. The first is in age groups (higher proportion of 50 to 70 year olds), and the second is ethnicity (European cultures rather than Aboriginal, South American or Asian). While there are gaps, there is diversity of opinion. Residents do not hold back sharing their thoughts about how the world is now, and how it should or could be shaped. Transformative spaces, in which different stories co-exist and people have an opportunity to witness or understand another mode of thinking or being, are evident throughout the Gulf Islands.

Related to different ways of understanding the world is agency – the capacity to act in the world and question the dominant virtues. To consider the extent to which Gulf Island residents exercise their agency I'd like to reflect on this quote from the conceptual framework: "To understand things politically is to focus on what we do, how we think, and interact with one another…The focus is on human agency and hence on purposive activity" (Magnusson, 2011,

pp. 41-42). From the cooperatives created on Hornby Island to Anna's stand against inspected eggs, the stories in this dissertation have described agency – purposive activity stemming from inner authority rather than the authority of the state.

Residents in these islands are not alone in their capacity to exercise their agency. In the Cowichan Valley, a community located on Vancouver Island, a grassroots movement is standing up to a provincial government's decision to allow a company to dump contaminated soil at the head of their watershed (Fraser, 2013). In India a group works to shut down factories, halt construction of dams, and rouse the Indian public to treat the once pristine Ganges River with respect (Roshan & Vaughan-Lee, 2012). Throughout the world, community members are rising up and saying no to government decisions they disagree with, and taking action themselves.

Agency arises through consciousness of one's capacity to act on one's beliefs rather than society's norms and, as evidenced in the stories; support can be a crucial element when taking a stand. Both residents and print media in the Gulf Islands are supportive of ecological-thinking and lifestyle. Newspapers, such as *Island Tides,* provide information and opinions that are different than those put forward by corporate or government owned media. Residents have plenty of opportunities to be with other like-minded community members and learn about threshing kamut and barley or restoring and protecting damaged streams and foreshores. Living a life based on ecological decision-making in the Gulf Islands does not mean living a life that is fundamentally different from that of friends and neighbours. Instead, there is a range of lifestyles, with those differing from the dominant culture being supported rather than shunned. The strength of the support comes from the relationship between a geographical area and support for alternative lifestyles. Similar to immigrants from the same country moving to a particular area within a city in order to be connected to those with the same cultural norms and behaviours,

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those living lives different than the dominant culture find it easier to be part of a community with an accepted alternative culture.

When communities are known for their alternative lifestyles – as is the case in the Gulf Islands, Vermont (USA), Nelson (British Columbia), and the Isle of Eigg (Scotland) – then those shifting to alternative lifestyles move to those places, as epitomised by some of the storytellers, and the cultural shift in that community continues. For the Gulf Islands, the low cost of small acreage (or half acres) and the proximity to urban centres while living in semi-wilderness encouraged enough artists and back-to-landers to move to the islands in the 1960's and 1970's (Jones, 1994) that they outnumbered the residents and, as a result, shifted the culture.

Due to many of the preceding factors, the norms and behaviours created through self-governance on the islands encourage aspects of ecological-thinking, non-consumerism, and self-sufficiency. What flows from that culture is support for actions taken that reflect those values, when there is corresponding public dialogue in the creation and implementation of those actions. The support is there whether the political authorities are a group of artists, an advocacy group, or government representatives (Magnusson, 2011). The culture also determines who will be elected to the various forms of government as people look for politicians who reflect their values. I would suggest that challenging the status quo and promoting an ecological-thinking approach is easier for a politician when his or her electorate has similar values.

Islands Trust politicians have the benefit of their island culture plus the additional advantage of an Object statement that supports ecological-thinking. However, their limited jurisdiction, tools and resources require them to be cognizant of how best to use their advocacy, regulatory, and facilitative roles if they want to support rather than hinder system change.

The culture(s) of the Gulf Islands is influenced by a network of local spaces throughout the world as described by Hawken (2007), Massey (2005) and van Loon (2006). The connections and support between those creating alternative systems and lifestyles on the islands and beyond is happening, as outlined in Chapter 11. The potential for expanding ecological-thinking through this accumulation of localisms is possible. However, influences from the dominant culture are also evident on the islands, and different stories meet and collide, as well as work together in the various community debates and conversations, as different political authorities in different registers and scales, attempt to achieve their objectives, creating the ever shifting order described by Magnusson.

These stories from the Gulf Islands have demonstrated how transformative spaces, in which personal shifts to a different mode of thinking take place, provide clues about system change. They have provided a glimpse at how change arises through the resulting lifestyles, system shifts, engagement with communities, and acting on one's agency rather than according to the dictates of extra-local governments. The examples of support and connecting with others beyond home base describe an ever expanding network; the creation of a cultural shift, of system change.

Relationship to Arab Spring, Occupy, Idle No More…

What is the relationship between the recent uprisings and the Salish Sea stories?

Over the past three years, there has been an uprising of citizen action aimed at voicing and demonstrating outrage as well as alternatives to the current governance and economic systems. Various authors have now analysed these movements, providing an opportunity within this dissertation to compare their conclusions with the findings of this research.

At first glance, there appears to be little relationship between the violent protests that occurred in Egypt and the bucolic Gulf Islands, or the urban-centric Occupy movement and the rural-like lifestyles found on the islands. However, as we dig deeper into the stories behind these global movements then we start to see similarities with the activities described on the preceding pages. In this section I identify parallels in the type of alternatives proposed, the processes used, and the relationship between the various actions. I also highlight where authors differ or have a different emphasis than the conclusions in this paper.

According to Harvey (2012) and Castells (2012) the rationale behind the recent movements has been the type of transformative change described by Bookchin (1990) – a challenge to "the very premises on which the present society is structured and [an emphasis on] the need to create a caring, cooperative, non-hierarchical, ecologically oriented society (p. 19). Whether they are about individuals such as Judith and Rebecca, or organizations such as The Mud Girls Natural Building Collective, the Salish Sea stories reflect the same desire to challenge society's structures and create the type of alternatives described in Bookchin's statement.

Just as transformative spaces were fundamental in creating a different mode of thinking and being for each storyteller, those challenging the status quo and taking action in Iceland, Spain or Egypt had access to transformative spaces that provided them with the courage to stand up against injustice and believe that a better world was possible. Castells emphasizes the importance of social media in bringing a different story from the one projected by the ruling apparatus as well as inspiration to millions of people. He emphasizes that "[t]he way people think determines the fate of the institutions, norms and values on which societies are organized" (p. 5) and the internet, Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube provided alternative stories of outrage and hope that were not controlled by governments or corporations. The key here is not whether this

occurred through social media or paper media. In the Gulf Islands there are newspapers, social media and face-to-face communication regarding alternative ways of thinking and being. In countries such as Egypt, in which there was a tight rein on alternative world stories, social media played a larger role than on the Gulf Islands. The access to those different stories is the key in both locations.

Another common element found in the Gulf Islands as well as the Occupy movement is the importance of support in challenging the status quo and changing behaviour patterns. In Egypt Fridays became the day to gather and "feel the strength and courage of being together" (Castells, 2012, p. 56). During the Occupy movement people in public squares around the world experienced support from others who were also interested in changing the current systems.

Harvey (2012) describes the aim of the Occupy movement that started on Wall Street: "We the people are determined to take back our country from the moneyed powers that currently run it" (p. 162). However, these protests occurred on a global basis: they were not just about the United States – the movement spread throughout the world. Harvey goes on to describe the purpose as 'reclaiming our cities' as Occupy sites tended to be in city squares and plazas. Yet, thousands came from the suburbs and countryside to participate in discussion, debates and activities at the Occupy sites and smaller communities created their own way of joining in the Occupy movement (several Gulf Islands had Occupy sites in recognition that the moneyed powers intrude into every community). The symbolic power of physically taking over sites of wealth and power, such as Wall Street, was crucial in order to depict the underlying aim and to inspire others to join in the conversation about the outrage and the hope. Nonetheless, those joining were from a myriad of locations. If we take specific countries and community size out of the equation then the movement was about, paraphrasing Harvey, "We the people … determined

to take back [our right to govern] from the moneyed powers that currently run [our world]." The movements are about the right for people to have increased autonomy in order to make decisions that work for their communities. Idle No More, while specifically about First Nation peoples and communities, was about their right to govern. The relationship between the Occupy Movement, the change to Iceland's banking system, the establishment of the right of the environment in Bolivia, Arab Spring, and the Salish Sea stories told on the preceding pages is a network of different forms of creation and resistance aimed at achieving this goal.

Another similarity is the response to capitalism and the corporate hold on government decision-making reflected in the ousting of the bankers in Iceland, the challenge to the financial systems expressed in the Occupy movement, and the stepping away from capitalist practices in the Salish Sea. Each reflects a different aspect of the challenge to corporate dominance and the destruction created by present day capitalism. The storytellers demonstrate how a different mode of thinking changes behaviours in relationship to the concept of material conditions. Storytellers choose to participate in many of the required economic activities in ways that are not capitalist. They re-use, swap, create, grow, and share material goods and they collectively engage in labour activities wherever possible. When there is a need to participate in capitalist activities, they make an effort to be conscious of the potential impacts of their choices (wages and working conditions, resource extraction, fossil fuel use). Many recognize the need for new structures and systems, reflecting M'Gonigle's (2013) argument that we need to change the meta-discourse and re-form the context. The actions of the storytellers are part of a multi-layered challenge to the hold that corporations and capitalism have on cultural norms and systems. These challenges have arisen out of local spaces and the non-hierarchical, loose-knit network described previously.

While I have pointed out similarities, there are also differences between the various actions and the context for those actions. I would argue that those differences reflect the individual context, and they reflect the concept that Tsiporah emphasized, which was demonstrated when Salt Spring Islanders collectively prevented a particular development (Chapter 11), that there is a role for everyone in shifting the culture. None is more important than another is – they are all part of the 'termite politics' described by Harvey (2012): eating away at institutional and material supports of capital until they collapse. They are also part of the creation of alternatives that address Harvey's (2012) three conditions for a viable movement:

1) The construction of alternative social relations to those that dominate within capitalism,

2) Significant lifestyle changes…as well as major shifts in consumerism, productivism, and institutional arrangements…and

3) The socially constructed and historically specific law of endless capital accumulation has to be challenged and eventually abolished". (p. 127-128)

Limitations and Implications for Future Research and Practice

This study is an exploration of the 'how' of transformative change within the Gulf Islands and is not generalizable to other populations, as stated in the chapter on methodology. To that end the theoretical conclusions need to be understood either as starting points for testing their transferability to other communities, or as a confirmation of theories identified previously in the literature. While theories are posed throughout the dissertation there are three that I will focus on for consideration in future research and practice – government structures, legal restraints for effective shifting, and networks.

This research indicates a need for further research in order to understand effective ways of integrating community self-governance with collective decision-making for geographical areas – whether that is local, regional, or international. In the co-creation of ecological-thinking alternatives - what is the role of governments? Is it possible for governments to take on the role of researching and providing information without the need to accompany that information with the role of expert decision-maker and sovereign owner of the territory? Recommended community self-governance practices arising out of the conclusions include increased agency on the part of community members, and using the combined efforts of self-governance and local governments to stand up for ecological-thinking decisions for community members.

Secondly, there is a need to understand how to shift cultures when there are legal restraints, such as property and monetary laws. How can we shift from an ownership culture to a culture of the commons when the law is based on property ownership? Further exploration and analysis of areas in which experimentation is occurring is needed in order to understand the interface between property law and collective use of land, how alternative monetary systems can operate effectively within the current legal parameters, and what laws and regulations could be changed to help those practices flourish.

Finally, how does that accumulation of localisms happen and how can it be increased? Another area of future research is determining the demographics of those involved in a shift from the dominant culture to ecological-thinking. One of the limitations of this inquiry is that the language used in the invitation may have precluded those with lower levels of education from participating, indicating the need to address that limitation. Practices arising from this research suggest that actions speak louder than words, and 'just do it' – live the ecological-thinking lifestyle and create non-hierarchical structures – was a common refrain of storytellers. Practices

suggested by this research include the need for a conscious reaching out between those engaged in ecological-thinking activities, providing support, strength, and cross-fertilization of ideas.

Concluding Thoughts

I started this dissertation with a problematic focused on my frustration with governments and their inability to respond to the social, environmental and economic challenges facing the world today. Through the process of hearing islander's stories I have deepened my understanding of concepts related to transformation, space, agency, ecological-thinking, empathy, symbiotic nodes, 'seeing like a community' and localisms. In so doing, the focus on governments as the locus of system change has shifted to a recognition that it is local acts of agency, creating cultural shifts in communities, and connections with like-minded people in other local spaces, that is at the heart of system change. The spaces and actions described in this research lean towards Tuan's (1979) 'fields of care', as opposed to Tahir Square or Occupy Wall Street – which are public symbols of a movement. The alternative lifestyles in these island communities and other ordinary communities throughout the globe are the glowing centres that Tuan describes and part of the networked social movement that gives people hope (Castell, 2012).

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Appendix A

Hi Sara [Island Tides],

Thanks so much for your interest in this research. As mentioned I'm attaching the one page description.

A brief summary: I'm looking for ways in which people initiated or took part in a shift away from our current economic system, food system, governance system, or any other system that they feel operates contrary to their values….and towards a system that is in harmony with the earth and with those around us.

The first phase in the research is about storytelling. Those who have been involved in those transformative system changes are asked to tell a story about their participation in transformative actions. People have the option of taking photo(s) as the starting point for telling the story. People also have the option of having a joint story-telling session on their island - telling their own story as well as listening and then reflecting on those aspects of other people's stories that resonate for them.

Thanks!

Fay Weller, Gabriola Island
250-247-8120
PhD Candidate, Interdiscipliniary Program
University of Victoria

Study on Transformative Change – Volunteers Wanted

The moment one begins to be unable, any longer, to think things as one usually thinks

them, transformation becomes simultaneously very urgent, very difficult, and altogether

possible (Foucault).

Do you believe that we need transformative system change in order to respond to climate change and the growing lack of biodiversity? As governments promote the tar sands and provide taxpayer funded bailouts to those responsible for economic crises, there are people in the Gulf Islands creating transformative systemic change.

I am using the term transformative change to describe movement towards systems different from our current ones. A move away from a monoculture, pesticide-based, global food system and towards local, organic systems is included in this definition, as are ways of interacting that move us away

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from hierarchical governance and towards collective decision making; lifestyles that shift our economic system away from poverty for many/ wealth for a few and towards one based on the values of social justice, and; zero-carbon footprint living rather than the current North American high carbon lifestyle

The focus of the research will be on transformation that occurs in local spaces – when the naturalness of the dominant way of living is seen as arbitrary and questionable and there is a resulting urge to transform in order to live in a way that is consistent with one's values. It is not about separate communities or neighbourhoods but rather activities and lifestyles that exist side by side with our current forms of government and economy.   Human agency is key – both creative and resistant - agency being our capacity to make choices based on our own values, values which may differ from those in the culture and power structures that surround us.

The starting point for the study will be stories from the Gulf Islands of transformative change. If you are interested in participating in this phase then please contact me at fayweller@shaw.ca. There will be an opportunity for those participating to share their stories with other islanders. The second phase of the study will involve in-depth discussion with those involved in seven of the 'photo' stories, exploring community governance and the range of influences from off-island.

Appendix B

Hi,

I'm carrying out research on transformative change in the Gulf Islands and I'd like to invite you to be part of the photo-voice component. I'm looking for ways in which you initiated or took part in a shift away from our current economic system, food system, governance system, or any other system that you feel operates contrary to your values….and towards a system that is more consistent with your values.

I appreciate your interest in agreeing to take photos that respond to any or all of the following three questions. The questions reflect Foucault's statement "***The moment one begins to be unable, any longer, to think things as one usually thinks them, transformation becomes simultaneously very urgent, very difficult, and altogether possible.***"

   a) What shows a creative response to your urge for transformative change?
   b) What demonstrates a resistant response to your urge for transformative change?
   c) How does your everyday life reflect your values?

You can choose to respond to one, two or all three of these questions. If you decide to take a photo of a person or people you must get that person(s) permission to show the photo as part of your storytelling to both the researcher and to other participants.

Once you have taken the photo(s) you have a choice of:
   a) Emailing the photo(s) together with a brief story about the photo to fayweller@shaw.ca by *March 16th* or
   b) Participating in a story telling session on your island using the photo as the starting point for the story on March 17th in the afternoon (more specifics as we get closer to date and determine people's availability) or
   c) Both a) and b)

Thanks again for your interest and for agreeing to participate. Please feel free to call (8120) if you have any questions.

Fay

University of Victoria

Interdisciplinary Studies   *Consent Form*

Transformative Spaces in Canada's Gulf Islands

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Transformative Spaces that is being conducted by Fay Weller. Fay Weller is an Interdisciplinary PhD Candidate in the department at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by emailing fayweller@shaw.ca

Purpose and Objectives of the research: To provide a glimpse of the 'how' of transformative change in everyday lives, an understanding of the influence of governments, corporations and community power struggles and the extent to which discourse and individual agency play a role.

Importance of this Research: This research will provide knowledge that can be utilized by both activists and policy makers interested in how transformative change occurs and to what extent they play a role in that change.

Participants Selection: You are being asked to participate in this study because of your involvement in a transformative space.

What is involved: If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include sharing photo(s) and stories of transformative change in your life. There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used without your approval.

You will determine the levels of anonymity and confidentiality you require through your approval of what will go into any information that is disseminated to others. The information will be shared through my thesis dissertation and potentially as a published article and in scholarly meetings. None of the information will be used for commercial purposes.

Disposal of Data: Data will be stored electronically. You have the option of determining what will happen to the data (please initial your option):

_____The data will be sent to you after the dissertation has been completed.

_____The data will be sent to you and kept by the researcher after the dissertation has been completed.

_____The data will be destroyed.

Visually Recorded Images/Data Participant to provide initials, *only if you agree*:

Photos I have taken may be used for: Analysis _____ Dissemination_____

I agree to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study: _____

I agree to have my photos attributed to me by name in the results: _____

Contacts: You may contact researcher and supervisors for any questions about this study. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you agree to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix D

The story: I'm interested in your story about 'x'. Could you tell me the full story – in whatever order makes sense from your perspective.

I would look for the following in the story and if they are not mentioned, or only mentioned briefly, I would probe for more information (points probed will depend upon whether the interviewee is initiator, supporter or resister):

How and why the space was created:

- *Why did the person feel it was important to initiate the transformative space <u>or be engaged in the transformative space</u>*
- *How were the values/beliefs <u>different or similar to</u> the dominant values/beliefs?*
- *Who was engaged in initiating the space?*
- *What roles did different people play?*
- *Was there any resistance when the space was first created?*
- *Was there support from others when the space was first created?*
  What is in the space?

- *Creative transformative action – initiating an alternative to the current systems*
- *Resistant transformative action – responding to a technology inconsistent with the person's values/beliefs*
- *Disagreement with forcing dominant cultures 'ways' on Gulf Island*
- *Disagreement with capitalist forces negatively impacting local economies*
- *Evidence of modes of thinking and doing different from the dominant ways*
- *Evidence of lifestyles, everyday life, that is different from the dominant lifestyles*
- *deconstruction of codes and signs of the dominant, and construction of codes for alternative ways of living*
- *Recognition that there are multiple narratives within the story, not just the storyteller's voice.*
- *Is the structure of those engaged egalitarian and collaborative or hierarchical?*
- *What material objects are part of the story and how do they relate to the economy?*
- *What material objects are part of the story and how do they relate to governance?*

What are the local community influences?

- *How does this space fit in with the various groups on the island?*
- *How does the 'group' that supports this space interact with other political authorities on the island?*
- *What scale and what register are the various political authorities and what are their 'purposes'*
- *Are there indications of solidaristic strategies used, either by this group or others, in relation to the transformative space?*
- *Are there indications of agonistic strategies used, either by this group or others, in relation to the transformative space?*

- *Are there indications of alienation strategies used, either by this group or others, in relation to the transformative space?*
- *Is there evidence of self-organization – no government involvement*
- *Is there evidence of involvement from Islands Trust representatives (staff or trustees), either formally or informally?*
- *Look for change over time.*

What off-island influences are evident?

- *Is there evidence of government technologies of control in the story? If so, are there documents, websites, emails or legislation corresponding to the technologies?*
- *Is there evidence of technologies of control from institutions/corporations other than government? If so, are there documents, websites, emails or legislation corresponding to the technologies?*
- *Is there evidence of influence from documentaries, listserves, websites, etc. in relation to the transformative space?*
- *Is there evidence of networking with others 'off-island'? Describe the nodes – are they symbiotic? Describe the links – are they collaborative or hierarchical in nature? Are there different forms of capital being exchanged ?*

General:

- *What does the storyteller feel are the results from the transformative space?*
- *Would they have done anything different?*
- *Are they engaged in more than one transformative space?*