Innovations and Sustainability

Part 6

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This is the sixth of a six-part Discussion Paper Series of the SSHRC Research Project: *Environmental Governance for Sustainability and Resilience: Innovations in Canadian Biosphere Reserves and Model Forests*. This project involves researchers located at the University of Waterloo, Ontario and University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan, Canada.

August 2012

This Discussion Paper is intended to spark discussion and debate. Please use it but ensure that the ideas presented within are appropriately attributed to the author. Correspondence about the project as a whole can be directed to Dr. Robert Gibson at rbgibson@uwaterloo.ca or Dr. Maureen Reed at m.reed@usask.ca

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6. The wide variety of community-based innovations in Canada (and elsewhere) to enhance local level sustainability. Phase cycles and cross-scale forces influencing them. Reflections on institutional and policy approaches that seem to enhance the emergence of major adaptations and innovations in different situations. Collaborative reframing of what needs to be done and how. Three examples of substantive institutional reforms for enhanced sustainability currently being increasingly promoted.

Introductory comments.

As landscape-defined sites or regions in which local initiatives are being taken to enhance desirable forms of sustainability, biosphere reserves and model forests/forest communities are being affected by major changes underway in the global economy, society, and environment. It would be redundant to re-iterate what these changes are here. They have, however, recently been articulated again with a great sense of urgency by international consensus declarations (e.g. Barnosky and others 2012; Biermann and others 2012, Leach and others 2012, Stafford and others 2012; State of the Planet Declaration 2012; UN High Level Panel 2012). Perspectives adopted from complex social-ecological systems are evident in these recent declarations. Canadian communities everywhere will be affected by these changes, although the particular consequences for many of them may not yet be clear.

From the eco-innovation strategies, based on the sustainable development discourse, a wide-ranging number of local initiatives to enhance desirable forms of sustainability have been underway in different communities across Canada for the past 25 years or so. The concept of “adjectival communities” is used here to summarize different local networking and partnership formations adopted in communities to address 23 variations of the kinds of communities they are seeking to create. Each gains recognition from national and/or international bodies that determine the criteria and endorsements needed to receive some official recognition. The biosphere and forest communities (that are of primary interest to this project) are but two of these sets of similar initiatives. Given the local foci of all these groups, they are all encountering similar challenges and difficulties that relate to the governance regime they have to work with or under. These issues are noted, but not analyzed here

Towards Sustainable Communities in Canada

Local initiatives are being taken in communities across Canada and around the world to enhance aspects of their own sustainability. The themes under which they do this as well as their main foci, strategies and priorities vary, as do supporting networks maintained nationally and/or internationally. Some discuss what they are doing with reference to cities, towns, or rural areas, but with little distortion all could be considered under the general rubric 'community' that can be a geographic area as well as extended networks of communities of interest linked mainly by modern ICT capabilities. Different approaches have been identified (or 'branded') with different adjectives.

The "adjectival communities" in Canada include (in alphabetical order of the adjective used): Age-friendly; Biosphere; Bluegreen; Compassionate; Creative; Eco; Fire-smart; Forest; Green; Healthy; Human Rights; Inclusive; Intelligent; Learning; Livable; Resilient; Safe; Smart Growth; Strengthened; Sustainable; Transition; Vibrant; Youth-Friendly. Most communities use several terms to describe what they are attempting to do, including (besides the above) terms such as capable, caring, planning, secure, and vital. As can be noted, some key adjectives are of wider inherent scope than others, and the ways in which different groups in different communities interpret them will vary as well.

There seems to be little need to engage in semantic debates over definitions of adjectives. But there are possibilities of learning from the experiences they all have had in implementing what they have embarked upon. Although the substantive domains of each group may be quite different from the others, they all have to cope with organizational, management, and governance regimes issues that are in many ways essentially the same. But some seem much more successful at doing this than others.

Information for 23 of these "adjectival communities" is summarized below under the general headings of their main foci, sponsoring organizations, national and/or international network affiliation, main activities and the number of examples in Canada (as of 2012, or at the time the latest information has been compiled) and internationally (if known). An exemplar community is identified where appropriate, comments are sometimes added, and an occasional reference is identified. Otherwise, the information was gleaned from various websites and from the more substantive information many had posted on them.

Age-friendly communities

Main Foci: Major determinants of a community environment that influence the health and quality of life for older people, e.g. availability of affordable housing, transportation, community facilities, with inclusion and participation in community activities in ways that support active and healthy aging.

Major Sponsors: World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities (2006); Public Health Agency of Canada PHAC) Division of Aging & Seniors, and the Canadian Ministers Responsible for Seniors (provincial/territorial). Criteria and procedures for acceptance by WHO were developed in consultation with 33 cities in 20 countries, including four in Canada. A detailed guidebook was published by WHO in 2007. Qualifying communities must engage in a five-year cycle of planning priorities, implementation actions with indicators of success, evaluation of programs and gaps and then make continued improvements over successive five-year cycles. The Council of Ministers have endorsed the WHO program and also agreed that in Canada it should include rural and remote communities as well (The Council has identified ten remote communities in eight provinces for special attention).

Number: As of 2012, there were 42 'official' age-friendly communities in the world in 22 countries including eight in Canada. Because of the need to engage in a five-year planning organizing cycle, there are apparently many more candidates becoming organized with many local agencies and non-governmental groups. In Canada, each province has agencies and NGOs engaged in this.

Exemplar: Portage La Prairie, MN. Portage was one of the cities included in the WHO consultations in 2006. Follow-up was then undertaken by the City of Portage la Prairie, the Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat, and the PHAC. A community survey was conduced by the Centre on Aging at the University of Manitoba in 2007, a Age-Friendly City Advisory Committee was appointed and along with its other work prepared a Senior's Resource Guide for the Portage in 2011. At a provincial conference on the theme of age-friendly communities held at Portage in 2008, an Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative (AFMI) was announced. As of 2012, AFMI has funded 72 communities in the province to complete their first five-year cycle of preparations.

Comments: These programs are being administered in Canada by provincial public health and community service agencies with considerable support from associated national, provincial and local non-profit agencies and organizations in these fields. To be successful they have to have strong support at provincial and municipal

levels to assure participation from the planning and development organizations to provide the necessary modifications and up-keep of buildings and physical infrastructures (sidewalks, road intersections, transit services, shelters and places to sit down, etc.)

References: PHAC 2006; Menec and others 2007.

Biosphere communities

Main foci: Conservation, resource management, quality sustainable livelihoods.

Main sponsor: UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, 1971, Paris, and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Ottawa. Since 1998, the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA) helps to coordinate work among groups of "biosphere reserves" (the official name used by UNESCO).

Number: 16 in Canada, and 598 in 117 countries in the world (as of 2012).

Exemplar: Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, ON. 2002. This is a 2,700 km^2 area focused on a major landform in south-eastern Ontario. It is organized as a network ("Networks R Us") involving about 80 other organizations that collectively range over a region twice the size of the biosphere landform configuration itself.

Reference: UNESCO. 2010. World Network of Biosphere Reserves: Sites for Sustainable Development (Summary information for each one). Paris: UNESCO (597 pp.)

Bluegreen communities

Main foci: safe & healthy working conditions, use of toxic materials, green manufacturing jobs, protection of environment and human health.

Main sponsors: United Steelworkers (Canada); Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union; Environmental Defence (Canada); Columbia Institute (BC); Pembina Institute (Calgary). Keeps track of global events and trends in green economy.

Number: As of 2012, just getting underway with work in Sudbury and Hamilton, Ontario, and with the work of the Centre for Civic Governance, Columbia Institute, in British Columbia. They have informal links with other community organizations across Canada.

Reference: Blue Green Canada (2012).

Compassionate communities

Main foci: New spirituality, empathy.

Main sponsor: Compassionate Action Network (CAN), 2009, Charter for Compassion, 2010. CAN International Institute (CANII), 2010. Canadians for Compassion, Vancouver 2010. CANII sets requirements for recognition as a Compassionate community.

Number: As of 2012, 1 +10 in preparation in Canada. World: Eight confirmed in two countries + 40 candidates in about 30 countries.

Exemplar: London ON was the first in Canada to ratify the Charter, in May 2011.

Comments: The term “compassionate community” is also used by The Pallium Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association. They seek to integrate service provisions for later in life, serious illnesses, and end-of-life into the chronic disease prevention and management of provincial and territorial services delivery (Pallium Foundation 2012). This is consistent with the broader scope of the compassionate community ideal while also identifying a high priority element for it.

Creative communities

Main Foci: Arts and culture, community-base & self-determination.

Main Sponsors: Creative City Network of Canada, Vancouver, since 2000, Canada Council for the Arts, and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. International: UNESCO Division of Cultural Expression and Creativity; Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005, entered into force 2007.

Membership in the Creative City Network of Canada is for municipalities only, and is based on annual membership fees scaled to the population size of the municipality. Canada: 115 member municipalities in 2012. International UNESCO Programs of the Creative Cities Network and Arts Education: Seven creative groups are recognized – literature, film, music, crafts & folk art, design, media arts, gastronomy. As of 2012, there were 30 member cities in 20 countries, with entries under all categories. Montreal (design) was the only Canadian member.

Eco-communities

Main foci: Relatively small groups of people self-organized into rural or urban “intentional communities” that provide a mutually supportive social environment and a low-impact way of life, by integrating different aspects of ecological design, perma-culture (organic gardening/farming), green production, alternative energy, community

building practices, that can create self-sufficient, self-governed, hence sustainable alternatives to the destructive consumerism of the modern economy.

Main Sponsors: Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), 2000, recognized as an official UN Non-Government Organization by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, New York. Regional GENs have formed for Europe, the Middle East and Africa; Oceania and Asia; and for The Americas. These networks serve to encourage alliances between relatively small intentional communities reacting against the trends in the 'developed' economies they are in with the more traditional cultures of peoples elsewhere (with much larger populations) who strive to protected their traditional lands and cultures from external forces of destruction in the name of 'economic development' (Dawson, 2010).

The Ecovillage Network of Canada was formed in 1997, and as of 2012 had regional representatives for the Maritimes/Ontario, Quebec, the Prairies, and British Columbia.

Number in Canada: 51 organized and operating eco-villages (mostly rural) along with 132 listed as "forming", or "re-forming".

Exemplar: O.U.R. (One United Resource) ECOVILLAGE, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, BC. This eco-community has been in continuous operation since the original group of 14 people started it in 1999; its members have had to resolve a number of practical and governing issues along the way. The community offers a wide range of tours and practical workshops/seminars on building an eco-community that draws upon "dozens" of funders, "hundreds" of sponsors, and '"thousands" of volunteers.

Reference: Kasper (2008) has analyzed several US eco-communities in the context of the Global Ecovillage Network.

Fire-smart communities

Main foci: Reduction of fire hazards and emergency preparedness in wildland/settlement interfaces.

Main sponsor: In 1990, the Alberta Forest Service (now Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development) created a "Partners in Protection Program" to facilitate inter-agency cooperation, public awareness and education about reducing the risk of loss of life and property from fires in the wildland/urban interfaces. Key people to engage were community leaders, local firefighters, industry partners and vulnerable

community members. In 1999, they created the FireSmart® brand and published a comprehensive “FireSmart Protecting Your Community from Wildfire”.

National sponsor: In 2008, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) asked for a FireSmart Canada program for community recognition. The “Partners in Protection Program” has about 60 organizations from eight provinces/territories, and has recently provided information about the criteria and procedures to be followed in each province to obtain a FireSmart® community designation of recognition.

International network affiliation: None yet but future possibilities include the US, all circumpolar boreal forest countries, and countries having other kinds of ‘fire-driven’ forest ecosystems (e.g. eucalyptus forests in south-eastern Australia).

Number: Apparently about 700 communities are recognized in 41 States in the US. None yet in Canada.

Exemplar prototype: Jasper National Park and Municipality of Jasper Fire Smart – Forest Wise Initiative, 2010.

Reference: FireSmart Canada. 2012.

Forest communities

Main foci: sustainable forestry, non-timber forest resources.

Main sponsor: Canadian Forestry Service, Canadian Council of Forest Ministers under the model forests program (1992-2007) and forest communities program (2008-). Linked to other forestry issues by the UN Forum on Forests, and regional model forest programs.

Number: As of 2012, 13 in Canada, and 55 in 24 other countries.

Exemplar: Bas-Saint-Laurent Model Forest, QC, 1992-2007. Much of this 113,000 ha area is privately owned by forest companies, but is being management under a tenant farm system (en métayage). Groups of 10-12 tenants are allotted 1,000 ha units of forested lands each to be managed as small woodlot businesses under terms & rents negotiated by the model forest project, and supported by producer cooperatives organized by the tenant groups. This is a unique local arrangement in Canada and has continued after the model forest was no longer needed (and has been de-listed as such).

Reference: Masse 2001.

Green communities

Main foci: One or a mix of energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable green space, water protection and conservation.

Main sponsor: Green Communities Canada (GCC), 1995, Peterborough ON. Green communities are non-profit businesses with numerous partners and act as social entrepreneurs. GCC provides central coordination and support for each member community that is responsible for program delivery. The Green Communities Foundation was incorporated in 2005 as the charitable affiliate of the GCC.

Number: 30 in Canada in eight provinces/territories.

Exemplar: Elora Environment Centre ON, 1993, and a founding member of Green Communities Canada.

Comments: The Centre's general vision is to make the Village of Elora and nearby areas greener and healthier places to live. Staff and volunteers have experience in home energy evaluations; greenhouse gas reductions; water use efficiency & safety, urban tree stewardship; sustainable transportation options; promoting sustainable lifestyles, as well as environmental education based on these topics. They also sponsor local events, fund-raisers, and provide information.

References: Maynes 2008; GCC 2010.

Healthy communities

Main foci: The entire health spectrum of medical examinations, treatments and care, public health, and health and wellness promotion.

Main sponsors: World Health Organization under terms of the "Ottawa Charter", 1986, i.e. health refers to "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Health Promotion.

The medical sector comes under federal and provincial health policies with support from a large number of charitable foundations and community groups organized by different categories of chronic illnesses or disabilities. The public health sector is similarly organized in most provinces. There are four provincial community-based coalitions, i.e. BC Healthy Communities, the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, Réseau québecois de Villes and Villages en santé, and Mouvement Acadien des Communautés en Santé in New Brunswick. These groups support healthy community ideals by providing information and assistance to local groups to help them address the multiple determinants of health and build community capacities. The Ontario Healthy

Communities Coalition for example, was founded in 1992, and as of 2011 it had 34 coalition members and 285 organizational members (as well as 175 individual members).

Number of healthy communities: The WHO is organized into six major regions of the world, some of which also have sub-regions (e.g. Baltic States). Each region has WHO-designated "collaborating centres" (CCs) that are "centres of excellence" for different categories of medical or public health issues. As of 2012, there were 830 CCs 'covering' 195 countries. Canada has 25 CCs that are either federal health-related departments or major university-based medical and/or public health institutions.

Comment: Local community groups do have a role in promoting the importance of good hygiene, nutrition, and physical fitness as this might be integrated into other community activities such as poverty alleviation, local foods, and outdoor recreation.

Human rights communities

Main foci: Combat racism and multiple forms of discrimination.

Main sponsor: Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA). Initiated the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) in June 2005, other partners joined to officially launch CMARD in Calgary, June 2010. Signatory municipalities have to commit to ten actions in their role as a guardian of the public interest, as an organization in the fulfillment of human rights, and as a community sharing responsibility for respecting and promoting human rights and diversity. Canada is also one of six regional coalitions recognized by the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ICCAR) launched by UNESCO in 2004 to develop and/or enhance policies to fight against racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

Number: 52 municipalities in Canada, nine of which are among 38 examples in the world cited by UNESCO as examples of "good practices"; ICCAR has 500+ cities in the world as signatories.

Exemplar: Saskatoon, SK. The city's Race Relationship Committee fulfills all ten of the CMARD criteria.

Reference: CCMARD Toolkit for Municipalities, Organizations and Citizens, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, February 2012.

Inclusive communities

Main foci: Servicing vulnerable groups.

Main sponsors: National Community Inclusion Initiative (CII), 1997, sponsored by the federal Social Development Partnership Program, the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), People First of Canada, and provincial/territorial Associations for Community Living. During their first years, CII, focused on individuals with "intellectual disabilities" and their families. They assist communities to develop capacities to become more welcoming and supportive of these groups and become places where "people in all their diversity belong".

CII's experience during this phase led to the realization that the full inclusion of individuals and families needed to consider policies and practices across sectors and systems that needed 'innovation' in order to achieve this goal. Priority areas for attention included "deinstitutionalization, housing, education, income and employment, family and disability supports, and community associational life and capacity". In 2005, CALC adopted a ten-year agenda for change to work with governments and other organizations to deal with issues of "child rights, close institutions, disability supports, employment equality, equality rights, eradication of poverty, family supports, global inclusions, inclusive education, and safe and inclusive communities". This would help achieve the vision of "a fully inclusive Canada". Progress reports are to be issued.

Comments: While the groups of primary interest for the CII are one priority, the term "inclusive communities" used by other organizations envisions a much larger range of programs to assist different categories of 'marginalized people' to become functioning members of the larger community they are in.

Intelligent communities

Main foci: Use and effective development of ICT for economic development.

Main sponsor: US Intelligent Communities Forum (ICF) that awards "Top Seven" communities in the world each year (out of ~300 nominations) – some may also receive an award from the World Teleport Association, a multi-national trade association that promotes satellite communications 'from the ground up'. In Canada a recently formed I-Canada Alliance in 2011 is helping to create an "Intelligent Nation".

ICF criteria for recognition are the use of broadband communications to create a 'virtuous cycle'. The deployment of broadband communications fosters 'digital inclusion' of more people and organizations, the development of a skilled workforce in its use leading to a greater demand for more access that in turn attracts new businesses and

investments leading to more innovative thinking about products, processes, and marketing.

Number: 15 Canadian communities have received a Top Seven award, a few more than once. Altogether, there are 100 recognized intelligent communities in four main regions of the world, i.e. Africa/Middle East, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, and Europe.

Exemplar: Stratford, ON, based on the intensive development of digital media associated with the annual Shakespeare Festival and other artistic/cultural events as well as a range of city services. Stratford is also home for the digital media campus of the University of Waterloo. In 2011, the ICF established with Stratford the first of its "Institutes of the Intelligent Community to Study the Intelligent Community". In Stratford, it will examine digital media cluster development that focuses on organizing and producing the Shakespeare Festivals.

Learning communities

Main foci: life-long learning viewed in the framework of "Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live Together, and Learning to Be" applied at the community level using a Composite Learning Index made up of 17 indicators and 26 specific measures.

Main Sponsors: Canadian Council on Learning (CCL). The framework was adopted from the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (1993-1996). Since 2006, CCL compiles and analyzes data from various sources (mainly Statistics Canada) to generate numeric scores for more than 4,500 communities across Canada. Relatively high scores mean the community possesses the kinds of learning conditions that foster social and economic wellbeing. Lower scores mean they are under-performing in some aspects, hence it is desirable they consider ways to improve. CCL provides consultation services and works quite closely with a number of communities across Canada. By 2010 CCL was able to provide a five-year trend compilation for 38 major cities in Canada.

Exemplar: Victoria, BC, ranked very high, above the national average with an increasing trend in 2010.

References: Official proclamation of Victoria BC to be "A Global Learning City", May 12, 2005; CCL 2010.

Livable communities

Main foci: Indices of prosperity, affordable housing, amenities, available services, safety, and lifestyle options.

Main sponsor: “Money Sense” Magazine, a personal finance and lifestyle magazine issued seven times a year by Rogers Media Publishing, Toronto. Since 2005, it publishes an Annual Ranking of “Canada’s Best Place to Live”, based on data banks for 24 quantitative indicators grouped under the general headings of prosperity, affordable housing, lifestyles, and weather & air quality. The list is for 154 communities.

Exemplars: Victoria and Ottawa have ranked the highest in recent years.

Comments: The editors realize that their readers (~900.000 subscribers) are partial to the kinds of lifestyles associated with good incomes, so they don’t include intangibles such as scenery or other indicators of environmental quality.

Resilient communities

Main foci: develop and maintain emergency preparedness for health emergencies and disasters (natural or human caused strife).

Main sponsors: Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (and the federal Government Operations Centre) in partnership with St. John Ambulance and the Salvation Army (for the federal roles). A federal, provincial and territorial Emergency Management Framework for Canada, 2004, revised in 2007 and up-dated in 2012, guides federal-provincial cooperation. The framework specifies a set of ten principles that cover the main provisions in the Framework for prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. “Resiliency” refers to the on-going ability of a community to work together, to identify their strengths and challenges, to mobilize their assets, and to work collectively to meet their needs. Municipalities are in the front line as first responders. Issues of governance and coordination are pervasive.

The Canadian Centre or Emergency Preparedness was formed in 1993 and based in Hamilton ON, to help a range of non-profit voluntary organizations to be better prepared for emergencies. It gives annual awards to individuals who have contributed to emergency preparedness or business continuity preparedness (one in each category, annually).

References: Senate of Canada (2008a); Hutchins and Sladowski (2009).

Safe communities

Main foci: injury prevention and promotion of safety.

Main sponsors: Safe Canada Foundation (SCF), 1996, along with the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, School of Public Health, University of Alberta, both recognized as "certification centres"; World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion, Stockholm 1989. Ten criteria for designation are: Establishing a Leadership Table of organizations, including the municipal government for injury prevention and safety (three criteria); priority setting, e.g. high risk groups and work or other settings (three criteria); sustainability of program funding (two criteria); and sponsoring information/communication programs (two criteria). Designation in Canada indicates "readiness". A subsequent listing by the WHO (upon application) indicates the organization is operational and producing outcomes. The latter includes more detailed provisions for traffic, workplace, sports, home especially for children and the elderly, and public places.

Number in Canada: 62; International, 274 in 19 countries. Six Canadian communities are on the WHO list.

Exemplar: Sault Saint Marie, ON, endorsed by city council 2002, and designated by WHO in 2009. The community has committees for traffic and road safety, provisions for domestic and elderly abuse, risk watch awareness for children and families, health & wellbeing promotion, and awareness programs for risks of "slips, trips and falls".

Comment: SCF conducts annual surveys that score Canadian centres on how well they meet specific expectations, and report general results, e.g. in 2012, the average score for safe communities was 16/20 (80%) and over 25,000 participants were in safety programs in Canada. SCF also asks for nominations for various awards to be given out on an annual Safe Canada Day.

Reference: SCF 2012.

Smart growth communities

Main foci: design or re-design of urban lands to reduce costly urban sprawl over large regions beyond central cities. Alternatives are for urban lands to become more compact, diverse in their land uses with more clearly defined internal structures and boundaries, and much less dependence upon automobiles for transportation.

Main sponsors: Smart Growth Canada Network, 2003 (current status unclear); some provincial networks (Ontario Smart Growth Network; Smart Growth BC) and many local groups participating in planning debates in particular communities.

The main issues have been widely identified and smart growth principles have been articulated. A number of communities have stated policies to foster 'smart growth'. The problems lie in the complexities of implementation given the deeply embedded path-dependencies inherent in urban infrastructures.

Comments: Elements of smart growth thinking can be found in a number of communities in Canada. The difficulties encountered because of the long time that it takes to make significant changes in urban form make sustained efforts by proponent organizations, especially NGOs, difficult to maintain over a number of years. 'Burn-out' seems evident in some situations.

Reference: Tomalty and Alexander, 2005.

Strengthened communities

Main foci: Building community assets (physical, social, environmental).

Main Sponsor: Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) established in 1992. CFC has 11 national programs that different community foundations participate in, including "international" - CFC is a sponsor of the Transatlantic Community Foundation Network.

Number: There are 181 community foundations in Canada. Explorations are under way to create others and to build networks of cooperation among some neighbouring foundations in different regions of Canada.

References: CFC Annual Report 2010; CFC Strategic Alliances, c 2010.

Sustainable communities

Main foci: Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development based on what makes life possible, how the biosphere functions, and how people are a part of the earth's natural system.

Main Sponsors: The Natural Step Framework Network (Sweden), 1989; The Natural Step Canada, Ottawa. These are non-profit organizations that offer fee-based advisory, coaching, training, and process facilitation services for individuals, organizations, and entire communities to work through four sets of recurrent questions at different organizational scales. The questions relate to awareness creation and visioning, baseline mapping, brainstorming creative solutions, and priority setting. 'Early adopters' can help expand this process to include other individuals and organizations, and at some point entire communities or groups of contiguous communities in some

region can become involved. The basis for this approach was the definition of "sustainable development" given by the Brundtland Commission in 1987. This definition appeared two years before the natural step approach was developed by its founder, Karl-Henrik Robèrt.

Number in Canada: As of 2012, the natural step process has been completed for 11 communities in five provinces and with groups of organizations in seven other communities (including groups in three other provinces) with expectations of a scale-up to the community level. International: Not known, but the Natural Step maintains offices in 11 countries.

Exemplar: Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley, Bow Valley Sustainability Hub, Canmore, Alberta, 2006.

Comments: All of the "adjectival communities" are striving for desirable forms of community sustainability, but tend to take more pragmatic and/or intuitive means of achieving it.

Reference: LeBlanc 2008.

Transition communities

Main foci: Local choice of working together on one or more of local food supplies, public transportation issues, energy alternatives, housing, waste disposal, arts and education.

Main Sponsor: A Transitions Network with a Transitions Initiatives Directory that list their requirements for becoming registered in the Directory as well as the number of communities that have done so. Can be some information exchange among communities in the same country or region (within a country or supra-nationally).

Number: The first transition community and website about their initiatives was established in Totnes, Devon, in southwestern England in 2006. As of June 2012, there were 23 "official entries" and another 43 listed as "mullers" (interested in the idea but still undecided) in Canada. Altogether, there were 427 "official" listings and 545 "mullers" initiatives in 34+ countries.

Exemplar: "Golden Ears Transition Initiative", Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadow/Katzie First Nations (north shore of the Fraser River in the greater Vancouver area) BC. This is a community co-op with about 50 members that was organized in 2009. A local Centre for Education on Environment and Development (CEED) sponsors a variety of local events including "skills sharing" on a range of topics such as cooking, farming/gardening,

artisan skills, building, transport without fossil fuels, organizing etc – there are some 20 smaller project groups associated with the community.

Comment: The speed at which the transition community concept is being taken up has attracted considerable academic interest.

References: Transition Initiatives Directory, Transition Network.org.; Barry and Quilley (2008).

Vibrant communities

Main foci: multiple facets of entrenched urban poverty.

Main sponsors: Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement, 2001, Waterloo ON, with the Caledon Institute of Social Policy and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. Guides qualifying communities through a process of creating new collaborative entities in their community tailored to the local context/circumstances that have trapped people in poverty, then formulate a community plan with targets that address program interventions to help people built or access necessary assets, as well as system interventions to alter policy or other system conditions that are restricting people's life prospects where they are located. Tamarack provides funding, "coaching" support and "learning community" support though web-site materials and special events across Canada. Results are monitored by the Caledon Institute that also prepares media items about case examples.

Number: There are 13 "vibrant communities" across Canada. The program is completing an external evaluation as of 2012.

Exemplar: New Dawn Enterprises Ltd., 1976, based in Sydney, Cape Breton, NS and also a founding member of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network. Its mission is to "engage to create and support the development of a culture of self-reliance" through co-operative institutions. New Dawn has an inter-related set of about 15 co-ops that employ over 175 people with an annual budget of about $ 6 million.

Comments: New Dawn is located in the Sydney-Glace Bay region of the former 'old industrial region of Cape Breton'. This region once had an economy based on a steel mill complex, coal-fired thermal power plants (for the provincial grid), a number of different coal mines that supported both, and a large number of service sector jobs related to this economy. The founders of New Dawn were well aware of the co-op and social economy concepts, partly because of their own experience with the Antigonish movement throughout NS in its day (St. Francis Xavier University), and also by direct

knowledge of the experience of the Mondragon co-operative complex in the Basque region of northern Spain. The informal links they have (through long-time personal friendships) with the Tamarack Institute and the "vibrant communities" program were nurtured by New Dawn's current work in a region experiencing widespread poverty, including many people with chronic illnesses associated with the working conditions they had encountered in the underground mines, or at the former steel complex (especially near the notorious "Sydney Tar Ponds" contaminated wastes sites that are only now being cleaned up).

Reference: Macleod (1997).

Youth-friendly communities

Main foci: well-being of children and youth; monitoring Canadian adherence to The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General Assembly resolution 44/25, 20 November, 1989; facilities for youth to pursue a wide-range of interests and activities.

Main sponsors: Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC) using the Convention as the guiding framework for all of its activities. Canada ratified the Convention in December 1991. [Note: "child" is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 in this Convention]. CCRC has arranged for the participation of children and youth in events associated with the CRC and has organized regular five-year reviews of Canadian implementation of the CRC

The Society for Children and Youth of BC, 1974, is an advocacy group that uses the CRC as a foundation. It works with other organizations in Canada on issues such as child abuse, children's environments, and the importance of play. It has examined policy and legislation in BC, AB and ON (so far) and the federal government as it relates to the Convention obligations.

Comments: From 2005-2007, Ontario experimented with a one-time funding of "Play Works" by making small amounts of money (up to $1,500) available to groups of youths (age 13-19) who applied (and had a sponsor to help out where needed). These were used to carrying out short-term projects such as recreation, leadership, sports, travel, arts, performance, civic engagement and volunteerism activities. In the three years this was tried "the response was tremendous" and the exercise was presented as a "do it yourself" community funding model (Play Works 2010). A Play Works Partnership network (with eight member organizations so far) has been formed and

annual recognition awards are given under a Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program. As of 2011, 39 communities have been recognized.

Brief comments

Arguably, it is rather early yet to evaluate success or lack of it in these initiatives. They are probably subject to critiques that have been made in the UK about transition fallacies of the new localisms generally such as the alleged six core myths raised by Marvin and Guy (1997) about a decade before the transition town program got underway. The myths were really questions about the realism of framing the problems as local ones that can be resolved locally given the institutional structures and ownerships relationships in the global economy, and the political commitments of governments to maintaining these. Holden (2010) summarized the main kinds of reactionary arguments against any kind of sustainability actions, noting examples of each she has encountered in Vancouver. Basically they are: *Perversity*: well-intentioned efforts towards change always backfire and make the problems they were trying to solve become much worse; *Futility*: the changes will achieve nothing because they fail to acknowledge incontrovertible truths about political and economic power or the givens of human nature; and *Jeopardy*: the changes will destroy some cherished hard-won accomplishments of the past such as freedom or democracy.

Phase and other cycles within and among related “adjectival communities”:

There are three scales to consider. One is at the level of a local organization that becomes engaged in a particular community and strives to develop local networked capabilities to carry out what they are trying to do. This was described by the summary of SiG@Waterloo (*Innovations and Sustainability* - 4). There are organizational ‘traps’ to avoid if the management group is to successfully re-organize itself to be effective in the next phase it has entered. Volunteer organizations especially, can have difficulties at these transition points leading to a number of failed ‘start-ups’ in local communities.

A second scale to consider is that of each particular kind of “adjectival community”. As noted in summaries of the different communities, some have been in existence for several decades whereas others are just starting up. The older, and presumably better developed examples are also ones that have become more structured, especially if they

are closely linked with federal-provincial or 'national' organizations and with intergovernmental or other international organizations that also set the criteria and application procedures to give recognition to communities that qualify. This can easily become a set of bureaucratic bottlenecks. It can certainly be a dis-incentive to potential newcomers who will be needed from time-to-time to revitalize the commitments. At some point this means engaging younger generations to take on the pre-defined challenges.

'Global' change also entails new technologies, and some of these are expected to be 'transformational'. The Internet is most often quoted as an example, especially the Web 2.0 interactive capacities giving rise to 'blogospheres' along with social media that can link and/or energize other people quickly. Younger people can be quite at home in this transformative ICT, and they are being urged to do so in order to promote the new information-based economy. Global 'social forums', local 'occupy' groups, and street demonstrations exemplify various other possibilities of ICT as do surveillance technologies used to crush ones that threaten existing power structures. Those 20th century institutions relied upon as intermediaries in many of the "adjectival communities" may be withering in their own obsolescence. Social or other change groups in the 21st century may see no need for them at all.

A third scale is contextual. With all the technological and other innovation-driven changes underway in the world, different combinations of them will also be seen as "transformative". This generally means that various complex systems are themselves being changed in quite fundamental ways that may not become fully evident until after this has occurred. "Adjectival communities" in all their variety may be early signs of an emergent "meta-movement" or (in complex systems terms) of a 'Punctuated Equilibrium Paradigm' where now is the time of increasing turbulence as the old systems collapse and the new have yet to emerge. There are a number of discussions among proponents and supporters of similar community-driven initiatives in the US. Initiatives have been taken by several organizations there to organize national conferences with tele-conference connections for people unable to attend, e.g. "Bioneers", and discussions of some kind of "Transformation Institute for Community, Business and Personal Transformations". A "Fourth Sector" approach has identified the various ways that boundaries between the public (government), private (business) and social (non-profit) sectors are dissolving and emerging in a whole variety of hybrid organizations. This is

similar to discussions underway through the SiG consortium in Canada, especially SiG@McConnell with its high-powered "Task Force on Social Financing" and SiG@Waterloo with its guidance to the "Capacity Waterloo Region".

The talk about 'punctuated evolution', 'transformative innovations', and 'meta-movements' immediately (should) invite attention to the considerable historical and contemporary research, analyses, and debates that relate to trajectories and phase cycles operating at the global scales. See *Innovations and Sustainability – 5* for a discussion of this.

Some Reflections About Community-Based Approaches to Sustainability

Multiple designations:

Some communities have several "adjectival" recognitions, but no attempt is made here to determine the extent of this among the 23 examples noted above. Much depends on local circumstances and contexts but these factors can vary greatly. Urban communities are most likely to be sites for the high technology-based new economy being constructed, although rural communities are experiencing similar developments for industrial agriculture, and remote areas near extractive resource development are also impacted in a number of ways. The rapidity of changes brought about largely because of the space-time compression transformations associated with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) suggest that communities should strive to develop their capacities for both 'resilience and adaptation' and for continual incremental or transitional innovative changes.

The recipes for this are not very clear but there are examples where this seems to occur with a certain regularity where one major change (either adaptive or opportunistic) seems to open up other such changes in due course. A situation that appears to exemplify this is sketched below.

Case situation: Clayoquot Sound, is an area of about 350,000 ha on the west coast of Vancouver Island, a location that is part of the Nuu-chah-Nulth (NCN) Tribal Council traditional territories. In the 1980s, it became the site for increasing confrontations with the forest industry because of their destruction of some of the last

remaining old growth temperate zone rainforests. The provincial government eventually responded in 1993 with a major change in the governance regime for the region that slowly relaxed the tensions over the next few years. In 2000, Clayoquot Sound was declared a biosphere (reserve) community by UNESCO and awarded a $11 million endowment fund (the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, CBT) by the federal government to promote co-management resource management initiatives with members of the NCN Tribal Council. In 2007, a Forest Communities program was started, jointly administered by Ecotrust Canada and the NCN Tribal Council with the goal of creating a "conservation economy" for the forest sector (other projects by Ecotrust address other sectors). An earlier Long Beach Model Forest functioned between 1995 and 2003 but was closed down by the Canadian Forest Service (the only MF in Canada that was terminated for non-compliance). In 2012, the CBT itself became recognized as a Community Foundation. That makes its programs recognized as contributions towards a "strengthened community". It now works in cooperation with the Vancouver Community Foundation, Canada's oldest (1943) and largest with $735 million in endowment funds. As a Foundation, CBT provides enhanced support for the "healthy foods and healthy community" program and for the "youth and the biosphere" program. This in turn can be interpreted as the beginnings of a "healthy community" (re-enforced by other social projects CBT has funded in the past) as well as being recognized as a "youth friendly community".

Treaty negotiations have been completed with final agreements for some NCN First Nations and 'almost' final agreements with the others who interpreted agreements to be essentially complete following a 2009 BC Supreme Court decision about fishing rights that was in their favour, and was upheld by an Appeal decision in 2011. Co-management relations are effectively institutionalized such that the situation could be considered to be a special kind of an "inclusive community". In 2008, the Tla-o-qui-aht FN declared all of their traditional lands, some 55,000 ha from the mountains to the sea, to be a "Tribal Park" that will be managed with the wisdom of their Elders, modified as necessary by current circumstances. This could also be interpreted as an "eco-community" with common property ownership of traditional lands shared by the entire Tla-o-qhi-aht population. These additional designations would not likely be acceptable if they came from the 'outside' without consultation and material or political advantages.

Looking back almost 20 years, this appears to be a slow but steady evolution of the community capabilities in the region from the 1993 “land use decision” of the BC government that launched the whole process. More changes can be expected. For example, the NCN communities in the area are re-instating their Hereditary Chiefs in formal honorific and executive roles in governance (previously informal arrangements) after having been ignored and over-ridden by federal “Indian Act” policies (applied across Canada) for some 150 years or so. Officially, this was expected to make the old ways wither into insignificance or be forgotten altogether. In the case of the NCN this policy didn’t work. It can raise the question of whether restoration of old practices under new circumstances is genuine ‘innovation’. At the same time, Ecotrust strives to encourage changes in social economies of Clayoquot Sound in ways that could renew the role of co-operative organizations in local communities.

Another situation altogether is where a community generally agrees that these adaptive capabilities should be institutionalized as an on-going set of processes that serve to enhance probabilities that new creative ideas will routinely and regularly emerge and some will become the stimuli and sources of new adaptations and innovations. The question is how this kind of environment that has ‘the propensity for innovation’ can be created and maintained since it will always be about possibilities. This ‘managing emergence’ would never succeed in the conventional world of having always to prepare explicit statements of visions, goals, and objectives with phased plans for implementation using explicit criteria and indicators for success. That might come later, but first keep generating the good ideas. A situation where this approach is being explored is sketched below. It should be noted in passing that the cautions raised by Martin and Storr (2008) about ‘perverse emergent orders’ must also be kept in mind.

Case situation: The Region of Waterloo is an Upper Tier (former County) municipal government that includes three cities, Kitchener, Waterloo (KW), Cambridge, and four rural Townships. It is in southern Ontario about 100 km west of the Greater Toronto Area, with a population of 507,096 (2011). The Region was the origin of the Tamarack Institute’s ”vibrant community” network, and in 2007, the Region was nominated as a top “intelligent community”. However, it also has a record of commitment to innovations exemplified over the past 10-20 years in the larger community: for example, Communitech, (1997) a regional hub for commercialization of innovations in

technology and other sectors; the development (2001) and expansion (2009) to double the size of the Perimeter Institute of Theoretical Physics; the Accelerator Centre for cultivating technology entrepreneurship (2009); two independent institutions linked with universities, the Centre for International Governance Innovation (2001) and the Basillie School of International Affairs (2010); and new centres within universities such as the School of Business and Economics, Wilfrid Laurier University; the Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation (WICI in 2009), the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR in 2010) and a new Lazaritis Centre for Nanotechnology and Quantum Computing at the University of Waterloo (to open in 2012),

The Region has long had a "Prosperity Council" founded by the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce, the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Communitech and Canada's Technology Triangle (the three cities along with Guelph in neighbouring Wellington County) created in 1987 to represent about 3,400 businesses. Following a Prosperity Forum in 2003, the council set up task forces to address issues of building a collaborative vision for the region, branding and marketing it, enhancing regional health institutions, strengthening local post-education institutions (workforce development) creating a regional arts and culture body, and becoming involved with Regional Growth Management issues. In 2006, the KW United Way, KW Foundation and a local representative of the Ontario Trillium Foundation formed "OLIVE" to help strengthen the organizational resiliency of the nonprofit sector so they may play a stronger role. The framework for thinking about this was adopted from Social Innovation Generation (SiG@Waterloo) who in turn had developed it from the complex social-ecological systems perspectives developed by ecologists (from the international "Resilience Alliance" group) who define 'resilience' to be the ability of systems to adapt and innovate in the face of change.

In 2008, following the impact of the financial crises, especially in the US and subsequently in Europe, local charitable organizations were constrained or crippled in what they could do. The Waterloo Region Resiliency Initiative (RI) was created in 2009 to be the vehicle for exploring what might be done and how, building on capacities that were already being shown by various organizations and groups in the region. "OLIVE" entered its second five-year phase in 2009 under the title "Capacity Waterloo Region". By then it had three main activities, a Peer Learning Network for executives and senior

community leaders, an E-D in residence to mentor and coach leaders, and a Board Governance education initiative ("Boot Camp for Boards") about effective organizational Boards of Directors across all sectors. At about this point Tides Canada was invited in to provide support for all administrative chores.

Currently, cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaborations are being explored. In answer to the question "community innovation to what end?" a Community Innovation Discovery Process is now underway. It has no pre-conceived specific goals or outcomes other than to foster catalytic partnerships, creative models of delivery, and extend the notion of institutional entrepreneurs to community systems entrepreneurs who can create promising emergent conditions for cross-sector transformational change. The critical role of individuals with particular knowledge and skill sets as well as systemic requirements for effective collaboration have been identified (Denton and Robertson 2010; Capacity Waterloo Region 2011; Langlois 2011). The implicit expectation as these explorations continue is that multiple 'adjectival qualities' for any given community can be fostered by process designs. Struthers (2010) offers a particularly insightful interpretation of the processes underway. Meanwhile, new social change groups are being formed mainly by university students, e.g. the "Laurel Centre for Social Entrepreneurs" (2007-08) that organized Boot Camps for entrepreneurs and other events before disbanding; "Transition KW" (2009) to organize a "transition community"; and "Upstart Collaboratory" (n.d. 2012?) to "initiate a rich and complex web of conversations" that explore the creation of "Resilient Waterloo".

So this is one example of a community striving to create collaborative processes and a supportive environment that fosters emergent initiatives from a number of entrepreneurial people to produce transitional and/or transformative innovations across sectors and domains of interest. It has attracted interest and critiques from various academics about 'why Waterloo?' Most have focused attention on the ICT innovations and associated organizations as somehow setting a larger ambience within which social innovations also occur. Leibovitz (2003) has conducted the most detailed and nuanced study of "Canada's Technology Triangle" initiative from the point of view of the politics of institution-building and economic governance. He documented a number of barriers and gaps in the set of local governments, private sector, and civil society organizations, many of them deeply entrenched, that up to that time prevented the emergence of a

coherent and effective 'city-region' from forming. Bramwell and others (2008) examined the development of the ICT cluster in Waterloo, and noted that in many ways it has transcended the situation Leibovitz described mainly because, although located locally, their core business links were global and rarely local, UW's policies for intellectual property (if you invented it, it's yours) and co-op education program (one work-term each year, required for some programs and optional for most of the others) has led to several hundred spin-off companies over the years and to a larger 'buzz' that attracts highly qualified personnel to the Region, and spills over into other sectors. It also transcends the entrenched disputes of the old municipalities and remnants of the former industrial sector.

But major social innovations can take a long time

"Complexity" entails contradictions, tensions, paradoxes, ambiguities, dialectical processes, and collaborations. 'Steering' this for desirable forms of sustainability is still an art to be learned. But there are also major system change processes building somewhat under the 'radar' of the day-to-day promoters of capitalism and its State sponsors. Major innovations such as those of the "suffragettes" from the 1880s through to early 20th century took decades before women were finally given the right to vote in Canada. The step-by-step introduction of comprehensive health insurance programs like "medicare" took most of the 20th century to develop. The main elements of medicare were enacted between 1947 and 1972 (with 1962 being a turning point), but different aspects of them are still a source of controversy in Canada today.

Like these major social changes in earlier times, are there reform movements already underway to develop major alternative forms of social-economic organization that would be consistent with the commitments of the "adjectival communities" that could soften and/or divert some of the bleaker prospects of the unfolding world-system? Possibilities include:

<u>Degrowth: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?</u>

The "Degrowth" movement in its present form emerged in Europe over the past decade, partly in response to the pervasive economic difficulties being encountered there by 'late

capitalism', especially in the financial sectors. The issues now being debated are similar in many ways to ones debated extensively in the 1970s, notably the "limits to growth" (Meadows and others 1972; 2004); the need for a transition into a steady-state economy (Daly 1968; Daly and Cobb 1989), and in Canada, the promotion of a "Conserver Society" (vs 'consumer'), SSC 1973; 1977). Intellectual leaders of "degrowth" recognize and acknowledge this earlier period, perhaps because they, like their earlier counterparts are, or include dissenting professional economists challenging the deeply embedded neo-classical orthodoxies of their discipline.

Forty years ago, and allowing for much (sometimes quite willful) misinterpretations of what the 'limits' actually said, the 'limits' were projections of prevailing trends and possible future scenarios that anticipated future major shortages of critical resources, along with increasing pollution of water and air, with resulting higher human mortality rates if nothing was done to acknowledge the economy as a sub-system of the larger biosphere ecosystems and create social policies and institutions needed to guide these relationships in ways that would become socially just and environmentally sustainable. By the 1980s, the discourse had morphed into "sustainable development" that (with deliberate ambiguity) suggested that there could be some optimal mixes of the economic, environmental, and social components ('the three pillars') that could modify growth and development strategies. This recognized the distinction economists did make between 'growth' as expansions of the existing economy, and 'development' as re-structuring the economy to make transitions into sustainable futures possible.

Political reactions to all this from the most powerful and wealthy classes were swift and took the form of virulent neo-liberal economic doctrines and neo-conservative political ideologies that swept anything that stood in the way of relentless growth and accumulation, This was fueled by increasing debt and mass consumerism, with expansion to include world-wide capitalism itself. "Development" became defined as exploiting resources anywhere in the world. As proclaimed loudly and persistently, 'there were no alternatives'. Now, 30+ years later, the geopolitical and ecological consequences of these doctrines have become increasingly evident.

The word "degrowth" captures attention. A somewhat official view of it is:

> "Sustainable degrowth may be defined as an equitable down-scaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global level, in the short and long term. The adjective sustainable does not mean that degrowth should be sustained indefinitely (which would be absurd) but rather that the process of transition/transformation and the end-state should be sustainable in the sense of being environmentally and socially beneficial. The paradigmatic proposition of degrowth is therefore that human progress without economic growth is possible" (Schneider and others 2010: 512).

Serge Latouche, a professor in the University of Paris, South, and. Joan Martinez-Alier, a professor in the University of Barcelona, are economists with a strong sense of history. Both are academic proponents of the degrowth concept and of the growing social movements associated with it. The following main points have been paraphrased from Latouche (2004; 2007; 2012) and from Martínez-Alier (2009; 2012).

- Degrowth is a banner for radical criticism of development and is best seen as the beginnings of a cultural revolution to reopen inventiveness and creativity of an 'imaginary' that has been blocked by the 'totalitarianism' of the endless growth doctrines. Addiction to growth is like a disease or drug that should be treated with a comprehensive detoxification program. It is not (yet) a concrete political program;
- Degrowth is better seen as "a-growth" in a sense comparable to "a-theism". Either we revive the planet-destroying mega-machine or we invent another society;
- Ecological economics is a contributing field to degrowth with its research on flows of energy and materials through economies, and development of general models of economies that then apply different possible scenarios to demonstrate greater or lesser growth of key variables in the stocks and flows of materials and energy through different sectors. The challenge is designing the framework of controls and regulations that would be required to get preferred results, and how such models can be scaled up to include many other factors. Nevertheless, this gets at the 'real-real' issues of reforms required for major de-materialism in the social, economic, and ecological metabolisms of society;
- Socially sustainable economic degrowth is being explored by a number of grass root movements at the community scale, notably in transition communities and by a 're-invention of the commons' for local food and energy

in many areas of France, Italy and Spain (and elsewhere in Europe and the world). The cultural 'revolution' may already be getting underway;

- The issue of population growth gets raised, given the large number of people (up to about 9 billion) who will have to be included in degrowth policies. This often leads directly to different arguments about neo-Malthusianism. A major demographic transition is already well under way as evidenced by the below replacement level fertility rates in most countries (especially the 'developed' ones), and significant declines in fertility rates in countries still somewhat above this level. The transition also shows in the near panic about the increasing number of older people in all the 'developed countries' hence the need for more economic growth. Feministic neo-Malthusian views about the empowerment of women in society, including over their own selves, is the perspective to adopt;
- Political ecology has been documenting the increasing distributional conflicts associated with resource extraction and waste disposal practices of global corporations in particular, as well as of the increasing major local campaigns for compensation sometimes led by indigenous peoples, and for 'reparations', the latter under the banner of "climate justice";
- Doctrines of economic growth forever are being rejected everywhere, especially in the 'South' where 'development' has long meant accumulation by dispossession, by contamination, and other forms of the global 'plunder economy'. The rapidly growing inequalities in the 'North' and social justice issues everywhere are pointing to common cause solutions;
- Environmental justice organizations in both North and South should be natural allies. The new social media are providing the kinds of communications that can make organizing feasible The convening of major 'social forums' in the 'South' over the last decade or so exemplify this.

Major degrowth conferences were held in Paris in 2008, Barcelona in 2010, Montreal in May 2012, and Vienna (scheduled for October 2012). The most interesting features of them is the time devoted for small work groups to discuss particular issues of their own choosing and prepare written summaries of what they proposed. For the participants in the "Montreal Degrowth Conference: Degrowth in the Americas", an eight page "Degrowth Bullet Points Summary" from the Barcelona conference was sent out

beforehand along with declarations that came out of the Paris and Barcelona conferences. Time was devoted to reviewing and refining these. The main topics outlined were: General Values; Democracy: Education; Social Economy; Natural Resources; and Demography. Under the Social Economy section sub-headings included: Enterprises, Social security; Trade degrowth; Money and currencies/financial institutions; Property rights; Sharing; Work-sharing; Degrowth of infrastructures; Degrowth of advertising; Agro-ecology, food sovereignty and degrowth; and Technology. Each had several points that identified issues or proposed approaches for dealing with them.

While the proceedings of the Montreal conference are not (yet) available, it was clear that in sessions with talks or papers, a number of them directly addressed these identified topics. Thus the literature on de-growth seems to be growing quite fast. (It is not reviewed here). But it does get at the criticisms so often heard i.e. we know what they are against or complain about, but WHAT DO THEY PROPOSE?

And yes, the Montreal conference did come up with a declaration on a "Quebec Movement for Convivial Growth", as well as a "Degrowth/Decroissance Canada" website created to help organize the conference and follow-up to help mobilize further efforts across Canada.

Reform of Financial Systems

The de-growth movement now getting underway is among the most recent to note the need to address the role of private banking systems in creating the national and global financial crises. They also flagged the importance of debt creation and financial speculations in creating these problems and see possible roles for co-ops, credit unions and local currencies. Organizations such as the New Economic Foundation in the UK, the American Monetary Institute in the US, and the Committee on Monetary and Economic Reform in Canada are example of groups calling for the reform of their respective national financial systems and criticizing the weak attempts to develop international guidelines and minimal regulatory standards.

National banking systems have developed over many years from relatively distinct businesses like chartered banks or credit unions, mortgage loans and trust companies, insurance companies, and real estate investors. In recent decades they have developed many combinations of 'full service' organizations operating across all these sectors while creating increasingly dubious 'financial products' for stock market promotion. Trading in electronic markets goes on 24/7 with much speculation and deliberate manipulation of stock market values increasingly at the expense of the productive economy the financial sector was supposed to serve. The consequences of this impact on enterprises at all scales from the local to the global and even modest attempts to set ground rules and/or regulatory 'best practices' are vigorously opposed by powerful private sector corporations. One result is that when financial institutions collapse, governments are expected to 'bail them out' while going into debt much further themselves.

There is little doubt that financial systems have become complex but not very adaptive systems (e.g. Lietaer and others 2008) but the official 'explanations' of causes ignore all this in favour of quasi-religious doctrines about 'free markets' and the absolute need to leave them alone. Robertson (2006) an economist who has been an articulate and outspoken proponent of financial reforms in the UK for several decades describes the situation as follows:

> "Surprisingly few politicians, public officials, economists, sociologists, political scientists and other professionals have been interested in money as a system that might be made to work better as a whole. Perhaps its even more surprising that few campaigners for good causes – social justice, ending poverty, dealing with climate change, a more peaceful and fairer international order, human rights and so on – seem to realize that the money system is a prime cause of the ills they oppose. The development of the money system over the years has been piecemeal – and largely in response to powerful interests – and this means that it is now not only incoherent and incomprehensible to most of the world's people, but also systemically perverse…. There has never been anyone whose role has been to ensure that the monetary and financial system would work efficiently and fairly for all its users – that is not the purpose of the system" (*ibid*. 118-119).

It is essential to have a relatively clear concept of what kind of society is to be sought through 'development' and reformed financial systems. Robertson (1973, revised 1983, revised again 2008) has articulated his "sane alternative" quite clearly over the years, an alternative the newer degrowth advocates would generally find agreeable. From that

perspective Robertson (2009a; 2009b) has noted that responsibilities at a national level are to assure that a sufficient money supply of official currency circulates efficiently and fairly, public revenue is collected for spending on public purposes, and public spending programs are properly administered. This would create a new framework of prices within which the market can operate without further interventions. At the local community level of "regenerating, self-reliant, ecologically sustainable, decentralized local economies" a "local exchange trading system (LETS)" will use local currencies along with micro-credit, community banks or credit unions. A citizen's incomes supplement will also be necessary for those without jobs. The proper system at the international level has not yet been invented. The post-1945 international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, are instruments for global capitalism and economic doctrines that underpin endless growth as a vital necessity.

The *Committee on Monetary and Economic Reform (COMER*), based in Toronto, was founded in 1988. Its original purpose was to study the reasons that the world's central banks had decided that their main role was to control inflation and by implication, nothing else. The Governor of the Bank of Canada at the time was utterly determined about this. COMER is a relatively small policy-oriented 'think-tank' that produces analyses, newsletters and commentaries all of which have discussed necessary changes in monetary policy and other economic reforms while confronting (as they said) "well-organized, well-presented rationalizations that champion marketplace greed and foster political doubt as to what the best policies might be".

Of particular interest to COMER was that the Bank of Canada, established in 1935, was able to create large sums of money (only the government can create '"legal tender"), then made these funds available to provinces and municipalities as well as the federal government for fulfilling the responsibilities of the public sector in a federal system. This helped Canada out of the Great Depression of the 1930s, it financed Canadian participation in World War 2, and it supported the post-war economic prosperity while also developing social programs. Then suddenly, in the late-1970s, the federal government began instead to borrow money from the private sector, increase interest rates in the name of inflation control which also triggered various recessions in the

1980s and 1990s, and has now piled up massive indebtedness that governments must pay to the private financial institutions while also cutting corporate taxes regularly.

In December 2011, COMER launched legal proceedings in the Federal Court of Canada in Toronto against "Her Majesty the Queen, The Minister of Finance, The Minister of National Revenue, the Bank of Canada and the Attorney General of Canada". The plaintiffs have tabled 50 specific detailed claims that "the defendants unwittingly or wittingly in varying degrees, knowledge and intent engaged in a conspiracy (along with a list of other organizations) to render impotent the Bank of Canada Act as well as Canadian sovereignty over financial, monetary and socio-economic policy and bypass the sovereign rule of Canada (through Parliament) by means of banking and financial systems" (Quotation from press release (19/12/2011). See COMER 2011.

Basic Income/Guaranteed Income

With the financial crises underway since 2008, unemployment is rising, and inequalities are growing very fast. For a consumer driven economy, the question of 'effective demand' for the basics of life becomes of growing urgency. So does, the off-and-on debate about making it possible for every citizen, as a fundamental right, to have access to these basics. "Basic income" is defined by the Basic Income Earth Network (www.basicincome.org) as "an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement."

Since the 1980s, this concept and how to apply it have been debated in a number of Countries. In 1984, a small group of young intellectuals at the Université Catholique de Louvin-la-Neuve in Belgium wrote an essay on L'Allocation Universelle that was published in a news magazine. They also formed a Collectif Charles Fourier to advance the idea, and the main intellectual leader, Phillipe van Parijs, has since become a major player in what followed. With the prize money, the new Collectif organized a conference to invite people to discuss the concept. There is a rich history of social thought in Europe on which to ground it. Some 60 people attended in 1986, and they began to realize that quite a number of other people in Europe had similar ideas. The conference then decided to form an association that they called the Basic Income European Network (BIEN) – an acronym they thought was very appropriate. The network then

started to meet every two years with different members taking the responsibility of co-sponsoring the event. Their membership grew and people from other countries (than Europe) came, so in 2004 they decided to include them as life members in BIEN, now an acronym for "Basic Income Earth Network".

> "Common to all is the belief that some sort of economic right based upon citizenship – rather than upon one's relationship to the production process or one's families status – is called for as part of the just solution to social problems in advanced societies. Basic income, conceived as a universal and unconditional, if modest, continuous stream of income granted throughout life to all members of a political community is just the simplest and most striking element in an expanding set of social policy proposals inspired by this belief and currently debated, if not already implemented" (BIEN website, mission statement).

Similar ideas were also beginning to be debated in North America where a small but dedicated group in the US came together to argue for a "Basic Income Guarantee (USBIG), meeting biennially as a concurrent session in annual meetings of the American Economic Association. Canadians, as individuals also began attending the BIEN and BIG meetings, and usually caucused to discuss prospects in Canada. An informal network was formed, and as of 2012 BIEN Canada was incorporated. Canada and the US now alternate hosting a North American BIG meeting, while people from both countries are regular attendees in BIEN conferences overseas. The latter now has groups from 17 countries affiliated with it, along with conference proceedings, newsletters, a website, and a journal.

Canada also has a history of on-and-off discussions of some version of a citizen's income, starting with the notion of a 'social credit' in Alberta in the 1930s. The subject has been raised in different contexts several times in each succeeding decade, and proponents have come from all major political parties (but only as a minority or quixotic example in all cases so far). Some academics have also been in favour of it. Examples in more recent years include Lerner and others 1999; Blais, 2002; Frankman, 2001; 2009; and Mulvale 2008. Young and Mulvale (2009) gave a succinct and clear overview of the basic issues and options that arise in debates. The main points noted were:

- "The purest or strongest versions of guaranteed income proposals generally specify a floor or minimum level of core income provided on a continuing basis by the state, to which everyone is entitled irrespective of personal circumstances or need, subject to no or very few conditions of eligibility, such as work requirements" (p. 7);

- The general appeal of this includes “a fix to poverty”, a measure of formal liberty and individual opportunity, a means to social and democratic citizenship, a key to gender equality, a recognition of citizens’ shared social ownership, a more flexible and just labour market, and a more environmentally sustainable world;
- Four criteria characterize and distinguish GI proposals: degree of universality of eligibility, degree of conditionality of entitlement, adequacy of benefit levels, and integration with other social programs;
- Three working models that entail variations of themes and variations in applications are: minimalist-libertarian models that protect paid work incentives; mixed welfare models that extend to smaller subset of populations, and strong basic income models that seek to eliminate poverty and ensure liveable incomes;
- Critiques of the idea include: work incentives, especially for poor jobs, while also subsidizing employers to reduce wages; reciprocity, receiving something for nothing is unjust, and while costs might be off-set by lower administration overheads (and unemployment for administrators) they could still be high.

To catch a flavour of on-going discussions of these issues see Senate of Canada 2008b. There is a general sense that implementation of income supplements is best done incrementally. The framework for implementation has already been set, starting first with old age pensions and old age security supplements where needed, child tax credits to parents, and some measures underway for people with disabilities. Federal-provincial coordination is required as are measures to stop ‘senior governments’ from downloading costs to the municipalities with already over-loaded property taxes to call upon.

There have been a few pilot studies that have tested responses to the provision of income supplements for communities in terms of their responses to it. Of particular interest, the federal and Manitoba government undertook an experimental study in Dauphin MN, in the early 1970s. Dauphin (located immediately north of the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve) is an agricultural town where every family (about 12,000 people at that time) was declared eligible to participate in a guaranteed annual income in the years 1974 through 1978. Records were made for all who applied, with the view of finding out what the social and economic consequences of their decisions would be. But

funding for this follow-up research was cancelled and the file records all went into long-term storage.

Forget (2011) and her colleagues were, however, able to analyze provincial health records for Dauphin and similar rural towns in Manitoba for the period 1970 through 1980 as well as school enrollment data for the same period. They found that accident and hospital rates, and visits to physicians, declined significantly for Dauphin over that period compared to the 'control' towns, especially for accidents and mental health issues, and more adolescents continued in school to obtain their secondary school certificates. There were no significant differences in fertility or family dissolution rates. The savings in medical expenditures (in constant $$) was significantly much more than the cost of the guaranteed income expenditures.

It may be noted in passing, that Guy Standing, one of the original founders of BIEN in 1986, has reviewed a large number of programs in the world that provide conditional forms of assistance including conditional cash transfers for people designated by government policies to be eligible. Standing (2008) concluded that:"… most forms of selectivity and conditionality are conveniences at best while being costly, inequitable, inefficient and offensive to basic egalitarian principles" (*ibid*:10). More and more people are beginning to question them. Universal transfers, in the few places they have been tried, including some of the world's poorest countries, "… have proved an effective means to combat poverty and income security while promoting livelihoods and work" (*ibid*:26).

The 'degrowth' people are supportive of basic income as well. Huber (2000) for example also links basic income with the seigniorage issue (restoring the prerogative of creating all official money to central banks of nation-states), and including basic income expenditures in the budgets of governments.

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