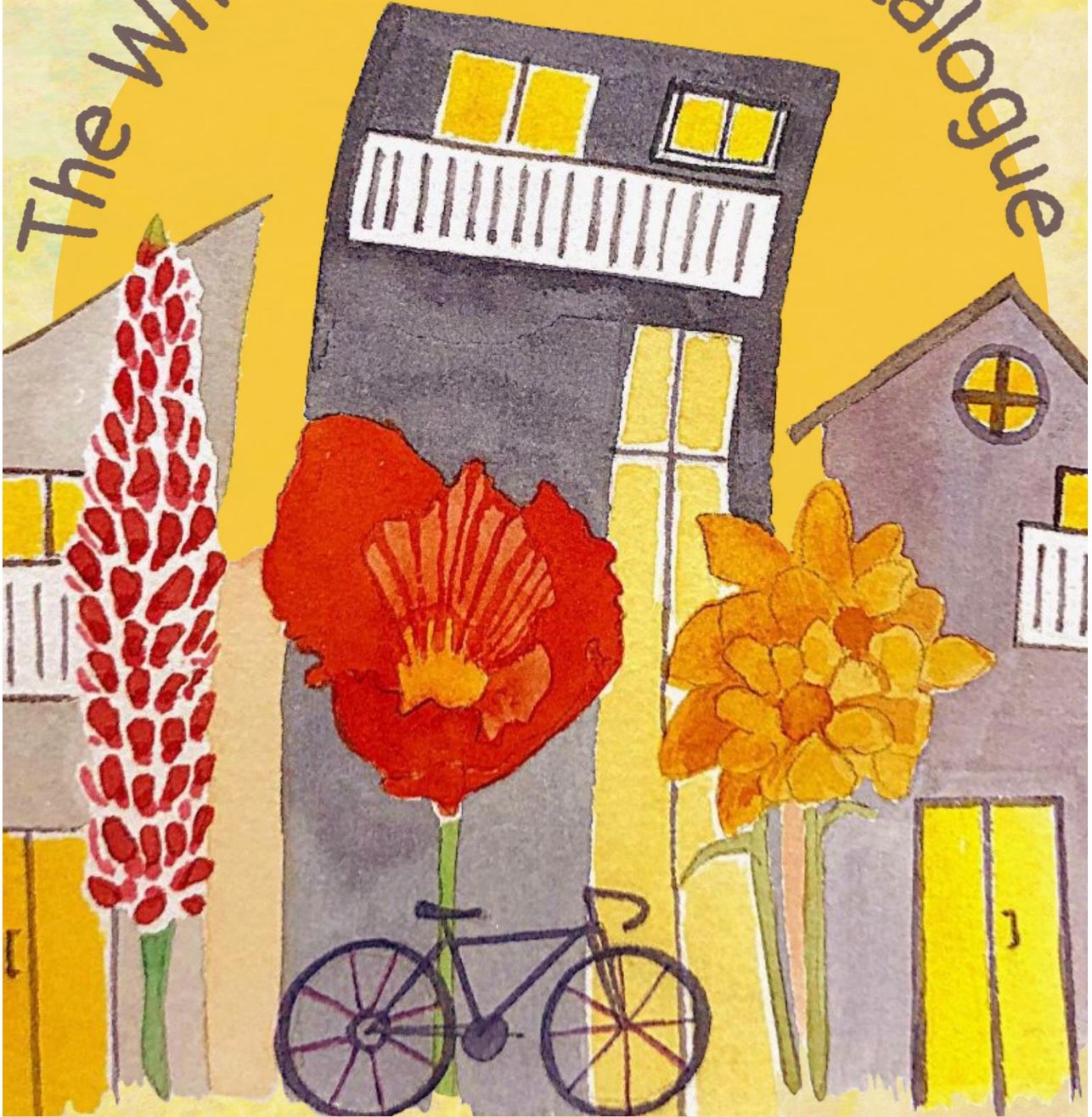


The Whole Eco Vista Catalogue



Whole Eco Vista Catalogue

Edited by John Foran, with Kimberly Lim, Eduardo Medina-Ramirez, Elena Salinas
O'Toole, Bethesda Sandoval, and Julia Samuel

Isla Vista: Eco Vista Climate Justice Press, 2021

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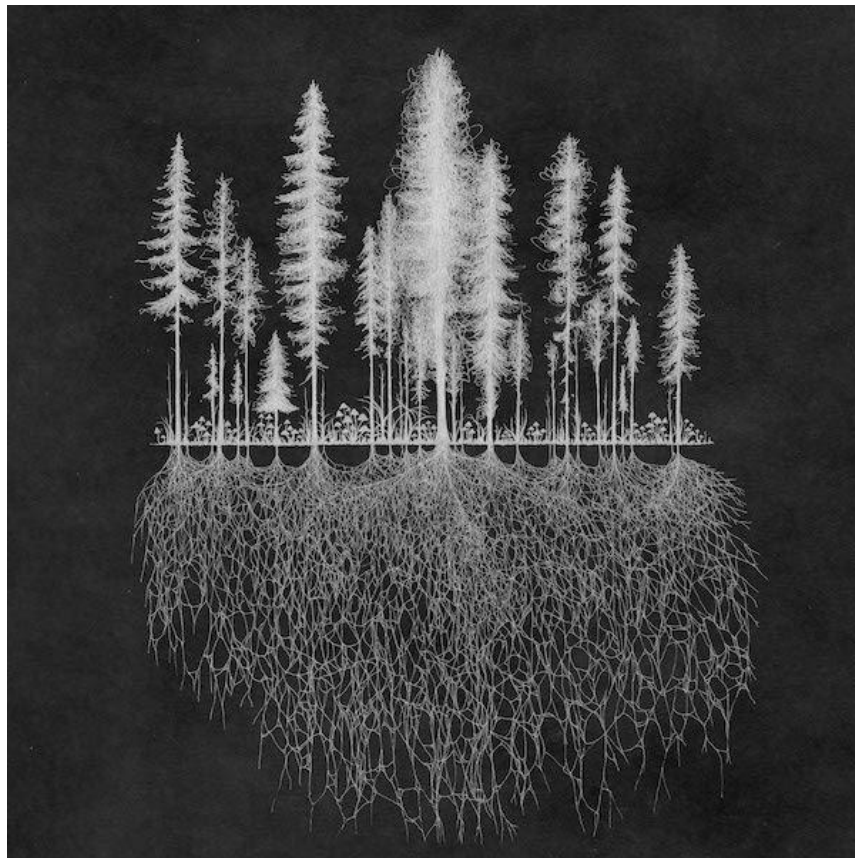
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Dedication

For Michael Bean, beloved first citizen-mayor of Eco Vista,

With love, for you and everything you stand for



Artwork by Katie Holten, "Forest"

Introduction

John Foran

The title of our catalog is meant to bring to the reader who knows about it echoes of the original *Whole Earth Catalog* from the 1960s. That volume was a compendium of advice and images on the general theme of unplugging from the capitalist, war-making society that the United States was (and still is) and to inspire folks to start off in their own fresh directions and create the kind of society in which they wanted to live.

Eco Vista today is not so different. We want a different, a better, a more just and less violent society, economy, culture, and politics. This first – will there be more? – *Whole Eco Vista Catalog* presents our thinking on these questions as compiled in the work of some of the many people who are taking up the challenge. The voices here are richly diverse and passionately engaged with creating solutions and approaches to the problems the world community faces in our century of decision, for the well-being of the planet, people, creatures, and places we share with each other on the basis of the survival and thriving of all. Of everything.

It is worth pointing out the obvious: we are just starting out on this path, still becoming aware of the possibilities for systemic transformation of the worlds we inhabit, only beginning to try to create the most life-affirming ideas, resources, alliances, and actions that we can as we go.

This is an unfinished, doubtless never finished, adventure. All are invited to join in. We look forward to finding out what we might do together if we

Connect the dots

Learn to love

Act, together

Eco Vista, February 2021

A note: many of the images sprinkled throughout this book have been chosen for their precise fit with the text, others more randomly there simply to express the Eco Vista ideal. We have tried to use our own images, as many as possible of the images of others with their permission, some with the best attribution we could find, and a few we have no doubt simply found where they lay so beautifully. We trust that the originators of all the images in the book will in the non-commercial spirit of Eco Vista allow us to use them. If any can be attributed further or granted permissions where they have not been, we would be happy to immediately change and update the credits at the originators' requests.



Mural in Oakland, California, 2019

Eco Vista: Roots and Seeds

Maia, January 2021

Eco Vista's "deep roots" lie in the history of Isla Vista itself. Which in turn lies and relies on Chumash land...

In the 70s when I arrived, not so long after the bank burning and at the tail end of the War in Vietnam, IV was *alive* with creative energy. As a UCSB work-study student and single mother of two young children, I was galvanized by this "Pre-Eco Vista Climate Justice movement," and became an active "particle," volunteering for IV Federal Credit Union, taking my young son to draft-card burning rallies, helping with the transition of the Whole Wheat Buyer's Club into the actual Food Co-op still thriving in IV today.

Almost literally, out of the ash of protests, we Isla Vistans created the Food Co-op, Housing Co-ops, Open Door Medical Clinic, Park District, People's Orchard, Community Gardens, free food programs, and much, much more –passionately creative responses to the injustice, war, and eco-terrorism. Of American business as usual. Later on we passed legislation to protect and preserve parks and open spaces "forever," for the flourishing of us all in this crowded little university town. I hope you all can explore IV's many green spaces – each one is unique and precious.

In 1977 when I graduated from UCSB, I discovered I couldn't leave. I'd fallen in love with the Community. By "community" I mean the human/social AND the more-than humans, the mountains and ocean, trees and crows, everybody!

In 1979, three women (Terry McMains, Eva Anda, and I) with inspired energy and few economic resources, incorporated as a (very small) business, and opened Womankind Books and Records. We were located first on Trigo (upstairs and down a dark hallway!), then in 1981, on Seville Road right next to the original Food Co-op. Co-opers browsed our shelves, Womankinders bought yogurt or a sandwich for lunch. We lasted four years with the help of UCSB history professor, Patricia Cohen (and a few others) who ordered texts through us. Somewhere, I still have our card with its logo of 4 moon phases (Dark, Waxing Crescent, Full, Waning Crescent) inside 4 scientific symbols for "female," all the O s joined at the center.

While we cultivate and repair green justice projects, let's remember this—

along with water, soil, air, and sunlight, our more-than human community members are literally weaving our breath and our lives as we humans meet here together. In a literal sense, they "invented" us. :) *We've got to carry this in our bones, know this in all our actions.*

Our part is to protect and preserve, to find and encourage the inflection points. By the power of this mutually-nourishing spiral, our “beyond-sustainable” *regenerative enterprises* contribute to the healing of The Earth Community.

This is the “fractal power” of seemingly small movements, small changes. And if there is such a thing as Spiritual-political Activism, this is it.

The word *spirit* is rooted in breath, in cyclical movement. But the cycles don’t simply repeat. They have an overall long-run direction: valuing and protecting diversity (bio, social, political, spiritual), while simultaneously moving ever closer to an all-embracing collaborative harmony. What comes of diversity and harmony, arm in arm? Maybe something of that long-curve-always-bending, as MLK Jr. says, *toward Justice*. Justice of every kind. And for all kinds. All our kin.

Eco Vista is one green, local off-shoot of many older seedlings: a vision of transforming anger, betrayal, and tragedy into cooperatives, social services, and green refuge spaces we all need to thrive.

This is radical/radicle!

Why not explore some of Eco Vista’s many, already thriving, “seedlings,” such as the Eco Vista Climate Justice Press on the Eco Vista Community website?
<https://ecovistacommunity.com/> .

I am immensely grateful to EVCJP for choosing to publish as their first book, *See You In Our Dreams*, which I started writing in 2005 and finished just before the covid-19 pandemic began. There’s a free PDF available to all:
<https://ecovistacommunity.com/see-you-in-our-dreams-maia/> For a paperback copy, email: Maia@impulse.net.

And speaking of “radicle,” check out *The Radicle: The Eco Vista Zine*! It’s inspiring!
<https://ecovistacommunity.com/radicle-zine/> And then, please, contribute your creative energies, contribute your artwork, poems and stories!
radiclesubmissions@gmail.com

Maía

Maia@impulse.net



Judy Ann Seidman (South Africa), Capitalism, 2020

Building Eco Vista: a Prefigurative Praxis with Historical Grounding*

Daniel Berchenko, University of California, Santa Barbara

June 2019



Madart Megan Duncanson: [source](#).

*Daniel Berchenko can be reached at danielberchenko@protonmail.com. The website for the Eco Vista project can be found at EcoVistaCommunity.com. I do not claim to speak for the Eco Vista project team or the residents of Isla Vista. I thank Professor John Foran for promoting Eco Vista and making this paper possible. In a way, this is the culmination of all his teachings.

Summary

Replacing the “student ghetto” of Isla Vista with a sustainable ecovillage requires cooperative ownership and financially viable local institutions based in community participation. This paper examines the history and reality of Isla Vista, as well as primary sources from the global transition movement and research on prefigurative politics, to define measurable economic, ecological, social, and cultural milestones for becoming an ecovillage while detailing the first half of a multi-phase plan to accomplish this goal. The plan recommends that Eco Vista first establish a consumer cooperative to operate from and a research journal to repeatedly measure progression, and then achieve financial stability as an organization through subsidiary community service organizations. It identifies key values for Eco Vista and makes recommendations for formally incorporating them into the organization.

Key words: *Isla Vista, democracy, cooperative, prefigurative politics, transition town*

The global climate crisis has progressed to a point where immediate action is needed to quell emissions and keep the biosphere livable for human beings. Multiple comprehensive international reports have predicted unprecedented economic and social devastation if something doesn't change, and soon. Fossil fuel companies have stalled political initiatives at federal level for decades by investing millions in climate denial and corrupt politicians to protect their profits. In the midst of all this, numerous movements are fighting to bring about real change. Some are political, such as the Sunrise Movement and Extinction Rebellion, and some are more oriented towards community or individual change. One of these local movements is the Transition Network, which is leading the way in building sustainable municipalities which challenge capitalist institutions while creating a better life for locals. A promising candidate for such a “transition town” is Isla Vista, California.

Transforming the unincorporated community of Isla Vista into an ecovillage – the terms transition town and ecovillage are used interchangeably in this essay, and what applies to one is assumed to apply to the other – is no easy task. Already the organization, if it can be called that, known as Eco Vista has hit upon a myriad of potential projects; from a farmer's market, to an end-of-the-year furniture sale, to creating more cooperative housing, the amount of work that needs to be done to even initiate such a transition is staggering. Like most towns, Isla Vista is firmly mired in a capitalist economy not known for its emphasis on sustainability. In order to carry out such all-encompassing

changes, we require an understanding of the history of Isla Vista as well as a full accounting of the tools at our disposal. Our end-goals need to be firmly defined, as well as what exactly we're talking about when we say "Eco Vista." To that end I've embarked on a study to figure out what sort of organization and strategy it would take to create a mostly self-sufficient, cooperatively owned and run transition town or ecovillage in the area. There is a debate in the transition movement over how much guidance to give transition initiatives (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 4), and this debate should be somewhat familiar to many on the left as it is reminiscent of much older arguments about centralization and whether revolutionary principles should be applied uniformly or adapted based on the location. I am personally of the opinion that more guidance is better, but that it should not be mandatory or forced on a community where it may not apply. Hence, the advice in this report is presented as a series of "strategic recommendations" tailored to Isla Vista, and informed by its history, which can be modified however is necessary by the Eco Vista team if they are accepted at all.

This paper is split into two main sections. The first reviews the existing literature on Isla Vista history to examine the forces which shaped its development and identify the primary obstacles for an Isla Vista transition initiative. The second uses content analysis and secondary data analysis to examine transition movement materials and research on projects similar to the transition movement. The intent of this section is to create clearly defined goals for the Eco Vista movement while identifying the ideal structure for an organization capable of realizing those objectives. Both sections provide strategic recommendations which outline the organizational forms and tactics needed to build a working Eco Vista, while describing transitional stages and potential outcomes, in order to inform the grand strategy of turning Isla Vista into a transition town.

ISLA VISTA HISTORY

To transform Isla Vista, we must first understand how it came to be the "Student Ghetto" (Goldman 2016; Lodise 1987a, 2) that some know it as today. Jennifer Strand (1987) writes about how "The crowded conditions, monotonous buildings, narrow streets, and insufficient parking were the unwitting result of distinctive patterns in Isla Vista's development" (Strand 1987, 5). The history of Isla Vista contains patterns which can inform our current strategy, particularly regarding our major obstacles, allies, and enemies. As such, we need to examine two distinct periods to form a sufficiently complete picture: the land dealings of the early- to mid-twentieth century and the activism of the '70s and '80s. Before we begin, however, I request that the reader take a moment to contemplate the earliest history of this place. The first inhabitants of Isla Vista, that we know of, were the Anisq'Oyo' band of the Chumash people (Lodise 1987a, 2; Lodise 1987b, 4). They lived here for at least 8000 years before the Spanish arrived, and potentially as far back as 15,000 (Lodise 1987a, 2; Lodise 1987b, 4; Erlandson, Torben, and Vellanoweth 2008, 20). The environmental impact report for

Santa Barbara County's Isla Vista Master Plan (County of Santa Barbara 2007) contains a summary of Chumash ethnography synthesized from multiple studies detailing how their villages declined and eventually vanished as they were incorporated into the mission system. The Chumash were decimated by European diseases and the remainder were forced into the mission system, which "broke down or weakened many aspects of the Chumash economic and sociopolitical systems" (Erlandson et al. 2008, 25). They were forced to assimilate, beaten (Erlandson et al. 2008, 25), enslaved (Lodise 1987a, 2; Lodise 1987b, 4), and when they rebelled they were "harshly suppressed" (Erlandson et al. 2008, 25). Very few of them survived Spanish rule, and the rest lived lives of "dispossession and discrimination" (Erlandson et al. 2008, 25) under both Mexican and American regimes. The history of Isla Vista begins with theft, murder, and imperialism.

From this grim history we can take our first lesson; the current administration of Isla Vista is illegitimate from its very foundations. We cannot turn back the clock – restoring the land to its former owners is unfeasible – but we can maintain respect for the cultures that originated here and privilege the views of Chumash descendants.

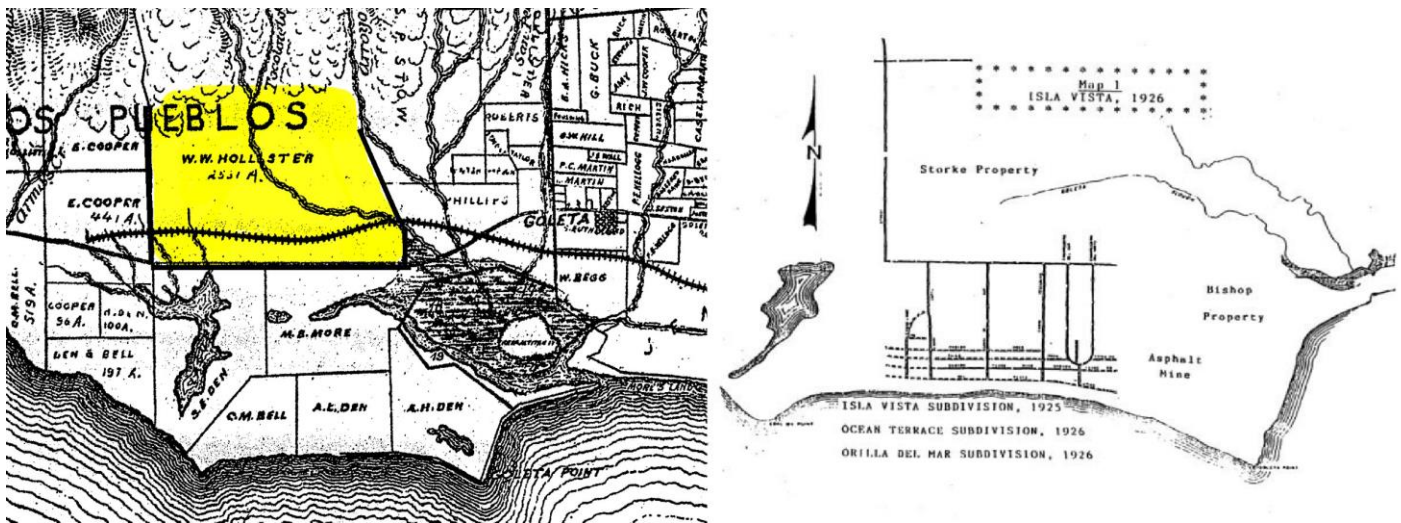
Original Chumash place-names should be restored, and representatives of the Chumash should always have a reserved vote and a voice in community decisions, particularly those to do with their cultural sites and artifacts, many of which were stolen and dispersed (Erlandson et al. 2008, 26). Affirmative action programs can and should be introduced, particularly with respect to housing and the local university. Of course, Chumash descendants should be consulted on the implementation of any of these programs and their wishes should take precedence over any recommendations given here. We would also do well to take note of the forces that put Isla Vista on its present path. Outsiders interfering in the local community for personal gain and profit is a persistent theme, as we will continue to see. Likewise, the same oil interests that presently threaten our world rear their ugly heads more than once in our story.

The Formation of "Isla Vista"

Starting with the brief period of Mexican control and extending well into the American conquest, the land now known as Isla Vista was part of a large land grant which was carved up into small plots and ranches after the owner went bankrupt in the 1860s (Lodise 1987a, 2; Lodise 1987b, 4). The maps below (Modugno 2015) show the ranches of the Goleta and Isla Vista areas in the late nineteenth century and again in 1926. Through a series of dealings of questionable legality (Modugno 2014) which are discussed in great detail by Lodise, Strand, and Modugno, modern Isla Vista was divided up into three lots, given its current name, and then sold off piecemeal to oil interests which found absolutely nothing of value (Bond Graham 2008; Lodise 1987a, 6; Lodise 1987b, 14; Strand 1987, 14–22). These subdivisions created the haphazard land use that Isla Vista suffers today (Figure 2 (Strand 1987, 13)). "In the 1920s there were no

requirements that subdividers pave roads, put in sewers, provide access to utilities or even grade the roads that appeared on their maps” (Strand 1987, 19). Still, there was a possibility to redevelop Isla Vista into something greater, as most of the subdivisions remained minimally developed because of the lack of oil and water (Strand 1987, 19–20). This all changed with the entry of two powerful new interests – Signal Oil, and the University of California.

The coming of the university was achieved through extensive political finagling on the part of one Thomas M. Storke (Strand 1987, 25–33). Storke was the son of Charles A. Storke, who had arrived as part of the 2nd wave of white immigration in the late nineteenth century, what Bond Graham calls the “2nd Pioneers of the 3rd Empire” (Bond Graham 2008). The senior Storke married into a powerful family of local



landowners, and his son became so influential through land and newspaper holdings – including both of Santa Barbara’s major newspapers— that Time Magazine referred to him as Santa Barbara’s “benevolent dictator” (Bond Graham 2008). Thomas Storke’s political connections turned the local state college into a branch of the University of California, and in 1949, after a brief period as a military installation during the Second World War and the construction of an airport nearby, the land to the east of Isla Vista was sold to the university for the nominal price of \$10 (Lodise 1987a, 6; Lodise 1987c, 1). Signal Oil, the other half of this pair of malefactors, leased the land that comprises Isla Vista in 1947 to once again try and drill for oil (Strand 1987, 34) and came up dry just like all the others. However, in 1949 a vote to approve Cachuma Dam guaranteed, for the first time, a reliable supply of fresh water for Isla Vista (Strand 1987, 36); all of a sudden, what had once been worthless land was now valuable real estate – real estate controlled by Signal Oil and soon to be host to a captive market of students.

Isla Vista as prime real estate

Upon learning of the university’s impending move, the small population of local Isla

Vistans created the Isla Vista Improvement Association (IVIA) (Strand 1987, 44). The IVIA, together with the Goleta Chamber of Commerce, began lobbying the county for zoning as the first step towards development (Strand 1987, 46). There were “nearly 500 property owners in the roughly 330 acres of Isla Vista” (Strand 1987, 50), many of whom did not actually live in the community, and these property owners fought for the maximum possible property values for their land. This left them in disagreement with Planning Director Richard Whitehead and a small group of others about the type of zoning designations Isla Vista would receive (Strand 1987, 51–52). The small lots left over from the subdivisions of the 1920s and earlier were already seriously substandard for building, but landowners forced the Planning Director to recommend higher density zoning: allowing duplexes to be built on even the smallest lots so that owners could make a profit by renting out half of each building (Strand 1987, 55). This would allow for maximum population of around 13,000 for the small Isla Vista area, “a density that did not exist anywhere west of the Mississippi river” (Strand 1987, 55). Despite this commitment to profit over sustainable development practices, the county did deem the roads unacceptably narrow and the property owners agreed to donate 10 feet of streetfront property to widen them (Strand 1987, 57).

When the Santa Barbara County Health Department conducted a survey of Isla Vista, “about 50 percent of the dwellings in Isla Vista were judged ‘substandard,’ with about 10 per cent ‘very substandard’” (Strand 1987, 60). Many of the houses had no way to dispose of sewage, used bottled drinking water, or threw their garbage into the street (Strand 1987, 61). The roads were unpacked dirt, filled with ruts and holes, and there were 1,384 “sheep, goats, horses, chickens, ducks, rabbits, and pigeons” (Strand 1987, 61), plus uncounted cats and dogs. The desire for profit had won out over sensible design, firmly entrenching the issues precipitated by the original land deals. To make the area somewhat livable, the IVIA managed to scrape together funds to improve the roads and build a sewer system just as the university opened its doors in 1954 (Strand 1987, 63). Despite these obvious problems Isla Vista landowners continued to fight for lucrative high-density housing, such as when an amendment to county zoning regulation was proposed that would limit the amount of land constructions could take up. Isla Vista property values skyrocketed throughout the 50s, and landowners didn’t want anything which could deter development on their land, or worse: lower their property values. Their attitudes are exemplified by this quote from Strand:

In the course of the fight against the Summerland amendment, the improvement association not only reaffirmed its choice for density, but set the pattern for future development. To produce moderately priced living spaces on high priced land required inexpensive construction, and “ultimate use of every square foot.” This was exactly the formula followed by future development. Such a description could conjure up images of a crowded, squalid, low quality district, but this was clearly not the image in

the minds of the improvement association members. They believed they could have high density “without committing violence on good planning.” They placed their faith in personal restraint, community good will, and zoning requirements (1987, 78–79).

The county’s building standards still limited the landowners’ ambitions, but requests for variances, exceptions to those standards, were almost universally granted by the board of supervisors. This meant that, in essence, “the community grew up, compact and crowded, as if [the county zoning ordinance] did not exist” (Strand 1987, 82). While IVIA may have had some good intentions mixed in with their desire to profit, the granting of endless variances and increasing influence of external landlords, as well as their complacency and faith in “personal restraint, community good will, and zoning requirements” (Strand 1987, 78–79) would lead to much of the overcrowding and slum- like condition that characterizes the contemporary Isla Vista.

Before we turn to the next chapter of Isla Vista history, we need to reckon with those two powerful interests we noted earlier and the growing influence of external landowners. During the 50s, both Thomas Storke and Samuel B. Mosher, founder of Signal Oil, were members of the University of California’s Board of Regents. Storke’s hand in bringing the campus to Isla Vista, and his new position, netted him a hefty profit when he sold his land to the University of California for the tidy sum of \$1,115,000 (Lodise 1987a, 6; Lodise 1987c, 1). Meanwhile, Mosher had failed to find oil under Isla Vista but was still determined to turn a profit from his holdings. The regents, Storke and Mosher included, decided not to purchase Isla Vista for the university in 1956, *apparently* due to the increasingly extreme cost of land there, purchasing only small strips where the Tropicana Gardens apartments now stand (Strand 1987, 81–107; Lodise 1987a, 6; Lodise 1987c, 1–4).

This opened the area to the patterns of private development described earlier, allowing Signal Oil to sell off the land to developers and make back the money it spent looking for oil. Meanwhile, the owners of Isla Vista were consolidating, and large non-resident developers like Jack Schwartz, R. Day, Roy Eaton, James Ventura, and John Harlan started to dominate the IVIA during the ‘60s (Strand 1987, 124–125). This would cause the organization to splinter into factions and disintegrate by the end of the decade (Strand 1987, 131). The negative developments in Isla Vista throughout the late ‘50s and ‘60s were guided by the hands of an alliance of these developers and the UC Regents, along with the university personnel who profited: namely, UCSB Chancellor Vernon Cheadle.

Isla Vista’s development oligarchs: Storke, Mosher, Cheadle, and Schwartz

If the IVIA had at least some members with good intentions, such as IVIA President

Ken Hendrickson who provided a partial voice of reason throughout the narratives in my sources, the cabal that came after it had little reason to take an interest in building a real community. In 1962, the Goleta Valley Savings and Loan opened its doors (Lodise 1987a, 6; Lodise 1987c, 4). A partial list of the board of directors of the Goleta Valley Savings and Loan includes names like Sam Mosher, Thomas Storke, Vernon Cheadle, Storke's general manager Bert Lare, Mosher's attorney and member of the Signal Oil board Daniel Frost, and aforementioned large Isla Vista developer John Harlan (Lodise 1987a, 6; Lodise 1987c 4). "According to research done in 1969 by the Isla Vista investigative newspaper PROBE, the Goleta Valley S & L completely turned around the national lending average. While the typical S & L lends 15 percent of its capital to developers, this one lent 85%" (Lodise 1987c, 4).

That year, the building of duplexes peaked and the trend turned towards larger complexes (Strand 1987, 133–135). The large developers such as Jack Schwartz and John Harlan became more and more influential both within the IVIA and with the board of supervisors, going to as many supervisor meetings and public hearings as their leisure time allowed in order to lobby (Strand 1987, 139). "By contrast many of those who might have argued against variances worked at jobs full time. They were usually out of touch with county issues and often did not know that decisions had been made until they read about them in the paper" (Strand 1987, 139). The bulk of variance requests to the board were from these developers, and almost all were granted (Strand 1987, 135). The final triumph of the cabal came in 1967, the year the IVIA essentially fell apart, when a zoning plan created by Schwartz, Harlan, and a county official and landowner named Carl Chandler was passed by the county; this plan created a special "student" zoning regulation that allowed the developers to totally bypass the regulations such as parking which had slowed their progress (Lodise 1987a, 7; Lodise 1987c, 4; Strand 1987 130–134).

By the time the first of these large developers, Jack Schwartz, arrived in 1958 (Strand 1987, 141) the fate of the university had already been sealed by a chain of greed going back to the early nineteenth century. To summarize, a last quote from Strand (1987):

A crucial factor to understanding Isla Vista development was that very few people who built there ever intended [sic] to live there. People were primarily building for profit, and those with a long-term investment in the community's quality of life were in short supply. Initially the Isla Vista Improvement Association had had this interest. But although it continued to embody good intentions long afterward, it had unwittingly undercut its ability to achieve a good environment for the long-term as early as 1953 – just five years into its existence – by fighting for high density zoning. The nature of the subdivision and the numerous property owners had already

made development of a quality settlement a challenge. The high-density zoning elevated the task to something of a Herculean feat.



Photo by Eduardo Ramirez-Medina

It was the drive for profit, overriding an interest in building sustainably, which made the community vulnerable to external moneyed interests. From this history we can take a second set of strategic recommendations: in order to transform Isla Vista, it is necessary for those who own the land to have a long-term interest in its development. Creating a truly democratic and sustainable city therefore requires the appropriation of the land – through means that should be discussed in a future paper on community ownership – and creation of a cooperative land trust or other cooperative organization. This would allow the community to lobby for itself without the presence of hostile interests, and to present a more united front. The penetration of people like Schwartz and Harlan into the IVIA corrupted its purpose, never mind that the association was tainted by greed from the beginning. Furthermore, the susceptibility of county supervisors to lobbying by external forces makes them unreliable. The present zoning of Isla Vista is unlikely to change, but the zoning outlines minimum, and not maximum, requirements. There is no law preventing Isla Vistans with control of the land from redeveloping it to higher standards. Finally, I have detected a tendency, especially amongst those affiliated with the Associated Students, to try and push for increased university control over Isla Vista. The history illustrated here shows that, while individual faculty and administration members may be sympathetic, the institution of UCSB as a whole does not have the community’s best interests at heart – particularly the UC regents, who regularly come by

controversy for their investments and economic policies. All large external interests, the university included, must be removed from Isla Vista to allow it to flourish under local resident control.

Activism and Lasting Institutions in Isla Vista

I will not be going into the Isla Vista uprisings in great detail, nor will I be examining the 1968 occupation of North Hall or the 1969 oil spill. These are well documented events which, while very important to the history of Isla Vista and its activists, do not necessarily inform the strategies I wish to discuss. Instead, I am interested in the aftermath of these events and the institutions created as a result of the wave of student activism they precipitated. It is generally agreed upon that the unrest of 1970 is what allowed for the community building which happened in the next two decades (Irving 1973; Isla Vista Food Co-op 2008, 3; Lodise 1987d, 4; Mounteer 2014a; Ziegler-McPherson 1999). After the uprisings, enrollment in the university dwindled and many students moved to other residential areas, causing the vacancy rate to exceed 30% (Irving 1973, 1). At the same time, the attention the uprisings brought to Isla Vista resulted in an outpouring of resources from the county and University of California to fix the perceived problems with the town which caused those rebellions (Lodise 1987d, 4; Irving 1973, 3; Mounteer 2014a). The university also began to change the way it marketed itself to bring students back and dispense with its reputation as a “party school” (Irving 1973, 1). A number of institutions were created to serve Isla Vista residents, the most significant of which, for our purposes, were the Isla Vista Recreation and Park District (IVRPD), the Isla Vista Community Council (IVCC), and the Isla Vista Food Co-op (IVFC). Each serves as an example for how future services could operate in Eco Vista, and a road map for moving forward. In “More Than Just Parks’: The Isla Vista Recreation & Park District, 1972–1998”, Christine Ziegler-McPherson writes that:

The few histories of Isla Vista written have focused primarily on the 1969-1970 student disturbances and the aftermath. There is little interest in the community that emerged out of the Isla Vista riots It is unfortunate that for most authors Isla Vista history appeared to stop in the early 1970s, because it was in the immediate aftermath of the 1970 riots that the modern community of Isla Vista was created (1999, 4).

As such, there are few comprehensive sources examining these institutions even today – though a piecemeal history of many can be found in various news articles – with the exception of Ziegler-McPherson’s own book on the IVRPD.

The book starts out by citing the primary reasons for the IVRPD’s longevity, specifically a culture of DIY environmentalism, a purpose which didn’t explicitly threaten established authority, and an official institutional structure which allowed for

taxation, standardized elections, and specific objectives (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 2–3). Keep these in mind as we discuss the history of the aforementioned institutions. Established in the fall of 1969 as “an informal group to discuss community problems” (Ziegler- McPherson 1999, 16), the IVCC quickly became an official institution backed by university and county money (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 18; Lodise 1987d, 4; Mounteer 2014a). The influx of money allowed the IVCC to establish programs like a medical clinic, a police commission, a planning commission, an animal control commission, a credit union, a tenants’ union, and more (Irving 1973, 3; Lodise 1987d, 4; Ziegler- McPherson 1999, 18; Mounteer 2014a). For the first time, “there was a sense within the UCSB-I.V. population that a community ... could be recreated, but this time along the lines of the 1960s counterculture. Isla Vista was to be the model alternative community” (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 18); this sentence should be hauntingly familiar to anyone working on the Eco Vista initiative.

The IVRPD also emerged from the IVCC and the money awarded to it, based on a paper produced by an Economics 120 student named Carter Ray. They laid out exactly what Isla Vista would need to have a park district, including “liability insurance rules, county park standards, potential park sites, and political barriers” (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 19). Ray continued their work using university money allocated for research into community building projects, and the county was happy to help move forward with the parks as long as it didn’t use any of their own money; through the county, Ray was able to apply for grants from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 20–22). Large landowners such as Schwartz opposed the IVRPD, and any agency with taxation powers, but the IVCC hired lawyers to stop their interference in the county’s political process – where they had massive influence, as we noted in the previous section – and once it came to an actual democratic vote the result was overwhelmingly positive (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 23–26). While multiple lessons can be taken from the formation of the IVCC and IVRPD, first we should discuss what happened to the two organizations throughout the following decades.

The first challenge for the IVRPD was securing funding. Technically the district had the ability to levy taxes, but those taxes would first have to succeed at the polls. Even when they did, funds were scarce, and HUD threatened to withdraw some of its support for the first park (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 30). It was sustained by loans from the county and funding granted by the Isla Vista Planning Commission, part of the IVCC, until it could start collecting those taxes (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 31–32).

Though the IVRPD was able to start performing its duties, attempts by local homeowners on the west end of Isla Vista to leave the district, as well as new state laws cutting funds and limiting property taxes, threatened its financial viability (Ziegler McPherson 1999, 33). To stabilize itself, and begin a program of land acquisition for their long-term development plan, the IVRPD asked to issue \$1,115,000 in bonds at

their next election – which they failed to pass the first time, forcing them to holding another election the next year to make it stick. The IVRPD used its money and its unique culture to experiment with a wide variety of programs, though it was often thwarted by either the university or the local homeowners. Despite the threats and constant lack of funding, the IVRPD stayed afloat due to its official institutional status and an internal culture that was conducive to a tight budget. The land acquisition program was a success, and preserved a significant amount of open space that would otherwise certainly be developed by now.

Meanwhile, the IVCC was encountering a different problem. Ziegler-McPherson describes how, after the uprisings in 1970:

Isla Vistans concerned with police-community relations quickly gravitated toward the idea of cityhood and local control as the solutions to I.V.'s problems, while others, more influenced by the counter-culture's focus on the environment and the desire for an alternative community, began to focus on the idea of parks and open space. In some ways these two groups were interested in different components of a community, power and politics [strategic] versus society and culture [prefigurative]. But because of I.V.'s high density, the issue of open space and the authority to control development and zoning were inter-related, and the police/cityhood and parks groups were able to work together on the Isla Vista Planning Commission and the Isla Vista Community Council to establish the Park District" (1999, 15–16).

The IVRPD encountered serious problems in getting established because of its taxation powers, but the county kept it afloat more than once and people were generally happy to fund it because it ultimately wasn't a threat to the establishment. The IVCC, on the other hand, started out at the core of the battle over cityhood. Police brutality in particular was a constant hot-button issue, and advocates for local control believed that a city of Isla Vista could have its own police force instead of the county Sheriff (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 60–61).

However, the creation of the Isla Vista Foot Patrol appeased homeowners supporting incorporation despite continuing police brutality and harassment – particularly in the '90s and late '80s, once reporting to the IVCC ceased (Living History Project 2014) – and the county and university both opposed cityhood on political or economic grounds (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 61–63). Businesses, landowners, and homeowners all opposed incorporation because they knew the city government would be controlled by a leftist majority that would levy taxes and be hostile to their interests (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 63–64). Cityhood proposals were rejected again and again by LAFCO, the Local Agency Formation Commission, despite studies indicating the

feasibility of a city of Isla Vista and at least eight elections showing massive supermajority support for incorporation (Lodise 1987d, 4; Mounteer 2014b; Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 64–65). Carmen Lodise attributes this to the fact that LAFCO was 4–1 Republican to Democrat, the margin by which proposals tended to fail, and Isla Vista would be another strongly Democratic city in Santa Barbara County (Mounteer 2014b). The IVCC became a one-issue organization, fighting for cityhood more than providing community services, which earned it the ire of its funders and caused it to decline as a power (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 130).

In response to the troubles with the IVCC, the IVRPD began to take on more government-like functions, like the battle over Tipi Village, which created a stronger conservative block in opposition to it (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 76–77). This was foreshadowed heavily by its counter-cultural heart:

In the early 1970s Isla Vista was divided into three factions, a pro-cityhood group, an anti-cityhood group, primarily made up of property owners, and a pro-environment element that was much less interested in cityhood and more in creating an alternative community through organic gardening and urban agriculture Initially, few of the ‘politicos’ saw anything potentially threatening about Isla Vista’s Gardeners. What they failed to recognize was the environmentalists’ commitment to an entirely different way of thinking about both the earth and society, and then trying to act on those ideas. Both the political and counterculture activists sought to change society, one group simply focused more on political and economic institutions [strategic] rather than social and human relations [prefigurative] (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 59–60).

The IVRPD’s commitment to alternative lifestyles and eco-friendly practices inevitably dragged it into political fights with the traditional opposition blocs in the county: landowners, business, and conservatives. This was an inevitable “conflict of vision of society and the community” (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 76) which came about when the IVRPD’s “mission to preserve alternative lifestyles in Isla Vista” (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 75) came into conflict with the dominant capitalist strains in the community. In 1982, a final push for cityhood began that would signal the end for the IVCC. A slew of candidates supporting an independent city of Isla Vista were elected to the board, bringing forward one last proposal before the LAFCO (Mounteer 2014b). In response, the county and university cut funding to the IVCC in 1984, causing it to go defunct by 1987 (Mounteer 2014b; Lodise 1987d, 4). Without the ability to levy taxes or secure other means of funding, the IVCC was vulnerable to the political whims of capitalist institutions. Though the IVRPD was seriously damaged by neoliberal meddling in tax law, it managed to survive by passing a variety of special taxes and other measures that were within its power (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 83). As a parks district, it also had

access to grants, federal work study, and probation workers (Ziegler-McPherson 1999, 111). As Isla Vista became more conservative in the '80s, the district was forced to professionalize due to the lack of volunteer support – which also takes money. Despite that, it managed to stay solvent through clever management.

Looking beyond government: the Isla Vista Food Co-op

Before we delve into the lessons provided by Isla Vista's community building in the '70s, we should briefly examine the last of our three key example organizations.

While the IVCC and IVRPD were both official government agencies in a way, the IVFC was nothing of the sort. Though it, too, found its beginnings in the counter-cultural spirit that dominated Isla Vista throughout the '70s, the IVFC began as an informal arrangement of interested parties (Isla Vista Food Co-op 2008, 3–4). The IVFC started as an organization called the Whole Wheat Buying Club (WWBC) (Isla Vista Food Co-op 2008, 4). In an anti-capitalist spirit of independent and sustainable living, very similar to the core of the Eco Vista project, the WWBC created a way to get one's food outside of the "corporate system" (Isla Vista Food Co-op 2008, 4). A description of the WWBC's operation is provided in the IVFC's primer on its history, available on their website:

Isla Vista was divided into 6 cells of operation, broken down geographically by the streets in the town. Every cell had an organizer, who was charged with distributing order guides to each household involved. To become involved, a household merely had to contribute \$5.00 in "equity" to the Buying Club (collateral for supplies and storage), and stay on top of submitting and receiving their order. At the height of the Whole Wheat Buying Club, over 450 households were meeting in Anisq'Oyo Park every Saturday, staggered by the location of their cell, receiving and breaking down 50lb wheels of cheese, hundreds of pounds of potatoes, loaves of bread, all necessary foodstuffs to get their families and friends through another week of living outside the confine of the corporate food chain (Isla Vista Food Co-op 2008, 4).

The WWBC continued operating in this manner until a student decided to start a storefront food co-op as part of an independent research project, similar to how parts of Eco Vista are emerging at present. A \$13,000-dollar loan from AS allowed the co-op to lease a space, and the WWBC slowly became defunct as many of its members switched over. The IVFC operated successfully as a business, and continues to exist to this day as an Isla Vista fixture despite periods of financial uncertainty. However, there was one major problem in 2012 when the building that IVFC had been leasing for over 30 years was to be sold (Lawson 2013, 4). Realizing that leasing from a landlord who wasn't invested in the co-op would leave them at the mercy of Isla Vista's real estate market and threaten their survival, the IVFC had to come up with the money to

purchase their building. Local banks rejected them, as they were unfamiliar with the cooperative model (Lawson 2013, 5). Instead they turned to the National Cooperative Bank and the North Country Cooperative Development Fund, which provided them with the \$1.4 million dollars they would need to purchase the land (Lawson 2013, 5–6). In order to raise money for the \$200,000 down payment needed for the loans the IVFC started a kickstarter campaign, mobilizing its strong community connections to raise the money in just a few months through a campaign called *Project We Own It* (Lawson 2013, 6).

Though each of the organizations had problems, the IVRPD and IVFC were able to survive to the present day because they met certain thresholds of financial independence and community support. Waves of interest in community building tend to wax and wane amidst the broader cycle of waves of left resistance and right reaction.

The period of the '70s was one of left resistance following a crisis, accompanied by a massive flow of funding into Isla Vista programs. The '80s and '90s, by contrast, were a lean and conservative time. Only the strongest organizations survived into the current period of renewed left resistance and county funding. The tragedies of 2014 and the political climate have once again created an engaged student base with the resources necessary to transform Isla Vista. Therefore, the present goal is to create institutions which can survive the next lean period, if not prevent it altogether. By internalizing the lessons presented in this history, we can accomplish this.

Strategic Recommendations and Analysis

Community service organizations in Isla Vista can be divided into two types, governmental and non-governmental. Obstacles to the establishment of governmental organizations can be divided into the political, the financial, and the participatory, while non-governmental organizations only have to deal with the latter two categories. Once established, these threats tend to persist; however, the primary qualifier for long-term survival is financial independence. Briefly looking into some other existing organizations around Isla Vista lends itself to similar conclusions. Long-lasting institutions like the IVRPD and IVFC become part of the fabric of a community, and lead to increased participation in other ventures – particularly when community ownership and democratic control are an emphasized part. People like to take ownership in the things around them, and it cultivates a sort of Isla Vistan nationalism or municipalism. Initial participatory interest in Eco Vista already exists, and unsurprisingly it exists primarily among the environmental activists in the community. However, the student turnover rate may kill this interest in two to five years if we don't move quickly with establishing organizations to be part of Eco Vista. The holy grail for such a thing would be, of course, incorporation of Isla Vista into a city. However, the same hostile interests that thwarted these efforts in the past are likely to do so again

without major structural changes in the Isla Vista community. As such, I recommend against campaigning to establish governmental organizations and advocate for avoiding county government as much as possible. Eco Vista must begin by identifying services which do not exist in the community and creating official organizational structures to meet those needs. While Eco Vista projects of that type already exist, the unstructured nature of the initiative gives it an unacceptable fragility. Therefore, I recommend that Eco Vista incorporate itself as a legal entity.

The Eco Vista cooperative corporation

The Eco Vista cooperative can operate as a holding company for any number of ventures while operating on the same principles of shared ownership, democracy, and equity that the IVRPD and IVFC use. Both the formal structure of such an entity and the very term “corporation” might be anathema to some on the left, but there is no inherent conflict between socialism and sound fiscal policy.¹ The better part of sustainability is a sustainable economy. I recommend that the Eco Vista team identify its long-term supporters, such as UCSB faculty and permanent residents of the Isla Vista, Goleta, and Santa Barbara areas, and together with students begin drafting by-laws and articles of incorporation similar to those held by other cooperatives. Such a project may not be possible over the summer of 2019, but must be the primary focus of Eco Vista during the fall of that year. Both the IVRPD and the IVFC began because of student research projects of different types, and I recommend a similar route for Eco Vista. Moving forward with a plan and specific goals is central to establishing Eco Vista rapidly, before interest wanes in the project. Therefore, in the fall of 2019 student research projects should identify exactly what is necessary to create a cooperative corporation under California law. At the same time, key services must be identified. The ideal services for the Eco Vista cooperative to provide must meet three criteria for long-term viability: necessity to the community, financial viability, and community building.

The Eco Vista consumer cooperative corporation should be a holding corporation which operates on a democratic basis, holding elections for its board from the co-op’s owners, i.e. the community members buying into it. The cooperatives under it will provide a particular service for the community that fit those three criteria, and have their general managers hired by the board. Owners will buy into a specific cooperative service, giving them equity in the organization as a whole. The details of establishing such an organization need to be hammered out by the end of 2019. Of course, making sure the cooperative listens to every voice in the community is vital to its success, and we should take pains to make sure the exact structure of Eco Vista is maximally democratic. So far, student research and participation in Eco Vista has been mostly

¹ Readers with strong concerns about the internal structure of this organization should be sure to carefully read the section on best practices.

unguided. While this has produced multiple creative ideas and an excellent example of prefigurative participation for what we want Eco Vista to look like, certain students – or even non-students – should be tasked with doing this specific research. A farmer’s market, zine, composting initiative, year-end furniture pickup, community garden, and thrift store could all potentially meet the three criteria for long-term viability, especially with the community support that the current political environment might provide, but their establishment has so far been haphazard and generally unplanned which makes the limited successes of Eco Vista very fragile. Further studies need to be done in fall 2019 to judge each of these initiatives, and others, based on the criteria.

Avoiding pitfalls and hostile interests

The Eco Vista cooperative must avoid potentially unreliable sources of funding. While the IVFC secured an initial loan from the associated students and the IVRPD did receive grants and county funding, those were transitional phases for both organizations. The IVCC relied on university and county funding for its entire existence, and was totally helpless when the money was taken away. The IVRPD managed to survive such events because it had control over its funding and could get creative.

Likewise, the IVFC managed to purchase its building when its survival was threatened. Relying on institutional funding also defangs an organization and removes its ability to challenge the establishment, as shown by the IVCC’s failure after it angered opponents of Isla Vista cityhood.

Democracy and local ownership need to be built into the fabric of the organization. The IVIA was corrupted partially because large developers became influential within it and changed its bylaws to allow non-residents to be officers. Isla Vista needs to be tied to the city, meaning that Eco Vista should operate within and limit board members to Isla Vista residents, which would require defining boundaries for Isla Vista. The bylaws of the organization should reflect considerations which may not come into play for many years. Though the membership will start out small, plan for a membership that includes the entire city of Isla Vista. The goal is to create a cooperative corporation which can essentially operate as a shadow government for the city.² While this paper will later discuss more controversial objectives and confrontational practices, the early Eco Vista must remain on the good side of the university and county government without being their bedfellows. That means establishing a permanent presence. This is the paramount goal of Eco Vista for the first few years.

Finally, Eco Vista must perform effective triage of unsuccessful initiatives. This may be

² Readers concerned with concepts of “power over” should also turn to Best Practices, particularly the subsection titled “Centering diversity by creating homeplaces and recognizing alternative labor.”

the most difficult prescription for a project that is the brainchild of a such a vibrant, creative, and idealistic community, but it must be done to ensure a long-term future for the cooperative. The studies on Eco Vista will provide findings for financial viability for each service, and these findings must take precedence over all other considerations. That means each study needs to make a realistic assessment of how much money each service will take to operate, where the seed funding could come from, how much money it is expected to make, how many personnel will be necessary and how much they'll need to be paid, etc. While there is a limited amount of faculty support at UCSB, this will need to increase. At least three professors evangelizing Eco Vista to students will greatly help sustain interest. Particularly, students and faculty with backgrounds in alternative economics, if they exist on campus, should be targeted by Eco Vista. Discussing Eco Vista in classes and assigning work on it as a project in sociology, economics, environmental studies, and so on and so forth would be a significant boon.



ISLA VISTA AS TRANSITION TOWN AND ECOVILLAGE

The blueprint for Isla Vista's transformation into Eco Vista is the transition town movement, started in 2005 by Rob Hopkins and some of his former students in Kinsale, Ireland (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 2). The concept was based on Hopkins' "Energy Descent Action Plan," which was a reaction to the threats of climate change and peak oil (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 2), and was developed further in UK towns such as Totnes. The Transition Network was launched in 2006 to support transition initiatives throughout the world (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 2). The rationale for the movement is that individual activity is too small and government activity is too slow, but communities and municipalities might be able to act quickly enough and at a large enough scale to effect change (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 3). The goal is to

decarbonize and relocalize the economy to build community resilience to “shocks,” whatever they may be (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 3). While the overt focus of the transition movement is environmental, the broad nature of the changes required allow us to use it as a springboard for a simultaneous critique of unsustainable systems and ideologies, such as capitalism, neoliberalism, and constant economic growth (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 4). Key to this program is the creation of a collective social consciousness through positive language and imagery, skill sharing, and community building (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 5–6). “Overall, the Transition movement aims to catalyse deep social change through envisioning a different, post-carbon collective story for a community and taking steps toward realising it” (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 6). While this is a noble goal, transition initiatives tend to run into the same problems we identified in Isla Vista community service organizations: lack of funding and participation (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 6). Hence, we may be able to apply the same lessons we learn from Isla Vista history to the transition movement and vice versa. By examining studies on the transition and ecovillage movements, and internal documents, we can look at best practices for structuring the cooperative and define specific end-goals for Eco Vista to set our terms for the project as a whole. We can define what Eco Vista *is*, and figure out how we’re going to measure success. Further, examining critiques of the transition movement can enable us to look at Eco Vista from a critical perspective while drawing recommendations from the transition movement’s experiences on confronting the twin challenges of participation and finances.

Defining Goals

According to the Eco Vista community website, the initiative’s mission statement is as follows:

Our long-term goal is to establish an ongoing, multigenerational, student-led community development project for an equitable and just transition in Isla Vista. We aim to encourage and inspire the foundation of an ecovillage in Isla Vista through renewable energy, a flourishing and regenerative agro-ecology of public urban gardens, cooperative, affordable eco-housing, a circular eco-economy based on solidarity and meeting the real needs of the inhabitants, a vibrant web of visionary cultural creativity, radical self-governance, and community priorities determined by all who reside here. We hope that Eco Vista can become a model for other sustainable communities! (Eco Vista Mission Statement 2019).

These goals cover Isla Vista’s ecology, agriculture, economy, culture, and politics; it is nothing if not an ambitious program. Meeting them is going to require a well-thought-out long-term strategy, and the first step is defining the conditions for progress. Writings from the transition movement are heavy on vision and contain many helpful

resources for starting a transition town, which we will discuss later, but tend to be light on specifics for their long-term plan. Part of this is addressed in the section on critiques of the movement, particularly when I discuss the language of positive vs. negative – or prefigurative vs. strategic – activism. We can fill the gap by examining the Global Ecovillage Network’s “Sustainability Mandala” (Dimensions of Sustainability n.d.). Using that, we should be able to envision specific criteria that we can make measurable progress towards with our Eco Vista projects – the farmer’s market, the zine, etc.

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) defines an ecovillage as “A rural or urban community that is consciously designed through locally owned, participatory processes in all four dimensions of sustainability (social, culture, ecology and economy) to regenerate their social and natural environments” (GEN Glossary n.d.). The four dimensions of sustainability broadly overlap the Eco Vista mission statement, which also specifically mentions energy, agriculture, housing, and self-governance (Eco Vista Mission Statement, 2019). The four dimensions of sustainability further contain six ecovillage principles each, which include renewable energy, accountable institutions, agriculture, and local economics (Dimensions of Sustainability n.d.). The only ecological or economic part of the Eco Vista mission statement missing from the four dimensions is affordable cooperative housing. A few additional goals can be culled from the demands list I wrote this year for an attempted Eco Vista manifesto. By combining the mission statement and eco village principles we can expand to the following list of tangible measurements, to be expressed as percentages: energy from renewable sources, residents living in affordable housing, waste diverted from landfills, food sourced sustainably or locally, energy efficient buildings, financially stable residents, water sourced locally, businesses owned locally, land owned locally, and carbon-free transportation. All of this needs to be overlaid by cooperative control. A reminder that this list is likely missing a few crucial measurements, and a reminder that everything in this report is meant to be democratically discussed by the Eco Vista team to ensure that it reflects “community priorities determined by all who reside here” (Eco Vista Mission Statement 2019). Additionally, several of these terms will need to be operationally defined – “local,” “sustainable,” “affordable,” and “financially stable” strike me as the most immediately problematic, but good operational definitions are key to any quantitative sociological research.

Measuring the cultural through prefigurative theory

Next, we need to set aside our economic and ecological measurements for a moment to tackle the social and cultural. These goals are more difficult to define, but, as the fields of sociology and psychology would tell us, they’re certainly measurable. The transition and ecovillage movements have a focus on a positive vision of the future (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 9) which is often expressed through somewhat vague language. The Eco Vista Mission Statement mentions “a vibrant web of visionary cultural creativity

[and] radical self-governance” as part of its long-term goals (Eco Vista Mission Statement 2019). The GEN sustainability mandala’s ecovillage principles include such difficult targets as connecting to a higher purpose in life (Dimensions of Sustainability n.d.). The Transition Network’s website also uses this type of language, with goals like “nurtur[ing] a caring culture” and “reimagining work” (What is Transition? n.d.).

In order to connect these concepts to the operation of Eco Vista, we can imagine them through the lens of prefigurative politics, “the idea that radical social change requires creating and experimenting with the kinds of egalitarian practices, democratic spaces, and alternative modes of relating” (Cornish et al. 2016, 115–116) that you wish to see in your future society. Epitomized by the phrases “another world is possible” and “be the change you want to see” (Cornish et al. 2016, 114), prefigurative politics rejects the exclusive focus of the “old left” on structural and economic determinants in order to address the internal conflicts which led revolutionary movements to reproduce the oppressive practices of their enemies (Cornish et al. 2016, 115–117). This focus on the individual and interpersonal occasionally opens them up to criticism, which we’ll discuss in the next section, but for now it’s a handy theoretical framework for our social and cultural objectives.

Research on prefigurative politics argues that participation in social movements, regardless of their success, leads to a “sustainable social impact through the psychological empowerment and personal growth experienced by participants” (Cornish et al. 2016, 119). This can be characterized by “identification with a global ideological network,” “reduced intergroup prejudice,” more inter-group collaboration, identification with a democratically inclusive system, criticism of electoral politics, and increased valuation of social programs and care work (Cornish et al. 2016, 119–120).

Biddau, Armenti, and Cottone (2016, 142) performed “a case study investigating the socio-psychological aspects of grassroots participation in ... the first Italian Transition initiative: Montevoglio (Bologna),” and operationalize variables which could be adapted for examining Eco Vista. They mention five ways that prefigurative organizations explicitly recognize politics and try to ensure their own continuation, which I’ve already mentioned as essential for Eco Vista’s long-term plan, including “collective experimentation” and the establishment of new norms (Biddau et al. 2016, 144). One of these ways is “The demonstration and dissemination of practices and perspectives to allow prefigured alternatives to persist beyond the present and the group” (Biddau et al. 2016, 144), which is a restatement of the conclusions I arrived at in my section on lasting institutions. They also describe other concepts which are central to my analysis, such as the idea that transition should be “characterized by a pragmatic approach [which] stresses the importance of practical activities ... which can lead to tangible sustainability outcomes in communities and encourage citizens to get involved” (Biddau et al. 2016, 145).

Biddau et al. (2016, 147) use a conceptual framework called “the psychosocial model of community participation” to distinguish three measurable factors: “Shared Social Representations” are shared values which have a fundamental role in regulating intragroup relationships, “Shared Social Identities” motivate participatory behavior, and “Shared Conditions and Constraints of Access to Power” refer to perceptions of individual influence in a group and overall group effectiveness (Biddau et al. 2016, 148). Research shows that when these factors are present, they can motivate participation and encourage people to stay in “places that are important to them,” which is relevant to Isla Vista’s high turnover rate (Biddau et al. 2016, 148). For example, “The role of the perceived effectiveness of participation – together with collective identity – has been confirmed in the literature as one of the most powerful factors in explaining the involvement in collective action” (Biddau et al. 2016, 148). Their research on social representations recorded how movement participants felt about concepts like “sustainable development,” “energy sustainability,” growth, resilience, transition, etc. (Biddau et al. 2016, 149–150).” To measure social identity, they interviewed participants about their identification with the transition movement, commitments towards it, proselytizing behavior, feelings about being connected to a global movement, and feelings about its political relevance (Biddau et al. 2016, 153–154). The theme of identification with the community is a consistent one, as is that of hope for the future.

Lin et al. (2016, 306) studied an organization called “We are BRAVE” through the lens of women of color feminist theory to examine three strategies for engaging participants in prefigurative politics, centered in the power relations of real struggle. From their research we can take measurable concepts like a sense of collective identity, “body politics,” “intersubjectivity,” “critical agency,” “transnational solidarity,” and visualization of alternatives to capitalism (Lin et al. 2016, 306). The strategies helped participants by forming strong interpersonal relationships between them, (Lin et al. 2016, 308) results that might be measured with survey questions asking about networks and friendships tied to Eco Vista, for example. These strategies also helped participants link their personal experiences to politics (Lin et al. 2016, 307), which is crucial to the success of the overall Eco Vista project.

Many of the terms used by Lin et al. (2016) are consolidated into three major elements: “relationality, self-determination, and intersectionality,” which the authors contend are the core elements of a prefigurative politics based on women of color feminist praxis (Lin et al. 2016, 305). The authors also employ phrases which can be used to measure complex sociological concepts. For example, one might find it difficult to measure intersectionality, but sufficiently clever survey questions could measure “coalitional subjectivity,” a constant awareness of the identities of yourself and those around you which causes you to center considerations resulting from intersections in identity (Lin et al. 2016, 313). For example, a constant awareness of how your construction project is going to affect people in wheelchairs.

Cultural variables and considerations for research design

By building on this qualitative psychosocial research we are able to synthesize our sources on the cultural goals of Eco Vista into quantifiable, measurable variables. The process of reaching these goals can be summed up as the inner transition, “the changes we need to make within ourselves to transition” (What is Transition? n.d.). Note that, since the Eco Vista cooperative is the vehicle of our movement, anything which strengthens Eco Vista as an organization and fosters an internal culture in line with our stated end-goals should be considered part of the inner transition. Prefigurative politics presupposes that there is no difference between organizational culture and our cultural objectives, in other words: what strengthens Eco Vista strengthens the community and vice versa. Each of our variables is part of a feedback loop where increasing the presence of that variable tends to further participation, which further increases the presence of that variable. Therefore, our cultural goals function as both means and ends, and we can break down inner transition as the process of overcoming *barriers to participation* by creating a culture which fosters group efficacy and commitment to outer transition. Now, finally, we can look at our primary sources for movement goals – e.g. the mission statement, transition network website, and sustainability mandala – and combine overlapping concepts to get a set of cultural values. Then, by examining the places where these values overlap with processes of inner transition, we are left with the following list of variables:

1. Movement Consciousness: the degree to which a subject identifies with the global ideological network of transition; feels like they are part of a larger movement; feels like participating in the movement is part of their higher purpose; feels transnational solidarity with other transition initiatives
2. Shared Social Identity: the degree to which a subject identifies with the Eco Vista community; feels that they meaningfully contribute to the Eco Vista community; holds positive attitudes about Eco Vista; commits to continuing to assist Eco Vista; feels that Eco Vista is a major, salient component in their life; proselytizes Eco Vista; feels that Eco Vista represents the community
3. Coalitional Subjectivity: the degree to which a subject displays an awareness of intersectional identities and the identities of Eco Vista group members; centers intersectional considerations in decision making; understands that identities and bodies are central to the way people are governed; the degree to which members of marginalized communities feel that Eco Vista members have coalitional subjectivity
4. Vision: the degree to which a subject is able to imagine alternative futures, specifically alternatives to capitalist and extractivist modes of living; believes that good outcomes are possible for society in the long term; feels that they have unique

ideas which advance the Eco Vista mission

5. Perceived Efficacy: the degree to which a subject believes that Eco Vista is or will be effective in making change; believes that the transition movement is effective in making change; believes that their voice has influence in Eco Vista
6. Shared Social Representation: the degree to which a subject shares the Eco Vista values of diversity, transparency, radical democracy, anti- capitalism, care work, community, respect, mindfulness, creativity, and non-anthropocentricity; identifies with the aforementioned values; associates Eco Vista with those values; shares Eco Vista's definitions of transition concepts such as resilience
7. Relationality: number of close relationships a subject has which are tied to the Eco Vista community; degree to which a subject experiences group support rooted in Eco Vista; feels accountable to the Eco Vista community; wants to create relationships within the Eco Vista community

According to my research, all of these variables motivate participatory behavior. They simultaneously operate as preconditions for participation *and* cultural goals which can be directly measured. Once again, they are the means and the ends. However, I exclude those elements of prefigurative praxis such as institutional transparency and self-governance which are mostly crystallized during the creation of formal structure. These are included in the ten values listed under "Shared Social Representations:" diversity, transparency, radical democracy, anti-capitalism, care work, community, respect, mindfulness, creativity, and non-anthropocentricity. Each of those terms represents something that Eco Vista seeks to promote, and was selected to encompass as broad an area as possible without overlap. Researching shared social representations includes measuring the penetration of these values into the Eco Vista community.

Interpretations of those values, and strategies for incorporating them in the cooperative, are explored in our section on best practices. Eco Vista researchers can use sociological and psychological techniques to measure changes in our cultural variables both qualitatively and quantitatively. For example, in order to measure vision one might first ask subjects to envision a non-capitalist future, and then present a series of Likert items such as "if asked, I would be able to articulate my vision of a non- capitalist society," "my vision of the future is realistic," "I am optimistic about the future of the world," "we will live in a non-capitalist economy by 2050," and so on. A researcher could also use mixed methods like measuring keyword frequency in interviews to look at attitudes regarding Eco Vista for purposes of measuring shared identity.



Photo by Ramona Foran

Engaging with Critiques

I divide criticism of the transition movement into two basic arguments: it mimics capitalist patterns of exclusion by not accommodating the needs of the marginalized or engaging with their oppression, and it doesn't confront power in the ways necessary for structural change. Starting with the first argument, the transition movement – like the environmental movement as a whole – has been criticized by some on the left as existing for the wealthier and whiter among us, and studies done on the demographics of the transition movement somewhat reflect this (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 7). A cursory look around the room, or park as it may be, at Eco Vista meetings might suggest the same thing, especially when contrasted with non-environmental organizations in Isla Vista like the United Student Labor Action Coalition, Students for Justice in Palestine, and so on. The barriers to participation which may prevent marginalized communities from engaging include the time and money required to actively participate in a transition initiative (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 11). Not everyone is able to attend regular meetings or put in hours of work, especially if they are an employed student or parent. GEN addresses this criticism directly on their website, saying “Ecovillages are not islands for the rich and middle class. Some of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in the ‘Global South’ ... are engaged in GEN” (What is an Ecovillage? n.d.). Part of the Transition Network's response to this criticism has been refocusing some of its messaging on economic instability and crisis,

as well as a focus on community-based activities that offer immediate benefits as opposed to more abstract and intellectual focuses (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 7). While much of the messaging one encounters in the environmental movement prioritizes imagination and visionary thinking for the future, which tends to appeal to a base of wealthier, whiter, and perhaps slightly less radical thinkers, we should keep in mind that “the dichotomy between [prefigurative] ‘positive alternative building activism’ and [strategic] negative ‘radical left activism’ (as Hopkins calls it) is artificial because a lot of groups and individuals can and often do engage in both strategies” (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 9). Furthermore, the Transition Network has developed resources for making sure that transition initiatives explicitly confront social justice issues and incorporate diversity, and Lin et al. (2016) provide multiple strategies and a theoretical framework for *centering* the perspectives of the marginalized. This is why coalitional subjectivity was included as one of our cultural variables – reversing oppressive hierarchies in Eco Vista prefigures the society we are trying to create.

Regarding our other criticism, the transition movement attempts to be somewhat “apolitical” by focusing on a positive promotion of sustainable living vs. a critique of the current system (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 9). I’ve mentioned that this approach tends to alienate some of the marginalized and attract some of the wealthy, but it is important to recognize that systemic critique is implicit in the transition program because of the broad nature of the changes required to our lives and lifestyles. Cornish et al. (2016, 119) ask what distinguishes projects for small-scale local change from utopian or conservative efforts. They note that advanced capitalism has the capacity to incorporate critiques – and that the existence of scale-scale alternatives might inadvertently support its legitimacy (Cornish et al. 2016, 115–119). However, they also find that these projects help people “discover wider existential possibilities” and “provoke a rethinking of alternatives,” (Cornish et al. 2016, 121) which ties into the arguments laid out in the previous section. By increasing the saturation of our cultural variables, prefigurative projects increase participation and strengthen the movement.

With regard to confronting political power, critics assert the transition movement is at risk of becoming a form of shelter for wealthier communities to insulate themselves from the ecological crisis, “green zones” where the world’s privileged are safe from exploitation (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 10). Explicitly concerning Eco Vista with social justice and economic issues may offer a path away from this, but it also puts the movement at risk of politicization too early on – something that proved fatal for the IVCC. In my section on Isla Vista history I mentioned that participation in activism comes in waves, one of the factors that led me to conclude Eco Vista needed a formal structure. The 1980s were not the only conservative years which threatened activists, as prefigurative practices also “served to sustain stalwarts through repression in the 1940s and 1950s– times when radical pacifists were marginalised” (Cornish et al. 2016, 122).

While the question of whether localization can challenge global political power is an important one, I will only address it briefly so as not to risk a serious digression from our topic. It is true that “state power is continually reasserted, both by liberation movements which strive to achieve a better life by achieving a better state, and by mainstream politics which co-opts alternatives in the service of state power” (Cornish et al. 2016, 122). However, Isla Vista differs from some of the prominent transition towns in the UK due to its specific circumstances, such as the imbalanced and sometimes actively hostile relationship the majority population of students has with the county, the local capitalists, and the university. I have mentioned that there is a strain of Isla Vista which seeks to take refuge in state power, e.g. by giving the university more control over the city. This lends great importance to the enforcement of our shared social representations. Teaching Isla Vista history for the explicit purpose of fostering mistrust in the university and county institutions could be a way of confronting this tendency, as part of the goal of creating a shared social representation of state power.

It should also be noted that, unlike other transition towns, my plan for Eco Vista cautions us away from working with the state. Biddau et al (2016, 152–153) mention that activists in Montevoglio have a strong distrust of the state, and that following Transition Network recommendations for working with local government created enough frustration that “today, in fact, only one member of the steering group is committed in a collaborative relationship with local governments addressing energy issues.” This resulted from “wasted efforts in past cooperation and engagement with political institutions” (Biddau et al. 2016, 157). This is very much in keeping with my idea that Eco Vista should be independent of local institutions and become a power on its own before interacting with them. Furthermore, the latter phases of my plan do involve challenging state power. If Eco Vista can successfully explicitly challenge power in the county, then it could serve an effective case study for a more confrontational version of transition. However, we already know that overt politicization is a threat to the early operations of the organization so Eco Vista needs to wait until it is firmly established to challenge the system. Doing this properly requires careful long-term planning, as we need to walk a fine line in how we communicate intent, and will be elaborated on when I write my strategic recommendations.

Best Practices

Since Eco Vista is a project of prefigurative politics, we want to make sure that it embodies our values in its structure and practice. When I cross-referenced my sources on movement values to craft the cultural variables, I was left with a set of ten values: diversity, transparency, democracy, anti-capitalism, care work, community, respect, mindfulness, creativity, and non-anthropocentricity. A movement that truly embodied these values would also be able to successfully confront the critiques listed above, since they generally stem from a lack of actionable manifestations of one or more of them.

To see how this possible, we can use Transition Network and GEN resources that exist to address problems with diversity in the transition, as well as inform best practices in group formation, meetings, and inclusion. These resources also educate groups on how to effectively implement democratic practices, such as consensus or deliberative democracy, to ensure all voices are heard. We can supplement this information with the strategies discussed by Lin et al. (2016) in their analysis of the “We are BRAVE” organization, among other sources. The Eco Vista values intersect in that promoting one requires a necessary promotion of the others, which stems from theoretical concepts like intersectionality and dialectics. Therefore, as I address each area I will group values, and draw your attention to the overlap between solutions.

Let’s start with decision making. I’ve already cited some of the reasons to formalize Eco Vista’s decision-making process, namely that it contributes to the likelihood of the organization surviving to achieve its goals. We also want the group’s decision-making process to reflect its priorities. That means the process needs to be transparent and radically democratic. To do that, we first have to define the terms.

Radical democracy, for our purposes, means that every member of Eco Vista has control over their own lives and exercises the full functions of power through an equal say in the organization – remember that the intent is for Eco Vista to become a government. It also means that Eco Vista members should feel heard, and making sure that the cooperative fills this function is going to be something our researchers are constantly occupied with. Note once again that my conclusions are meant to be taken as recommendations. Deciding on the ideal structure for Eco Vista’s democracy will take time, and a trial period will be necessary for whatever procedures the cooperative ends up developing to accommodate “all who reside” (Eco Vista Mission Statement 2019) in Isla Vista. Transparency means that the inner workings of Eco Vista, e.g. decisions, finances, and meeting minutes, are clearly apparent. In order to stay fully transparent, Eco Vista will need to make sure that all of its information is carefully recorded and publicly available on its website. This will also have to be negotiated by the team, especially in the later phases when Eco Vista is confronting local power players. This interfaces with our goal of diversity, since some of the alienation of marginalized communities from the Transition Network could also stem from its seemingly top-down nature; official registration for the Transition Network involves adherence to their program’s guidelines and a long checklist of requirements (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 7).

Consensus decision making

Perusing the literature, I’ve found three alternative democratic practices that I wish to explore: consensus, sociocracy, and deliberation. Our final system can take parts of each, depending on what works best for the cooperative. Consensus decision making is

sometimes thought to be the ideal form of radical democracy (Christian 2008; Christian 2012). I am referring specifically to consensus-with-unanimity, as Christian (2012) calls it, where decisions need to be made unanimously and any “no” vote can block a proposal. In theory, this ensures that all perspectives are included since no proposal can pass if even one member disagrees (Christian 2012). A moment’s reflection reveals immediate difficulties if this method was used in, say, *congress*, so the consensus-with-unanimity method comes with a few prerequisites.

1. They have a common mission and purpose (including guiding principles and perhaps guiding goals) which are written in clear, unambiguous language— so everyone is aligned in what they’re doing together as a community and how they’re doing it.
2. People have equal access to power. There is no single leader or group of leaders; no one is the boss and the rest employees; no one is the landlord and the rest tenants.
3. And group members have been thoroughly trained in consensus so everyone understands that blocking should be used only when one believes the proposal would harm the community or violate its mission and purpose, rather than blocking because of personal interests (Christian 2008).

These constraints might not be a problem now, in the early days of Eco Vista, but as the membership increases it could start to take in members which don’t share its values.

Ideally, there will be a process for ensuring that Eco Vista membership is in line with the mission, but if not, this could result in blocks which stop the organization from making decisions or, worse, ideological drift that ends up corrupting it and changing the mission altogether. Since we have political aims, we need to think about political tendencies.

Consensus-minus-x is sometimes cited as an alternative to consensus with unanimity, where multiple blocks are needed to halt a project (Christian 2012), but this tends to reproduce the same problem. Adjusting for the increasing size of our cooperative, it’s possible that the organization will continue to function until the wrong group of people forms the right sized faction. Other communities have also been derailed by agents provocateurs, which is a serious risk if we become a threat to local businesses and developers (Christian 2008). Though consensus-with-unanimity developed as a way to equally share power, it oftentimes ends up creating a “tyranny of the minority” by giving contrarian members power over the group (Christian 2012). It particularly benefits members who can endure high amounts of conflict or are particularly committed, since the demoralizing effect of a broken consensus process can result in lax attendance and

membership attrition (Christian 2012). This also causes “premature proposal death,” where just the threat of a block or the obvious distaste of a member for an idea can prevent it from being proposed (Christian 2012). When no new proposals can go forward, it lends power to the status quo and conservatively inclined members (Christian 2012). Finally, Eco Vista’s mission is complicated enough that determining whether a block is appropriate could be next to impossible (Christian 2013). Workarounds like better consensus training and the four-option method, which allows members a type of vote between a stand-aside and a yes, aren’t effective when the system itself is flawed at the root (Christian 2009a; Christian 2013).

In response to these problems certain communities have developed other decision rules which don’t operate on consensus-with-unanimity, such the method used by Davis’s N Street Cohousing (Christian 2008). N Street relies on two policies for preventing inappropriate blocks and factionalism: small-group solution-seeking and supermajority voting fallback (Christian 2008). Small-group solution-seeking refers to a process which is triggered whenever a proposal is blocked (Christian 2008).

Responsibility is placed upon the blocking member to arrange several mandatory meetings, usually with a small number of supporting members, to create an alternative proposal which addresses the same problem (Christian 2008). If this process doesn’t take place, the block is invalidated and the proposal is voted on again without them – putting the impetus for finding a solution on the blocker and deterring frivolous blocks (Christian 2008). If the process occurs but a new proposal cannot be created, then the original proposal can be voted on using a 75%–90% supermajority rule as a fallback (Christian 2008). Other communities, such as Sieben Linden in Germany, have created “feeling” and “thinking” meetings separate from their business meetings to foster shared social identity and strengthen community, which they hypothesized would increase community understandings and decrease blocks, but as the community grew they suffered from low attendance and a generational gap in the time and volition to participate (Christian 2009b; Christian 2013). Remember that time is a commodity which is in short supply for many, and one of the factors that suppresses marginalized voices in transition efforts. A decision-making method that was truly democratic would, by definition, accommodate those voices. By making people feel represented, it could also strengthen Shared Social Identity, which is pivotal to realizing our value of community.

Holding good meetings and deliberating effectively in representative democracy

The centerpiece of a consensus-based system is the meeting. Good meeting practices are essential to getting things done in any organization, and many have created resources to educate groups on how to hold them effectively. For example, the Bonfire Collective in Santa Barbara has a pamphlet which functions as a brief guide to holding

good meetings (Bonfire Collective n.d.). One basic, healthy practice is rotating facilitation (Bonfire Collective n.d., 2–6). Many meetings have a facilitator who decides the order of agenda items and runs the meeting, whether formally or informally. Rotating facilitation means that every member of the group is required to take turns as facilitator (Bonfire Collective n.d., 2–6). This grows each group member’s ability to lead and prevents the group from relying on one person or being led by just a few voices (Bonfire Collective n.d., 2–6), while promoting the values of community, diversity, radical democracy, and mindfulness – mindfulness being each individual’s self-awareness of their contribution, perspective, and standpoint in relation to others within the community.

Another such practice is taking stack, which entails allowing the meeting facilitator to maintain an ordered list of speakers to prevent certain participants from dominating a conversation (Bonfire Collective n.d., 4). The Los Angeles chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America use a *progressive* stack, meaning that the facilitator can modify the order based on how much space a speaker is taking in the conversation and other factors such as membership in marginalized groups (DSA-LA n.d.). Taking progressive stack ensures that all voices are heard equally and makes meetings more efficient (DSA-LA n.d.), while continuing to support those same values listed above. Deciding on decision-making procedures like these early on helps guide group culture appropriately, which is a key part of the prefigurative process and a responsibility shared by every team member.

Two more good practices are bottom lines and quorum. “Bottom lines are an individual promise to complete a task ... facilitator[s] help attendees to make their bottom-lines as specific as possible so that the group understands what is about to happen,” (Bonfire Collective n.d., 5) so a good facilitator should ask everyone to repeat their bottom lines at the end of a meeting. Quorum is a minimum number of members that need to be present for decisions to be binding (Bonfire Collective n.d., 4).

According to Bohmand and Rehg (as cited by Wikipedia contributors 2019), deliberative democracy is the idea that legitimate lawmaking issues from the public deliberation of citizens. That means that, rather than just voting on things, all decisions should be preceded by conversations about what’s the best course of action. James Fishkin (as cited by Wikipedia contributors 2019) says that the five essential characteristics of deliberation are:

Information: The extent to which participants are given access to reasonably accurate information that they believe to be relevant to the issue

Substantive balance: The extent to which arguments offered by one side or from one perspective are answered by considerations offered by those who hold other perspectives

Diversity: The extent to which the major position in the public are represented by participants in the discussion

Conscientiousness: The extent to which participants sincerely weigh the merits of the arguments

Equal consideration: The extent to which arguments offered by all participants are considered on the merits regardless of which participants offer them.

This is another practice which democratically minded activists might leap to immediately, and the centerpiece of a good meeting is certainly a good conversation. Unfortunately, we're likely to run into another major problem with deliberation. I've already mentioned that holding many long meetings can exclude those without the time to participate, and as the membership grows meetings become more and more complex. I find that direct deliberative democracy is logistically unfeasible for an organization that might eventually expand to 26,000 or more members. An elected board which follows good meeting and consensus practices is more reasonable, and it can be combined with several other techniques to be maximally democratic.

The Transition Network itself recommends employing Open Space Technology (OST) and World Cafe, two methods designed for hosting open-ended meetings with a potentially large number of attendees. They allow for groups of people to discuss complex topics and come up with useful, creative results without months of pre-planning. Open Space Technology is intended to maximize output with minimal structure by designing open meetings around a small set of basic instructions (Owen n.d.). To run an OST conference all that is required is a large space that comfortably fits all attendees, with seats arranged in a circle, and one trained facilitator – along with plenty of markers and flipchart paper (Owen n.d.). According to Open Space facilitator Michael Herman (n.d.), OST should be used when “the work to be done is complex, the people and ideas involved are diverse, the passion for resolution (and potential for conflict) are high, and the time to get it done was yesterday.” In an OST conference, the facilitator invites attendees to craft the agenda by writing down whatever topics they want to address on paper and then adding it to a wall which is dubbed the “marketplace” (Owen n.d.; Herman n.d.). While this happens, the facilitator explains the four principles:

‘Whoever comes is the right people’ acknowledges that the only people really qualified or able to do great work on any issue are those who really care, and freely choose to be

involved. ‘Whenever it starts is the right time’ recognizes that spirit and creativity don’t run on the clock, so while we’re here, we’ll all keep a vigilant watch for great ideas and new insights, which can happen at any time. ‘Whatever happens is the only thing that could have’ allows everyone to let go of the could haves, would haves and should haves, so that we can give our full attention to the reality of what is happening, is working, and is possible right now. And finally, ‘When it’s over, it’s over’ acknowledges that you never know just how long it’ll take to deal with a given issue, and reminds us that getting the work done is more important than sticking to an arbitrary schedule” (Herman n.d.).

Accompanying these is the one law, “every individual has two feet, and must be prepared to use them. . . . Individuals can make a difference and must make a difference. If that is not true in a given situation, they, and they alone, must take responsibility to . . . move to a new place where they can make a difference” (Owen n.d.). Taken altogether, these rules put the responsibility for making the conference successful on the participants. While crafting the agenda, each participant also writes down a time and place during that day when they would like to discuss their issue (Owen n.d.). Once that is finished, the facilitator steps back and each person goes to any discussion that they are interested in (Owen n.d.). If the principles are followed correctly, attendees will flit from conversation to conversation. The results of each conversation are recorded by whoever initiated it, and these are collated and prepared at the end of the conference for immediate distribution (Owen n.d.). The facilitator simply stays near the marketplace and provides assistance if necessary.

World Cafe is a somewhat similar method. It consists of five components: Setting, Welcome and Introduction, Small Group Rounds, Questions, and Harvest (World Cafe Method n.d.). The setting component is equivalent to the place requirements of OST, but instead of one large circle it asks you to set up a number of tables with four or five chairs at each one (World Cafe Method n.d.). The facilitator welcomes everyone and explains the rules, much like OST, and introduces a question for the round of conversation which is then discussed by each table (World Cafe Method n.d.). This goes on for twenty minutes, at which point each participant goes to a different table for another round (World Cafe Method n.d.). The facilitator can either present the same question for further discussion, or another question which builds on the theme and guides participants (World Cafe Method). Optionally, tables can leave behind one member to act as table host and explain what the last group discussed (World Cafe Method n.d.) This continues until “harvest,” when individuals and groups are invited to share final insights and conclusions (World Cafe Method n.d.) While the cafe is ongoing, participants can record thoughts as they happen on paper in the middle of each table for a graphic representation of each conversation (World Cafe Method n.d.) Combining World Cafe with OST could be useful for large, “convention” type events where Eco Vista needs to create new by-laws or come to a resolution on some other

matter as an alternative to letting the board decide or having a referendum, particularly when it's a complex matter. All of these methods, including the good meeting practices, are appropriate for some conversations and not others. Eco Vista should be judicious in deciding which to use and when.

Sociocracy is, potentially, the last piece of this puzzle. I suggested earlier that direct democracy is logistically unfeasible for the day-to-day operations of Eco Vista once it reaches a certain membership size. However, one of the major flaws with representative democracy is that it's easier to influence or control a smaller group of people.

Representative democracy also risks reproducing hierarchies that are against our values. Sociocracy is a way of structuring an organization in multiple tiers, so that each one functions as an independent unit (Koch-Gonzalez 2016). The basic unit is the circle, which is a group of individuals centered focused on a particular task or specialty which makes decisions by consensus (Koch-Gonzalez 2016). Each circle has a leader, who is responsible for communicating the greater plan to circle, and a delegate, who is responsible for communicating the circle's experience and decisions to the next level up (Koch-Gonzalez 2016). The leaders and delegates of each circle together form a general circle, which functions as the "board" of the organization; each circle can have sub-circles as well, and be separated into departments or other groupings (Koch- Gonzalez 2016). We can replicate this function electorally through households, neighborhood councils, and so on all the way to a general leadership.

Centering diversity by creating homeplaces and recognizing alternative labor

Lin et al. (2016, 305) hold that "Collective and individual self-determination that responds to the real circumstances of people's lives ... must be a core element of a new prefigurative politics." Real justice is about the collective and individual right to self-determination, and movements should center the experiences and leadership of the marginalized (Lin et al. 2016, 305). Since one of the main criticisms of transition is its problem with diversity, this is important advice to follow. The Transition Network seems to agree: their official resource for making your transition initiative inclusive focuses on listening to marginalized communities who are, more likely than not, already at the "sharp end of change" (Pickering 2011, 5).

The ways that I discuss power in this paper might be worrying to some, since it's written as if Eco Vista is meant to subsume other movements. However, this is not necessarily the intention. Local groups like PODER, the IVFC, and the Bonfire Collective have been doing this since long before Eco Vista was around, and their experiences are invaluable to our mission. This guide is intended as a recommendation for Eco Vista's structure and long-term plan, but the reality *must* be guided by consultation with as many parties as possible.

The Transition Network suggests the “coaching approach,” which entails starting from a position of respect for each person, listening to their “real interest and passion ... and supporting that, regardless of whether that might seem the most ‘logical’ route” (Pickering 2011, 6). This strategy is about genuine collaboration.

I’ve mentioned that one way to bridge the gap between stereotypical environmentalists and marginalized communities is to focus on the immediate economic benefits that Eco Vista services can provide. The research which Eco Vista does to craft these services should be at least partially grounded in that coaching approach. An example could be doing interviews of local leaders in the relevant areas, as certain Transition Initiatives have done, to understand “what the Transition picture already looks like ... [and] avoid stepping on toes or alienating an important potential partner” (Pickering 2011, 4). Employing the World Cafe or OST methods is another way to do this on a large scale, though moves of that size shouldn’t be made until initial consultation is complete.

Working on this issue has to do with our coalitional subjectivity variable, as well as the values of diversity and, more broadly, care work, mindfulness, and respect.

Awareness of personal privilege and power relations is part of mindfulness, and our listening strategies are embodiments of our commitment to respecting, i.e. taking into account and duly regarding, the needs of others and the contributions that they have already made and are continuing to make. When Lin et al. (2016) discuss coalitional subjectivity, they recognize that there is a tension between prefigurative and strategic politics.

For example – how do we craft winning messages that speak to the ‘movable middle’ but don’t throw your own communities under the bus? How can we engage both racial justice and economic justice, when tools for race and class analysis in strategic movement settings are so limiting? How do we invoke the vulnerability and humility necessary to organize reflexively when the politics of positioning militate against them? (312-313).

Coalitional subjectivity is something inherent to those who live their lives at intersections, a quality which “holds the taut (third) space between the polar ends of utopia [prefigurative politics] and instrumental institutional [strategic] politics” (Lin et al. 2016, 313). To teach that quality, and to embody it, we can employ the technique of creating homespaces – “intimate enclaves for fostering deep and intersubjective relationships as well as theory in the flesh as a critical pedagogy” (Lin et al. 2016, 313). In homespaces, participants discuss and interpret their personal experiences while connecting them to politics, revealing the “linkages between bodily and structural violence” (Lin et al. 2016, 307–309), which is the basis of the politics of self-determination that they refer to as “theory in the flesh.” Homespaces also develop

relationality, making power by strengthening the organization internally (Lin et al. 2016, 308). The challenge for Eco Vista, and the traditional base of middle-class environmentalism, is to “deviate from traditional ‘insider’ advocacy with a few leaders to a base-building approach” (Lin et al. 2016, 314).

This links together many of my recommendations, weaving a direct line from empowering local communities, to confronting capitalism and power, to avoiding working with local institutions on their terms. Homespace can provide an environment that places standpoints like the women of color focused on by Lin et al. (2016) in a position of power and forces that traditional base to listen while fostering coalitional subjectivity and relationality which rebuild trust and strengthen the organization. How does care work play into this? It is crucial to recognize that the impetus for learning must be on us. When we seek out alternative perspectives and local leaders, we must do so with the understanding that we are asking for labor which is not owed to us. Participation in programs like homeplace should be rewarded with genuine decision-making power, and the point of asking for local experiences isn’t just to capitalize on them to better Eco Vista, but to make Eco Vista a space for collaboration between its affiliates. We need to meet others halfway, or more than halfway, by also using homeplace as a space to constructively but critically engage with power dynamics and personal privilege, while connecting them to our activist practice. How might this play out?



Photo by Andrew Dao

Strategic Recommendations and Analysis

The goal of Eco Vista is to transform Isla Vista into a sustainable transition town. In my last strategic recommendations section, I concluded that the best way to do this is to establish an Eco Vista consumer cooperative with a formal democratic structure for the provision of necessary services to the Isla Vista community. This cooperative would create a financial base for our efforts and engender community participation to keep the initiative afloat once initial interest in Eco Vista waned. I also recommended performing research on which Eco Vista projects would be the most effective in filling those purposes based on three criteria: necessity to the community, financial viability, and community building.

However, in order to craft effective projects and strategies that actually produce their intended outcomes, Eco Vista needs to be able to explicitly define what its objectives are and measure progress towards them. To that end, I have crafted the previously described set of seventeen measures to check Isla Vista's progress towards inner and outer transition. These are grounded by a set of ten values based on a content analysis of language used by Eco Vista, the Transition Network, GEN, and others.

Measuring these variables must be a constant, ongoing process in Eco Vista's development. I also suggested in that section that Eco Vista should avoid confrontation until it was firmly established, which puts us at risk of being confronted with one of the two major critiques I identified. Eco Vista needs to mature to a point where it can confront state power with a realistic chance of making progress, while ingraining the ten values into its structure at every level. This basic set of recommendations provides the basis for a multi-stage plan to meet our overall goal of creating a sustainable transition town in Isla Vista. The first phase, to take place in the 2019–2020 academic year, is to establish comprehensive by-laws and a community research journal.

Phase one: establish the Journal of Eco Vista Research and decide on structure. In the 2019-2020 academic year, I recommend that Eco Vista establish a journal dedicated to collecting and publishing research on Eco and Isla Vista. This journal must explicitly state its purpose as advancing the Eco Vista mission, cataloguing Isla Vista history, and measuring progress towards the ten outer and seven inner transition goals. Eco Vista's faculty supporters should direct student participants to begin initial research on those projects that will advance the goals while being financially viable. This should follow the model of "prefigurative action research," meaning research that "simultaneously create[s] images of what could be possible while exploring and documenting the actual limits imposed by the current system" (Kagan and Burton 2000, 1) and "itself strives to instantiate the ideals of emancipatory social relations" (Cornish et al. 2016, 117).

During the preceding summer of 2019, Eco Vistas should begin conferring with local actors about a conference based on OST and World Cafe to draft by-laws that formally and explicitly adopt the values of diversity, transparency, radical democracy, anti-capitalism, care work, community, respect, mindfulness, creativity, and non-anthropocentricity while enshrining a democratic structure. I recommend that Eco Vista craft an internal structure for the cooperative that takes into account future evolution and explicitly sets out conditions by which the governance will automatically change to a more appropriate form. Phase one of Eco Vista should operate by the N Street consensus method, with a register of voting members, and follow good meeting practices such as progressive stack and rotating facilitation.

By the end of 2019 the phase one team should have established the journal, be in the midst of initial research on Isla Vista's current status vis-à-vis the transition goals, have completed at least one conference with the goal of establishing by-laws for the cooperative, and know which ventures it wants to launch in the next year. By the end of the 2019–2020 academic year the team should have established the cooperative, have completed research ready for publication in the journal, and be fully prepared to launch the first initiatives in the 2020-2021 academic year – which includes having any necessary seed funding. Readers should keep in mind that this planned research is intended to inform the practices of the Eco Vista cooperative, and as such needs to be statistically significant for the entire Isla Vista community. It is also entirely possible that this process will take two years rather than one. I also recommend *against* officially registering with the Transition Network, though Eco Vista can certainly activate itself as a muller.

Phase two: building the cooperative and becoming an institution

Over the summer of 2020 Eco Vista should make its final preparations for the year and make sure that it has a cohesive marketing strategy for each of its ventures. It should have been written in the by-laws that the formal establishment of the cooperative triggers a new form of governance, with an optional new conference to finalize details.

For the cooperative governance structure, I suggest an elected board of directors, which also operates on N Street consensus. One of the three criteria for a successful venture for Eco Vista was necessity to the community, which includes the members of the team. At this point, all members of the team should purchase equity within Eco Vista by buying into one or more of its services. They thereby become part-owners of the cooperative. I recommend selling services separately, but giving equal ownership stakes to each owner regardless of how many services they are purchasing. While this is subject to change based on consultation with marginalized groups, I suggest, as a base proposal with weaker commitment than my other recommendations, to have voting seats on the board reserved for certain groups.

These seats can be elected by Eco Vista committees created for those groups, which operate based on the N Street consensus method and regular voting in of new members like the phase one Eco Vista team. I suggest that these seats be excluded from quorum calculation, but included in the supermajority voting fallback calculations if they are present. I also suggest using affirmative action–type hiring methods. I recommend that the by-laws include a crisis period, to be triggered the first time the blocking rules reach certain milestones such as the fallback, to allow for more conventions and perhaps supermajority referendums if the rules are not effective. I recommend that this mechanism come into effect again if there is ever a critical mass of blocked proposals leading to the supermajority voting fallback.

I'd like to take a step back at this point to remind the reader that there are many contingent factors here. This is not a perfect plan, and it's not going to happen with perfect smoothness. However, the by-laws of Eco Vista are one area where imperfection cannot be tolerated if we want to avoid what Christian (2013) calls a "Type One Design Error," meaning "a basic design flaw so fundamental to the whole system that it unleashes a cascade of subsequent, smaller errors downstream." If additional time needs to be taken in phase one to craft perfect by-laws, then by all means we should take it. Perfect, by the way, could also mean having plenty of clearly defined cases where it's appropriate and easy to restructure parts of the by-laws in case of unforeseen problems.

The rest of this phase is Eco Vista's journey to financial stability and a solid membership base. Eco Vista should avoid risky or expensive ventures, and concentrate on maintaining its financially viable programs. Building up a comfortable surplus if possible should be a priority. Launching other ventures during this time is permissible, as long as they clearly support one of Eco Vista's values and advance its mission in one of the 17 areas. I recommend, for example, that Eco Vista create a program for the home spaces I described in the previous section, to engender understanding and raise coalitional subjectivity by sharing experiences of inner transition.

Following the advice of Alloun and Alexander, initiatives which are focused around addressing an immediate economic or other need could a long way towards fostering trust and goodwill with certain parties. Expanding membership should be a priority for these programs, whether to new groups of people or new neighborhoods. Research in the journal should continue steadily during this stage, and throughout all stages. Eco Vista research isn't just critical for the organization itself, but Biddau et al. (2016, 159) remind us that "Issues ... of prefiguration and power relations ... represent key open issues for future research. Examining how these dimensions affect grassroots action and stakeholder cooperation for sustainability represents a great challenge for the development of resilient and low-carbon communities." This research is also important to the greater transition movement, as is research into any transition initiative. The

tentative idea for this phase is three academic years, 2020-2023, but of course it may take longer and start later. Still, by 2025 Eco Vista should be ready to begin its third phase.

CONCLUSION

The core of this vision for Eco Vista's mission is to combine the strategic and the prefigurative by engineering a praxis of inner and outer transition that incorporates critiques and challenges power while building a strong organization rooted in community participation and economic self-determination. In the words of Cornish et al. (2016, 120), we are “bringing the political into the psychological” and creating a transition initiative that includes the entire community and realistically confronts dominant capitalistic hierarchies. This is, I hope, a guide for building a revolutionary organization.

Eco Vista should legally incorporate as a cooperative to enshrine a radically democratic structure based on the ten core values – 1) diversity, 2) transparency, 3) radical democracy, 4) anti-capitalism, 5) care work, 6) community, 7) respect, 8) mindfulness, 9) creativity, and 10) non-anthropocentricity – and establish the Journal of Eco Vista Research to measure progress towards the seventeen objectives which, I find, together constitute nearly the entire process of inner and outer transition. The ten outer transition objectives are 100%: 1) energy from renewable sources, 2) residents living in affordable housing, 3) waste diverted from landfills, 4) food sourced sustainably, 5) energy efficient buildings, 6) financially stable residents, 7) water sourced locally, 8) businesses owned locally, 9) land owned locally, and 10) carbon-free transportation.

Each outer transition variable needs to be overlaid with a measure of cooperative and democratic control. The seven inner transition objectives are: 1) movement consciousness, 2) shared social identity, 3) coalitional subjectivity, 4) vision, 5) perceived efficacy, 6) shared social representation, and 7) relationality. Eco Vista should deploy services and projects based on the real needs of Isla Vistas to support itself and work towards these objectives. By doing so, it confronts directly the problems of financial instability and low participation which have plagued past organizations in Isla Vista. This allows it to maintain itself as a lasting organization while prefigurative practices build the Eco Vista community. Eco Vista is a living organism. As it grows, we should be ever vigilant for signs of bloat, stagnation, or complacency. As soon as Eco Vista ceases to evolve and change, it dies. We need to envision Eco Vista as constantly existing in transition, much like Isla Vista, so that it stays true to the ideals it's built on.

Later Phases

While my in-depth research ends after the second stage of the Eco Vista plan, I have basic recommendations for the latter stages completed – and may explore them fully in

a future report. The third phase is to create a brand trademark to license while incorporating other community initiatives under the Eco Vista umbrella as affiliates and becoming a strong business presence in the community. This is part of a “material consolidation of political messages, symbols and codes of conduct” (Biddau et al. 2016, 144) which can operate as a boycott signal to make Eco Vista and allies a dominant force in local business.

During this stage, Eco Vista would also be established enough to start “bridging with other places and groups to feed into broader socio/ecological/political movement [sic], standing in solidarity with nearby communities and groups in resistance, getting involved in non-violent direct action, divestment campaigns etc.” (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 13). This would entail organizing members as a political force while creating an Eco Vista political party and supplanting local business organizations like the Isla Vista association.

The third stage brings Eco Vista into local politics, and could involve an Eco Vista–based tenant’s union to work on the process of appropriating local land – perhaps Eco Vista money. During this phase, the Eco Vista cooperative would operate as a backer to the political organization which assists it in creating alternative services which are already provided by capitalist institutions like the Pacific Gas and Electric Company or the county. Stage four is to push once more to create an incorporated city of Isla Vista that maintains Eco Vista’s democratic structures and complete the process of appropriating the local land through eminent domain.

Limitations

I want to acknowledge that I started typing out the limitations section on my first day of writing. It may not be possible for a work like this to be truly complete, especially in the time given. There is a relatively vast corpus of literature on Isla Vista which I did not expect to find and did not have time to fully peruse while writing this, to the detriment of myself and this paper. Therefore, this work is only as complete as a single busy quarter’s work could be. Due to time constraints I was unable to procure a copy of *Isla Vista: A Citizen’s History* by Carmen Lodise, which would have been an invaluable resource, or Joanna Yokota’s “A Short History of Isla Vista,” among other resources on the subject. I was not able to procure interviews with a number of people at the IVCS and Isla Vista Food Co-op, which would have allowed for far more detail on sustainable internal structure for institutions and potentially provided a wealth of miscellaneous city data. I would have liked to look into the history of the neighborhood clinic, housing co-op, and credit union. A history of the tenants’ union would have provided valuable information on how institutional funding reduces an organization’s capability to challenge those institutions and make waves politically.

Though it's not possible, I would like to have more time here to examine the existing programs in Isla Vista, for example the Edible Campus Program, and what points of intervention would be the most effective for future change. Entire sections on, for example, the agricultural and growing potential of Isla Vista remain unexplored because I did not have time to research them. As such, the specific services provided by the Eco Vista cooperative will have to be examined by future authors in the research journal.

I have already made it clear that I did not have time to room to discuss the latter phases of the plan. I also had to omit sections on the practicalities of finance, on marketing strategy, on hiring practices, on the Community Services District's role in Eco Vista, on a power map of potential allies and opposition, on potential for solar and wind energy, on food and water, on waste, on land ownership and prices, and on the minutiae of local politics. I also collected a large amount of data from the county tax rolls and maps of solar energy capacity, which I considered including in an appendix but decided against. The paper is long enough as is, and the tax rolls will be outdated by July.

My section on best practices for democracy relies heavily on the scattered writings of author Diana Leafe Christian, as well as primary sources from organizations dedicated to promoting sociocracy and holacracy. It may have benefited from some peer reviewed research on the effectiveness of various methods in creating efficient, long-lasting organizations and communities. I also relied on Wikipedia for some information on deliberative democracy, though I made sure that the information was based on other sources. I would have liked to cite those original sources directly.

Additionally, I am fairly sure that I did not follow proper guidelines for citing images within the text, as I do not own a copy of the ASA's style guide nor could I find one online beyond dead links to long forgotten help sites. I used commas to separate year from page number in my in-line citations instead of colons due to my instructor's stated personal preferences. There may be other formatting errors throughout the paper as well, though I did my best to stay consistent.

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The World in 2050
Systemic Alternatives

Mikala Butson
Sheina Crystal
Lauren Dasher
Caroline Fyfe
Kayla Gorman
Irma Hernandez
Taylor Jackson
Ewa Laczowska
Claire Morgan
Pauline Naterstad
An Nguyen



Edited and compiled by John Foran

Published by Eco Vista Climate Justice Press

~~1st~~ Eco Vista, California

October 2020

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Introduction

John Foran

The “decade of decision” has arrived. We must now, each of us, tap into the meaning of our existence on this planet at this time, and summon from deep inside whatever response we have to this question. At a moment when the paths to various “next Earths” diverge in front of us, what do we do?

Everyone will find their own answers to the question, our efforts will be multiple and diverse as the stars in the sky, bounded only by our imaginations, our truths, our callings.

For my part this moment joins with an awakening that occurred just over ten years ago in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the now infamous “COP15” U.N. climate summit that saw the world’s leaders fail to lead, but where the nascent global climate justice movement converged to take its own council.

The impact of those days on me was the revelation that I had perhaps at last found my people, and that I could turn my focus on the academic study of the revolutions of the twentieth century (however radically I viewed them, that did not qualify as scholar-*activism*) to the most radical and potentially most far-reaching struggle for deep and liberating social transformation I had ever personally encountered.

Since then, I have tried to live up to those too-grandiose words: scholar-activism (we need a better term that avoids the elitism that clings to scholarship). I changed what I taught at the university where I work, I redirected by writing to more public, accessible forums (and in the process learned how to write on-line essays, more commonly known as blog posts), and I encountered and learned from climate and environmental justice activists everywhere I could, entering into the most promising movements I saw around me: 350.org, the Climate Mobilization, Extinction Rebellion, and others.

This book is a collection of the essays that undergraduate students wrote as final papers for Sociology/Environmental Studies 130SD: *The World in 2050: Development and Its Alternatives* (now subtitled a more direct *Systemic Alternatives*). The question read, in part:

Where do you think the world could be in 2050 in the best possible/realistic scenario you can imagine, and what are your best strategy ideas for that being achieved?

In your essay, please take into consideration the following:

- a) Describe your world in rich detail and across all the systems you think important, such as the economy, agriculture, the texture of community life, governance, culture, etc.
- b) Make explicit your theory of deep, positive social change: how does it happen, who makes it, what are the most effective strategies for achieving it. Be specific about the strategies you propose – why did you choose those particular ones and why/how would they work?
- c) How far can it take this vision and strategy take us toward the world we want? What would have to happen for a better outcome than you think is possible/realistic?

Because my teaching assistants do so much of the work in a class of 220 people, I read only a couple dozen papers, by students I already knew or had come to know in the ten weeks of the quarter.

These essays are their eloquent and thoughtful words.

The World in 2050

Mikala Butson



In 1987 my mom graduated from Chico State exactly 10 years before I was born. Nearly the same amount of time has passed since then that will pass between now and 2050. While in college, my mom enjoyed the stressful experience of writing essays on typewriters and mailing in resumes to postings she found in newspapers with a buzz of excitement over the prospect of starting her new “adult” life. Today, I type on my computer and apply for jobs online with a feeling of dread and fear because the world is dying around me. My generation is fighting to save a world that has been all but destroyed by the generations before us. While the class of 1987 faced a financial crisis, we face a crisis on all fronts. We face a future that is uncertain, messy, and quite possibly apocalyptic. While the media of my mom’s time predicted flying cars and artificial intelligence beyond anything we ever thought possible, today’s youth are looking toward the future with anything but excitement. Instead, we look toward a future of widespread drought, wildfires, and record-breaking temperatures. We predict storms greater than what we’ve ever seen in modern history coming at us at a speed scientists never could have predicted. With only 31 years until 2050, the questions are endless. What will happen? What will the world look like? How will we get there? Will we even survive it? With so much fear and uncertainty it is difficult to predict a place that humans are able to save. Here, I set aside these intense, and often dramatic,

predictions and try to envision the best-case scenario. Though some claims may seem unrealistic, I ask that you too set aside your notions of reality and imagine what the world could be in 2050.

1. Capitalism?

In 2019, U.S. Sociologist John Bellamy Foster stated, “We cannot deal with the climate crisis, much less the overall planetary ecological emergency, in an effective way while conforming to the logic of a globalized capitalist economy” (Triantafyllou, 2019). He also hinted that the Green New Deal would be an “entry-point” into “wider, eco-revolutionary change, involving the self-mobilization of the population” (Triantafyllou, 2019). He suggested, along with many other scholars and activists, that the GND would need to spark major revolutionary change in order to achieve its purpose. Fortunately, the GND did spark such changes, beginning with the 2020 presidential election in which Trump was defeated by democratic candidate [insert name of anyone but Joe Biden please]. Since 2020, democrats have held the highest position of the land and have worked tirelessly to pass thousands of laws and regulations that have helped us transition to a green economy. Corporate democrats and republicans have slowly come around, recognizing the significance of climate change as their own states were impacted and their constituents began to speak up by the thousands demanding that they “step up or step aside.” The abolishment of the electoral college in 2025 and large-scale campaigns to increase voter participation, along with decreasing social inequality (as I will discuss later in this essay), has led to a more involved community of voters who are showing up to the polls in numbers we have never seen before. While we still live in a capitalist system, strides have been made in the right direction with the rise of independent living communities and transition towns. Smaller scale movements calling for degrowth have also seen success. Arguably, the most significant changes have been made by mobilizers of the Sunrise Movement.

2. The Movements

The Sunrise Movement

The Sunrise Movement is a youth-led movement that took off in 2018 and reached its peak in the years 2019-2025 when it successfully helped to pass the Green New Deal, along with a plethora of amendments and related policies, seen today as the most important piece of legislation in modern history. After it passed, amendments were made to strengthen its language and clarify the importance of keeping fossil fuels in the ground. While it initially received major pushback from large gas and oil companies who collectively referred to themselves as the Sundown Movement, the need for massive social and political change won out as young people mobilized by the millions. This massive call for change could not be defeated by police or government

officials and since 2020, hundreds of similar movements have popped up around the globe as other countries have begun to adopt their own versions of the Green New Deal.

Degrowth Movements

According to *Wikipedia* (It was an assigned article!), “Degrowth thinkers and activists advocate for the downscaling of production and consumption – the contraction of economies – arguing that overconsumption lies at the root of long-term environmental issues and social inequalities” (Wikipedia). In short, degrowthers believe that growth is not the foundation of a strong society but rather a symptom of a dying one. The movement also holds that economic growth translates only to the 1% and that growth is not equated with happiness or well-being (Legendre, 2018). Therefore, the degrowth movement has been focused on a “voluntary transition towards a just, participatory, and ecologically sustainable society” (Legendre, 2018). This has complemented the political changes brought forth by the GND in many ways and has become a philosophy for many as the growth of transition towns and intentional communities has flourished with millions now living in such communities.

Transition Towns and Ecovillages

Much like Jonathon Porritt dreamed about in his book “The World We Made,” ecovillages have become a normative part of American culture and have popped up in major cities around the country including Isla Vista, California which now describes itself as “Eco Vista.” In 2019, Eco Vista stated that its long-term goal was to “establish an ongoing, multigenerational, student-led community development project for an equitable and just transition in Isla Vista” (Eco Vista, 2019). This long-term goal has become a reality and Eco Vista has become a model for others hoping to transition into communities with more sustainable practices. Gardens, co-ops, and visible green infrastructure are common features of this small college town once known for its trash problem. While students still stumble home at 3am from parties on DP, they no longer trip over beer bottles or run into cars, making it the perfect model for all college towns.

3. A Green Economy: Energy and Food

Today, technological advances have allowed us to capture and save energy from solar and wind power, thus allowing us to thrive in a green economy. We have transitioned away from coal, oil and gas and moved toward a near net-zero-carbon economy. Factory farms have seized to exist with the creation of crushing regulations, allowing small farmers and communal gardens to thrive. Additionally, people have begun to transition to more plant-based diets and obesity rates are on the decline as public transportation sector has begun to boom. Affordable battery powered cars produced in green factories have allowed transportation services such as Uber to

continue, but the vast majority of people have moved toward the public sector due to the increased availability and accessibility of public transport options such as rental bikes, scooters, and buses.

4. Inequality: A Just Transition

In 2019, U.S. activist and writer Naomi Klein wrote an article analyzing the original draft of the GND. In it, she responded to common criticisms of the plan including its approach to inequality. Many were weary of the proposition, calling it a “laundry list” of the left or a “green dream.” In response, Klein asserted that, “Most of us have been trained to avoid a systemic and historical analysis of capitalism and to divide pretty much every crisis our system produces — from economic inequality to violence against women to white supremacy to unending wars to ecological unraveling — in walled-off silos” (Klein, 2019). Thinking of capitalism in this way is dangerous and allows its grip to tighten on every aspect of our society. In order to change our system, we had to move forward with a GND that acknowledged the intersection of inequality and American politics. The Green New Deal produced an outline that allowed for the creation of millions of new jobs in the green energy sector. Today, nearly every person has the option of entering into such a field, with an emphasis on including frontline communities. As a result, many structural inequalities have been blurred and improved and we are now facing the lowest rates of poverty in modern history

5. Moving Forward

In July of 2018, UCSB sociologist John Foran said “No single thing, and quite possibly nothing at all, can get us out of the epic mess we’ve made this time... Yet try we must, and try we do” (Foran, 2018). To say Foran was correct would be an understatement: to get here took billions of dollars, millions of people, thousands of politicians, and hundreds of organizations working hard to save what was left of our world. To say we are out of the woods is not accurate: today, we are still facing the greatest crisis ever known to man as we must deal with the world made for us by the generations before. What we can do, however, is continue to ask the earth for forgiveness and hope it forgives us enough to recover from the damage we have inflicted on it. It makes one ponder, however, what the world will look like in the year 2100. I suppose we can only *fight* and see.

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Hello! My name is Sheina Crystal and I am a rising senior at UCSB studying sociology and environmental science. I enjoy hiking, biking, activism, traveling, spending time with friends, and pondering what the future might look like. Here is my (hopeful) take on the World in 2050:

My (best possible and realistic) World in 2050

In the best most realistic scenario that I can imagine, the people of the world in 2050 will be well on their way to creating a society that works with the Earth rather than against it as well as with each other rather than against each other. This new society will have radically different cultures, economies, and governances than currently found across the globe. These changes will be achieved through several different methods, namely through both small-scale community movements and through larger scale social movements. These two synchronous movements will work together from both the bottom-up and the top down to usher our generation into a new type of lifestyle and a new era of governance.

The world in 2050 will be different in several major ways. First off, the culture of the world will be different. The teens of the 2000s will be remembered as a time of extreme loneliness and isolation of the individual. While social media took the world by storm, people became increasingly isolated, spending more time on their devices and less time interacting with each other. In hindsight, this era will be remembered as the digital age, a time in which people became media-obsessed and lost interest in the real things that brought them joy.

However, this extreme obsession with media was not all bad. Many were able to use their platforms for good, spreading messages of waste reduction, proper waste disposal, and trash collection. In the early 2020s, people were able to get widespread social support for movements towards climate justice by raising awareness of issues via the social media platforms that everyone spent so much time on. Instagram feeds quickly became saturated with information about climate change and actions that individuals could take to essentially take back their power

and own their actions. This enabled people to feel more empowered and less apathetic to the climate crisis. People began to voluntarily adopt new behaviors that helped them, their community, and their organizations operate at a higher level of social value and realize more of their potential, all integral to achieving the reinvention of social change described by David Gershon. (Gershon 3).

In addition to this change in how people utilized social media, people overall began to use it less. By the late 2020's, people were more educated on the downsides of e-waste and less focused on consumer culture. Instead, through the campaigns that had gotten people outdoors and interacting with their neighbors, people started to just spend more time together.

Greenspaces were now cleaner and less full of trash, there were fewer hungry on the streets as communities got together and overall became more caring. As people's apathy turned into passion, the world slowly changed. Instead of wasting food at the end of the night from restaurants or grocery stores trashing food that would go bad, policies were created that enabled the distribution of this food. By 2050, food waste is a thing of the past, and composting is the preferred mode of waste disposal. Community gardens blossom and provide fresh produce, a place of community engagement, and a place to gather.

As world powers focused on the common enemy of the climate crisis, military funding in the US became obsolete. The military was instead deployed to help communities hit by natural disasters, it was now a force that helped protect Americans from the environment and shape the environment into one that would be less threatening. It was also a force that would help create communities that were more resilient. As funding was no longer needed for weapons and other military spending, the government was able to begin to subsidize programs such as the sustainable food initiatives previously discussed. With this help, by 2050 communities at risk for natural disasters are better equipped to handle whatever may hit them.

Several large public and privately funded campaigns took hold. Through these campaigns, people were able to make money by partaking in environmentally friendly actions in small groups. As Gershon states, "people need others of like mind going on the journey with them to stay motivated," and the social media platforms provided the space for this (Gershon 3). For example, if you got in a group of three or more and picked up a bag full of trash and disposed of it in the right way and submitted documentation, you got 10\$ each. Activities like this took the world by storm, and streets filled with groups picking up trash, advocating that their local stores reduce plastic use, bringing their own containers places, gardening, eating less meat, and feeding their homeless neighbors through expanding programs

like Food Not Bombs.

Financial incentives enabled people of all backgrounds to get involved, and instead of donating money to a climate cause, people were now making their own money off of creating a more sustainable world. By 2050, city streets will be trashless, there will be very little single use plastic, way less meat consumption, and it will be the norm to bring your own container places.

As global culture changed and became one more focused on human interaction and the power of individual actions, the global economy also had to shift to accommodate a new kind of demand. As consumers were now more educated on the impact of the mindless consumption habits that characterized the earlier 2000s, companies shifted messaging and practices. Growth took a back seat and sustainability became a key driver of consumer behavior as many only purchased from carbon neutral businesses. This sustainable degrowth was “an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions.” (Kallis 10).

Big corporations were early to catch onto this consumer shift, and Big Oil spearheaded the shift to renewables. Coal was phased out by 2030, a necessity according to Danny Chivers (100). With the aid of the administration that followed Trump, slowly all oil productions in America ceased, and America became known as Solar Nation. The government invested in solar technology research and in microgrids. Every rooftop was outfitted with government funded solar panels, and grids became localized, making communities more energy resilient. By 2050, great gains have been made toward the zero-emissions society described by Chivers (100).

The economy of agriculture also shifted. A new type of food certificate was created, that of a food carbon footprint. All foods received a grade of A-F of how carbon intensive it was to create and get to the location of purchase. While this required a lot of research, it was worth it.

People found the new labeling system easy to use, and low carbon food became the most popular for people to purchase. Additionally, the government began to subsidize low carbon food, and it became the cheapest, therefore most accessible option. Farmers began to focus on producing more veggies in lower carbon ways, as they were now receiving subsidies to reduce the carbon footprint of their agricultural methods. The methods subsidized and used in 2050 will be more traditional, enabling the reversal of the loss of soil carbon caused by chemical fertilizers and the pulling of CO₂ from the atmosphere back into the soil (Chivers 118).

These changes to the culture and economy were mostly driven by a bottom-up approach to tackle the climate crisis. Private donors provided funds for the social media campaigns that empowered the individual and also made the individual feel less alone. Through these programs, communities became stronger, more resilient, and better educated. As described in “Degrowth - Controversies, Debates, Future Research,” economies became more insular, with people living in a more frugal and simple way (Kallis 156). These decentralized economies with limited trade, artisanal production, less professional specialization, and more free time, took hold. People’s consumer behavior changed and producers changed to meet the new demand trends of sustainable consumption. As people felt more empowered in themselves and in their community, they felt happier and more engaged.

With communities more empowered and engaged, the top down approach was able to take hold. Individuals who felt more educated and empowered showed up at the polls in mass, and in the elections that followed Trump’s successor, more people showed up to vote than ever in American history. Sunrise Movement had, at this point, achieved a lot. Reforms were in place that banned private interest campaign contributions and the Green New Deal became a reality. In achieving the goals laid out in the Green New Deal, numerous programs will be put in place. By 2050, programs to aid in the removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and restore natural ecosystems through proven low-tech solutions that increase soil carbon storage will be in place. (Ocasio Cortez).

Other changes to the government that enabled the top-down tackling of the crisis included an overhaul of the way citizens and government act. Similar to the “Enough! Movement” described in “The World We Made,” a social movement took hold in the late 2020s as communities felt more empowered (Porritt 34). People rallied for a more direct democracy and politicians listened. Every person living in the country for more than 3 years one vote, regardless of criminal history or citizenship. The electoral college was disbanded, and politics and government became a much more approachable less elitist institution. This diversified governments both at the state level and the federal level, and by 2050 government will be the most diverse it has ever been.

I chose to focus on both the bottom-up and top down approaches to achieve the society of sustainable consumption, carbon neutrality, and increased community that I believe will characterize the world in 2050 because I don’t believe just one will be enough. To create a system approach to the climate crisis, we must address it at all levels and all points, the individual, the community, the social, the political; all must be included in tackling the issue (Salon). The specific bottom-up approach I discuss, one that provides financial incentives, I think is integral to the success of the

movement. Financial incentives are key to motivating people, and as the financial incentives would build community, they would lead to social incentives. With a greater sense of community, individuals would feel more empowered to take action in their own lives. This form of bottom-up approach will provide both social and economic incentives to work towards a more sustainable future.

The top-down approach I discuss is one that emerges out of the bottom-up approach. With a more engaged population, people will be more likely to be aware of social issues and climate change, and more likely to vote for individuals who will tackle these issues.

Additionally, with movements such as the Sunrise Movement, the form and priorities of the government (the top) will change, enabling the approach discussed.

With people working to take action in their own lives, their own communities, and their country, the world in 2050 will differ dramatically from the world we live in today. Communities will be tighter, plastic will be a thing of the past, compost will replace trash, and sustainable food will be both cheap and tasty. People will focus less on things and more on each other and overall happiness will be higher. America will be well on its way to achieving carbon neutrality and will be run by politicians who are actually from the communities that they represent and whose interests are not compromised by money. Although not perfect, people will have more faith in the institution of government and although capitalism will still be our economic system, it will be more controlled by the government, ensuring that profit is never made unless the cause is good. The world in 2050 will not be perfect, but cities will be more resilient, communities stronger, and energy cleaner. It will be a new era of positive social change and climate action. The inertia of positive change will enable a future not even I can imagine of peace, climate justice, and prosperity.

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Deep Positive Social Change is Possible and Realistic

Lauren Dasher



My name is Lauren Dasher and I am in my third year at UC Santa Barbara. I am majoring in Sociology and Religious Studies and I spend my free time with friends and family, crafting, reading, enjoying the outdoors and practicing and teaching yoga.

The world in 2050, even in the best-case scenario, will probably not be a utopia. There is no such thing as a perfect world. However, there is a lot of room for improvement, and there are billions of hands yearning to help. We can come a long way in thirty years, and climate change will catalyze demands for positive social change on the biggest scale humans have ever known. As Wayne Price pointed out in his article “A Green New Deal vs. Revolutionary Ecosocialism”, “We cannot say what is reasonable to expect. Today’s popular consciousness is not what it will be tomorrow. The very crises of weather and the environment will change that.” The universal dance, which has been going on since the beginning of time, will peak in dramatic, unprecedented, and unpredictable ways. Over the next thirty years there will most likely be heart-breaking destruction as well as ingenious creation. It is going to be a time when the poor are hit the hardest, and people will need to come together to build resiliency. We can no longer ignore the injustices that have been accumulating. It is a time for a radical re-envisioning of what is acceptable and what is not.

There are examples of deep democracy everywhere on this earth, growing like weeds and flowers busting through cracks in the concrete. The way forward is to learn

from them and to emulate them -- to be inspired by the creativity that births such movements and run with it. Worker-run cooperatives, community-owned cooperatives, community gardens, community markets, intersectional movements, renewable energy, zero-waste living, and efficient and reliable public transportation are just a few examples.

Here is my best possible/realistic scenario for the world in 2050. In 2050, the United States' president is a member of the Eco-Cooperative party (If I could, I would have eliminated representative politics altogether – but this is only thirty years from now). Cooperative businesses are flourishing all over the United States, and excess profits are redistributed into community projects. Children are taught in school to garden, to respect the earth, to be creative and inventive, to think critically, and to nurture their gifts so that they may use them to contribute to the diversity, beauty, and sustainability of the world. People of many walks of life feel that they have the freedom to live their lives as they wish as long as their practices are sustainable and non-harmful. This is because power has been de-centralized and, except for human rights, worker rights, animal rights, and environmental rights laws, towns have more legislative power than the state or federal government. Indigenous Nations have finally been granted sovereignty and autonomy.

There are solar panels on just about every building, and the amount of energy consumption required has decreased significantly because people are more mindful of their consumption and have installed energy-efficient electronics. A lot of people are recovering technology addicts – key word, “recovering”. Nature, art, creativity, and deeper connection with humans and animals have been tremendously healing. All crops are grown organically; all farm animals are pasture-raised, and there are fewer of them because over half of the population is vegetarian or vegan for the most part. Farmer's markets have become a primary method of acquiring produce, alongside food grown in community gardens. Food cooperatives committed to providing their communities with local, sustainable food are also a primary method of food distribution. The minimum wage is \$20 an hour, but often people are paid more as a result of the law passed in 2038 that requires the lowest paid worker of a company be paid at least 1/8th of what the highest-earning executive makes. However, people prefer to support and work for cooperative businesses, so many workers are paid decently without the presence of corporate greed, at all. Also, fast fashion has practically died out. People recycle old clothing and sew it into new clothing or reuse the fabric, or they trade and sell their clothes at community markets, or, when they buy new clothes, they value quality over quantity. Workers' rights laws have required that any product sold in the United States must have been produced abiding by the United States' worker and environmental rights laws, established in 2038. This has resulted in improved production standards everywhere. Unsustainable industries such as coal, oil, and pesticide industries have been abolished, and workers of those industries have been provided jobs in recycling,

restoration, composting, re-manufacturing, and renewable industries. In these industries, employees are encouraged to use their creativity to find solutions to problems posed by previous decades' waste production, carbon emission, and destruction of the environment.

Climate precarity has shaken us up and woken us up, and has caused us to clean up, grow up, and show up. Wealthy countries have been stepping up to assist less wealthy countries with disaster relief and make sure that the aid gets directly to the people. Inequality is declining, and consciousness is rising.

How did this happen? It took something radical: externally-imposed destruction - environmental disaster. The majority of citizens in wealthy countries were too comfortable to demand or even desire systemic change until their own lives were disrupted. When Bernie Sanders was elected back in 2020, environmental regulations were passed and the renewable energy sector began to grow. He could not get too much passed, though, because many Americans had been fully indoctrinated into neoliberal "America first" ideologies. It was not until national disasters become increasingly devastating, however, that people realized that the United States needed to be much more proactive. After several devastating natural disasters occurred all around the country within the year 2029, most US citizens made it clear that they wanted political representatives who would push strongly for climate action; they also wanted money out of politics so that they could trust that ethical and sustainable decisions would be made, and that greed would not sabotage politicians' ethics. They also realized that they needed a government that was on the side of the earth and of the majority. Almost everyone came to see that there were not sufficient funds dedicated to disaster relief, health care, or education for that matter. They were coming around to the notion that you cannot eat money, and that action absolutely must be taken, as well as revolutionary change made.

They realized that as individuals they should as much responsibility for the businesses that they supported as financially feasible, as well as for the waste and carbon emissions that they produced. When a candidate of the Eco-Cooperative party ran in 2032, they won by three-fourths majority, and people really began to radically re-envision the world that they lived in. They did not stop at environmental lawmaking, for they had learned from the past that compartmentalization is an illusion.

I predict that radical action will be taken as a result of the sense of urgency provoked by external events. This is what will get people to realize that this crisis cannot be ignored, and my hope is that people will really question the capitalist consumption-and-growth-based system, itself. I also believe that people, in these times of crisis, will be forced to look within and figure out what they are made of. I believe that claiming individual responsibility will also play a big part in changing the way we

live. Here is my final soliloquy on the transformation that humans are being called to undergo within their own minds and hearts.

If we are to create deep, positive social change, we must realize our place in the world. We must understand that we belong to this world in the sense that a puzzle piece belongs to the whole. No piece is more or less important than another. While a single piece might only understand itself in relation to the pieces directly touching it, anyone viewing that piece from a higher dimension could see that it is made of the same material as all of the other pieces and that that the pieces are inextricably interconnected. We are called to become conscious of our place in the world, which we have always had, but might never have sensed. Each of us is a cell in the body of Earth. Each of us matters, and whether we can sense it or not, who we are is a tiny aspect of who Earth is. With this grounded perspective, we can see that we, as cells, should not hold ourselves responsible for the entire Earth; getting lost in overwhelm about the climate crisis and trying to carry it all on one's shoulders would only cause us to implode in the face of our individual smallness. We would feel isolated and helpless. However, we are absolutely responsible for the tiny part of Earth that is us, and we are invited to recognize our sacred place in the web of life. Trying to carry the Earth on our shoulders as activists will wear us out; instead we must vow to be more of what we wish for others to be, and see ourselves as embracing the Earth in our arms. Let us love it tenderly. We must also remember that it is impossible to be truly separate from others; separateness is an illusion of modern life that has wrought havoc on the minds and hearts of people. We must do our best and have faith that it will affect at least one being – because it will. We are called to reclaim the fragmented parts of ourselves and become whole. We are called to grow up in the sense that we embody a mature sense of self and take responsibility for our lives. We are not called to become one – we are called to realize that we were never anything else and that we never could be. We are called to embody empowerment, humility, connection, responsibility, and truth. If we listen closely, we can hear the call. It is coming from inside of each and every one of us.

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The World We *Could* Have

Caroline Fyfe



The year is 2050. You wake up in the morning to the sound of native birds singing. They sound joyous and carefree, like they somehow know that the fight against climate change has finally been won. You sit up in bed, look out the window at the Coast Live Oaks planted by the EcoCorps many years ago. It's another windy day. The weather is pretty erratic now, but at least you know that it's not going to get worse. You get up and start to make an omelette using vegetables you've grown in your garden and eggs from your chickens. Your kitchen is not too far from your bedroom, since your home is only about 250 square feet. The neighborhood of tiny houses that you live in was built by FEMA as a place for climate refugees such as yourself to live in now that coastal homes are no longer habitable. These homes are run completely off the grid by a solar power and battery storage system, and the passive heating reduces your energy use anyways. The affordability of the tiny home renders you able to work less and have more free time for mental health and hobbies.

Once you've finished eating, you get dressed and walk the couple of blocks to the monorail tracks. You hop on the train for free, and ride it into the downtown area where you work for the government, organizing projects for local EcoCorps. Ever since the Ecosocialist party took power in the government, military funds have been continuously diverted to ecological and welfare projects. Once you get off the train it starts to rain heavily, so you run inside the LEED-certified carbon neutral building where you work. Ever since the government initiated its Universal Basic Income and guaranteed employment programs, the nature of workplaces has changed drastically; after only about four hours of efficient and useful work, you're done for the day.

You head over to the local cooperatively owned grocery store, and stock up on some groceries. Everything in stores now is produced locally, less than 10 miles away. Ever since government policies helped the agriculture industry transition to smaller, family owned and ecologically conscious farms, agricultural products are all high quality and guaranteed to be organic. Since the meat industry has been completely shut down, you can't buy any more cheese or meat, but the synthetic lab produced alternatives really do taste very similar. You get a chik'n wrap and some strawberries for lunch. Thankfully EcoCorps aided in projects to help recover native bee populations - these fruits wouldn't have been possible if they had gone extinct.

You hop on the monorail again to go meet some friends at a local brewery. As soon as you walk in they complement your new jacket - you hadn't bought a new article of clothing in years, now that goods are made with such quality. Society has finally left behind the absurd ideologies of consumerism and productivism, and now everything is manufactured sustainably and locally. With the downfall of large corporations, people are finally out from under the spell of capitalism. After a drink or two, you hop back on the monorail and ride it home. You still have hours left in the day, so you tend to the garden for a while, sit outside and paint, practice the guitar, and cook a healthy dinner, all before heading to bed for a calm, peaceful sleep.

This vision of a possible world in 2050 seems too good to be true. However, with radical actions and cooperative changes like those illustrated in this story, it's certainly doable. In order to achieve such drastic but necessary change, we need a political revolution of sorts - an ecosocialist party must gain enough popularity and influence to take power and completely rework our government and economy (Foran, Lowy, Price). Under an ecosocialist regime, people would have different values, more free time, higher quality goods, healthier foods, and live in a world without pollution or worsening effects of climate change. Although the world in 2050 will have worse climate conditions than today because of the carbon we've already added to our atmosphere, our current business-as-usual economic trends will have ended and the effects would no longer worsen. The biggest decisions must be made via direct democracy. Capitalism has to end - our economy must transition to one of no growth, without the rampant consumerism, productivism, and extractivism that define it today (Kallis). We must eliminate all use of fossil fuels and power everything using renewable sources. Factory farms must change into family farms with smaller plots of land who farm ecologically and have much higher yields per acre. Citizens would have a much richer sense of community, and share values of improved social and ecological welfare. This change cannot happen by simply introducing policies into our existing government - a revolution is necessary. With an ecosocialist party in power and the end of capitalism, we can finally create the world in 2050 that we desire.

The first thing that needs to happen to change our society is the introduction of an ecosocialist party (Foran). We cannot make the change we need by simply introducing policies into our current government, because the capitalist class has too much influence over its decisions (Price). Ecosocialism is an ideology that rejects capitalism and puts social and ecological well-being first (Lowy). At its core is the idea of democratic ecological planning, in which the population makes the main decisions about the economy (Lowy). Society at large would lead an economic transformation while pursuing full employment and good working conditions and wages. People would have control over the prices of goods, and therefore have control over their future and the types of goods that are made. This process requires education of the public and social change, which can be achieved through an improved education system and widespread, easily accessible information (Lowy).

An ecosocialist government would also advocate for massive decentralization. It should aid in the formation of local economies, shorter supply lines, and reduced economic growth (Price). Communities should be encouraged to be as self-sufficient as possible, so that goods no longer need to be transported large distances, energy can be used where it is created, and smaller local farms can have higher yields. National plans that aim to tackle climate change should be implemented in a decentralized manner as well. In order to form such a decentralized, cooperative society, power must be taken from the capitalist class and given to the working class. This way, people can produce for use rather than profit, society will be democratically self-managed, and there can be federations at local, national and international levels to tackle larger issues (Price).

The biggest change that an ecosocialist government would need to achieve is one of degrowth. Degrowth is defined as “an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions” (Kallis). Evidence has shown that an increase in GDP is proportional to environmental damage, and that decoupling these is impossible, since we live on a finite planet (Mastini). Therefore, we must reject the endless growth of capitalism and accept degrowth as the only way forward. In a society that has transitioned to no-growth, people live in localized communities within their ecological means, and resources are distributed more equally through more democratic institutions (Kallis).

Historically, unlimited economic growth has been justified through saying that it is a solution to rising unemployment. However, full employment could still be managed in a society without growth. If the government implements a Universal Basic Income, people would have guaranteed livelihood regardless of employment (Mastini). However, since working is an essential value in our society, there must also offer a job guarantee, in which the government is the employer of last resort. These jobs could be channelled into sustainable projects and production, like the “EcoCorps” example in my vision (Mastini). This job guarantee would also improve working conditions in the private

sector, shorten the work week and lower productivity, therefore increasing the quality of goods and giving people more free time (Mastini).

I believe that the only way to achieve a transition to the world we need is through an ecosocialist revolution. However, this cannot only happen in the USA - this must happen globally. This would require cooperation between nations that have had historically high tensions. Overcoming these tensions would be probably the greatest obstacle to reaching a global climate change agreement. Additionally, even if only in America, the amount of time that it would take for an ecosocialist party to form, gain popularity, take power, and make the necessary change would likely take too long to avoid some of the worst effects of climate change. So many people in this country scoff at the idea of "socialism," and many more are climate deniers who do not value education or scientific knowledge. Reaching these people will likely prove extremely difficult, and so changing the prevailing ideas enough to gain the support of the majority of Americans could take generations. By that point, it would be too late. The most ideal outcome would be if all fossil fuels stopped being extracted and burned today, if the system of capitalism was suddenly dismantled, and if all countries adopted an ecosocialist regime and worked together to end climate change right now. However, such a massive and sudden change would be almost impossible to achieve and could have unforeseen consequences.

The process that I've outlined in this paper is the most effective and viable option, and by adopting these ecosocialist ideals and ending our unsustainable use of resources, I believe we can achieve a better world in 2050 than the path we are on now. We could have this ideal world, if only we put in the effort, work together, and act to create this positive vision of the future.

Caroline Fyfe is a class of 2019 graduate from the environmental studies program at UCSB.



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(My) World in 2050

Kayla Gorman

The world we know is in *grave* danger. This sentence has invoked a sense of panic and urgency for hundreds of audiences throughout the scope of time. Ironically enough, it gives me a sense of peace. The world we live in, the one I am familiar with at the very least, is collapsing at a rate that seems near impossible to comprehend; and it is all because of *us*. In referring to us, I am referring to the individualistic, toxic, capitalist culture that we, as a society, have allowed to become the acceptable. This system that we deem okay has already, although it has existed for less than 1% of human history, caused more damage to the planet than the other 99% combined (Wallace-Wells 2019); the planet is heading towards its sixth mass extinction and it is because of *us*. From my perspective, the world in 2050 will either act as a testament to the ingenuity of the human spirit or as a look into what will soon become the extinction of the human race. For the purpose of this assignment, as well as for my personal hopes for the future, I am going to assume that we, for lack of better terms, get our shit together.

The climate crisis is directly related to the social crisis that our world is facing. In order to solve the climate crisis, deep systemic changes to our social culture will be needed. The issue that arises with that statement is that systematic changes that last are slow to progress (Chamberlain 2019). As a world, we have been given 11 years to handle the climate crisis before the effects become irreversible and detrimental to our current infrastructure (IPCC Report 2018). The two timelines of change are anything but in sync with each other. For this reason, the theory of change I am calling for requires both action from the masses as well as the governments of the world. For my best possible version of 2050 to be accomplished everybody, regardless of social and economic class has a role to play; especially those associated with the capitalistic western culture. Acknowledging the short period of time given to start handling the climate crisis, in terms of the United States, legislative action must be passed. Although there are viable arguments against working within the existing capitalist model of society, there is not ample time to restructure an entire government; unless full-on anarchy was enacted, in which, I believe, would cause more problems for humanity (maybe not the planet) than it would solve. The Green New Deal is what realistic climate policy looks like in the United States (Britton-Purdy 2019), at least for the next decade. Of course, the Green New Deal is not the only approach, but its broad ambitions mark out the ground where future climate fights will happen. Because reshaping our environmental impact means reworking our economy, there will inevitably be competing visions about who deserves to benefit and what kind of economy we should build (Britton-Purdy 2019). From there, bottom-up change will be essential to the long-term well-being of society. This is where the deep systemic changes become necessary, but again, due to the time crunch, we need to start making changes now, in the system we know as

reality. In terms of changing the entire system, the task does seem too big, and possibly even too daunting (Chamberlin 2019). This will require realists of a larger reality. These are the people who acknowledge the overwhelming nature of the problems facing *us*, but regardless still decide to work towards a new possibility. The institution of capitalism, in the present, may seem impossible to defeat, but so did the kings and their nobility (Chamberlin 2019). What I am ultimately proposing is a complete transition. A transition that would seem almost like a step backwards, but in reality, it would be a massive leap forward.

Under the assumption that the Green New Deal, or something of the sort, get enacted and the people start pushing for a more fair and just society, a large-scale transition being in progress by 2050 is completely possible. I believe the most challenging aspect of this transition will be that unique solutions that will have to be taken into consideration for each and every community. There is no one size fits all solution for the world to transition to a more sustainable, equitable reality. For this reason, I will use my vision of what Isla Vista can be in 2050 if the proper measures were to be taken. The potential of Isla Vista for 2050 can be considered one of an Eco-Vista. With a population just under 25,000 IV is the perfect location for a transition to a small, locally sustained community to emerge. By 2050, I envision Isla Vista having a centralized community garden that provides all the produce for the town. This community garden would rely on organic practices and would be a permaculture. IV would be a city of its own, with leaders from the community who would make decisions that truly reflect the needs of the people. It would have a free thrift store, that played an essential role in the newly established circular economy. The streets would be litter free and would promote the well-being of the surrounding environment and biodiversity. Ultimately, it would be on its way to becoming a carbon-free, self-sustaining community. All of this by 2050 is the best-case scenario that I could imagine. However, it would take substantial change and mobilization from community members. De-growth would be essential to this vision becoming a reality.

De-growth, as I understand it, requires massively cutting back on consumption (Foran 2018). A way to successfully achieve this would require de-coupling economic consumption to economic well-being. In our current system when growth slows, so does the economy, in turn causing economic hardship for a large population of the world. In taking away well-being as an incentive to consume, there could be positive implications for the environment and in turn, the species that rely on it (i.e. humans). The main concern that is brought up in the conversation surrounding de-growth is the massive consequences that it would imply for people, in this case Isla-Vistans. For a transition to a de-growth economy to work it would require massive levels of participation from the local community members (Rutherford 2017). This is where my vision of the future of the world circles back to my original strategy for *how* it will happen. It will have to begin with legislative changes, but ultimately, what will decide

the success of the world in 2050 will be the majority; the people on the ground. This is all under the assumption, of course, that we get our shit together.

To get this movement of the masses behind a transition of society will take time, organization, and persistence. Luckily (or unluckily) for us the world we know is in *grave* danger and soon, society will have little choice but to adapt to the changing circumstances. Starting a worldwide transition will require being prepared. In knowing what is to come, transparency and easy to understand messages can be relayed to people (Giangrande 2018). This would play into the success of the transition because realistically, most people do what is most convenient for them. From there, those leading the movement must understand early on that it will be a slow, dragged out process. From this assumption, hope will be necessary. It will be necessary for the purpose of the fight. It will be an exhausting one, and without the belief that an alternate world is possible, it will also be an unsuccessful one.

The notion of hope, especially when regarding the crusade to save the planet, is an essential one to debate. My vision of the world in 2050, as well as the steps it will take to get there, will require hope. However, this hope must be a practical one. It would be an active hope that is enacted on the ground, through action (Foran 2018). This hope would work to make my vision of 2050 a reality, not just a hypothetical. This version of hope requires people collaborating to deconstruct the current system; the system that is killing not only the planet, but *us*. What I am calling for is a revolution of togetherness. Capitalism functions under the principle of individuals competing for resources. As we've seen, that version of competition leads to environmental degradation, infinite cases of loneliness and depression, and ultimately the demise of the world. The world I see in 2050 is a world in which we have found each other again. We remembered the reason humans succeeded in the race against natural selection thousands of years ago; because we knew how to work together (Darwin 1871). I cannot guarantee that the strategy I have proposed is perfect, nor a road map to the survival of the human race, but I can say that it is a start to an evolving mindset about how we, as a culture, see ourselves; and to me, that is the essential first step.

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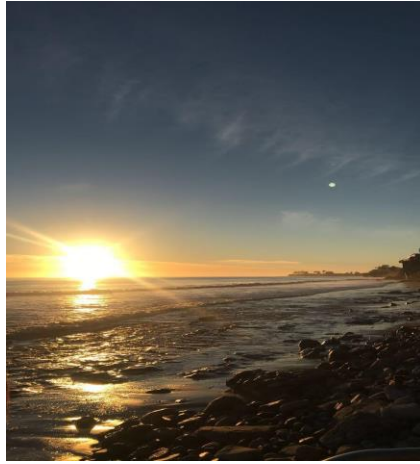
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A 30-year Glimpse into the Future

Irma Hernandez

I am Irma L. Hernandez, a third-year college student at the University of California, Santa Barbara studying Sociology and Statistical Science.

The best possible world I imagine in the year 2050 is that of society no longer relying on the capitalistic system that has existed for so long. Whenever I think about societal issues that impact so many lives throughout our communities, they all go back to the issue of capitalism. The other day in lecture, John played a video describing rights that mother nature should have such as the right to water, growing, and simply just existing, I completely agreed. Nature deserves to have such rights, but it all made me wonder about how we want to give such rights to nature, but we have not even done that for humans. There are still so many people that still do not have the right to things such as water, and this all goes back to the idea of capitalism.

If we changed from capitalistic ideas, our entire community would change, starting off with that of our economy. Instead of focusing on profit, the equal distribution of resources and income would be prioritized. Our economy strongly relies on the high amount of consumption people intake. Many people rely on these fossil fuel companies to make a living as it has created over 1.4 million jobs in the oil and gas industry (Britton-Purdy 3). Realistically, we can't force everyone to be part of this change, but if the majority of the people take control instead of having the top 1% make all decisions, then we can bring about real change. Changing our economy would make the transition of changing our entire lifestyle a lot easier.

The way I imagine our agriculture is to be more dependent on the growth of plants instead of raising livestock. Our health and the planet would be able to benefit from this since we wouldn't be as dependent on meat as our communities have been in the past. Changing our diets would be able to decrease our consumption of meat and the carbon monoxide that it has contributed to our atmosphere. My best-case scenario vision for our world, includes a better use of land through things such as gardens. Growing food in our own communities would highly contribute to the action we can take in our own neighborhoods and it would be able to educate children that grow up in such communities. If children are taught to care about nature and contribute in any way they can as children, they are able to continue doing it as adults and could pass it on to their children.

Issues such as that of world hunger could be addressed since our focus would no longer be profit. A constant topic that is brought up when talking about world hunger is that of population growth. Having more people oftentimes makes people believe that it means higher consumption, but this is not true. The true issue is that of consumption in first-world countries. Although third-world countries tend to have a higher population, they tend to consume much less than that of third-world countries, "The wealthiest 20 per cent of the world's people use over 70 per cent of the energy" (Chivers, 94). Instead of worrying about population increase, we should be addressing real issues like that of our consumption and the high amount of waste that first-world countries produce. This all goes back to impacting those that contribute less, which is third-world countries. Things such as natural disasters continue to affect the lives of many, especially in poorer countries. Just because some are not experiencing these negative effects first-hand doesn't mean that they are not happening. There are so many deniers that make claims like that of global warming not existing because it is still cold and snowing in a lot of locations. They don't understand that places will have changes in their climate at different rates (Chivers 31). This mentality encourages others to doubt or question the existence and consequences of global warming which will prevent them from creating change. Addressing these issues through further consumption education and bringing about things like policies could help reduce the amount of waste that we produce. Using our natural resources wisely instead of throwing them away could certainly help us with the proper distribution of food that is necessary because the issue is not that we don't have enough food to sustain the world, it's the consumption from first-world countries that negatively affects third-world countries.

When I went back home for a weekend, I brought up the issue of climate change to my mother. She knows that this is an ongoing issue and tries to contribute in any little way possible through small things like that of recycling and no longer drinking cow milk, but we both know that it's not enough to create the change necessary to prevent us from a sixth mass extinction. She brought up a post she had seen on her social media that was from an elder man that mentioned that although past generations have

contributed to the Earth's air pollution, he said that he remembers decades ago when small things like bringing your own bags to the grocery store, bringing big jugs to refill milk containers, and even that of bringing jugs to refill water instead of wasting plastic with multiple water bottles were a lifestyle. People now just make things that make us lazier, and continue to waste more plastic than we ever did before. This shows that we could bring about smaller changes, just like they existed before, but the issue is that we need to stop increasing things like our usage of plastic when it is unnecessary if it didn't exist at one point in time. Making smaller changes to live a more sustainable lifestyle is possible, but it needs to be done now before it is too late.

The way I imagine our community life is of being a lot more friendly and open-minded. Oftentimes, we do not even know who our own neighbors are as I am speaking from personal experience. If we simply talked to our neighbors and strengthened our community bond, we would be more united and it would be easier to bring about change. On the other hand, doing smaller things like sharing things instead of buying could help the friendship, but also the things we consume. People tend to have things sitting around or going bad when in reality, they could have been used by someone else. If we worked on creating a better connection with our own community, we would be more worried of bringing about change to improve the environment we are in. This can be very difficult especially for us college students that are often moving around so the temporary location might never fully feel like home.

The way I imagine governance is by splitting up into multiple smaller towns to make decisions. This would allow people to be more comfortable with one another since it would be a local group and they would be able to voice their opinions. Although I know that it would be almost impossible to have groups of people all agreeing on a decision, it would be voted on by the majority. Since these local groups would be more focused on those nearby, it would guarantee that the people being impacted by the decisions are the ones being able to vote. Those in charge, would hold rotating positions so that no one person can control everything. The power would not get to the head of one person and instead, the community could keep one another on-check so that no one person would hold all the power. Unlike, our current system where money talks and all those in power tend to be those with money which make the decisions that benefit nobody else, but themselves.

The way I imagine culture is that the population's decrease in meat consumption will lead to less open land and that instead, cities will continue to expand. The population will certainly increase so skyscrapers will grow even more. Buildings will be even taller than what they already are. Although there would be more buildings, there would also be an increase in random spaces between skyscrapers that would be used as gardens. Sidewalks with patches of grass would also be used to plant food so every form of grass would be put to use for the increase of food. Our culture would no longer be

meat-focused so the transition into a healthier lifestyle would decrease common diseases like that of obesity.

Change begins with us. Although we often complain that companies with money control society, we have to realize that power lies within the hands of the population. The minorities are the majority and we should utilize that in our favor. The top one percent that holds power only controls us because we allow it. In order to bring about real change, we need to take back control and change society. Those in power tend to be rich, White men that the general public outnumbers. They are afraid of the people uniting because they know that we could create massive change if we all came together. Rebelling this idea and coming together to create change that would benefit the people would be the most effective way to take away the power from the rich. Instead of allowing them to divide us, we should realize that we have more in common and bring about the change necessary for all of us.

The most effective strategies for achieving it include that of educating communities. Many people normalize the unfair living conditions they are surrounded by. If people were educated enough on what happens in their surroundings and how they are being impacted first-hand, they would be encouraged to bring about change. Uniting people with the ways they are being impacted and showing them that they are not alone can encourage people to get together to make positive change. The reason this would work is because the general public would outnumber the rich in power so if we got together, we would have the power to create effective, positive change.

Another effective strategy for achieving it includes that of increasing communication between one another, both nationally and internationally. If we spread methods or ideas with one another, we would be able to share what works and what doesn't. There are many people and organizations that have been working on bringing about similar change regarding environmental justice. This would not only bring us together, but it would allow us to create this necessary change a lot faster. Instead of wasting time doing trial and error, we would know what we can do to effectively reduce our carbon footprint. This would be effective because we would be reaching out to others that might have incorporated ideas that we might have never thought of in the past.

I believe that this vision and strategy can take us very far toward the world we want. At this point in time, we are running out of time to bring about change and prevent a sixth mass extinction. If we continue to delay dealing with the responsibility, the consequences will only continue to worsen especially since our global emissions would have to be cut in half in less than 12 years (Britton-Purdy 3). Instead of doing something now to try to leave the best world possible for our children and grandchildren, we continue to ignore the issue and prioritize our privileged lifestyles.

The unnecessary lifestyle that we live in first-world countries such as the United States includes that of having tons of food waste, wasting energy, and continuing to break through the Earth to remove all-natural resources possible. If we do not take this matter into our own hands, nothing will ever change and we need to do whatever is possible now. Making such changes will benefit not only the people of the United States, but the entire world (McKibben 4). The longer we wait, the worse things will get and the harder it will be to come back from that.

Something that would have to happen for a better outcome than I think is possible/realistic is for people in power to agree with bringing about change. If we had our own president and others that put together policies and laws, such as the Green New Deal, we would all be on the same page. Instead of struggling to educate our own president, we would be united and bringing about change faster than ever. A change in our way of living starting with our system itself would no longer provide power to the rich and instead make it easier to transition into a more sustainable way of living. Instead of working for money-hungry companies, we could transition into more eco-friendly job opportunities. Things such as the Green New Deal would provide healthcare for everyone (United States. Cong. House of Representatives 14). Many people stick with specific job positions just because of benefits such as healthcare so separating a specific job from healthcare and making it available for all jobs would encourage people to consider sustainable jobs instead of those of fossil fuels (Klein 7). Uniting would make it easier to bring about change because we wouldn't be against our own system and we can prevent the consequences from worsening at a faster pace.



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The World in 2050

Taylor Jackson

Tax havens ended, perverse subsidies ended, nuclear power ended. Sustainability is the major goal of the world, not consumption. The bees are saved, the people are saved, cultures and languages are preserved, a world of harmony never seemed possible. Especially considering how greed seems to be intrinsically human (Porritt 56). I have seen a lot in my 52 years of life. I have seen how greed is not intrinsically human, it is intrinsically consumerist, especially in the context of our previously capitalist society. Now things are different. The education that my children receive is not dictated by the same standardized tests that were designed to make me fail (Porritt 80). My child is able to design their own learning programs and their school teaches practical, knowledgeable, vocational, and technical skills. Their school also requires that they engage in the community in a variety of ways (Porritt 81). The most fulfilling part about their education is that every single person on Earth has access to this quality, self-organized learning. My child inherited my love of history and sociology and decided to write a report on how the world was in 2019 compared to the world we live in now, in 2050. They asked me how my generation saved the planet and survived the Great Disaster and my answer was this:

I grew up in a capitalist society. Capitalism was a global economic system that exploited the people it rendered the most vulnerable. Very few people had the means of production and the wealth, and these people and their corporations had substantial political control over the old countries. The planet was dying, animals were going extinct, the sea levels were rising, natural disasters were unnaturally frequent, and the amounts of greenhouse gases was causing nearly irreparable damage to the atmosphere (Raskin 36). Monocultures were created, the soil and earth were deteriorating, and biodiversity was at an all-time low. The majority of the world was poor, meaning they had little to no access to resources that would allow their basic human needs to be met. Yet, there was always money for the perpetual wars that plagued our planet and further destroyed human, plant, and animal life for the benefit of the rich few and to the detriment to our planet as a whole (Raskin 52). My generation knew that life on Earth could not be sustained because the economic system of capitalism sole purpose was generating wealth.

We fought the impending doom of the world by creating and sustaining a global movement whose foundation was the belief that every person is equal and deserved their basic human needs to be met. We knew that capitalism was a multifaceted system that created almost unbelievable destruction to the planet agriculturally and sustained, created, and/ perpetuated systems of oppression based on race, class, nationality,

culture, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity for the sole purpose of exploitation, and used violence to maintain these systems of oppression and environmental destruction for the purpose of profit. We knew that we needed a multidimensional approach to saving the planet. We knew that the systemic crisis of capitalism required systemic alternatives to save the world (Solon). We created a movement that challenged capitalism and the other systems of oppression that effected the most marginalized in society. We protested our respective governments and called for the power to be returned to the people.

Before the Great Disaster, there were a variety of different efforts to constrain the devious corporations, reform power structures, and form alliances across the globe to fight for a common goal (Raskin 51). This social movement began by a forging of alliances across working class labor movements around the globe. Its focus was on resisting the powers that be and identifying that our struggles were interconnected and related in ways that we could not imagine (Raskin 69). Considering that we all were coming from diverse backgrounds and experiences, it was by no means easy for us to learn that we were all global citizens of the world. Natural disaster knows no race, class, gender, or any other socially constructed category; although we also recognized that our identities informed how we navigated and experienced the same systems of oppression differently. We knew that since our fates were intertwined, we had to respect our differences and work together. We called ourselves Cosmopolis United. The leaders of our individual and transnational grassroots organizations came together and decided on our core principles that were universally applicable, inclusive, ethical, and environmentally responsible. We used the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Earth Charter as our basis (Raskin 67). Our individual organizations were the enforcers and these actions before the Great Disaster was the basis of how we allowed society to survive.

Cosmopolis United tried everything to avoid the Great Disaster. We did awareness campaigns, fought for autonomy in our respective regions, created community gardens and centers, tried reforming our governments, rebelling, civil disobedience, and armed struggle.

The people of the core, first world countries were scared to give up their means of living. Many people who sympathized the movement hesitated to participate because they were not certain change was possible; yet we needed mass engagement to make mass change (Raskin 66). The sympathizers saw the violent repression, the assassinations, the blatant violations of human rights, and they were scared. It was not until the Great Disaster, that the people realized that there was not a choice. The Great Disaster was Mother Earth responding to the disrespect, disregard, and disdain for her soils and oceans. The floods, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, and tornados were one after the other. Destroying countries and regions alike. It had gotten to the point where there

was no need to deny that climate change was real, and humanity awaited their impending extinction. Since everyone was affected by the results of the Great Disaster, no propaganda could stop the people from realizing that capitalism was not sustainable for humanity.

Cosmopolis United and their socialist ideology appealed to the masses. Their promises of a global, equitable society that was inclusive to different cultures, faiths, races, and regions was paired with their disaster relief work in the communities most affected. Independent social action groups increased the number of those involved and committed themselves to the purposes of Cosmopolis United. Cosmopolis United was able to build and maintain a diverse and inclusive movement of solidarity. People from different areas were able to unite with the common purpose to save the Earth, while allowing people to remain autonomous in their own identity and group. Individuals began to form independent communities with independent thoughts and subscribed themselves to the mission of Cosmopolis United. Since we all came from different areas and had different knowledges and epistemologies to contribute to the work saving the planet, the diversity allowed for the union to be successful (Raskin 68). The organizations that existed under Cosmopolis United all had different methods of fighting for equality, human rights, and the environment, encompassing the need for the global and the local (Raskin 33). That is where our strength came from, creating a global network that existed cooperatively and traded knowledge and resources to ensure that every group was able to survive the Great Disaster. Whenever conflict arose, restorative rather than punitive measures was used so that the movement could grow from weaknesses and only become stronger.

We dismantled the corporations and gave the people the power to determine how their resources would be used for the betterment of the globe. Global trade completely changed as we changed our relationships with nature and the agriculture. As we dismantled capitalism and capitalistic tendencies, we focused on making qualitative change with our transitive economies. Private profit became a thing of the past as community development and empowerment became the primary goal of society. Each society operated differently, but always in conjunction with what was best for the planet and the people, whether that looked like decentralized governments, social ownership, or a worker-controlled society (Raskin 49). The society and region we currently live in is based on social ownership, local gardens, communal living, and high technological output.

Our society and region used to be known as Silicon Valley. There used to be high levels of waste, smog, unemployment, and great wealth disparities. Nearly everyone owned a car as means of transportation and meat was consumed on a daily basis. Now in our province, there are energy efficient and environmentally sustainable high-speed railways. The agricultural areas of Central California transitioned from mono-cultures to

multi-cropping systems that were organic and beneficial to the soil (Raskin 55). Our province trades knowledge, books, educators, and healthcare services for the fresh produce of Central California. We also trade our medical technologies around the globe for various other goods and services. Every person in the province is secure in their needs, from shelter to food to education to healthcare. Across the globe, irrigation systems have evolved to be as efficient as they will ever be, and desalination has allowed the world to have access to potable water (Porritt). Coal has been rendered useless to the needs of humanity, and only renewable energy is used to power the lives of the globe. There is peace in our society and world because we are working as global citizens yet preserving our autonomy in respect to culture and governance. Our Eco-Socialist government is thriving. The globe is working tirelessly to ensure that another Great Disaster is avoided, and human and animal rights are being protected on every acre of the globe.

What World in 2050?

Ewa Laczekowska

whiteness of the melting snow

and we?

until next christmas?

holidays?

till monday?

tomorrow...

/ tomek kowalski³ (2005)

What we call the beginning is often the end

And to make an end is to make a beginning.

The end is where we start from. [...]

Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,

Every poem an epitaph. And any action

³ Tomek is not a famous poet, but my friend, that happen to write amazing poetry. Our conversations over the course of last months inspired this essay greatly, for which I am very thankful. The original poems are in Polish, we collaborated on the translations to English.

Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's
throat

Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.

/ T.S. Eliot, *Four Quarters* (1943)



photo by e. l.

I have dreaded writing this essay for weeks. *A fairly common case of student procrastination*, one might say; but it is not. The dread goes deeper than that, and it touches profoundly upon the fear of facing the reality we find ourselves in. Alone during my lifetime, the world we know have changed a lot and will soon change even more, to the point of unrecognisable. New analysis suggest that the IPCC's 2018 devastating report on climate crisis was, in fact, *too optimistic*; according to new prognoses, the year 2050 will mark the begin of global spiral into chaos that is likely to end humanity in a wink (Ahmed 2019). It's not a matter of *maybe* anymore: we *will* face numerous cataclysms and further destruction of ecosystems; earthquakes, floods, and heatwaves ready to kill will soon be the new normal. In short, it seems that my generation is the one that will actually be able to make plans for the end of the world, and it's scary. The news streaming in from all around the world is by no means good: as Derrick Jensen (2006) reports, "the most common words I hear spoken by any environmentalists anywhere are, *We're fucked.*"

Oh yes we are. We can cry about it, throw tantrums, or fall into despair; it will not change much, because the things that could actually pardon our death sentence are

damned to be too utopian, unrealistic, too big, too weird, too unreachable. This is why it's so hard to write this: because being able to imagine a *livable* world in 2050 would mean I still insist on pretending to have hope and that I am not crushed under the weight of alarmingly apocalyptic climate reports and future visions of the inhabitable planet (e.g., Wallace-Wells 2017). Truth be told, I'm with Paul Kingsnorth on that "whenever I hear the word 'hope' these days, I reach for my whisky bottle" (cited after Foran 2018). I do too.⁴ I get *insufferably decadent*, with a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other – not believing that the civilization will survive long enough to see me getting a lung cancer.

As you may have noticed by now, this is not going to be a typical academic paper. The issue at hand is way too personal and emotionally exhausting to write in an orderly and detached manner: I'm convinced that in order to prepare for the end of our world, we need to get real, beyond *best-case scenarios* and wishful thinking. With the words of Chögyam Trungpa (2005: 8 f.), my favourite wisdom-bringer of the twentieth century:

We must allow ourselves to be disappointed, which means the surrendering of me-ness, my achievement. We would like to watch ourselves attain enlightenment, watch our disciples celebrating [...]. This never happens. [...] We fall down and down and down, until we touch the ground, until we relate with the basic sanity of earth. We become the lowest of the low, the smallest of the small, a grain of sand, perfectly simple, no expectations. When we are grounded, there is no room for dreaming or frivolous impulse, so our practice at last becomes workable. We begin to learn how to make a proper cup of tea, how to walk straight without tripping. Our whole approach to life becomes more simple and direct, and any teachings we might hear or books we might read become workable. They become confirmations, encouragements to work as a grain of sand, as we are, without expectations, without dreams.

There is no need for despair in abandoning high hopes. The only thing it requires is a *change of perspective*. We didn't panic with the first signs of bees disappearing; we did not shed a tear over polar bears dying of hunger either. The pattern, resembling the famous words of Martin Niemöller,⁵ is an answer to the question why we call our times *Anthropocene*: we didn't care about climate crisis until it had occurred to us that what follows is a total destruction of our own species. Now that we do care, it might already be too late for redemption.

⁴ Well, I don't drink whisky; but you get the idea.

⁵ "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out - Because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out - Because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out - Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak for me."

In some ways, however, I think we are missing the point here. *The planet will be fine, eventually* – and this is what lets me sleep at night despite the existential anxiety about my own tomorrow. The existence is, in fact, eternal.⁶ Ecosystems, free of the human disease, will recover and build new thriving cycles of life and death: assuming otherwise is like believing that the world stops existing when we close our eyes.

We have to deal with our own unimportance. We must, with all honesty, imagine the end of us and go beyond the desperation to the point where there is no losing, no winning, and no hope:⁷ that is, to a point of ultimate acceptance. *It is the coming to terms with losing everything that puts us in a position to be honest about ourselves, our situation, our perspectives; a position from which we can truly act without fear or ambition.* Only a candid embrace of reality holds a potential to let go of our survival obsession that makes us small, and think clearly about what to do with the time we still have left.

Is there room for hope there? Yet again I have to side with Kingsnorth: “giving up hope, to me, means giving up the illusion of control and accepting that the future is going to be improvised, messy, difficult...” (cited after Foran 2018). Or, in other words (whispered from the top of the *Dark Mountain*): “After we stop pretending... [...] Whatever hope is worth having, it lies on the far side of despair, where the maps run out, at the margins or hidden in plain sight” (Hine 2019).

∞

[...]

Sometimes we cry
forgetting that it is
as
it should be...

Suspended

⁶ I must give Alan Watts credit for this point.

⁷ I dare to refer to the wisdom of Buddhist Heart Sutra here. I do not claim to understand it. But it helps me get by anyway. (See e.g. Brunnhölzl 2017)

- being the silence,
at least for a moment –
we have home everywhere...

And nowhere...

/tomek kowalski (2002)

we are living in impossible times. if it were fiction it would be critiqued as hyperbolic. if it were nightmares we would never sleep. [...]

it feels like everything is broken. we must, each of us, fix our attention on the nearest wound, conjure within us the smallest parts of ourselves that are still whole, and be healers. heal with words and prayer and energy, heal with money, clean water, time and action.

there's enough destruction. there's enough nothingness swallowing the living world. don't add to it. there's enough.

our visions are ropes through the devastation. look further ahead, like our ancestors did, look further. extend, hold on, pull, evolve.

/ adrienne maree brown (2017)

Talking to various knowledgeable people, and reading a bunch more, convinced me that we do not have enough time and tangible enough strategy to change the system and stop the crisis in its tracks. We can put our hands to work trying to build alternatives we consider palpable and hopeful, but in the end, nobody can tell what the world in 2050 will look like. Every alternative is met with resistance, not because of its (lack of) merits, but simply because “it’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism” (Fisher 2009). We can dream about de-grown, eco-social economies lived through local, truly democratic and resilient communities; these are worthy dreams that should not be

forgotten. There are people among us and around the world already building crucial focal points of prefiguration of these dreams; they should be given all the help and support in nourishing the seeds of a different society.⁸ However, *in the meantime*, we are driving towards a cliff with full speed, and the main issue at hand right now is to prepare for what's coming: to be ready to enter the global strife; to enter the *dark night of humanity* with a strong promise of social justice and an ocean of compassion. I do not believe any kind of different society is possible unless we collectively wake up, and as far as I got to know human nature, it will require more than a light push; probably something resembling a swing with a hammer to the head (or a global rise in temperatures of 2... 4... 6 degrees Celsius? How stubborn are we really?).

That is why it is imperative for our activism to be rooted in spirituality: because facing ourselves and the upcoming storm with radical honesty and compassionate heart will be the biggest challenge of our lives. We need to become warriors, in the Tibetan sense of the word *pawo*: “the one who is brave” (Trungpa 2007). Brave enough to not try to live up to the world we want to be but live down to the one we have. Face the truth. Become that grain of sand. Because

the impact of all of the knowledge that has arisen... looking under the carpets, and in the closets and behind the scenes of spirituality, and of ourselves, and of our traditions, has forced us to abandon wishful thinking about being better people. We're finally beginning to realise that the whole project of becoming somebody different and somebody better is bogus; it's actually a lie. This is a tantric point of view. What we have to do is – instead of living up to the person that we think we could be – we have to live down to the person we are already. It's down, down, down; down to the darkness of unconscious, down into the darkness of the Earth, because that's where the answers lie. That's where the deepest self really lies and that's where the sacredness of the universe is found. (Ray 2013)

For me, this comes before any attempt to save the world. Without honesty, we are just floating in our illusions. But truthfully, we can start from our inherent goodness to build strong communities, ready for the challenges of tomorrow. “A warrior knows that he is waiting and what he is waiting for; and while he waits, he wants nothing and thus whatever little thing he gets is more than he can take”⁹ (Castaneda 1991: 145). Thankful. Not hopeful.

⁸ To mention a few: Zapatistas community in Chiapas, Rojava region in Syria, Kerala region in India, Eco Villages all around the world, indigenous Andean Buen Vivir... We have talked about many, there are numerous we still don't know about. No matter what, these stories need to be told: for *if* there is a future in human history, we will absolutely need them.

⁹ He or she. Or them.

Instead of imagining the world in 2050, I'd rather think about now; without now, we lack the ground, *the basic sanity of earth*. Every road has to start somewhere; that somewhere cannot be anywhere else. Hope “robs us of the present moment” (Chödrön 2011); thus depriving us of the capability of doing. Forget hope. Let's put our hands together to rebel against the oppression, exploitation, and destruction, let's be rebellious on every step of our daily life. Let's organise. Build communities. Build movements. All without forgetting: we are going to die.

Isaac Yuen (2013), in response to Jensen radical stance on hope, writes: “in the end, I find myself unable to fully embrace his argument. His standards are too high, his stance too certain. I am not strong enough, not brave enough, and perhaps most importantly, not honest enough to reject hope in all its forms.”

Let's be brave enough. I know we can...

[...]

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

Through the unknown, remembered gate

When the last of earth left to discover

Is that which was the beginning;

At the source of the longest river

The voice of the hidden waterfall

And the children in the apple-tree

Not known, because not looked for

But heard, half-heard, in the stillness

Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always—
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

/ T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets (1943)

∞

Epilogue

I lost the key to
my
house and suddenly the world
became my home
like it's home of every life

in one body and one soul
a friend grows with me

and my enemies are my friends
not knowing, I take them for my
teachers

the same sun, that's inside me,
illuminates the whole earth
the tears of rain revive life
with an open flesh of the heart
I throb the same rhythm, as
Everything

/ tomek kowalski (2018)

ewa łączkowska (*she/her/hers*), born '91 in Poland, based in Germany, is a student, a storyteller, and a dancer of life. She is currently majoring in global and transnational sociology at the University of Duisburg-Essen and the University of California Santa Barbara.



photo by Yanqi Pan

wildgrowingsky@protonmail.com

Post Scriptum

This essay had a soundtrack to it. You can listen to it here:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/wildgrowingsky/i-lost-the-key-to-my-house-what-world-in-2050/>

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Claire Morgan

What World in 2050?

Where do you think the world could be in 2050 in the best possible/realistic scenario you can imagine, and what are your best strategy ideas for that being achieved?



In this short essay I will attempt to describe the best possible scenario I can

imagine for the world in 2050. In doing so I will highlight some changes across different global systems, compartmentalizing them for the sake of simplicity in explanation – not in a manner that is to underappreciate the interconnected nature of such systems. I will focus this vision on my perceived best possible scenario, with less emphasis on the realistic scenario, as one of the underlying sentiments throughout this course has been that of hope. I find it hard to be hopeful whilst simultaneously realistic from within the parameters of my current understanding of the state of the world. Thus, I am pessimistic that my vision for 2050 could be realized in its entirety. However, I will attempt to be more pragmatic in addressing practical strategies that could contribute to bringing my vision into being.

In order to set the context for my vision for the world in 2050 across various realms of human life, I will first outline the shift in the collective human psyche, consciousness, perception of the external world – whatever you wish to call it, that I see as pertinent to achieving any of the subsequent more systematic shifts. In short – a shift in how we as the human species perceive ourselves in relation to the other-than-human world. The essence of what I suggest we must shift away is summarized in what Vandana Shiva calls: “the disease of anthropocentrism” (Shiva, 2018) and its subsequent psychological, cultural, structural and institutional manifestations. Awakening to the fact that we are “all one earth family” (Shiva, 2018). Anthropocentrism – which, when taken to its conclusion, imagines the human species and thus the systems produced by human society – such a modern capitalism– as above and separate from the rest of the earth’s biotic community. An anthropocentric position perceives nature as having value only in so far as what it can provide for human needs and welfare (Baker, 2006: 26). Solon reminds us that in the pursuit of systemic alternatives, systematic failings such as

capitalism, anthropocentrism and patriarchy are interdependent and mutually reinforcing (Solon, 2019) and thus cannot be addressed in parts. We all carry with us some form of bias as a result of the our own deeply-held belief systems, and of course I am no exception to this, but my bias tells me anthropocentrism is a dangerously deep-rooted psychological mode of constructing reality and that, if overcome, could have a resounding ripple effect on all our other systems.

Moreover, my vision for the world in 2050 is premised on a global shift in the way we perceive ourselves in relation to the other-than-human world, from an anthropocentric sphere of reference to an “ecocentric” (Baker, 2006: 26) position, which aligns with those ethics prescribed by deep ecology. Deep ecology demands an “entirely new worldview and philosophical perspective” (Iep.utm.edu, 2019) - what Naess has called an “ecosophy” (Naess 1973). There has been work done to deconstruct the current and reimagine then a “new ecological consciousness” (Hamilton, 2010: 571), much of which is based on the ways in which we as a society today construct our sense of self (Hamilton, 2010: 573). As Hamilton suggests “consumption is now intimately tied to the creation and reproduction of a sense of self” (Hamilton, 2010: 573). In other words, in order to begin to practically shift towards a collective ecocentric position by 2050, I argue we need to find “sources of identities, creativity, and meaning that lie outside the realm of the market” (Agyeman, 2013: 31). In addition, I believe we must move away from individualism as an ideological stance that pervades modern consumer society – towards a more communitarian means of constructing our identities, or even better, towards an “ecological communitarian” (Callicott cited in Domsky 2008: 389) means of construction. An ecological communitarian ethic by which all of human society subscribed would allow “a whole host of natural entities to be allotted moral standing” (Callicott cited in Domsky 2008: 389).

Thus, such ends begin to align with visions similar to that of ‘The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth’, a movement already being enacted and written into law in countries like Ecuador. In 2050 I see the emergence of a new guiding universal ethic among human kind – taking inspiration from Leopold’s ‘land ethic’ (Leopold, 1949) - that, when enacted through decentralized, localized, community based governing systems, transcends human rights, and recognizes that whilst universal human rights are important, they are no more important than the rights of the wider biotic community made up of all living entities – and above all else the entity that from which life is born, the source of all of our existence – Mother Earth. I would hope this new ecological consciousness (Hamilton, 2010: 571) and guiding ethic would allow us to explore and cultivate our infinite human creativity and spirit in a way that constitutes love, compassion and deep respect for all that is. Providing the space for the realization of what it truly means to be human, a species among countless others.

As stated earlier, if such a shift could be authentically realized by 2050, I would imagine a plethora of the systematic alternatives we have covered throughout the course to be possible, from the Latin American concept of Buen Vivir (Solon, 2019) - encompassing indigenous cosmocentric values, to Degrowth (Kallis, 2017) – predominantly a Western discourse and critique, to the Gross National Happiness index, as showcased in Bhutan, reflecting notions of a Sufficiency Economy (Thin, 2015: 766). Or there is the concept of Buddhist Economics as espoused by Schumacher (1973), which is born from the idea of cultural relativism and pluralism: “just as a modern materialist way of life has brought forth modern economics” (Schumacher 1973: 32) the “Buddhist way of life would call for a Buddhist economics” (ibid).

There is much to learn and take from each of these discourses, and for me to say which I think would be most effective in different places around the world would be to fall into the same oppressive trap that the Western world has done for centuries - in its attempts to impose a one-size-fits-all, linear ‘development’ agenda onto the rest of the world, based entirely on their subjective experience and understanding of the world. Therefore, from my position I don’t feel comfortable in arguing which discourse or systematic alternative would be best suited to each region and community around the world, that I would want to see implemented by 2050. Thus, I reiterate that as long as we can collectively cultivate a holistic universal ethic as discussed above, we may begin to trust and empower one another in a real and caring way. In doing so, I believe that such systematic alternatives could authentically manifest in each region of the world, in a way that reflects each particular (biotic) community’s needs. With the application and deployment of what Schumacher describes as “intermediate technology” (Schumacher, 1973: 106), also known as appropriate technology.

Furthermore, my idea of how this may manifest begins with a re-evaluation of ‘needs’ in the affluent world – accompanied with a strong social movement advocating sufficiency as a *moral* way of life. I imagine as the effects of climate change worsen as time goes on and begin to directly impact those sectors of global society that have either had the resources to shield themselves so far or are located in more temperate climates where impacts are currently less felt – that gratitude and perspective will begin to emerge. And with the realization that we are not invincible as a species, I hope will come the re-evaluation of what we really ‘need’. It must be noted before I go on that this refers solely to the affluent people of the world. Those of us living and consuming far beyond our means – to the detriment of human (psychological and physical) and planetary health – will *have* to gain perspective whether we make the choice or it is eventually made for us. As Gandhi said “the Earth provides for every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed” (Gandhi cited in Schumacher, 1973: 17). The expansion of ‘needs’, propelled by manipulative capitalist marketing strategies, is to increase our dependence on outside forces (Schumacher, 1973:17) that due to climate change are facing imminent collapse.

In conclusion, I realize I haven't answered all the questions prescribed for this essay. However, I feel very strongly about a lot of changes that are desperately needed, that an essay of this length could never cover it! I also feel that sometimes there is disproportionate emphasis put on the practical and tangible aspects of addressing climate change and reconnecting with the environment – perhaps because we are a society that is a product of modern science – and this means greater bias towards the reductionist methods that modern science deploys. Subsequently there appears less emphasis is on the quasi-spiritual, psychological and philosophical components of climate change and the world we want to live in – of which I deem of equal if not greater significance.

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“A starting point for change - A new world in 2050”

Pauline Naterstad



My name is Pauline Naterstad and I am a student at the Free University of Berlin. I am working towards a bachelor in North American Studies, with a main focus on sociology and history. The academic year 2018-19 I did an exchange year at the University of California, Santa Barbara where I took the class “the World in 2050” with Professor John Foran. This class was what led me to write this piece.

When thinking about what the world will look like in 2050, my instant reaction is fear and pessimism. The way the relation between the environment and the economy works today makes it hard to have a non-dystopian vision of the future. A future that is not highly segregated into a rich elite living in the places that have been less affected by the climate change, whereas the rest of the world is struggling with health problems and natural disasters. Although the fear I have for a future scenario like that has not gone away, the text “Toward radical hope” (Foran, 2018) resonated with me. It made me think differently about our role in the climate crisis. The quote “It’s so crucial, regardless of ultimate outcome, that we cultivate our best capacities and form intimate

spiritual friendships that can grow into a broader social movement inspired by a grounded, healthy, and responsive spiritual vision,” made me reflect on what my ideas are for a positive future. I do not have all the answers on how to reach the goal of a better world in 2050. I do have a utopian hope that we would live in a complete socialist world, without inequalities and where we have managed to teach every community to be self-sufficient. However, that is not something I see as a realistic view, and I will therefore rather focus on some of the changes I do see as realistic that could create overall positive systemic changes. I do not think that I can come up with a holistic view of how the world would look, but I do see some measures we could take that in conjunction with other ideas could lead to larger substantial changes. The place I will focus on as the major place for change is education. The reason why I mention education as the main source of change, is because it really is one of the core places for shaping people’s mentality and ideology.

I think in order to understand how we can strive for a “best scenario world” in 2050, we have to interconnect the idea of individual actions with a larger scale systemic change. Lately, I have been pessimistic and angry at seeing people promote taking individual actions, because of its tendency to be a cover up for larger corporations to be able to continue working in unsustainable ways. Examples of such are the “Keep America Beautiful” advertisements of the 90s, that were focusing on promoting picking up the trash after themselves. This is a good thing to be conscious in itself, but it is in reality shifting the blame from the larger corporations producing the trash to the individual consumer. The ads were sponsored by the American Can company, and served as a way to hide the larger problem behind the individual blame (Dunaway, 2017). What these forms of action can lead to is making people feel good and conform without further action. However, it is not about not acknowledging the importance of individual actions such as recycling, choosing reusable cups, or eating less meat, but it’s about promoting these individual actions simultaneously as educating people about the necessity for more large-scale change. In order to reach a more just society in 2050 we have to take a look into what the real necessities are and maybe take a look for inspiration into the past, both to learn about what was done wrong and right. My belief is that we can promote widespread individual behavioural changes, as well as strive for large scale systemic change.

Since the generation that will have to take over the consequences of our actions are yet to be born and be formed into potential world changers, I think we need to focus on stirring the educational system in the direction of making it more of a place for preparing this generation for the changes ahead. First step in this process would be to create a plan directly targeted at preparing the children for more self-sustainability and for growing up to be active participants in working to maintain the planet intact for them to live on it.

I am building on Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, where he argues that education is used as a tool to maintain oppressed classes of people. (Freire, 1972) He goes on to argue that once we have come to the realization of how it works as exactly that, we can start changing the way we see education and valuable knowledge. We have seen how education can have a negative impact on people's ideology, and how it has helped maintain systems of oppression. Since we already have schools as an existing institution that has been used as a tool to help maintain widespread oppressive systems, we just have to reform the way we think about it and change the content of learning. It can be used as a space to spark widespread creativity, critical thinking and as a direct response to the climate crisis.

I was thinking that one important aspect of the curriculum all the way from kindergarten to high school could be gardening and learning extensively more about nutrition and sustainability. The way the food industry works today, in that we grow excessive amounts of produce at one part of the planet often harming that environment, and ship it across in large quantities, because it is economically more cost efficient, just does not work in the struggle for climate justice. Where I grew up in a little village in Norway, most of the inhabitants were active farmers. These were small scale farms that mainly produced meat and milk, and they were reliant on keeping global competitors out. Apart from the meat and milk they would sell, everyone would have their vegetable gardens, where they grew potatoes, carrots, and other root fruits. I vividly remember going to my grandparents' farm and being told to go outside and pick up some carrots and potatoes for dinner. Over the years, especially after the Norwegian government entered the EEA agreement, it has been almost impossible to maintain local farms, as there will always be a cheaper alternative coming from a larger scale farm (Norsk Landbrukssamvirke, 2018). Because of this I have seen more and more farms disappear from my hometown. Previously active farms, such as my grandparents' farm are forced to quit. With that, the art of growing your own vegetables as a way of having meals for the whole year disappeared. With our generation it is no longer a given that the main source of nutrition comes from your own backyard, in fact, it is a rare exception. However, knowing that my family has done that for generations gives me hope that we can go back to it.

If you start from having a garden in kindergartens where you teach the children about the process of growing the potatoes and other vegetables, to preparing it for a meal, this can already start sparking the interest, so that we can build on that when they enter school. Nowadays, there is too little knowledge of what is in what we eat, and how to maintain a healthy, sustainable diet, both for ourselves and the rest of the planet. This is how the large-scale agricultural business makes a profit, but by educating people on such matters we could bring the 'old' knowledge back and from there make a more local based economy again. Making this a standardized part of the school curricula is a

good start in promoting change. The knowledge that the children will learn could be continued into adulthood and lead to more community gardens.

When it comes to how to actually implement these changes into the school system, we have to be careful in it not becoming just some wonderful idea that only schools in richer neighbourhoods can afford. We need to make sure that resources to create these gardens and the future-oriented school subjects are distributed evenly. In order to implement this, the governments have to work as a strong voice and institution in making sure that it really is distributed evenly.

Striving towards socialism and turning away from the individualistic view is maybe the part that seems hardest to overcome here in the US. However, although the sentiments towards socialism are still a bit hostile overall in the US, more and more people are warming up to it (Younis, 2019). I think with our generation and the next, this could potentially be a widespread belief. Which is another reason why it is so important to focus on transforming the educational system.

In order to make a just democratic socialist system, the idea of donations and charity needs to be broken down and shown for what it really is. Having universities and schools heavily reliant on donations, does not only contribute to an unequal distribution of resources, but it also limits the teaching and freedom of speech. Once we have managed to create a fully tax-funded socialist system, the road to promoting more critical thinking and a practical curriculum should be easier, as there will be less of a profit from keeping knowledge from people. However, this is a two-way process to raise a new generation that could work hard to continue the work that the current young generation of activists are doing today. Therefore, the way I see it we first need to start with putting a heavy focus on making the school system more future oriented, which will hopefully lead the students to come up with new creative ideas. Through this form of education, we can shift the way people think about work as well. If they grow up focusing on creating a community, rather than on getting good enough grades to get into the best business school, a large part of the job to create a future like Riccardo Mastini is hoping for would be done. A future “economy of care, craft, and culture,” where people do the work for the good of the society (Mastini, 2018).

In this paper I have not focused so much on how the world would look in thirty years, but rather on what I think could be a good starting point for change. I hope that through reforming how we think about education and what is being taught, that we can manage to raise a generation with a new way of looking at the world. Through a larger focus on community building in education, I am hopeful that we can reach a world in 2050 where the capitalist system has been dismantled and a new more democratic community-based system has risen.

Reimagination to Reality: Our World in 2050

An Nguyen

An graduated from UCSB with an Environmental Studies major and minors in Art & Technology and Spatial Studies. She served as a Carbon Neutrality Initiative Research Fellow focused on building campus resiliency. She hopes to continue serving her communities by promoting environmental sustainability where ever she goes.”



Reflecting back on roughly thirty years ago, many didn't believe that the world could become what it is now in 2050. The Earth's chances seemed too bleak. In October of 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) came out with an assessment that warned the world only had a dozen years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree would significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people (Allen et al. 2019). In 2019, a United Nations Report suggested that because of human activities, around one million species "already face extinction, many within decades,

unless action is taken to reduce intensity of drivers of biodiversity loss,” (UNSD 2019). The world was undergoing a number of systemic crises that included, “capitalism, xenophobia, racism, patriarchy, extractivism, anthropocentrism, plutocracy, productivism, and colonialism,” (Solon 2019). During a time of social and political division, these facts and figures left people feeling overwhelmed and helpless. It oftentimes felt like nothing could be done for the sake of our planet.

It took the increasing frequency of climate related impacts like natural disasters to make the social distribution of vulnerability apparent and visible. Third-world countries were disproportionately affected by climate change, which was predominantly caused by first-world countries like the United States. We realized that if we were going to reverse nature loss and share resources fairly, now and in the future, the world would collectively need to enact change. These changes came in the form of systemic alternatives, which “[sought] to confront and overcome the structural causes of systemic crises” by thinking in “terms of the totality of the whole” (Solon 2019). It wasn’t one set of best practices that solved all of our problems, it was the combination of different visions and ideas that led to today’s revival. Since all crises are interconnected, the most logical way to find a solution was to connect all efforts. In 2050, we have restored the wellbeing of our people and planet through a new culture of behavior, reformed governance, and transformative, systemic change.

To ensure a safe, sustainable future, we had to break away from poor decision-making of our governmental agencies. Every day, leaders make decisions that affect our earth – from governmental policies and business strategies, international treaties, to local community decisions on development. In the 2020s, the decisions being made were not enough. In fact, governmental policies were lacking, and our natural environment was left to degrade at a rapid rate. We realized that the bottom-up approach wasn’t going to cut it. Individual behavior changes like voluntarily reducing plastic usage or eating lower on the food chain only made so much of a difference on a small scale. We needed top-down transformation in order for our global system to efficiently accommodate our planet’s cry for help. Understanding this, we adopted a multifaceted approach, in which governments, NGOs, corporations, scientists, and multilateral stakeholders were involved. The world’s governance achieved a pathway that now recognizes and empowers people as global citizens with universal rights. The change was supported by creating a value system that prioritized humans and the environment.

Our capitalist system was evidently no longer sustainable, so our society underwent the Great Transition – a deep, systemic change that abandons consumerism at the expense of humanity and nature. We adopted a planned ecosocialist economy where “societies exercise its freedom to control the decisions that affect its destiny” (Lowy 2019). As a result, degrowth was also activated within the United States through the decoupling of employment from economic growth. Degrowth is the “equitable

downscaling of production and consumption that reduces society's extraction of energy and raw materials and generation of waste. It is the abolition of economic growth as a social objective," (Mastini 2018). With these measures in place, governance now focuses on optimal livelihood for all rather than for just a few. Everyone has access to basic needs like clothing, housing, healthcare, education, clean water, and sanitation. Money is invested in programs to enhance livelihoods of people and make their communities more resilient.

One sector that has made the largest strides in today's society is energy. We now have the ability to rely almost exclusively on clean, renewable sources. However, the path to get to this point was not easy. In the late 2010s, the Trump Administration leading the United States caused a delay in action. Leaders weren't valuing our collective future, but instead prioritizing profit over people. Trump's goal of securing "energy dominance" was rooted in attempting to revive the nuclear and coal industries, obstructing natural landscapes, and marginalizing communities. Regardless of this obstacle, non-profit organizations and research institutes like the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) were taking matters into their own hands. WWF developed a report concluding that the "technologies and sustainable energy resources known or available [in 2007] are sufficient to meet the challenge of doubling global energy demand projected by 2050, while avoiding dangerous climatic change of more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels," (Ayukawa et al. 2007). However, the report also reiterated that "time is of the essence". As Trump was voted out of office during the 2020 elections, the Democratic party was able to regain control and enact change within the energy sector, especially within the parameters of the Green New Deal. Jobs were guaranteed for fossil fuel industry workers and clean energy was promoted as a human right and common good. The energy efforts in the United States included community, worker, and public ownership, with environmental health improving for all.

If they weren't experiencing them already, countries around the globe witnessed the positive outcomes of switching to renewables. Thus, they followed suit and the world collectively invested enough, eventually making what used to be an idealized concept of ditching dirty, fossil fuels a reality. In the 2010s, we only began to dabble in the area of energy technologies like solar, wind, hydropower, and geothermal. We explored the capacities of each technology by carrying out extensive research and innovation to determine which would serve us best economically, socially, and environmentally. The value and potential of renewable energy was realized, and the world fully committed in the 2020s. This commitment was driven by economic policies and measures as well as urgent intergovernmental actions. The link was finally broken between energy services and primary energy production, because energy efficiency was optimized with low-emissions technologies. Flexible fuels were made possible with the development of energy storage and accommodating infrastructure. The world finally replaced its high-carbon coal usage with low-carbon sources. In addition, carbon

capture and storage technology advanced and now successfully serves as a complementary avenue to reduce carbon emissions.

Like the energy sector, the way our world consumes and lives has dramatically evolved. Thirty years ago, our food system did not have environmentally sustainable ways of production nor did it even provide nutritious food for our booming population. Simultaneously, the food system including production, transportation, processing, and waste put an incredibly unsustainable strain on environmental resources. In response to this issue, we needed to find tools to feed ourselves more sustainably. With innovation and technologies, this was done by the implementation of better practices. It started with reducing growth in demand for food and other agricultural diets by shifting diets and reducing food loss and waste. With that behavior change we were able to increase food production without expanding agricultural lands through increasing crop yields and pasture productivity. In addition, the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural production decreased through better management of things like manure.

These vast changes were complemented with a variety of small-scale transformations. In the midst of the Great Transition, the popularity of ecovillages increased. An ecovillage is “an intentional, traditional or urban community that is consciously designed through locally owned participatory processes in all four dimensions of sustainability to regenerate social and natural environments” (GEN 2019). Within these ecovillages, systems like urban farms and community gardens took off. People began to see the value of investing in local procedures and the power of do-it-yourself projects. Not only do these sorts of local functions provide abundance for a group of people, it also builds community. Food production is not the only positive benefit of the popularity of eco-villages. These communities provide a space for individuals to enact the change they want to see for themselves and future generations. The practice of sharing and collaboration is invaluable and has proved to be a key behavior change that has led society to become what it is today.

Change starts with new ideas and courageous leaders, but it’s also put into action by popular demand. Undoubtedly, it is made possible by socially, environmentally, and economically just decisions by people as a collective. Back in 2020, it was impossible to say whether the world would be better or worse in 2050. However, humanity persisted resiliently despite all of the obstacles with one common platform that inspired monumental change – hope.

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Photo Essay on Resistance

Compiled by John Foran







*The explosion of demonstrations by students in Europe continues. This picture comes from a demonstration of 5,000 students in Leipzig, Germany in 2019.
April/May 2019*



**"BE REALISTIC,
DO THE IMPOSSIBLE"**



**"...IF WE DON'T DO THE IMPOSSIBLE,
WE FACE THE UNTHINKABLE."**

- MURRAY BOOKCHIN



Climate march in Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2019. Credit: Amal Atrakouti





Community Movement Builders where art, culture, politics, and organizing meet. Your support made possible our anti-gentrification mural in Southwest Atlanta

Popular Assembly for an Eco Vista Green New Deal: A Report

December 1, 2019



Introduction

In November 2019, students in Sociology 134EC: Earth in Crisis, devoted two weeks to studying the various Green New Deals and then convened a Popular Assembly to develop ideas for an Eco Vista Green New Deal. What follows is the entire collection of proposals that were made.

Note: as this book goes to press, in February 2021, students in Sociology 130EV: Eco Vista: Creating Systemic Alternatives, returned to this space to revise, update, and write text to accompany the bulleted points. This new work will be available on the Eco Vista website.

1) Housing

A: Rents and landlords –

B: Coops –

A coop is a housing cooperative that provides low-rent housing for students and other people interested living there. Inside their house they welcome all members regardless of their gender, race, social, political or religious affiliation and thereby create their own creative community. For creating more coops in the future Eco Vista, we would like to propose the following points in the Eco Vista's Green New Deal:

- Different themed houses:

Creating co-ops that have a specific theme to it that can appeal to certain groups of people (for example, a religious or vegan co-op). With this everyone is able to find a house that fits their needs.

- Engage in the community

- Have co-ops on every street of IV to be able to engage with that whole neighborhood
- Can help create/maintain neighborhood gardens and other facilities
- Organize special events for the community

- Expanding by creating demand:

Higher demand from students can create incentives for investors to provide housing. The coops have a low rent policy, which is really attractive for students since there is a big problem with 'overpriced' housing. A higher demand can be created by attracting more attention or benchmarking. And also by making the image more appealing. You could think about street painting/tabling in order to spread more information about it.

Besides trying to make the coops more known, we also have to think about the funding of the project. Our first step would be contacting

the IV Community Service District, because creating more coops will be in line with the future goals of the IV community.

C: *Houselessness* –

- In our group, we focused on breaking down the issue of houselessness and focused on two points:
- WHO is being affected/ targeted (which communities are being impacted the most) and
- HOW can we improve/change current resources already provided? We need to understand that this issue targets certain groups and these groups have no equal access to resources.
- There are programs such as Co-op; however, we believe we need funding, improvements, and more effort invested in them
- We need more community-based programs catered to everyone needed it
- Yes we need requirements, BUT what if they cannot be met? (no job, no income, etc.) We need to start moving away from putting standards/requirements for these programs
- We need to have easier access to resources
- Advertisement!!! How to do spread the word around?
- We have a lot of abandoned houses that can be put into use;
- Outreach: have direct communication with those being affected; listen to needs/concerns
- Understand that different communities have different needs/ impacted differently
- Avoid using one-size-fits-all strategies; strengthen the programs already in place
Include commuters as well! Students living in cars

2) Food

A: *Gardens and markets*

- Expand the gardens @ the community center & Harder Stadium

- Expand these gardens into the IV elementary and all around Goleta
- Each Street in Isla Vista can contribute and volunteer to grow a garden on their property - need to talk to the landlord, & city to get approval of this project.
- Each street will grow different vegetables or fruits, plant fruit and vegetable trees, later share and exchange the crops grown with different streets in Isla Vista
- supplies: would ask the university, local government, farmers markets to fund the project
- spread awareness generation after generation of students coming into UCSB --> emphasize how this project is important for survival as we experience climate change and healthier.
- Learn necessary gardening skills and how to grow your own food, and how important this is
- With the food growing, we can use it to cook meals for the community, teach students, children, people to cook and experiment with vegetables.
- Further education about plant-based diets
- With the food that is grown (vegetables and fruits) we can teach people how to eat vegetarian or vegan and emphasize how incorporating a meatless diet helps with not contributing to CO2 and methane emissions caused by the meat industry.
- Labor: If residents volunteer their front yard or backyard of their homes, they would be in charge of taking care of the crops.
- Labor can come from volunteers.
- As an incentive, upkeeping the gardens could be a way for students to earn school credits, gain experience, and could even look good on a job resume.
 - If professors get involved, they could have their class visit the gardens and help maintain them every so often
- Goal: Low cost food but primarily the goal is, free vegetables & fruits for the community.

- Fostering a better, closer-knit community
- Fighting alienation brought about by capitalism and culture

B: *Food insecurity*

- Combination of urban gardens & preventing food waste
- Expanding Food Not Bombs & organizations like AS Food Bank

C: *Waste*

- Establish education programs for students/residents on how to reduce consumption and waste of single-use items, and food:
 - Promote local sources, bulk buying, and utilization of local gardening opportunities
 - Speak in lecture halls, door to door with QR code
- Create an organization to manage waste disposal in Isla Vista (expand the current Isla Vista Compost Collective to service all of IV)
 - Sort and divert waste in Isla Vista; organic waste, recycling, and landfill (curbside diversion)
 - Provide split-waste bins for residences
 - Provide a bin for cans that bottle fairies collect (will help keep recyclables out of trash bin)
 - Cut Marborg out as the main contractor for waste programs, localize waste diversion instead
 - Have a subcontract with Marborg to collect what is left (landfill) at a much lower rate than door-to-door pickup

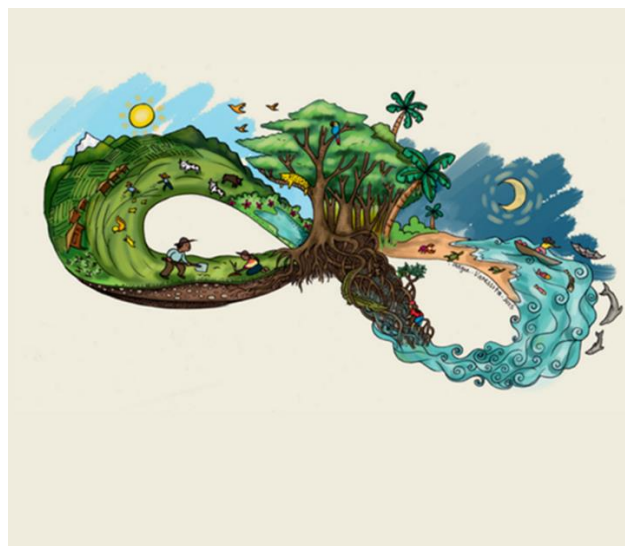
D: *Restaurants and Cafes*

- Create contracts with co-op and local IV businesses so that ingredients are locally sourced
- Leftover food from IV restaurants/cafes goes back to community in a food-drive and food past sell date

- Local volunteers composting businesses food and using that in soil in the community gardens
- Introducing vegan meal options to local restaurants where ½ of the proceeds go to the restaurant and the other ½ goes to an eco-vista fund

Proposals:

- Volunteers compost local business food scraps/waste and give that soil back to the permaculture gardens in IV
- Introduce vegan menu items to local restaurants. With these specified items, half of the proceeds go back to the business, and the other half goes toward Eco Vista.
- Leftover food or food that is past its sell date is donated to a local food drive
- Create contracts with local business and the co-op/farmer's market/community gardens that ensure their ingredients/produce are locally sourced
- Restaurants use reusable resources for takeout (banana leaves, rice paper bags, bees wax, Solubags (or other “plastic” bags that are biodegradable and dissolve in water)
- Cheaper, more accessible vegetarian/vegan foods within local businesses
- Using a local currency throughout IV businesses?



Art by Angie Venessita (2015), <https://www.convivialthinking.org/>

3) Culture

A: Celebrations, festivals, and regular local events

Our group collectively decided on three events:

1. An end of the year free sale event. Students would bring old furniture, clothes, appliances and would give them away for free, we would have student volunteers that would assist with the listing and moving of furniture. Can add extra credit in the syllabus, even the smallest point to get students to come out.

- Send out emails.
- Collab with student orgs to get funding for the program (for the food, snacks, drinks, t-shirts, etc.)

2. A day in the park is open to all residents, not just students. Different booths will be set up consisting of food, drinks, games, face painting, and activities. While spending the day with other residents, we will raise awareness of Eco Vista, providing ways they can become involved.

Promotion:

- Free and for sale.
- Get professors involved.
- Make Eco-vista a lecture where we can earn credit points while getting involved. This can help spread more awareness and it can also be motivating.

3. Plan an event to teach people about how to use the food that we grow at local gardens. We could do a free vegan or vegetarian cooking class that teaches people how to use vegetables that are in season or grown locally. We could also teach the community ways to substitute meat in their favorite meals with those locally grown goods. This way we could help people reduce their carbon footprint by utilizing local foods and reducing the amount of animal products in their diet.

B: Art, music, and video/film

Open Mic Nights

1. Community weekly Open Mics Fridays at 7-11pm (Beach Sea Lookout park)
2. Present new docu-series episodes
3. Sustainable food provided at Open Mic
4. Range of activities: speakers from eco-vista, spoken word, DJ sets accompanied by emcees/rappers etc.
5. The event will be live streamed and accessible for all
6. Social media outreach
7. Open assembly, anyone is welcome to share ideas or talk about how they feel in relation to the climate crisis.

Community Documentary

8. Records gardens
9. Combined efforts for sustainability
10. Youtube Docu-series (Weekly videos)
 1. What is IV/ Eco Vista?
 2. Food co-op
 3. Community
 4. Showcase local artists
 5. Music Videos

Outreach Ideas and Strategies

1. Flyers created by local artist
2. Website
3. Social media presence
4. Go fund me (will be used to fund our events)
5. Local food (community gardens)

6. Face to face interaction (local networking)
7. Door to door flyering/ inviting people to the open mic.

Funding Ideas:

1. Reach out to the Isla Vista community services district for funding of open mic events.
2. Create a circular economy, so the money put into these events can set up small business booths and these small booths can then make money and put some of that money back into the events or toward other areas of the Eco Vista movement that may need more funding

C/D: *Zines and newsletters and social media*

- Flyers
 - Not handed out individually
 - Digital flyers should be uniform and repostable
 - Recycled paper
 - Include all social media handles and upcoming events
- Social media presence
 - A balanced mix of PSA's and calls to action
 - QR codes and prizes for follows/posts during tabling
 - Snapchat - filters, geofilters and spotlights on Isla Vista sights and resources
 - Utilize public stories and snapchat takeovers
 - Partner with established instagram account @EcoVistacommunity
 - We can try to be featured on other popular IV accounts
 - @ only in Isla Vista
 - Official UCSB instagram

- Consistent posting- once a day/every other day
- Facebook- Check-in at Eco Vista events
- Partner with other campus organizations
- Set-up in the Arbor-outreach (incentives to follow Eco Vista & become involved)

Zines

- A collaborative work of art and special topics
- Members contribute pages to be compiled

Newsletter

- Weekly or monthly newsletter emailed to those who sign up for email list
- Lists current events going on in the environment, local events and meetings, etc.

4) Economy

A: Start-ups and job creation

Proposal: Solar panels company/startup

Step 1: Fix up infrastructure of existing houses and commercial buildings in IV

Government grants and UCSB funding

Creates jobs if you promote those in IV to help other Houses increase in value

Work study: School could promote working/installing solar panels for credits/tuition reduction/hourly wage

This would create new jobs as well as teach skills

Step 2: Install solar panels inside UCSB campus

Require UCSB to install solar panels on all school owned buildings and transition to 100% renewable energy over 10 years

Work study: School could promote working/installing solar panels for credits/tuition reduction/hourly wage

This would create new jobs as well as teach skills

Step 3: Maintenance and Economy

Required maintenance would mean that these jobs created would be sustainable. The saved money from using fossil fuels for energy would then be put back into the economy in IV.

Encourage existing energy companies to work directly with UCSB to hold instructional classes and hire students.

B: Services start-ups (yoga, ridesharing, etc.) –

- Creating a point system—an app used to keep track of environmentally friendly things you do. This will create incentive for more to think eco-consciously and connect with other start-ups. Local markets and businesses are able to give out points through the app or the app itself can reward the user through evidence (photo, Lyft receipt, donation receipts, etc.)
 - How to Earn Points
 - extra vegetables/food from personal gardens donated to local markets
 - ride-sharing—through apps like Uber or Lyft, or carpooling
 - using limes as a form of transportation
 - beach/city clean-up
 - donating clothes to local resellers
 - using reusable cups/utensils at coffee shops and restaurants
 - Bunz App is an app that already uses this idea. We can use it as an example for business model
 - o What to Redeem
 - free yoga class/surf lesson/Kombucha lesson

- free ride coupons (Lime, Bird, Uber, Lyft)
- purchasing donated clothes
- reusable cups and utensils

These are also ideas to expand on in terms of community and also playing a part in Eco Vista. Organizing activities such as these to help spread awareness of Eco Vista and what it represents, and also be used in the point app.

- Yoga in the park
 - Kombucha making
 - Surfing lessons
 - Music jam groups
 - Placing more trash cans and recycle cans around Isla Vista—organize to start up a compost truck
- More on ride-share: create a carpool/rideshare app and allow people to rideshare everywhere they go. They will be allowed to post on the app where they are going and pick up others who need rides. Can get points for ridesharing. Will be an app (like Uber) but for students.

C: Greening of existing businesses

Establish a standard for grading of local businesses “greenness”

- This would be similar to the way health department ratings are displayed at food service businesses.
 - With more information about how green a business is consumers could vote with their purchases.
 - Businesses could improve their rating by installing lower energy consuming products, serving more non-meat products, declining to provide single use items, more efficient use of ingredients to promote less waste, composting the waste that is generated, electrifying any devices that still use fossil fuels.
- Incentivize businesses
 - Policies

- Sustainable rating
- SF Business example
 - Fines if do not comply with standards
- Reward composting etc.
- Certification from Eco Vista
- Issues with Restaurants
 - Single use plastic silverware, bowls, cups, etc.
 - Solutions
 - Kit
 - Gather information form businesses on what is possible
 - Reusable to go containers brought by customer
- Solar Panels/Energy
 - Energy
 - Tax for implementation
 - \$2 million spent each year for the fences for Halloween
 - Solar islands - Eco Watch Article
 - Solar charging stations
 - Expand access for electric cars, electric scooters, etc.
- Farmer's Market
 - Camino Real
 - Bike / Bus groups
 - Support the farmers market from IV residents
 - Bring it to IV: Little Acorn Park or other parks in IV
- Problematic Businesses

- Example of green transition
- Car shop
 - Convert?
 - Waste management treatment
- Common Garden
 - Consider?
 - Different Group
- New Business
 - Zero Waste Product Store
 - Selling reusable products Locally
 - Goldie's Location
- Wind Power/ Energy Efficiency
 - Allowing businesses to transition

D: local currency

Proposal: Vista Pay

- Our group is in charge of proposing a local way to manage currency that is easy to use and will help the local economy of Isla Vista. The idea is to create an app for your phone for the residents of Isla Vista to use and partner with local businesses to help keep the flow of currency in our community.
- Our idea is to combine a few different resources into one universal form of local currency. Much like Venmo, the app will allow you to exchange money with other users. This app will also have the features of Apple pay where you will be able to use it to purchase items at shops and restaurants in Isla Vista alone by scanning your phone at checkout. Vista Pay will also record and catalog all of your purchases and receipts so there would be no need for printed receipts.

- The appeal to using Vista Pay in Isla Vista instead of other alternatives is because Vista Pay will partner with local businesses to offer exclusive deals and discounts. This will incentivize customers to consistently shop locally within Isla Vista instead of leaving to spend their money elsewhere such as Goleta or Santa Barbara. This also benefits local businesses due to creating more recurring and new customers. All in all, boosting the local economy of Isla Vista.
- Aside from just an economic standpoint, Vista Pay aims to help the environment. With Vista Pay, there is no need for plastic credit cards, cash, coins, or printed receipts (which ultimately get littered or thrown away).

5) Resilience

A: Disaster preparedness

Proposal: disaster relief program

- Isla Vista as we know is prone to recurring natural disasters. We have seen how unprepared and uncoordinated community and university responses have been. This has caused chaos that could have been prevented, so with that our team proposed a Disaster Relief Program, which aids the Isla Vista community in its preparedness and resilience development. Our ideas have been based off of the disasters that have already occurred .
- These ideas include:
 - Hold meetings and assign each member of the crew different areas to monitor in Isla Vista
- Phase responder alerts
 - Phase A: advisory alert
 - Phase B: emergency situation
 - Phase C: evacuation is in full effect
- Evacuation plan
 - Designated evacuation routes such as designating evacuations by blocks (for example, 65 block goes first, 66 second, etc.)

- Avoid DP and surrounding areas
- Fire Plan
 - Creating a designated safe open area in case of fire outbreak on or around campus that students can evacuate to
 - Possibly getting rid of the Eucalyptus bordering IV
 - Creating a fire committee in the community
 - Hold community outreach events on fire safety and preparedness
 - Education on areas that are prone to fire, so that students enter the “outside world” with knowledge on where fires are common or where they will be
- Educate residents on individual home preparedness
 - Have volunteers hold meetings or go door to door and educate IV residents on natural disasters prone to IV and how to prepare for them
 - Hold these in multiple languages??
- Transportation
 - Provide airbuses to shuttle every block during evacuation routes to the safest city nearby
- Natural Disasters aren't the only threat to the safety and well-being of students and faculty. The chances of UCSB or IV experiencing a man-made disaster are not 0, therefore we need to be as prepared as we absolutely can
 - Professors and TA's should be trained on how to treat a wound or how to help someone who has experienced physical trauma, this may save someone's life
 - Putting a first aid kit in every classroom, equipped to handle more severe injuries
 - Making it aware to all students and individuals where these kits are located

- Offering seminars for students on safety and how to help someone else in case of injury
 - This does not have to solely pertain to man-made disasters, students should be prepared with knowledge of how to take care of someone until help can arrive

B: Climate adaptation and resilience planning

- Threats to eco-vista and strategies to reduce them
 - Wildfires: change the vegetation, non-invasive grasses only ones that aren't very flammable, rework electrical grids → 95% of wildfires in California are human caused, independent power increase rooftop solar PV,
 - Adjust the way we build structures near the coast; stop letting people live on oceanside DP rather than continuing to fix damages; think long term rather than short term
 - Can improve road infrastructure, porous asphalt/renewable pavement that absorbs water and keeps it from going into the sewers and draining into the ocean
 - Green roofs, absorb water/ help with flooding, also helps with urban island heat effect which is why urban areas like iv are very hot, balances out heat that rises from asphalt. It also purifies the air because it adds plants to the environment
 - Bioswales (help with flooding), channels of vegetation to concentrate and remove stormwater runoff, removes debris and pollution from streets, promotes diversity
 - Evacuation planning, similar to earthquake drills at school but on a bigger scale
 - Wildfire planning, have equipment ready to put out wildfires → shoveling dirt on fire
 - Adjust the way we build homes, use less flammable materials

6) Energy and transportation

A: Transportation

Transportation Proposal:

1. Rideshare app: An app that allows people to post where they are going so that others can tag along on the ride to go to places outside of Isla Vista. This will reduce the number of cars on the road and make travelling around Goleta and Santa Barbara more efficient.
2. Introducing biofuel into the public transport system- which refers to cellulose, vegetable oil, algae, corn, sugar cane, and other forms of waste as an alternative fuel source.
3. Create a better infrastructure for the Biking system, with incentives for riding bikes over driving cars.
4. Increase jobs for students living in IV eliminating the need for cars to be the primary transportation to work.
5. UC Shuttles for transportation of students - stops around IV

B: Renewable energy

Renewable Energy Proposal:

Step one:

Have the Isla Vista community change their preference on California Edison bill to renewable energy while Isla Vista builds renewable energy technologies. Instead of having your hard-earned dollars going towards oil companies every month to generate your electricity, your dollars will go to a green, American, renewable company. It's as easy as signing up for the green rate option on SCE's website. In IV the average house is occupied by 7 people so at around \$7 per month extra (depending on your usage) the price increase is \$1/month per person.

This plan doesn't involve asking the university for one red penny, this is simply using the power of consumer choice to change the way power is made. I believe this is the most reasonable and affordable option to make IV, or anywhere in Santa Barbara, powered by renewables. If anyone is wondering about the reliability of switching to the green rate option, it's exactly the same. SCE is simply buying green energy on our behalf to supply us with renewable electricity. I've had the green option for months and the cost difference has never exceeded what I deem unreasonable.

1. Solar panels on the houses and university buildings.

2. Wind turbines on the cliffs and in ocean where there are higher wind speeds
3. Tidal power, can place under wind turbines in ocean
 - a. Make sure to put tidal power in areas that won't impact wildlife
4. Cut ties with oil companies

Make UCSB fund the conversion into clean energy in exchange for the promise of cheaper electricity. (regenerative investment)

Offer applied renewable energy courses through UCSB to maintain solar panels. These courses could count as upper division elective units for environmental studies majors.

7) Health and safety

A: Mental health services

- Peer Support Group Website
 - Add modules that would be mandatory for each year to take regarding mental health (kind of like Gaucho FYI) in order to raise awareness and help students erase the stigma surrounding mental health
 - This will especially be useful because even if one person isn't going through it, they will recognize the signs and help someone else
 - These modules will also be designed specifically for your circumstances to help you with some anxieties you may be going through (1st year - 4th year; transfer students; non-traditional students; etc.)
 - Anonymous Hotline for Students
 - Here students can also reach out to other students and meet up to talk about what they are going through and help each other out whenever they are available since it is hard to get an appointment at places such as CAPS (whether it be to just rant about your day or talk about your anxieties)
 - Hotline will use volunteers or anyone who wants to help to communicate with students

- Website will include links/phone numbers to other outside resources
- Rideshare for Appointments
 - Free of charge; volunteers would give rides to students who need to get to AA meetings, Rehab appointments, Therapy sessions, etc.
- Waived Healthcare Fees
 - This would make it more accessible for those who don't have the UCship or Student Health to get the help and support they need without worrying about the cost or not having a specific form of healthcare
- Working with elementary school - possible new curriculum/class
 - Many kids do not know how to express their emotions or understand why they are feeling the way that they are feeling; therefore they may become angry, depressed, or begin to have anxiety. Starting these teachings at a college level can be overwhelming, so starting the destigmatization at a young age can help youth process their mental state and eventually help to create a more empathetic community.
 - *Inside Out* study - many therapists have started to use figures from the Pixar movie *Inside Out* to help nonverbal kids express their feelings, and this has helped them identify their feelings when they have been unable to do so in the past. If we begin to do this at a young age, by the time these kids reach college, they will be able to identify and cope with their feelings instead of feeling lost and alone.
 - We make kids take gym in middle school and high school and emphasize physical health, but we ignore mental health, why not make it mandatory to take a mental health class, or offer a class for youth to take as an elective (not ideal) so they can understand their minds as they grow up and begin to discover new feelings/anxieties.
 - This course/class will also offer ways for you to cope with these feelings and how to help a friend, family member, coworker, etc. if they are going through something as well

- How can you help better your community when you are struggling yourself? If you take care of you, you can better your community in a clear, healthy state of mind

B: Physical health services

- Funding/Sponsors: UCSB, IV Government, Alumni, Grants, and Local Sponsors
- Free Clinics for Check-ups, Immunizations, and Testing
 - Volunteers helping with events and filling positions
 - Collaborate with local hospitals/clinics - Doctors, Nurses
 - Create easy, accessible sign-ups at schools/around town
 - Preventative Health Issue Awareness
- Weekly info meetings about health topics
- Quarterly Health Convention
- Health Classes and Events:
 - Yoga, Swimming, Running, Nutrition
 - Collab with Athletics and Rec Cen
 - Collab with Adventure Programs
- Fundraising Events
 - 5K Through IV
- Campaign: Lower Student Health

C: Safety and violence in IV

Proposal:

CSO program already in place – escorting people home late at night or when people feel unsafe to walk on their own; help decrease chances of sexual assault instances, domestic violence instances, etc.

IVPD – focusing more on safety of and helping residents rather than trying to punish residents

**can we reduce the police presence during Halloween or topias and are all the fences necessary? Seems like a lot of money that could go into something more stimulating

Trying to create a more central program to help students (IVPD, UCPD, IVFP, CSOs, etc.)

Getting rid of IV Foot Patrol and reallocating funds to CSOs, Life of the Party, emergency phones, lighting, or other programs or plans for promoting safety

Lighting – adding more lighting to more areas of IV; solar powered

Reform riot-risk during Halloween, Deltopia, etc.

Emergency phones throughout IV that are publicized and visible

Mandatory yearly Green Dot training through CARE office for ALL students – deals with bystander intervention, sexual assault, domestic violence, etc.

Stricter penalties for perpetrators

Board of students for sexual assault cases that go to the school (similar to Judicial Affairs hearings)

8) Funding

- A council that has funds delegated to fund environmental proposals:
 - Goal: funds should be available for those trying to better the earth, it is helping us all
 - It allows the environmental creativity of the people to flourish and come to life
 - Allows all organizations that have similar project ideas and goals to work together
 - “Eco-fund”: can apply for grants

- Separated into different categories to ensure that all categories are funded equally and allow more people to collaborate. [build community]
- Support events hosted by eco-vista
 - Food
 - Advertising
 - Art supplies
- Who's in this council?
 - Indigenous community [reintegrate into the conversation and action, a lot of knowledge we can learn from]
 - Students (UCSB/SBCC)
 - Environmental group representatives
 - Eco Vista
 - EAB
 - Edible Campus program
 - Etc.
 - Long-term residents
 - IVCS D
 - Parks and rec
 - This will allow for many voices to be able to have a say in what is funded and provide a platform for ideas
- In order to get funding, we need to spread awareness why these are important topics and why should be funded
 - Podcast; women environmental activist
 - Talk about our intersections
 - Educate our communities

- Bring more awareness about people our age
- Share out experiences, inspire others
- Guest speakers: professors, students
- Anyone want to join us?
 - Next quarter? You could get eco-vista credits [Soc 190A]
 - IV community center garden
 - First episode soon, john will be sent a link

9) Organizing and outreach [combine forces into one group, please]

A: Non-student community outreach

B: Building Eco Vista among UCSB students

Student outreach: Get people knowledgeable and excited! Also understand the desires of UCSB students and match that

- More classes across majors discuss what Eco Vista is and how to get involved.
- With Gaucho FYI, include more about info about living in IV in general, it's history, how to take care of it, and discuss organizations like Eco Vista.
- Implement more community-based events for points within clubs and Greek life. Support community more than other club teams (ex: encourage members to volunteer 2 hours with Eco Vista rather than sit and watch a baseball game).
- Show films at IV theater about climate change and offer extra credit to classes who attend for incentive.
- Putting posters around campus and sending student wide emails.

Nonstudent/other: Support our community and meet everyone's needs!

- Offer more meetings of Eco Vista so people who work during the day can attend (maybe after 5pm, on the weekends, or online forum).

- Fun events in IV that have food, prizes, etc., while educating people in our community
- Social Media to create an online platform on Facebook so people know where to go if they have questions or want to get involved with the community.
- Gardening and sustainability workshops.

C. Relations with other IV organizations

Work with already existing non-profits, service groups, and organizations in Isla Vista like the Isla Vista Recreation and Parks District and Isla Vista Food Cooperative to include the whole community of I.V including families and students

- Collaborate on projects and events such as Adopt- A-Block / clean-up projects with the I.V. Recreation and Parks District and sell the food grown at local gardens at I.V. Food Co-Op
- Educate community on Eco Vista and the climate crisis in general at organizations who already aim at educating the young and others

D. Relations with UCSB

E. Indigenous Relations

- Get in contact with the Coastal Band of the Chumash
- Hire a paid campus and IV liaison from the Coastal Band to oversee plans for Eco Vista
- Set up an Indigenous relations working group comprised of Native students/community members from UCSB and Santa Barbara to make sure that Indigenous land and protocols are respected
- Ask Coastal Band what reparations can be made within the scope of Eco Vista and how they would like to get involved

10) Holistic planning

A: Visioning Eco Vista

B: A development plan for Eco Vista –

11) Cool Eco Vista –

Recruitment and outreach for the Cool Block program –

12) Policy and Legal Reform -

Policy and Legal Reform Task Force

A coalition to tackle restrictive policies laws to help that each group needs help creating/reforming/abolishing in efforts to establish Eco Vista.

This group can alleviate pressure other groups have when they run into the politics and laws that keep shit from flowing smoothly.

Example: Making it easier for outside local entities to better support the community

If you have an idea that doesn't seem to fit anywhere, you may list it here.



Source: <https://us1.campaign-archive.com/?e=2e803ca1cf&u=9c663f765f28cdb71116aa9ac&id=3198619874>

Eco Vista Green New Deal Collective Notes from INT 133B: What's Wrong with the World? How Can We Fix It?" September 1, 2020

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RrUd0YeCctkkXG7iBD660aAQ9eDGR1dMGuNoKqcKdno/edit>

Group 1: Hailey Hennigan, Jeff Flint, Lucy Ma, Blaise Lemos

Topic: Houselessness

- Get billionaires out of IV – ban the slumlords
- More University housing – University coops
- Creative alternatives – more sustainable ways of growing food, making friends, creating art
- Fundraisers– selling art, having an outdoor concert, thrift swaps/yard sells to raise money for people in the co-op who might still need help paying for housing/food/life

Group 2: Tiffany Hsu, Ryan McNeil, Precious Anwanyu, Jessica Kelton, Justin Deckard

- More co-ops based on gardening healthy food
- Having healthier food options in IV food places rather than the junk food that is mostly sold, hopefully provided by the co-ops and locally grown food
- Less policing by actual police, more helpful interactions with CSOs
 - Providing water and help for people especially on nights when people are partying
 - Helping rather than criminalizing/penalizing drunk or struggling people
- Better community lighting to help students/citizens to feel safer and be able to see their friends and locations
- More community involvement in budget choices (i.e. \$300k traffic light)
- Informing citizens at the end of the year on how to organize unwanted furniture and home goods so that there aren't tons of furniture on the streets
 - Setting up composting for unwanted food at the end of the year

Group 3: Isaiah Aly, Jason Gonzalez-Mejia, Aurora Sanchez, Shayne Chen

- We talked about vista pay, the idea of keeping wealth central and circulating within IV is a great idea on paper, but the need for this shift in finances within IV might not be needed yet or necessary

- The idea of houselessness within IV and the amount of gentrification that is currently going on, how these new landlords and corporations are driving out more people and leaving college kids with fewer opportunities for affordable housing
- The question of sustainability within IV and mentioning how we are able to transition to these new forms of living without breaking the bank or leaving out small businesses that heavily depend on our business to stay afloat

Group 4: Names: Xochitl Briseno, Owen Schvarcinger, Anjanae Davis, Tucker Steil

- Push hard for Coop housing, as it fosters greater housing security, food security, and collective bargaining power with local government and landlords
- Bolster efforts to engage freshmen with the community, potentially with a freshman/sophomore level version of this class
- Themed housing coops are a fun way of getting prospective residents interested

Free write

Let's allow ourselves to dream big and think about a bold vision for the future. What do you want our region to be like in the next 10 years? What values would your community represent and what would it feel like to be a part of your community?

Hailey Hennigan – In the next 10 years I'd love to see IV as a thriving community. One that incorporates all of its residents regardless of gender identity, social status, religion, political opinion, etc. I hope that housing is more affordable to students and local residents. I hope the community is more tightly knit and people with all different perspectives recognized. More gardens, fewer cars – more bikes, less trash on DP, a bigger bagel cafe, maybe a local farmers market every weekend on Pardall where people can sell homemade goods and food, fewer parties, and more local gatherings, a dog park. I hope that the community is strong and we can come together through hardships *cough, cough* *a pandemic*

Jason Gonzalez-Mejia – I believe that IV should reflect the culture that students at UCSB have begun to foster here for many years: that of acceptance, security, learning, social life, and bright hopes for the future. In 10 years I would love to see more people involved in the community's sustainability efforts (which I thoroughly regret not doing that much) and cultivating an atmosphere of hope and transition to what the future holds. Local farms, larger food banks, less predatory landlords, more small businesses and grassroots organizations hold the key to IV's future in my eyes.

Owen Schvarcinger – I think California holds a lot of potential to not only lead the US but also the world in its pursuit of equitable ideals and progressive economic policy. Several sectors are already world class but I think there are several social, economic, racial, and political divides that have been increasing in visibility and intensity since Trump and now Covid that need to be dealt with. Gentrification, income/wealth inequality, and housing crises have come to characterize California as well and I believe these are the areas which we are uniquely postured to address and set precedent for other states to follow.

Xochitl Briseno – California’s ability to maintain its own relatively rigorous environmental laws and regulations as the Trump administration loosens environmental provisions at the federal level shows that we can be the precedent for the country. In 10 years I really think we can take the issues that are interacted particularly when it comes to environmental racism in California by having a collective agreement or our own version of the green new deal. If I could get into specifics I would love for Los Angeles to have some form of co-ops in areas like mine. I live in South East LA and would love for there to be less gentrification and more focus on community based gardens, groceries, farms, create more local banks that support our community business.

Justin Deckard – In ten years’ time I’d like to see the ideas that underlie this course and greater movements for justice institutionalized in Isla Vista. More specifically, I’d love to see a self-sustainable Isla Vista that can really govern itself and is committed to the mission of inclusivity and accessibility. Especially in a place as small as Isla Vista, there are so many opportunities for fostering community and building solidarity to combat things such as food and housing insecurity. It’d be wonderful to see the landlord-tenant relationship completely disrupted in Isla Vista, and for that wealth to be truly owned by people within this community rather than private landlords. There have been too many instances of entire apartments of people being displaced, and it would be great to see a community that is both culturally *and* materially focused on the prosperity of people rather than profit.

Tiffany Hsu – In 10 years’ time, I think it’d be nice to come back and see a much cleaner environment and see evidence of all the progress made by groups like Eco Vista. Also, it would be nice if the housing properties were no longer all owned by the same couple of companies and there were more co-ops woven throughout the community along with several gardens with healthy crops and food available to the whole community. The values of the community should represent camaraderie, solidarity, community building, and diversity as reflected by each and every person that makes up IV. I feel that there is already a strong foundation of community values but it would be great to see those values expanded to include everyone through more

community events that can build relationships. A major improvement could also be made throughout all the parks and lots in IV so in 10 years, I'd like to see a more developed, lush, and beautiful environment for everyone to enjoy.

Isaiah Aly – I would like for my region to be free of homelessness, and I would like for everyone to have a means of supporting themselves, whether it is achieved by increasing the number of jobs or increasing Federal security nets. I would like to see a drastic change in the direction of sustainable living and renewable energy, and an effort to make both of those things more accessible to all. If we are talking about Isla Vista, I'd like this town to be a leader in environmental and social activism. While I feel IV does a good job already, I'd like to see an even greater level of community commitment and collectivism, where every member could feel like they have a genuine stake in each endeavor that the town takes on as one.

AnJanae Davis – I hope that our community would be more environmentally conscious. Eco Vistas plans are a great stepping stone for what is to come. I believe that our community would work more as a collective to become more sustainable amongst IV as a whole. A vision that is Inclusive of the community members outside of students. There are major areas for improvement in relation to housing and waste management within the community. Tackling these areas could bond the two groups together in hopes of a better feasible living environment.

Ryan McNeil – I would like to see a community that is more connected to both each other and the world around them. I think the ideas about making food resources more local (i.e. garden co-ops or community gardens) are great because not only do they provide more local, healthy, accessible food resources but also I think it inspires you to think more about the origins of what we consume, in relation to everything. If I'm eating cucumbers and tomatoes from a local farm I feel connected with it, and then in contrast to that if I'm eating from Safeway I will probably then subsequently think - where did this come from? This then expands into other aspects of life, where is this plastic packaging from? What about my textbooks? What about my phone and energy? Etc. So the localization of food is big to me, but also really everything. Amazon is great in some ways because you can get so much stuff, but for example, if I bought all my books from a local book store, I think I would feel more connected to the place I am and also it inspires conversation between those who also frequent it, creating more of a feeling of place and identity. This was all a bit tangential but I suppose to unify my thoughts, my big vision for the future is more localized economy, involving local farms, energy sources, and more community oriented economy, for example stores which buy and sell from each other and from community members, tangible changes we can make which result in a closer knit community.

Shayne Chen – I believe that Eco Vista should incorporate the consideration of the environment in the future policies as the utmost priority, because climate change is one of the most significant issues that lies ahead of us. While equality, efficiency, and other issues remain important, the climate issue is related to our immediate future, because as the interview of Extinction Rebellion suggests, it's not something that we can wait to act, and radical change needs to happen now. And the best way for it to happen is for it first to take place on a small scale like in Isla Vista, rather than a national level. As the redundancy of the political process renders the transformation stagnant, changing policies in Isla Vista is much easier, as less stakeholders are involved in the process. So, I am absolutely for considering the green new deal and I am hopeful that by adopting environmentally friendly policies we are looking at a bright future ahead of us.

Lucy Ma – Ten years later, the crime rate will be reduced even more here. The problem of burglary will become less and less because people will pay attention to it. The price of renting a house to nearby students will drop because of the support of the school, which will lead to fewer people living together in the future, which greatly improves the quality of life and reduces the cost of living. The school will also provide safer security around the area. Perhaps nearby universities will form a university community to promote exchanges between students (UCSB, SBCC). For community college students, there will be better educational resources, and for students from UCSB, they will also meet different people and build our own community .

Precious Anwanyu – I see a community that grows its own food locally and allows community members (not just students) to benefit from it for free. I see people living in houses they own or are owned by people who live in IV. I also see a less policed community and a community with robust services for people in need that don't involve the police. I would also really love to see a way to subsidize small businesses so that they are reasonably affordable for all the citizens and so our local economy is strengthened.

Aurora Sanchez – I think that UCSB/Isla Vista has so much potential to be the starting point of changing communities into a more sustainable environment. UCSB and Isla Vista are the epitome of a large environmental and other social movements and can be a growing symbolism of peace in a small community. IN ten years, Isla Vista would be a clean and helpful community. As its population increases as the years go by, it will be more difficult to have everything in control. Some of Isla Vista's (and UCSB, for that matter) current issue is housing, theft, and parking. It is without doubt that the student population is being exploited in every aspect, and that is not mentioning the small families that live in the community. I would like to see a community at peace in one another and helping each other overcome the same issue that is trampling over us right now.

Eco Vista Project Sourcebook

Michael Bean

January 2020



[Source](#) for image

*We've got to start looking at what we pretend we can't see
it will save us, or it will break us
and you've got to stop telling yourself what you don't know
'cuꝛ you know what you know*

–Ali Dineen
What You Know
on Light Comes In
published by Bandcamp 3

Outline –

- Climate Chaos
 - Equipping Ourselves to Participate in the Climate Solutions Debate
 - Adaptation - Visualizing Local Consequences of Sea-Level Rise
 - Adaptation - Acknowledging Other Effects of Climate Chaos
 - Carbon Reduction - Calculating Methane Release at Tajiguas Landfill
 - Carbon Reduction - Combining Package Delivery & Trash Hauling Functions

- Communicating
 - Installing Public Telephones

- Community - Gathering Places
 - Collecting Placemaking Ideas in Portland and Other Cities
 - Gathering Places - Designing a Mini-Piazza(~)
in Anisq'Oyo' Park across from Markets

- Culture & Aesthetics
 - Music - Revitalizing IV's Music Scene
 - Sculpture - Beautifying IV's Downtown Loop
 - Beautifying IV's Student Residential Zones
 - Celebrating
 - Restraining IV's Dysfunctional Festivals: Deltopia & Halloween

- Dwelling
 - Houselessness
 - Opening a Drop-in Day Center
 - Articulating Housing Strategies
 - Retrofitting Buildings
 - Writing a Sustainable Retrofit Guide for Apartment Owners
 - Redevelopment & New Construction
 - Writing a Sustainable New Construction Guide for Apartment Owners
 - Minimizing Use of Concrete
 - Reorienting Buildings along North-South Axis
 - Land Use Planning
 - Establishing an Experimental Zoning Designation and Test Site(s)

- Economy
 - Recognizing and Supporting Parallel Economies
 - Understanding Poverty and Wealth at UCSB and in Isla Vista
 - Instituting Universal Basic Income

- Energy
 - Greenhouse Gas Reduction - Employing Peer Pressure to Reduce Personal Carbon Use
 - Encouraging SCE Customers to Choose Renewable Electrical Utility Option
- Environment
 - Planting Fruit, Nut, & Shade Trees
 - Studying the Blue New Deal Proposal
 - Forming Temporary Sculptures with Natural Materials
- Governing
 - Pressing CA Legislature to Make PG&E a Public Utility
 - History - Articulating a Cohesive Narrative of How We Landed in this Predicament
- Healing
 - Addiction - Offering a Smoking & Vaping Cessation Program
 - Disposing of Toxic Chemicals and Materials Safely & Responsibly
 - Minimizing Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields
 - Toughening Municipal Water Standards
- Infrastructure
 - Rethinking the Sewer System
- Learning
 - Establishing an Earthling FYI Training
 - Expanding Tenure Criteria
- Media
 - Promoting Reliable Sources of News and Analysis
 - Understanding Our Relationship to Phones and Other Devices
- Nourishing
 - Permaculture - Converting IV's Lawns to Food Forests
 - Building a Certified Community Kitchen
- Preparing for Emergencies
 - Planning for Deep Resiliency
 - Water - Drilling & Maintaining Emergency Wells

- Recycling
 - Cultivating a Deep-Rooted Zero Waste Ethic
 - Rethinking June Moveout
 - Reducing Contaminants in IV's Recycling Stream
 - Fostering Recycling Literacy
 - Reducing Litter
 - Opposing Reliance on Single-Use Plastic Water Bottles
 - Repairing Public Trash Receptacles
 - Installing Pocketed Skirts around Public Trash Receptacles
 - Opening a Repair Workshop
 - Creating a Makerspace

- Safety
 - Training Riders and Calming Traffic
 - Mapping & Marking Accident Sites
 - Closing Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant

- Transportation
 - Optimizing Transportation & Parking

- Water Conservation -
 - Irrigating - Installing Graywater Systems
 - Irrigating - Collecting Rain Water
 - Saving Some for the Fish

- Working
 - Organizing a Tool Library

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Projects –

- Climate Chaos - Equipping Ourselves to Participate in the Climate Solutions Debate – Climate activists (e.g., Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, Sunrise Movement, etc) are clamoring for government leaders to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but what evidence do we have that the decisions they reach will be at all helpful, appropriate, humane, or just? Based on past experience, it seems likely that what the US Federal government will deliver will be ineffective and expensive boondoggles that serve primarily to enrich giant consulting, engineering, technology, and fossil fuel companies like Bechtel, United Technologies, Monsanto, Exxon Mobil (~), etc. We need to become literate in pertinent disciplines that bear on climate science

and climate science skepticism. We also need to get acquainted with the wide variety of methods being proposed including greenhouse gas reduction, conservation, carbon sequestration, geo-engineering, resilience, adaptation, and retreat so we can advocate effectively for the kind of world we want to live in. Recommendations: List the disciplines we need to know our way around in. Start enumerating the “solutions” being floated. Begin articulating criteria for acceptable responses to the crisis. Get to know our congressional representatives and senators. Outline a curriculum for equipping activists, students, and the public to participate intelligently in this discussion.

Related Topics: Climate, Governance, Learning, Organizing

- Climate Chaos - Adaptation - Visualizing Local Consequences of Sea-Level Rise – We in IV don’t seem to have much sense of how global climate chaos may affect our lives. Yes, we’re experiencing extended droughts, wildfires, urban conflagrations, and storms. But the shape of future consequences isn’t tangible. Several years ago, a group of people in Santa Barbara set out / sought to get permission to paint a blue line on city streets and sidewalks to indicate how much of the city would be underwater given sea-level rise projections. The real estate community freaked, out of concern that it would depress property values. So the initiative failed. Recommendations: Get topographic maps covering IV, the airport, both sloughs, and Goleta. Research well-grounded scientific estimates of sea-level rise for different years. Ask folks at UCSB Geography and the UCSB Library Map & Imagery Laboratory (MIL) for help in plotting corresponding elevations. Collaborate with people in other departments like the Art Department, College of Creative Studies, Department of Theater and Dance, and Film and Media Studies. Host a film series on sea level rise and larger climate chaos issues. Consider organizing a large-scale art installation to help people visualize what may become of IV. Will it become a peninsula, an island, or a popular destination for recreational scuba divers? Explore options for ephemeral, temporary, and permanent performance and design elements, e.g., posters and signage showing the retreating shoreline and ocean intrusion into the slough and airport, street theater, a line of people in blue T-shirts people joining hands around IV Island, blue tape, blue surveyor stakes, blue chalk, durable signage, and/or blue highway paint. Host a town hall to discuss what intelligent adaptation might look like. Where could UCSB go? What would the relationship between town and gown be then? What about residents who aren’t students, staff, or faculty? Could we do a better job of planning this time? Could we create an intentional community grounded in social justice and ecological sustainability? Even if we didn’t have to move, what could we learn and adopt from this exercise?

Related Topics: Art, Climate, Film Series, Land Use Planning, Learning, Street Theater

- Climate Chaos - Adaptation - Acknowledging Other Effects of Climate Chaos – Questions: What other consequences of cascading climate chaos may Isla Vista and the

UCSB campus have to deal with? Recommendations: Compile a list of possible climate-induced or -exacerbated breakdowns. Consider drought, torrential rain, local flooding, salt water intrusion into the water table, death of trees and crops, incursion of tropical diseases as temperatures warm and vectors like new species of mosquitos expand into the South Coast, climate anxiety, debilitating moods, water & food scarcity, economic collapse, martial law, starvation, fascism, epidemics, etc.

Key Distinctions: lost decade, slow onset, Conference of the Parties (CoP), 1.5°C, 2°C, 3°C, major emitters, frontline communities, climate science skeptics, deniers

Related Topics: Mood, Preparing for Emergencies, Planning

- Climate Chaos - Carbon Reduction - Calculating Methane Release at Tajiguas Landfill – Over time, as organic waste deposited in the landfill decomposes, it releases methane, a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Recommendations: Research and calculate IV's contribution to methane production through the waste it sends to Tajiguas landfill. List and map the various food waste collection, composting, green waste collection, chipping, and mulching operations in IV. Calculate how much kitchen waste, uneaten table scraps, and spoiled produce is generated from IV restaurants, markets, and houses. Survey some households, co-op houses, sororities, and fraternities to gauge how much food is consumed and how much wasted. Consider siting a green waste dumpster in downtown IV (perhaps at the Park District?) for public use to divert more yard waste from the landfill. Talk with processors to learn what materials are suited and unsuitable for the process they use. Articulate the different methods or technologies being used, e.g., hot composting, vermicomposting, industrial composting, the chop & drop method of turning prunings into mulch on the spot, chipping, and the County's rotating shredder(~)* and heat sterilization method. Develop signage to help sensitize people as to what items belong in what or whose bins. What kinds of organic waste are still getting sent to the landfill? Design programs to capture and process them.

[* Call South Coast Recycling and Transfer Station at 805.681.4345 &/or Joey, the mulch guy at 805.681.4981.]

Related Topics: Composting, Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Recycling

- Climate Chaos - Carbon Reduction - Combining Package Delivery & Trash Hauling Functions – Isla Vistans receive lots of packages and produce a lot of waste. Swedish researchers(~) made an intriguing observation: package delivery trucks arrive full and leave empty, meanwhile trash and recycling trucks arrive empty and leave full. They wondered if it would reduce fuel consumption to have the trucks bringing packages also pick up landfill or recyclables (?) at the same time. [Fact check.] This question calls for some sophisticated mathematical modeling. When is it more efficient to take parcels to distribution centers (?) and when is it better to deliver them directly to recipients' addresses. The branch of mathematics known as operations research could provide this sort of logistical analysis. Recommendations: Ascertain how much fuel (and what kinds

of fuel) do delivery services and trash / recycling pickups currently use? Who uses gasoline, diesel, bio-diesel? How much carbon does that represent? What plans do different outfits have for implementing electric-, hybrid-, or hydrogen-powered trucks? Study the Swedish program. Have they designed special trucks? How far have they gotten? How is the program working so far? Assuming that several commercial package delivery services operate in Sweden, which delivery services are participating? How did they work out which delivery services would be included this? As this proposal would require the development of infrastructure outside Isla Vista, open conversations with the United States Postal Service, MarBorg Industries management, County of Santa Barbara Solid Waste Division (?), and City of Santa Barbara (~) Department of Public Works (?). Identify operations research authorities at UCSB and ask their thoughts on design issues, choices, and tradeoffs they see for such a project. (Source: BBC 191222n)

Links: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/stories-50828056/the-delivery-driver-who-takes-away-your-rubbish>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04grdbc/episodes/downloads?page=1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07y1vjy> (?)

Related Topics: Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Operations Research, Transport

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- Communicating - Installing Public Telephones – Public telephones have all but disappeared. (See list of pay phone locations.) Yet public telephones serve real needs: Folks who—for whatever reason—lack a cell phone still need to make calls. Cell phone users frequently experience having their phones run out of charge. Mobile phones get lost, broken, or stolen. People get behind on their phone bills and have their accounts suspended. In large-scale power outages, cell networks may be down while simple landline phones continue to work. There are reportedly still a handful of pay phones sprinkled around the Santa Barbara area. ViewTel(?) based in Portland, Oregon (?), has begun offering free stationary public phones in several communities.

Recommendations: Get corporate contact info from one of the remaining pay phones in the area (e.g., at the temporary MTD bus station at Chapala and Figueroa Streets (~), at the 7-Eleven at Storke(ø) Road and _____, (somewhere in Old Town Goleta perhaps?), (somewhere on Milpas perhaps?) and where else?). Contact the company to ask what they would require to install one or more pay phones in IV and how quickly they can make repairs. Contact ViewTel(?) to find out about their mission, the service they offer, and if they would consider serving Isla Vista.

Related Topics: Community, Infrastructure

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- Community - Collecting Placemaking Ideas in Portland and Other Cities – Portland, Oregon’s City Repair Project has nurtured tons(~) of delightful projects in nearly every one of Portland’s 92(?) recognized neighborhoods and inspired similar efforts in other cities. Recommendations: Check out co-founder and architect Mark Lakeman’s talks on YouTube.com and neighborhood projects on CityRepair.org. Organize a field trip to tour Portland and document cool neighborhood amenities, projects, and groups. Consider producing a video documentary, podcast, article and/or catalog of project ideas.

Recommended Reading: Mark Lakeman’s /A Placemaking Guide/ (~)

Related Topics: Community, Infrastructure, Placemaking

- Community - Gathering Places - Designing a Mini-Piazza(~) in Anisq’Oyo’ Park across from Markets – There seems to be a lack of convivial, non-commercial gathering places in IV. The west end of the Madrid walkway through Anisq’Oyo’ park used to be more of a gateway and small gathering spot. It widened out a bit, had attractive slipcast(~) ceramic pavers on the walkway, and stone planters on either side. Acoustic musicians would occasionally play there. Unfortunately, the space was too confining. Women often felt unsafe using that entrance because the stone planters constituted a pinch point where certain men would sit on either side and often make unwelcome remarks to women passing through. The space seems to call out to be made into an inviting—and safe—gathering place. If the space was enlarged into a semi-circle without the confining ‘running the gauntlet’ feel, it could be an inviting public space for people to gather and musicians to play. Recommendations: Assess whether this design would jeopardize the nearby pine trees. Solicit sketches and ideas from community members, passers-by, community leaders, Park District staff, and people in the Art Department. Pitch designs to the Park District.

Related Topics: Community, Design

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- Culture - Music - Revitalizing IV’s Music Scene – IV used to have a vibrant music scene, with many bands, numerous practice spaces, and more performance venues. A number of artists and bands got their start here and then rose to national prominence. These include Rebolution, Jack Johnson, Animal Liberation Orchestra (ALO), Zack ____, Green Day (?), FmlyBnd(~), Rainbow Girls, ..., and [who else?]. Most every weekend, groups would give outdoor concerts on the Anisq’Oyo’ Park stage and amphitheater. A large storage facility on the low 6500 block of Madrid Road, known as “The Sheds,” served as a practice space, hangout, and incubator for many bands. Unfortunately, it was gentrified out of existence when the property was razed(~) and redeveloped as the second ____ (?) apartment complex in 19__/20__(?). For several years, the property now known as UCSB’s Embarcadero Hall was a club and venue for

touring bands and local bands. [What were the names of the clubs? The Anaconda and _____? Which was first? What years were they open?] A house at 6674(?) -B Pasado, known as “The Pink Mailbox,” served as a punk venue for over a decade. The Biko Garage, i.e., the garage at Biko House, hosted (and still hosts) shows by touring bands. Borsodi’s Coffeehouse provided a stage for performances [Fact check]. A mix of houses (like Rainbow House), coffee shops, and restaurants held open mics.

Recommendations: Study the current music scene with a view to injecting new life into it: Who’s offering open mics? What houses are currently serving as practice or performance spaces? What venues are currently available? What factors or forces led to the comparative senescence / sleepiness / dormancy / death of the music scene(~) now? [Look into university & county efforts to discourage large parties, the County’s Noise and Social Host ordinances [What else?], Park District ordinances, Park District deposit and fee requirements]. Interview musicians and past residents for their perspectives on how it used to be and what happened to restrict music in IV? Reach out to musicians to find out what they need, what would make a difference for them.

Several years ago, Ray(~) _____ [Research], an Associated Students External President for Local Affairs (EVPLA) made it a priority to organize weekly Spring concerts at the Anisq’Oyo’ stage and amphitheater. Talk up this idea with the current EVPLA and the EVPLA-elect after elections are held in the spring. Speculate on how to lobby AS effectively for this proposal. Challenge the EVPLA candidates this spring to incorporate this as plank in their platforms. Seek to institutionalize these concerts so they aren’t just a flash-in-the-pan passion of an occasional EVPLA. If Park District fees are inhibiting bands from performing in the parks, speculate on how to address this, e.g., organizing musicians and community members to press for fee elimination or reduction, or how to seek external funding, e.g., AS. Propose to the Park District that they set up a low-cost or free stage equipment program, e.g., a cart with microphones, mic stands, mixer, amplifier, speakers, speaker stands, and decibel level meter that can easily be wheeled from the Park District office over to the stage.

- Culture - Sculpture - Beautifying IV’s Downtown Loop – There are no public sculptures in IV. Recommendations: Design a set of uniform bases for mounting sculptures. Write design specifications to guide sculptors in creating vandalism- and graffiti-resistant sculptures for temporary mounting on standardized bases. Interview organizers including the Santa Barbara Arts Commission (?) to learn from their experience with temporary sculpture installations along State Street (e.g., the giant fish sculptures of a few years ago [When?] and the 2019 Tiny Libraries on State project featuring “tiny libraries” in the form of punctuation marks). Invite local art students and community members to submit their designs. Seek grants for the program. Rotate sculptures and change themes periodically.

[Research Resources: <https://www.independent.com/2006/02/16/trout-migration/>, sbsteelheadfest.org, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Barbara_County_Arts_Commission, <https://www.edhat.com/news/tiny-libraries-project-to-enliven-state-street>, <https://www.sbac.ca.gov/>, <https://www.sbac.ca.gov/pianos>, <https://www.independent.com/2019/09/03/artist-call-for-pianos-on-state-street/>, <https://www.independent.com/2016/01/07/community-arts-workshop-gets-gates/>, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190825002549/https://pianosonstate.com/en>, <https://sbfoundation.org/community-programs/pianos-on-state/>]

- Culture - Beautifying IV's Student Residential Zones – Despite the area's abundant natural beauty, a number of forces combine to make the built environment in Isla Vista's residential zones ugly and visually boring. These include local rental property owners who would rather not deal with the trouble and expense of maintaining large trees, the bark beetle infestation of local conifers due to our warming climate, the toll that partying takes on buildings and landscaping, vandalism, and the rough treatment afforded rental properties by students who resent paying atrocious rents. Consequently little thought or care is given to creating a beautiful environment for people in the areas of town dominated by apartments (i.e., most of Isla Vista). Recommendations: pollinator-friendly flowering shrubs and flower beds, murals, public and private sculpture, street graphics, what else?

Related Topics: Art, Culture, Environment, Landscaping, Permaculture, Urban Forest

- Culture - Celebrating - Restraining IV's Dysfunctional Festivals: Deltopia & Halloween – I'm including Deltopia and Halloween in this list of issues because they are both big headaches for a lot of people here // for the community each year and they cost the County a lot of money // millions of dollars [Fact check]. Those dollars could go towards providing more and better services to IV and Santa Barbara County // making IV and SBCo safer and more sustainable and provide a more robust social safety net. Deltopia was low key, creative, and fun when it started. As you may know, it actually began as an event called "Floatopia." A few dozen local students got some inflatable rafts and some beer, paddled out to the ocean and had a blast. The next year it grew to hundreds of people. Students started inviting their friends from home. The third year saw thousands of participants [Research crowd sizes and costs by year]. Floatopia's final year saw about 15,000 people packing the beach. Out-of-towners had no reason to care about IV and left tons of trash [Research amount]. The policing and cleanup cost the County a huge sum [Research]. Community leaders, the County Sheriff's office, and local environmental organizations flipped out [Research what groups were pivotal in suppressing Floatopia] and that was that for Floatopia. The next year saw a huge police presence and virtual martial law. Deputies guarded beach access

points to prevent people from reaching the beach. Students adapted by simply holding the party on Del Playa Drive (hence the name Deltopia). Similarly, Halloween in IV also used to be very cool and fun, with lots of creative costumes. It, too, got increasingly out of hand year after year as students invited out of town friends and certain publications promoted it. For the last several years, hardly anyone is going out on the streets that night, just Sheriff's deputies and UCPD officers. Boring. When can we stop wasting millions [Fact check] on unsponsored event nobody comes to anymore. Apart from the cliff falls, alcohol poisoning, and other injuries [Research number and types of Deltopia-related incidents by year], these unsponsored events cost the County beaucoup bucks, money that could be going to provide much needed services in IV and elsewhere in the County. I've heard that UCSB(?) spends \$2 million to put up all the chain link fencing around town [Research]. Since no one individual or group sponsors Deltopia or Halloween, it's not easy to shut these events down. Recommendations: Please do not invite people from out of town to come to Deltopia—or Halloween. Come up with more skilful (and more honest) social marketing campaigns. Ask student groups to come up with their own messaging asking people to keep it local instead of relying on UCSB's official messages [Research UCSB's recent Deltopia and Halloween public service announcements (PSAs)]. Request that whoever came up with the last year's deceitful PSAs not get the job this year [Research PSA authors]. Let's see if the folks who produce the excellent local Lucidity Festivals can help keep things calm this year.

Related Topics: Culture, Social Marketing

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- Dwelling - Houselessness - Opening a Drop-in Day Center – Houseless people need access to safe places to hang out, and have access to services such as drinking water, hot beverages, lockers, a mailing address, a telephone, WiFi, computers, charging stations, bike tools, etc. Several years ago [From when to when?] Isla Vista had a church-sponsored day center that was a huge help to scores of people. It closed when the County bought the property and the church relocated. Recommendations: A drop-in day center can make a tremendous difference for people living on the street. Seek funds. To minimize the not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) resistance, look for suitable space in areas that are zoned commercial. For a comprehensive list of recommended day center amenities, see “Houselessness - Housing Strategies, Day Center Services, Local Meals, and Past Efforts.doc” file. [Note: an earlier version this list of amenities and strategies was given to City of Goleta Community Services staff (~) at their Community Open House on Goleta's Homelessness Strategic Plan at Goleta Valley Community Center on 2019 Dec 11 Wed.]

- Dwelling - Houselessness - Articulating Housing Strategies –

[Explain each proposal.]

Recommendations:

- Drop-in Day Center
(See “Opening a Drop-in Day Center” entry.)
- Additional “Housing First” Subsidized Housing with Supportive Services
- Sheds
- Storage Units
- DIY Tiny Houses
- Manufactured Tiny Houses
- Converted Shipping Containers
- Concrete Culverts or Stacked Culverts
- Carport-Style Shelters
- Pocket Hotel
- 3D Printable Houses
- Safe Parking Program
- Converted Minivans
- Hostel for Travelers
- Supervised Campground

Potential Partners: Jesse, David, Jon L
(See “Housing Strategy Links” for links for most of the ideas above.)

Related Topics: Land Use Planning

• Dwelling - Retrofitting Buildings - Writing a Sustainable Retrofit Guide for Apartment Owners – Some mom & pop apartment owners might like to green their buildings but may lack the requisite knowledge, experience, contacts, free attention, and/or money. Recommendations: Find out if any sustainable apartment retrofit programs or guides exist, and if so, are they any good. If not, consider writing a guide and compiling a resource directory. Outline typical retrofit interventions. Approach and enroll apartment owners. Seek grants. Hire an experienced contractor to serve as a retrofit coach. Document suitable conversion projects on video. Expand offer to owners of large buildings. Offer to help other communities set up similar programs.

• Dwelling - Redevelopment & New Construction - Writing a Sustainable New Construction Guide for Apartment Owners – The State of California’s mandate to cities to create more housing stock to accommodate a growing population and the consequent pressure on the County of Santa Barbara to ease lot densities, zoning restrictions, and regulatory requirements may make it attractive to property owners // may induce(~) property owners to tear down existing buildings and redevelop their

properties, remodel illegal dwelling units and bring them up to code, or erect auxiliary(?) dwelling units (AUDs) in back yards or other areas where there is sufficient space. What if there was // what if we had a new construction guide to assist property owners in designing more sustainable, energy and water efficient housing? How would they find out about it? How could we get it to them early in the design process? Could we partner with the County's Department of Planning and Development to distribute a flyer, pamphlet, or book to property owners, contractors, and developers? What topics should it cover? Are there already suitable resources we could direct them to? Recommendations: Research helpful texts, websites, contractors, landscapers, consultants, and other resources. Open a conversation with Planning and Development. Talk with property owners to gauge their interest and enroll early adopters.

- Dwelling - Housing & Commercial Construction - Minimizing Use of Concrete – The production and use of concrete accounts for up to 8% of US(?) human-caused carbon dioxide emissions. Researchers are working on a number of ways of formulating concrete that produce less CO₂, but they currently aren't available at scale. Recommendations: Follow developments in low-carbon concrete. Explore strategies for reducing the amount of concrete used in new construction. When affordable low-carbon concrete becomes available, lobby County and UCSB to require use of low-carbon concrete in new construction. (See also “Water - Collecting Rain Water” entry regarding applications for permeable concrete.)

Related Topics: Construction, Dwelling, Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Planning

- Dwelling - New Construction - Reorienting Buildings along North-South Axis – Buildings that are oriented along an East-West axis are significantly more energy efficient than those that run North-South [Research energy savings]. They absorb more warmth from the sun on their long South side (thus reducing heating costs in winter) and provide more extensive shade on their north side (creating a cooler zone in summer). They also allow for better placement of solar photovoltaic arrays and solar hot water panels. Unfortunately, when developers and county planners laid out Isla Vista streets and lots in the 19__s [Research], they employed // their narrow lots imposed a North-South orientation on buildings throughout IV. While it would be prohibitively expensive and impractical to reorient existing buildings, it might make sense for property owners to consider this option when redeveloping their properties. Recommendations: Research advantages of North-South orientation. Find out if other jurisdictions have incorporated this insight into their new construction standards or guidelines. Incorporate N-S orientation in /Sustainable New Construction Guide for Apartment Owners/. Talk with County Planning and Development staff.

Related Topics: Carbon Reduction, Climate Chaos, Construction, Energy Conservation, Land Use Planning

- Dwelling - Land Use Planning - Establishing an Experimental Zoning Designation and Test Sites – Our current way of constructing housing is two centuries years old, wasteful, toxic, and financially out of reach of the majority of people. We need to explore new concepts in housing and to do so we need places where such experimentation is allowed. Recommendations: Work with progressive design and planning advocates, the IVCSD, appropriate UCSB departments, and the County’s Department of Planning and Development to craft an experimental zoning designation for IV or somewhere nearby to facilitate work with new and old concepts in shelter design such as tiny houses, printable dwellings, geodesic domes, emergency shelters, pocket hotels, fired ceramic houses, indigenous stationary and nomadic dwelling designs, high-tech tents, sandbag igloos, straw bale and straw flake construction, repurposed modified shipping containers, underground housing, etc. Ask people who try out these designs to document their experience via journaling and to give periodic tours so the community can learn about the merits of different designs. As the IVRPD’s Tipi Village park at 6734 Sueño Road was an historical site of a small encampment that included a tipi, and as UCSB’s Art Department has built several novel housing ideas (including a set of modified repurposed shipping containers and a tiny house), explore potential sites with them. Consider lobbying to have such a test site incorporated into UCSB’s Long-Range Development Plan.

Related Topics: Dwelling, Land Use Planning



- Economy - Recognizing and Supporting Parallel Economies – When government, media, and corporate types talk about “the economy” they generally presuppose that the market economy is the only way of meeting our needs worthy of consideration. Other ways of systems aren’t mentioned or else they’re tarred by characterizing them as the “black” or “gray” market. Yet a wide variety of other modes of economic activity exist, e.g., subsistence, sharing, barter, mutual aid, scavenging, charity, welfare, etc. Questions: What are the different means by which people, organizations, corporations, and governments support themselves? What are the ways you get what you need? How do you support yourself and your loved ones? By what means do others support you? What relationships are there among these strategies? (For example, the economy of sharing and generosity seems to require protection from market forces: as when a swap meet vendor wants to take all the good stuff from the community free bin and turn it into cash, or someone wants to take large quantities and ship it to relatives in their home country.) Recommendations: Articulate as many categories of means of support as you can. List all the ways you support yourself and your loved ones. Inquire: How can we draw attention to and support some of these other economic strategies? What pitfalls may be associated with different modes? Which of these ‘economies’ would you

like to be more invested in, which would you like to rely on less? (Some examples of parallel / alternate / alternative / complementary economies: barter, sharing, generosity / trust / mutual aid, family, scavenging, savings, charity, government welfare, pensions, Social Security, and criminal economies.) [See list in “Economy - Recognizing and Supporting Parallel Economies (notes)”.]

- Economy - Understanding Poverty and Wealth at UCSB and in Isla Vista – National media and many national politicians rarely speak of poverty, yet 41.7% of people in the US are poor. How many people here are impoverished? Recommendations: Research poverty and wealth in Isla Vista and at UCSB. How many students are houseless, living in their vehicles, or couch surfing? How many non-students? How do people manage to make it here? What resources are available to students and/or community members? What services are needed? What plans are in the works? What systems, policies, and trends are driving this impoverishment? What can we do about it? How can we make people more aware of this? Generate graphs to help people visualize the economic spread (~).

Related Topics: Economy, Houselessness

- Economy - Instituting Universal Basic Income – How do Isla Vistans receive income and meet their expenses? [Parents, scholarships, wages, grants, loans, and interest income.] What are some other means of receiving income? [Renting property, owning a business and drawing profit from it, starting a business and selling it, taking a pension, drawing from savings or 401K program, Social Security, criminal activity, what else?] There are other ways to organize an economy. Universal Basic Income (UBI) is an idea that has been getting increasing attention. Several places have experimented with forms of UBI: The Canadian government implemented UBI in the town of Dauphin in the Province of Manitoba(?) for several years in the 1980s(?) [When exactly?] until a conservative administration took over [Which administration?]. Alaska’s popular UBI, the Alaska/n(~) Permanent / Development Fund (?) has been operating quietly for nearly 40 years. By taxing oil extracted from the state and investing the money in the fund, it pays each Alaskan citizen an annual/monthly(?) check/dividend(?) that has varied from \$400 to \$2,000 per year(?). Research [on which UBI/s?] showed that it / they had no effect on employment, that is, they did not disincentivize(~) people from working [Fact check]. This sort of program would probably have to be implemented at the state or federal level. Given that many jobs may soon be automated out of existence, how can we avoid scenarios in which masses of people are left without work or income? How can we take care that they can meet their basic needs and continue to participate in the economy? Recommendations: Research the state of the UBI movement. Find out what politicians, candidates, activists are advocating or working to

implement UBIs. Consider how implementing UBI might distract from more important structural change. [See also “Economy - Shortening Work Hours” entry.]

Related Topics: Earning, Economic Justice, Learning, Working

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• Energy - Greenhouse Gas Reduction - Employing Peer Pressure to Reduce Personal Carbon Consumption – Addressing the plenary(?) session of the COP25 UN climate conference (~) in Madrid(?), Spain, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg (~) spoke about the science of the climate crisis, reporting that humanity is releasing 42 gigatons [gigatonnes?] of carbon annually and that we have only (~)350 gigatons(~) remaining in our “carbon budget” until we will reach a 1.5° Celsius increase in global temperatures [Fact check]. This means that we have only a few years remaining for the major carbon emitting countries to reverse course and assist / support other countries to do the same. This issue requires action at many levels: planetary / international, national, state, community, household, and personal. Recommendations: Develop a model campaign utilizing constructive social pressure as well as social marketing to shift personal practices and encourage carbon activism among Isla Vistans. Study how much difference we can make at each level. Research what personal activities generate the most greenhouse gases and what we can do to minimize that. Look into the carbon implications of practices such as air travel, single-occupancy automobile use, commuting, heating, air conditioning, resource extraction, manufacturing, Internet purchases and shipping, reliance on products made and shipped from far away, fast fashion, refrigeration, big screen televisions, fast food, manufactured food, food grown out of the area, and waste transport and disposal. Encourage rental property owners to invest in energy saving improvements. [See “Sustainable Retrofit Guide for Apartment Owners” entry.] Continue political organizing to pressure educational, civic, corporate, state, and federal leaders to take dramatic steps. [Transcribe Greta’s talk from DemocracyNow 191211r.]

Related Topics: Climate Chaos, Energy, Social Marketing

• Energy - Encouraging SCE Customers to Choose Renewable Electrical Utility Option (~) – Southern California Edison reportedly offers customers the option of subscribing to a renewable energy sourcing program for an extra \$1 each month. [Verify.] Recommendations: Look into this program, how it works, and assess whether or not it’s helpful. Consider promoting it through Cool Eco Vista. Organize a social marketing campaign to reach the wider community in Isla Vista.

Related Topics: Climate Chaos, Energy, Learning, Organizing, Social Marketing

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- Environment - Planting Fruit, Nut, & Shade Trees – Recent research has shown a correlation between the presence of trees and the level of mental health in communities. Isla Vista has lost many of its large shade trees over the years leading to an increasingly exposed and sterile atmosphere. Most communities in the US feature a parkway between the curb and sidewalk where publicly owned and maintained trees can be planted; unfortunately, due to poor planning, IV has no parkways. A grassy eight foot wide public right of way exists along sections of some streets where the County plans to install sidewalks. Aside from our parks, a few public buildings, and these future sidewalk zones, the only spaces available to plant trees are privately owned. Rental property owners often fail to replace trees or plant palms that offer poor habitat for birds and other wildlife, provide less shade, and frequently drop heavy fronds. Bear in mind that trees require periodic care and pruning which can be expensive. Recommendations: Research communities that have instituted ambitious tree planting programs. Find out what organizations, agencies, and foundations actively support tree planting. Document the mental health and tree connection. Enroll Permaculture designers and arborists. Explore possibilities for public/private partnerships between property owners and public agencies such as the IV Community Service District, the County of Santa Barbara, and the IV Recreation & Park District. Craft incentives for property owners to plant and maintain fruit and shade trees throughout Isla Vista. Locate vacant tree sites particularly along sidewalks. Map areas of town that lack trees. Identify threats to young trees (e.g., inebriated partiers returning from clubbing on Bill’s Bus; children; hooligans with knives or hatchets; cars). Brainstorm strategies for protecting young trees. Work with County Public Works to target streets where trees are missing, e.g., the 6600 block of Picasso. Seek grants to support tree planting and maintenance. Plan for a tree-planting campaign next winter when inexpensive bare-root trees are available at nurseries.

Related Topics: Aesthetics, Beautification, Carbon Sequestration, Economy, Environment, Food, Mental Health, Permaculture

- Environment - Studying the Blue New Deal Proposal – The current Green New Deal proposals mostly ignore the degradation of the oceans. Recommendations: Study the provisions of Massachusetts Senator (?) and 2020 presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren’s Blue New Deal plan.

Related Topics: Economy, Environment

- Environment - Forming Temporary Sculptures with Natural Materials – Our high-tech, low-touch society distracts us from experiencing nature very deeply. Recommendations: Watch artist Andy Goldsworthy’s /Rivers and Tides: Working with Time/* video documentary with others. Afterward, go to the beach, a meadow, the woods—any natural area—and respectfully gather natural materials with which to craft beautiful forms. Is there a spot in the landscape that calls to you? Get to know that spot

using all your senses. Start with a simple construction. Try combining elements. Tell your inner judge to take a hike while you experiment. (Repeat after me, “Mommy and Daddy, get out of here! Nobody asked for your opinion!) Play with different materials, pieces, combinations, forms. Let yourself be curious. Keep returning your attention to the pieces you are using, the natural processes that created them, and the place where you are. At some point, you may get a sense of what your creation wants to become. Breathe! Human beings—i.e., you!—belong here; you are part of the web of life and have a vital part to play.

Recommended Viewing: Andy Goldsworthy’s *Rivers and Tides: Working with Time*/* DVD Video - Docu Rama(R) Documentary NVG9643 - Approximately 90 min - ISBN 0-7670-6609-X 7-67685-96433-0 (* italics or quotes for film titles?)

Related Topics: Aesthetics, Art, Culture, Environment, Healing, Nature, Play, Sculpture, Spirituality

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• Governing - Pressing CA Legislature to Make PG&E a Public Utility – Pacific Gas and Electric (~) (PG&E) has admitted its electrical transmission equipment started the Camp Fire and other of California’s recent massive wildfires [Factcheck; Specify the other fires linked to PG&E]. These fires killed ___ people, torched ___ square miles, and _____. PG&E has subsequently declared bankruptcy. Governor Gavin Newsom(~) has refused to approve their initial bankruptcy proposal because it fails to adequately address safety concerns and prevent future fires. [Factcheck.] Neo-liberal and libertarian think tanks, pundits, and politicians exert relentless pressure for public officials to sell off publicly owned resources(~) to for-profit corporations. Institutions and infrastructure like Social Security, the Veterans Administration, schools, water districts, roads, bridges, etc., (what else?)—some even advocate that everyone should have to pay for private fire protection! It’s rare that we citizens have an opportunity to take a private utility public. PG&E is the largest electric utility in California [Factcheck]. Even though we in Santa Barbara are supplied by Southern California Edison (SCE), not PG&E, let’s use this opportunity to advocate for public utility ownership. Recommendations: Find out what groups and politicians are advocating to make PG&E a public utility and support them. Lobby our state congressperson(~) ____, state senator ____, Lieutenant Governor ____ (?), Governor Gavin Newsom(~), and any other relevant public officials. Organize a letter-writing campaign. Write letters to the editor of local and regional papers.

Resources: Solartopia radio show on KPFK.org

• Governing - History - Articulating a Cohesive Narrative of How We Landed in this Predicament – Politics is made out to seem so convoluted and confusing. Questions:

Could we develop a clarifying history that would make this realm easier to understand? What are the key landmarks and inflection points that have led us to our current situation? What authors can we look to?

Resources: videos of Danny Sheehan's courses at UC Santa Cruz

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- Healing - Addiction - Offering a Smoking & Vaping Cessation Program – Although smoking is has declined somewhat in the general population, many people are cutting their lives short, degrading their health, producing second-hand smoke for those around them, and wasting their money on tobacco and vaping products. Recommendations: Research successful smoking cessation programs and social marketing campaigns and implement them in IV. Press the IV Recreation & Park District to design vandalism-resistant smoke detectors and install and maintain them in their public restrooms.

Related Topics: Healing, Social Marketing

- Healing - Disposing of Toxic Chemicals and Materials Safely & Responsibly – People seem so careless about disposing of toxic and hazardous ingredients and materials. This ignorance puts their–and others'–health at risk and harms animals, plants, soil, and the ocean. Recommendations: Compile a list of helpful reference books, web sites, and apps on food ingredients and common toxic household, industrial, and environmental toxins. Research common toxins and other hazardous materials and start a list of them, along with where they are found, their dangers, how to avoid them or protect yourself from them, and how and where to best to dispose of them. List local resources. [Split this entry between Health and Recycling sections.]

Related Topics: Environment, Healing, Recycling, Safety

- Healing - Minimizing Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields – We are increasingly surrounded by electronic devices. These devices emit invisible electromagnetic fields (EMFs) which can have biological effects including cancer. Recommendations: List common sources of EMFs including cell towers, WiFi, cell phones, cordless phones, laptops, tablets, desktop computers, televisions, large-screen displays, Bluetooth devices, and smart meters. Ascertain what research has been done about EMF health effects, particularly in Europe. Compile a list of resources including researchers, authors, books, articles, conferences, web sites, podcasts, etc. Outline steps people can take to mitigate or eliminate EMF exposure. Find out what's happening in IV, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, and the United States in terms of new technology and political resistance to EMFs.

Related Topics: Governing

• Healing - Toughening Municipal Water Standards – In */Troubled Water: What’s Wrong with What We Drink/*, author Seth M. Siegel(~) recounts San Diego’s experience with severe water quality problems [Research SD’s principle contaminants and sources]. The federal government’s Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for ensuring the safety of the nation’s water supplies. Although it sets standards for 60 contaminants, it has failed to define safe limits for over a thousand other chemicals that can occur in water. Ultimately, Orange County opted to dismiss the EPA’s inadequate protections and set its own standards. The water purification system they designed resulted in water that is incredibly clean. Siegel(~) states that for about 60¢ a week per person, any community can enjoy water that pure. Recommendations: Read */Troubled Water/*. Donate copies to water managers and boards of directors. Make presentations to local water districts advocating implementation of San Diego’s approach.

Recommended Reading: */Troubled Water: What’s Wrong with What We Drink/*
Related Topics: Healing, Water

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• Infrastructure - Rethinking the Sewer System – Municipal sewer systems are expensive to build and maintain. As sewer pipes and other components age, replacement costs can be daunting for homeowners and communities. Flush toilets seem relatively inexpensive—until owners have to dig up and replace the main drain line from their buildings. Also, in a protracted emergency, if the sewer system fails, the community will be at risk of cholera and other communicable disease outbreaks. What if IV led the way toward a more sustainable waste disposal strategy utilizing modern composting toilets and curbside pickup? Recommendations: Research current composting toilet designs, including solar-powered toilets, waste sterilization features, do-it-yourself plans, non-profit offerings for disaster relief and global south applications, etc. Think about how best to sensitize users in preventing pharmaceuticals, cleaning products, and other toxic chemicals from contaminating the resulting “night soil.” Research county code requirements. Find out if other jurisdictions or nations are moving in this direction. Speculate on possible partners among UCSB departments and community groups including Direct Relief International(~).

Related Topics: Infrastructure, Recycling

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• Learning - Establishing an Earthling FYI Training – UCSB requires incoming students to attend Gaucho FYI, a 2-hour orientation called covering ____ (?) [Research and list Gaucho FYI content]. Does contemporary university education have any relevance? What do we need to know in order to survive and thrive on this beautiful

planet? What competencies do we need? What skills should a curriculum for Earthlings include? Recommendations: Start to compile a list of critical discourses and skills, together with speakers, authors, texts, and helpful media.

Related Topics: Learning, Social Justice, Sustainability

- Learning - Expanding Tenure Criteria – Historically, university professors’ tenure is based on their research: the volume of articles, papers, and books they produce and the number of scholars who cite their work [Verify]. This practice produces a distorted academic environment in which a) many instructors have inadequate teaching abilities and/or poor social skills and b) the university is cut off from the community and the world. Recommendations: Expand tenure criteria so that instructors can also be awarded tenure for a) instructional skills or b) activism. In time, this simple change could radically shift the atmosphere at UCSB. [Research how widespread this movement is.] [Note: This is an example of what R. Buckminster Fuller called a trim tab, a metaphor for a small change that brings about a much larger change. A trim tab is a small surface on the edge of a ship’s rudder or plane’s aileron that with a small exertion of force can move the larger control surface and hence turns the whole vehicle.]

Resource People: Shari S

Related Topics: Community, Learning, Organizing

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- Media - Promoting Reliable Sources of News and Analysis – How do Isla Vistans learn about what’s going on in the world? How well informed are we? How deliberate are we about seeking out news? How skillful are we at navigating among myriad sources, discerning what’s valuable to us and what’s not, and sussing out the agendas of networks, web sites, channels, shows and their reporters, analysts, podcasters, and commentators? Facebook is reportedly the primary news source for 70% of people in the US. [Find source.] Commercial dedicated news sources such as Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC function as mouthpieces for corporate, administration, and Democratic National Committee propaganda. How can we respond appropriately if we’ve bought into their distortions? Yet there are scores of excellent sources for informative and truthful in-depth reporting. Recommendations: Compile a directory and weekly calendar with concise introductions and links to truthful, useful, and/or inspiring news and educational media. Compile tips on how to discern reliable sources and truthful reports from propaganda, public relations spin, and PSYOPs (psychological operations). Include notable websites, podcasts, radio networks and programs, newspapers and magazines, and Internet, cable, and broadcast television shows. Enroll sociology, communications, and/or media students in surveying students and other community members on their news and media consumption habits and how satisfied or dissatisfied

they are with the news outlets they use. Develop a Cool Eco Vista II module to support participants in becoming more discerning and skillful at sussing(∼) out media voices' agendas and interpretive frameworks and navigating available news and media resources.

- Media - Understanding Our Relationship to Phones and Other Devices – People are walking around with their eyes glued to their smart phones and spending hours browsing, playing video games, watching television, etc. Do we know where folks are going in the media landscape? What propaganda, distortions, distractions, and misdirection—and/or truth telling—are people getting exposed to? What are the implications of these media choices? Recommendations: See if there's any research on what percentage of time the good residents of the United States and others spend on small screens, tablets, laptops, etc, and what apps, platforms, and sites we use. What do you use and where do you go? What sites or apps do you find particularly valuable that you think others should know about? What percentage of time do we Isla Vistans spend on our phones? What percentage of that time is spent on what apps or sites? How does this differ by group (UCSB & SBCC students, Latinx families, elementary and high school students). Who chooses to use older technologies such as flip phones, landlines, sneakernet, snail mail, etc, and why? Research the psychological stratagems media companies use to catch, retain, and exploit our attention, e.g., connections to family and friends, comparisons with others, algorithms that promote the most emotionally engaging postings, controversy, rapid changes from one image to another (∼), sex, chained(∼) videos, the possibility of making anonymous comments, etc. Enroll Sociology, Communication Studies (∼), and/or Psychology professors and students in picking this as a research topic.

Related Topics: Communicating, Culture, Media

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- Nourishing - Permaculture - Converting IV's Lawns to Food Forests – The presence of grass lawns around most IV apartments and houses constitutes an absurd waste of space and water. The year-round growing season and good soils of the South Coast support most food plants, yet much of our food comes from remote sources such as central valley mega-farms, Pacific Northwest orchards, Mexican and Chilean agribusinesses, and deforested tracts of the Amazon basin. The practice of planting lawns instead of vegetable gardens and fruit trees around our homes may derive from the efforts of the European aristocracy and later, the middle class, to flaunt their affluence [Research this]. Permaculture is a design movement established by Australian biologist Bill Mollison and his student _____ Holmgren(?). The central insight of Permaculture is that we can create 'food forests' with a wide diversity of food bearing

plants (including fruit and nut trees, shrubs, vines, herbs, vegetables, fungi, and soil organisms) and beneficial animals in a stable ecological web. We can grow a riotous abundance of food all over IV; create jobs; conserve water; keep the community cooler in summer; be much more prepared for emergencies; minimize carbon emissions from industrial agriculture, factory food, and shipping; eliminate food insecurity; improve our nutrition and health; and convert from economies of extraction, domination, and exploitation economy and foster a regenerative culture. Recommendations: Ensure core Eco Vista organizers get Permaculture training. Attend talks organized by Santa Barbara Permaculture Network. Tour area Permaculture sites. Prepare flyers promoting SBCC's Permaculture course (much less expensive than most Permaculture Design Courses) and distribute them to related (~) classes, students, community members, and food & housing co-op members. Encourage UCSB, SBCC, and local high school students to get their Permaculture Design Certificate (PDC) from SBCC or other Permaculture teachers. Organize a Permaculture & regenerative food production film series. Hold more orchard care work parties at IVRPD's Sueño Orchard and UCSB's Greenhouse & Garden Project. Look for a departmental home for a Permaculture program at UCSB. Enroll housing co-ops, home owners, and apartment owners in hosting demonstration sites. Organize "Grow Food Party Crew"-style two-day food forest installation parties with music, great food, and hands-on training.

(See also "Environment - Building Rich Soil while Sequestering Carbon" and "Water Conservation - Irrigating - Installing Graywater Systems" entries.)

Related Topics: Carbon, Climate, Dwelling, Film Series, Food, InfoShop, Landscaping, Learning, Organizing, Transformation, Water Conservation

- Nourishing - Building a Certified Community Kitchen – California State Health Department's (?) stringent commercial food preparation regulations (?) require certain foods be prepared in a certified kitchen (?). Constructing a certified kitchen is expensive and beyond the reach of many co-operatives, collectives(?), church groups, non-profit organizations, and small businesses. A certified community kitchen can be a key resource for supporting local non-profit groups, etc, and incubating small food businesses. Recommendations: Research California State and Santa Barbara County Health Department (?) regulations as they pertain to local meal servings and startup businesses. Be ready to hang up or leave if officials' questions get too invasive. Talk with IV Community Center staff, IV Community Center Advisory Board members, Isla Vista Food Co-op board members and management, and area food entrepreneurs. Check Santa Barbara Independent and Santa Barbara Sentinel (~) tabloids for articles on area food startups.



Mural: Oakland, California, 2019

CAUTION: Be discrete when speaking with Health Department personnel. Speak in generalities and avoid naming specific programs or groups. If you are careless, you may trigger inspections and the closure of valued local services that people depend upon. This happened here some years ago when County Health (~) found Catholic Charities // Santa Barbara Rescue Mission (?) was distributing past-date packaged salads donated by Trader Joe's at a weekday lunch program at St Mark's University Parish (~). Afterward, the only thing County Health (~) allowed the group to serve was tasteless overcooked pre-packaged slop in styrofoam clamshells. The lunch program closed soon afterward.

[Research new relaxed regulations that allow people to prepare commercial food in their homes.]

Related Topics: Community, Food, Infrastructure, Entrepreneurship / Startups

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- Preparing for Emergencies - Planning for Deep Resiliency – When thinking about emergency preparedness, we tend to think of the standard recommendation that we set a few [how many?] days of supplies aside. But what if the emergency is a regional, national, hemispheric, or global one, e.g., a tsunami, earthquake, or volcanic explosion; a solar electro-magnetic pulse or one from a terrorist or military attack; cyber attacks on critical infrastructure, war, economic or civilizational collapse, etc? What if we consider that no outside help may be coming? Should we prepare for that? What would it take? When Permaculture teacher __ (?) moved to Santa Cruz, he proposed to city emergency planners that they switch from a 5(?) -day preparedness standard to a 6-month one. Note that he 5(?) -day plan is based on the economic model of exploitation, extraction, industrial manufacture, shipping, consumption, and disposal (and don't forget capital accumulation!). Well, for most people it's impractical to store and maintain six months of water and packaged food, so his proposal pretty much necessitated that the community switch to a more deeply sustainable model, i.e., supporting a subsistence economy in which residents harvest and store rainwater and grow food locally. And—he succeeded in persuading the local Red Cross to adopt this new standard! Freaking brilliant! (Gee, why don't we hear about stuff like this in the news? Oh, maybe because it doesn't help with the all-important project of capital accumulation.) Recommendations: Brainstorm what deep resiliency would look like for our town and for the wider area. Contact __ (?), the Santa Cruz Red Cross chapter (~), and others in Santa Cruz to learn from their experience. Convene a town hall discussion to explore how we might build deep resiliency for Isla Vista and beyond.

Related Topics: Permaculture, Preparing for Emergencies

- Preparing for Emergencies - Water - Drilling & Maintaining Emergency Wells – In a severe emergency, if our municipal water supply stopped working for an extended period, IV could become unlivable. Recommendations: Consult with a hydrologist to find out how the water table beneath and around IV is structured, how deep it is, how it flows, and how vulnerable it is to salt water intrusion. Research appropriate water filtration and purification strategies. Ascertain where toxic plumes are likely to exist by checking historical archives, old phone books and newspaper ads, and historical photographs and by interviewing people who have lived here for decades or who used to live here to find probable sources of contamination. [Notes: At least four gas stations and/or auto repair shops were located around the Embarcadero Loop (one repair shop still is). The Santa Barbara Airport was a Marine Air Base during World War II and what is now UCSB was the site of a lot of barracks (and what else?). (Military bases are frequently sources of groundwater contamination.) The Community Hazardous Waste Collection Center (~) and UCSB's Facilities Management yard (~) west of the Rec Center constitute two more likely sources of contamination. Also, be aware that there's a repository of nuclear research materials near the campus, too.]

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- Recycling - Initiating a Zero-Waste Campaign // Cultivating a Deep-Rooted Zero Waste Ethic (~) – Isla Vista generates prodigious quantities of waste.

Recommendations: Identify resource people, partners, and communities that are active in the zero-waste movement [See separate list]. Research what other communities and universities have done and how it's working for them. Explore greenhouse gas ramifications of a zero-waste campaign. (Include carbon dioxide, methane, and refrigerants in your inquiry.) Consider how we might support households, agencies, groups, and businesses with waste audits, lists of low-hanging fruit, and waste reduction targets. Catalog who's currently fulfilling what waste management & move-out functions in IV and at UCSB. Compile an IV waste management resource directory. Map reuse, second-hand, resale, sharing, repair, scavenging, recycling, composting, and waste management resources in IV, UCSB, Goleta, and Santa Barbara. Convene a town hall to solicit ideas and enroll support. Learn which IVCS D powers are relevant to this endeavour. Brainstorm what's missing and what new community facilities and institutions are needed (e.g., scrap yard, repair workshop, workspaces, storage, expanded and/or extended GIVE Sale or second-hand store). Speculate on strategies: where to start, who to enroll as key partners, what would be happening at different points in the school year. [See zero waste notes.]

- Recycling - Rethinking June Moveout – The period when UCSB's spring quarter ends, seniors graduate, leases end, and most students move out or leave for the summer is referred to as June moveout. This is a stressful period for tenants, students, parents, property managers, contractors, workers, property owners, refuse workers, and long-term residents. Many tenants have to rent a storage unit and move their belongings to storage when their leases end, then move them again when the lease at their new apartment begins a few days or weeks later. People come from far away to gather moveout discards. Scavengers from outside IV frequently trespass to pick through any items they can see from the street as though anything not tied down is up for grabs. It's also a terrifically wasteful time with tons of furniture, lumber, bicycles, electronic waste, and toxics crushed and carted off as landfill. This moveout chaos is an externality created by the UC Regents and County's failure to plan comprehensively for the student bedroom community that the UC created when it established the UCSB campus. There have been a few changes over the years: MarBorg Industries trucks now scour the streets for furniture, mattresses, and e-waste and empty trash bins daily for two weeks. The point of this seems to be to reduce the mess that parents of UCSB students encounter, thus safeguarding the UCSB brand. Unfortunately, drivers are under orders

to discard everything and show zero discernment regarding the many items that could be reused instead of destroyed. Note that UCSB does collect a small percentage of the tons of discarded items and sells them to benefit IV non-profit groups and agencies. Recommendations: Rethink June moveout as a multi-faceted “green new deal” and zero waste project. Consult with various stakeholders for their perspectives, complaints, and ideas. Consider how the trend toward unfurnished apartments contributes to the annual waste of cheap furniture. Explore opportunities for worker co-ops and job creation. Articulate categories of materials that call for separate treatment, e.g., green waste, compost, litter, runoff, clothing, rags, bedding, furniture, mattresses, lumber, appliances, scrap metal, junk bicycles, abandoned and non-operating cars, toxic waste, electronic waste, landfill, recycling, and redeemable containers. Research regulations governing reconditioning, reselling, and disposing of mattresses, bedding, upholstered furniture, clothing, appliances, toxics, etc. Research equipment, materials, and supply costs for steam cleaning, containment, etc. Brainstorm what new community facilities and institutions are needed. [See “Eco Vista June Moveout Notes.doc” for further steps.]

- Recycling - Reducing Contaminants in IV’s Recycling Stream – The stream of recyclable materials collected in Isla Vista has the most contaminants of any community in Santa Barbara County. The level of ignorance and thoughtlessness regarding recycling among students and residents here is ridiculous. People collecting redeemable containers sometimes empty bags of trash into the blue recycling carts to make it easier to pick out cans and bottles. How could we change this? Recommendations: Find out what’s happening with the recycled materials market, state subsidies, and other contextual issues. Go on a tour of MarBorg Industries’ and Santa Barbara County’s materials sorting facility, the transfer station, and Tajiguas Landfill. Incorporate recycling in UCSB’s Gaucho FYI orientation for new students. Inquire into whether SBCC has a civic orientation program. Consider how we might develop an Eco Vista FYI orientation that includes recycling. Train a cadre of recycling evangelists to increase recycling literacy. Target households with one or more people who want to recycle more skillfully and wish to enroll their housemates; bypass households that show no interest. Consider developing an offer to MarBorg to help make their recycling efforts less costly or more profitable. Consider whether switching from commingled recycling to source separation would make more sense.

Key Distinctions: recycling stream

- Recycling - Fostering Recycling Literacy – The three ‘Re’s of recycling—Reducing, Reusing, Recycling—don’t provide much insight into how to recycle materials // prevent waste skillfully. We can enrich these moves by distinguishing more choice—some of which even begin with ‘Re’: Restraining oneself, Refusing, Borrowing, Sharing, Making

It Yourself, Buying Used Items, Repairing, Repurposing, Parting out, Scavenging, Downcycling, and Reprocessing. Note that there's something of a logical hierarchy among many of these moves. For example, it's such a waste when scrap metal collectors toss discarded bikes into their truck to melt down (i.e., downcycling); many of these bikes could easily be fixed and see years more use (i.e., repairing). The lesson here is that repairing consumes far less energy than downcycling and wastes very little material. The scrap collectors weren't 'thinking downstream,' i.e., weren't considering the consequences of their actions for others or for our planet. Recommendations: Research what other 'Re's have people come up with. Rank these moves according to energy and materials saved or wasted. Tease out cyclical, dependency, linear, hierarchical, and cascading relationships among these steps. Inquire whether the term "recycling" has any specific meaning or should it be reserved as a name for this class of actions. Develop an outline or graphic depicting the relationships among the 'Re's, including cyclical and linear progressions / stages. Introduce these distinctions into Cool Eco Vista 1 or 2 and Earthling FYI. Develop an educational campaign to help people exercise discernment in minimizing waste. [Themes to develop: 'thinking downstream,' nuances, relationships among 'Re's, hierarchical / cascading order, how to rank them, embodied energy, delusion of disposal, no such thing as "away"]

Related Topics: Earthling FYI

- Recycling - Reducing Litter – Litter makes the community unsightly and can encourage others to litter or abuse the community in other ways. Also, litter contaminates the ocean when rain storms wash it into storm drains. The typical litter reduction strategy is placing a few trash receptacles along downtown streets and in parks and enroll volunteers to pick up litter. Over the years a number of Isla Vistas have targeted particular sources of litter and worked successfully to minimize them. Such sources include animals especially seagulls, raccoons, skunks, opossums, and dogs; party hosts and party goers; fast food restaurants and their customers; tenants and property owners who leave landfill and recycling bins out at the street; landfill bins overturned due to drunken hooligans, scavenging animals, and careless drivers; scavengers dumping bags of trash to look for redeemable containers; club, show, and festival promoters, cleaning services, and restaurants placing promotional flyers on cars; posters on utility poles; etc. Recommendations: Incorporate litter reduction strategies into Cool Eco Vista program. Keep lids on trash and recycling bins to keep out animals as well as rain and encourage housemates to do the same. Call IVRPD Adopt-a-Block program or SB County code enforcement office to report trash and recycling bins that are overturned or overflowing or vulnerable to getting knocked over because they are out at the street or not in enclosures as required. Think about how best to build respectful relations with the community of people who collect redeemable containers 1) to explore how the wider community can make their lives easier (e.g., by setting redeemables out separately from landfill and recycling bins) and 2) to sensitize and

educate them about the recycling stream contamination issue. Continue exploring the question “Where does litter come from?” and eliminating particular sources of litter.

Related Topics: Environment, Ocean, Recycling

- Recycling - Opposing Reliance on Single-Use Plastic Water Bottles – 70 billion bottles of water are sold annually in US. Few of the containers are recycled; most end up in landfills. Most plastic bottles are flimsy and not suitable for reuse. The quality of the water is often poor; many brands simply use municipal tap water. Bottled waters are exempt from federal standards if bottled and sold in the same state. When plastic water bottles are exposed to heat, the plastic leaches into the water, posing as yet unknown health risks. Some companies get contracts from local officials which allow them to drain the local aquifer and lower the water table, thus denying access to residents and farmers who depend on those wells to live and/or grow food. Recommendations: Calculate how many bottles of water are purchased and consumed by Isla Vistas. (Include out-of-town case purchases from supermarkets, Trader Joe’s, Costco, etc.) List bulk water delivery services. Research how many large (i.e., 5-gallon) water bottles are delivered to campus offices and IV agencies, businesses, and homes. Compile a list of public water fountains indicating the type of water or degree of filtration provided (including the excellent filtered water fountains at various locations around campus). Research and list bad actors among water bottling companies, e.g., those that privatize local water supplies or merely fill their bottles with city water. Note who is providing good quality water, e.g., The Water Store, Mountain Spring (~) water delivery service, IV Food Co-op (inside water dispenser), Keg ‘n Bottle (outside water dispenser), Associated Students (?) water fountains, etc. Also note locations of local springs in the back country. Find out what groups are working to reduce reliance on bottled water and what tactics they’re using. Find good guidance on different types of water purification gear including survival, recreational, home, and municipal products and technologies. Craft a social marketing campaign to encourage people in switching to refilling their water bottles from home filters or water filtering machines in stores.

Recommended Reading: /Troubled Water: What’s Wrong w What We Drink/ by Seth M. Siegel(~)

Resources: www.SethMSiegel.com, TroubledWater.us

Related Topics: Environment, Recycling, Social Marketing, Waste, Water

- Recycling - Repairing Public Trash Receptacles – Many of the perforated steel public trash receptacles along Pardall Road and in our parks are in disrepair: They’re missing their cylindrical plastic liners or the heavy hinged steel lids are broken or missing. The trash frequently overflows the bins at particular sites. These receptacles are orphaned infrastructure, leftover from the County’s now disbanded Isla Vista Redevelopment Agency. No County agency has taken responsibility for repairing or servicing them. Recommendations: Check with IVCSA (Community Service District) for a progress

report on this issue. Find out how often MarBorg Industries is currently emptying these bins and if they have agreed to increase the frequency of pickups. Inspect bins along Pardall Road, in Little Acorn and Estero Parks (and any other parks equipped with these receptacles) to determine what parts need repair or replacement. Seek funding from IVCS and/or Pardall Road merchants for replacement parts and repair work. Ascertain who manufactures and distributes these receptacles and how much the replacement parts cost. Ask the Park District what their plans are for repairing the bins in their parks.

Related Topics: Litter

- Recycling - Installing Pocketed Skirts around Public Trash Receptacles – Public refuse bins such as those along Pardall Road and in our parks are one of many sources for people who support themselves and their families by collecting redeemable beverage containers. To retrieve such CRV containers, one must open the lid and pull them out. UCSB students Will, Garrett, and Hunter from the 2019 Summer Int 133-B class, learned of a pocketed skirt designed and produced in Sweden that was considerably designed to save recyclers the trouble of rummaging through the bins.

Recommendations: Contact the manufacturer, inquire about pricing and shipping, and order a sample. Assess whether to order skirts from Sweden or fabricate skirts locally from fabric-reinforced neoprene or hypalon. Speak with IVRPD General Manager, Grounds Department staff, and Park Board directors to ask if they'd be open to having skirts installed on selected bins.

Related Topics: Dignity, Earning, Houselessness, Recycling, Working

- Recycling - Opening a Repair Workshop – People discard many items that—with access to tools and a little training—could easily be made serviceable again. YouTube videos, user forums, and other sites provide a wealth of free guidance on how to make, modify, or repair a wide variety of items. What if we had a community workshop space where people could have access to space, tools, and guidance for repairing things?

Recommendations: Research public repair popups and workshops. [Note that Patagonia brought a repair trailer to campus several years ago and ran a recreational gear repair popup event.] List tools, equipment, and facilities needed. Think about how best to orient and train users, particularly concerning safe use of hand tools and safe operation of power tools.

Related Topics: Earning, Economy of Sharing, Entrepreneurship, Working

- Recycling - Creating a Makerspace – Makerspaces (a.k.a. hackerspaces) are workshops devoted to fabricating or modifying products / systems such as software, electronics, and mechanical systems [Research]. Experienced volunteers or staff are on hand to provide guidance to users. They often serve as incubators for entrepreneurial startups. They provide participants space, tools, storage, and instruction. Recommendations:

Research makerspaces. List tools, equipment, and facilities needed [See separate list]. Visit, join, and participate at SBMakerSpace(~) in Goleta. Interview founders, managers, volunteers, and participants there. Speculate about suitable sites for an IV makerspace. Check out the SBMakerSpace(~) trailer and inquire into bringing it to IV periodically. Approach potential hosts or sites such as IV Community Center, IV Community Service District, AS Pardall Center, IV Recreation & Park District, or SBCC Adult Education (~). Visit, join, and participate at SBMakerSpace(~) in Goleta. Interview founders, managers, and participants there. Speculate about suitable sites for an IV workshop and makerspace. Also consider use of the SBMakerSpace(~) trailer here in Isla Vista.

Related Topics: Earning, Entrepreneurship, Working

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- Safety - Training Riders and Calming Traffic – Getting around Isla Vista and the UCSB campus seems increasingly risky. Factors such as increasing population density (due to UCSB’s growing enrollment), faster vehicles, quieter vehicles, and a higher proportion of foreign exchange students who seem unfamiliar with US traffic customs make our streets and bike paths more dangerous. Small battery-powered vehicles (i.e., electric scooters, skateboards, bikes, and Segway-style 1-or-2 wheeled scooters) are quiet and markedly faster than ordinary bikes. Fixed-gear racing bikes are speedy, silent, and increasingly popular. Electric and hybrid cars are also very quiet. Many cyclists and scooter riders seem ignorant of the rules of the road and basic safety practices such as calling out “On your left!” or ringing a bicycle bell when passing, using hand signals when turning or stopping, riding on the right side of the street, or riding single file when streets are busy. Hardly anyone in IV wears a helmet. SB County Sheriff’s deputies and UCPD officers don’t appear to care about bike and scooter infractions and the California Highway Patrol only seems to enforce bike regulations when they get a grant to do so. Recommendations: Download(~) the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) driver’s handbook (~) and UCPD’s Rolling Stock regulations (~) to get acquainted with traffic laws and ordinances. Find and/or draft a list of courtesy practices for bikes, scooters, etc. Meet with UCSB’s Associated Students Bike Committee and Sustainable Transportation Committee to hear their thoughts and initiatives to make our streets and bike paths safer. Ask UCSB Orientation Programs and Parent Services and UC Police Department how they address bike and scooter safety in the “Gaucho FYI” mandatory two-hour in-person workshop for new students. Develop a transportation module (including a peer support for sensible safety practices) for Eco Vista FYI or Cool Eco Vista II. Support the practice of hollering “Slow down, please!” at drivers, cyclists, and electric vehicle operators tearing through the streets at excessive speed. Target especially dangerous intersections for City Repair style interventions including artwork made with durable highway paint in the street, placemaking amenities, signage, and gentle speed

bumps (with County permission, of course). Three locations that seem especially dangerous are the crossing at Embarcadero del Mar and Pardall Road (outside Silvergreens), the intersection where Pardall “T”s into Camino Pescadero, and the blind curve where Embarcadero del Mar meets Trigo Road in front of the IV Community Center. Develop a traffic safety themed social marketing campaign. Consider designing a wind-activated fixie-, electric bike-, scooter-, or electric skateboard-mounted safety whistle that would sound when the vehicle went over 15 miles per hour to alert pedestrians and slower cyclists.

Related Topics: Safety, Social Marketing, Traveling

- Safety - Mapping & Marking Accident Sites – Bicycle, scooter, pedestrian, and/or auto accidents seem to happen in IV and on campus on almost a daily basis [Fact check], yet after the emergency vehicles leave, no trace remains to warn us how dangerous various spots are. Recommendations: Ask paramedics and law enforcement personnel how often accidents happen in IV and on campus. Research how to obtain data on types of accidents and where they have occurred. If such data is not easily available, lobby officials to change reporting protocols and make this information public. Develop an on-line map to mark accident sites and indicate accident type. Work with UCSB AS Bike Committee and County Public Works Transportation Division to develop designs for physical markers that could be used to mark accident sites and serve as a tangible reminder for people to be more alert and cautious there.

Related Topics: Safety, Traveling, Traffic

- Safety - Closing Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant – PG&E’s(∼) twin aging nuclear power reactors—together with their accompanying fuel storage / cooling pool (∼)—constitute the top threat (or one of the top threats) to our lives on the South Coast. The plant is located 80(∼) miles north of Isla Vista on the Vandenberg Air Force Base in San Luis Obispo County. Its site is close to or on (∼) the Hosgri(∼) earthquake fault. The plant was designed to last ___ years and has already reached this point; its life has been extended ___ years. One or both reactors are likely seriously embrittled. PG&E has deferred safety inspections and maintenance for years. In the event of a disaster, the depleted fuel cooling and storage pond (∼) has only 1 week of diesel fuel stored on site to run the cooling pump to keep the depleted uranium fuel from melting down [Research, fact find]. Some of the spent fuel is being stored in giant, fragile, stainless steel casks in silos close to the beach, just a few feet above the water table. The plants are running \$_ over cost (∼) to run each year and the company has arranged with the California State Legislature to spread these excessive costs around—extending them even to customers that have elected to cancel their contract with PG&E and obtain power from another electrical utility. Meanwhile the Legislature is promising PG&E \$7 billion over the next few years until the plant closes in 2025. Recommendations: Research the technical, political, and financial situation of these plant, who the players are and what

their strategies are, and what groups are working to close the plant now. Speculate on how best to help close this plant.

Related Topics: Environment, Energy, Governing, Healing, Toxics, Preparing for Emergencies, Safety

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• Transportation - Optimizing Transportation & Parking – The lack of parking in IV is one of the most frequently heard complaints here. Questions: If we organized ourselves to share transportation resources more skillfully, could we park more cars at outer lots, or even make private cars unnecessary for lots of people? What types of trips do people use their cars for? [How many of these truly require a car? How many students bring their cars with them from home but hardly ever use them? How many of the cars parked on our streets are hardly ever used? What sorts of trips really require a private vehicle? How many students know about the availability of the Zip Cars car sharing service or have used them? What could we do to support simple peer-to-peer car sharing in IV? What is UCSB’s policy toward 1st-year students bringing cars with them? How many students commute daily from outside IV, park here, and walk, bike, or skateboard onto campus? What transportation elements / modalities do we have to work with? [walking, running, bicycles, electric bikes, skateboards, electric skateboards, roller skates, gyro-stabilized unicycles and scooters (e.g., Segways), shared mobility Lime electric scooters & HOPR bikes, MTD local bus routes, Bill’s Bus clubbing buses on that run on party nights, VISTA (Ventura Intercity Service Transit Authority) regional bus service, bike racks on MTD & Vista buses, folding bikes or scooters that can be carried onto buses even when the bike racks are full, SBCAG’s Traffic Solutions regional ride share help line and Emergency Ride Home Program, other ride-sharing sites, the Zip Car sharing service, taxi companies, Uber, Lyft, and what else?]

Recommendations: Ascertain transportation’s portion of IV’s carbon footprint. Outline a strategy for optimizing response times and flexibility while minimizing carbon use and embodied energy costs. Explore how coordination via computer could match individuals’ needs to the mix of options available. Talk with people in UCSB’s Math Department to enroll local Operations Research experts.

Related Topics: Aesthetics, Energy, Traveling

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• Water Conservation - Irrigating - Installing Graywater Systems – We waste water by only using it once and then sending it down the drain. Recommendations: Install graywater systems on apartments and homes throughout IV to reuse dishwashing, laundry, and shower water to irrigate fruit trees and landscaping. Solicit grants to subsidize staffing and conversion. Develop a social marketing program to support

conscientious graywater use. Support co-op and faux-op houses in converting. Expand to sororities and fraternities as the kinks get worked out. Institute an ongoing training program for graywater users. Incorporate graywater advocacy and guidance in sustainable housing guide for rental property owners. (Note: Ordinary cleaning products and fabric softeners, etc, load soil with toxins and must not be used in graywater systems. Such systems require special detergents that decompose into plant nutrients.)

Related Topics: Social Marketing, Toxics, Water Conservation

- Water Conservation - Irrigating - Collecting Rain Water – Isla Vista is situated in a Mediterranean climate where we’re subject to extended droughts, yet our urban ‘hardscape’ (e.g., roofs, sidewalks, driveways, and roads) is designed to treat rainwater as a problem and get rid of it as quickly as possible. We can, instead, begin to treat rainwater as a blessing, inviting it to stay as long as possible. Recommendations: Plant fruit and shade trees in shallow basins along streets, then cut curbs next to them so runoff can fill these basins in order to water trees and charge ground water. Where appropriate, utilize permeable concrete in new construction and repairs to allow rainwater to support landscaping and trees instead of being shunted out to the ocean. Install or repair gutters and downspouts on buildings and place rainwater collection barrels below for irrigation and emergency use. Note that composite shingles contain fungicides that may harm soil microbiota, plants, and humans; sheet metal roofs may be preferable, especially for those who wish to drink the rainwater they collect.

- Water Conservation - Saving Some for the Fish – Having just come out of a multi-year(~) drought [Fact check], how many of us are back to treating water carelessly? Lots of people take excessively long showers. Recommendations: Research simple water conservation tips. Ask Goleta Water District what steps they’ve taken to educate, advocate, or require users to save water. Find out if they’ll perform water audits, i.e., checking for leaks and offering water saving tips. Incorporate their insights in Cool Eco Vista I or II water modules and Eco Vista FYI orientation. Talk with your housemates and landlord and install a timer on your shower(s). Require 3-minute shower timers be installed on all bathroom remodeling projects and new construction in IV. Lobby County supervisors or State legislators to subsidize cost of water saving measures for property owners and/or tenants. Orchestrate a “Let’s Leave Some for the Fish” social marketing campaign.

Related Topics: Social Marketing, Water

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• Working - Organizing a Tool Library – A tool library is a service that allows members to borrow or rent a variety of tools and equipment. It can take several forms. A “virtual”(~) tool library is a network of participants who offer to make loaner tools available for others to borrow and the tools they’re willing to lend. A “physical” / “tangible” (~) tool library is a facility where members can go to check-out tools. It could consist simply of a checkout counter and storage space for organizing and storing tools, or it could provide additional amenities such as a computer station for downloading manuals and accessing training videos together and/or a workshop space for people to work on small projects. Most implementations of tool libraries would need staff and a system for signing out, returning, recovering, servicing, repairing, replacing, and inventorying tools; noting the timeliness of returns and the condition of returned items; handling dues, fees, and fines; and refunding deposits. The Berkeley Public Library system (~) had or has a branch that lends tools. Recommendations: Research virtual and physical tool libraries. Check whether Berkeley still has a tool library; if so, visit it, and document how their system works and how they organize the tools on video. Find out if anyone has created tool tracking software that incorporates an eBay-type user rating system to incentivize returning tools promptly and in good condition.

Related Topics: Economy of Sharing, Working

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<https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/the-top-100-films-for-action/>



Eco Vista in the Quintuple Crisis

John Foran

May 19, 2020

<https://www.interfacejournal.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Foran.pdf>

An earlier version of this essay was published at Resilience.org on April 21, 2020:
<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2020-04-20/eco-vista-building-a-transition-town-in-a-student-community-in-california/>

The interlocked triple crisis of capitalist globalization-driven inequality, bought- and paid-for democracies, pervasive cultures of violence – from our most intimate relationships to the militarism of the United States – has for a long time been bound up with the truly wicked fourth of climate chaos. And now we have the wake-up moment of the coronavirus breaking upon these structural, systemic burdens.

Suddenly, it seems like we might have a quintuple crisis on our

hands! So, how do we connect *this many* dots?

Does less global trade and use of cars to commute mean less greenhouse gas emissions?

Will there be less (or more) militarism and violence as the dangers of the virus reduce the health and maneuverability of armies?

Might this economic crisis of unprecedented scope lead to universal health care and sky-rocketing unemployment lead to a guaranteed basic income for all, even in a place like the United States?

And how can we adapt our movements and systemic alternatives in the time of the Corona crisis?

Every movement, organization, systemic alternative, and countless activists, theorists, and intellectuals are asking questions like these (and better) as the crisis unfolds.

Everywhere, there is evidence that people are rethinking and imagining things like alternatives to our outmoded educational systems, an economy that works for all to meet real, basic needs, a new and better kind of politics for the purpose of radical social transformation, the shifts in culture and affect to design the whole ways of life we desire, the fair, ambitious, and binding global approach that the unfolding climate change will force on states and other elite institutions...

* * *

This is the story of a systemic alternative that is new and young, emergent and hopeful, and rooted solidly on the ground, yet informed at the same time by the [pluriverse](#) of such alternatives.

“[Eco Vista](#)“ was the name chosen in 2017 by a group of students at the University of California, Santa Barbara acting together with long-time community members to describe their vision of turning their rather unusual community of Isla Vista into an ecovillage in the next ten years. Unique because 23,000 people live together in an area of .54 square miles, with eighty percent of them between the ages of 18 and 24. In March 2020, the Eco Vista Transition Initiative became the 169th member and the newest link in the Transition US network.

We aim to encourage and inspire the foundation of an eco-village with

renewable energy, a flourishing and regenerative agro-ecology of public urban gardens, cooperative, affordable eco-housing, a circular eco-economy based on solidarity and capable of meeting the real needs of the inhabitants, and radical self-governance and community priorities determined by all who reside here, all within a vibrant web of imagination and cultural creativity.

We know that to achieve this aspirational aim will require significant political organization, social movement building, and visionary policy proposals, including the design of strategies for achieving a systemic alternative and perhaps even the invention of [a new kind of party!](#)

Isla Vista, a 50-year experiment in community built on five centuries of indigenous dispossession in the Americas

The land on which Isla Vista and the adjacent university and city of Santa Barbara sit is Chumash land, and the crime of their dispossession by white settlers is a history we are acutely aware of, as seen in this [video](#) on Eco Vista's real foundations made by Sierra Emrick. There will be no climate justice in California or anywhere in the Americas until this monumental injustice is overturned by making common cause under the leadership of indigenous and other frontline and fence-line communities everywhere.

Built on this tragedy and sold again by the Regents of the University of California to unscrupulous private landlords in the mid-1950's and early 60's with the inception of the UCSB campus, for the past half-century the unincorporated college town of Isla Vista has been a site for radical experiments in alternative ways of living, civil disobedience to authority, community governance, and environmental stewardship. As an epicenter for both youth culture and intergenerational solidarity, Eco Vista consciously draws on these histories of struggle, which are well narrated in the book [Isla Vista: A Citizen's History](#), written by Carmen Lodise and a number of other community members who lived there from the 1970s onward.

Today, the community presents many opportunities for active engagement that touches upon some of the most critical issues facing U.S. society – food insecurity and injustice, landlord rip-offs, houselessness, and tenant struggles, mental health, sexual violence, free speech, and police-community interactions.

After a forty-year battle against landlords, college administrators, and the county of Santa Barbara, in late 2017 Isla Vista elected its first local government – the [Isla Vista Community Services District](#); two years later

another referendum empowered the new government to tax utilities, drawing revenue to a \$1 million annual budget by 2019. This would soon be followed by an even more surprising development as community interest in carbon-neutrality, just transition, critical ecological post-sustainability, and systems change from below has grown deep roots.



The Eco Vista Project

In 2017, two UCSB undergraduates, Jessica Alvarez Parfrey (now a member of the permanent community) and Valentina Cabrera (who graduated and moved on to do this work elsewhere) conceived a project whose goal was to lay the groundwork for an ongoing effort to turn their community, Isla Vista, into a model “eco-village” through a thoughtful bottom-up process of engagement with others.

Over the summer and fall of 2017, the project was named Eco Vista, and activity began. Since then, students and community members, both inside and outside classes on topics such [The World in 2050: Systemic Alternatives](#), [What’s Wrong with the World? How Do We Fix It?](#), and a regular group studies called, simply, Eco Vista – have worked in the community on projects around food issues, housing, energy, transportation, local cooperative start-ups, a [newsletter/zine](#) and a [website](#), community outreach, and a burst of cultural creation. In the fall of 2019 my Environmental Studies/Sociology 134EC class “Earth in Crisis” engaged in a two-week exercise that produced the beginnings of a [Green New Deal for Eco Vista](#) and resulted in a 27-page

list of projects for aligning Isla Vista’s next community development planning process with the most progressive versions of the concept, such as the [Red Deal](#), the U.S. Green Party’s [plans](#), [feminist](#) and [labor](#) GNDs, Bernie Sander’s detailed [platform](#), and [ecosocialist ideas](#).

There are now more than 250 people on the Eco Vista e-list, with bi-monthly General Assemblies that have continued to meet on-line during the corona crisis. There are on-going working groups involved in projects including a food forest, community gardens, tenants’ rights (including UCSB-owned housing), and more. As we imagine the future, we also have the precious legacy and ideas of the late resident scholar and activist Michael Bean, who just before his untimely death in February created an [Eco Vista Sourcebook](#) of imaginative ideas and detailed proposals for bringing about Eco Vista on which to draw. Our collective grief at the passing of this shining spirit could only be borne because he had helped us discover each other and our collective strength.

Conceptually our efforts draw on the latest thinking about Transition Towns, degrowth, *buen vivir*, just transition, radical climate justice, and the many worlds to be found in the path-breaking [Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary](#), edited by Alberto Acosta, Federico Demaria, Arturo Escobar, Ashish Kothari, and Ariel Salleh. Another approach that guides our thinking and practice is adrienne maree brown’s [Emergent Strategy](#), which counsels working from the bottom up in an inclusive and un-predetermined way to generate a collective analysis enabling members to articulate their desires and dreams for what could be.



Image by: Charlotte Götze, www.charlottegoetze.de

This image from the work of Extinction Rebellion is so vivid and beautiful that I have stolen it openly for it resonates deeply and expressively with the feel of what we are doing with our own project. Some of this comes through in the community values we have embraced and our invitation for participation, open to all who agree with them:

Community values and principles

We are inclusive. We are democratic. We are non-violent.

We work collectively whenever possible, and all are free to organize their own activities and projects.

We are open to all points of view that are aligned with these values and supportive of the Eco Vista Mission.

We act and live out of love for the dignity of all living beings, and base this love on social and climate justice, and on radical hope.

Corona crisis

And now our worlds have been shaken by the coronavirus. How has this crisis impacted our efforts in the past three months? We last met face to face on March 13, 2020, just before the two-week spring break at the university.

When we returned to start a new ten-week quarter on March 30, we found ourselves beset by the challenges of continuing the work of system change as did all of the world's peoples in movement.

And like many of these organizations, we moved our work to the Zoom space. We have used a regular Friday meeting starting at noon and often continuing till 3 in the afternoon to keep our projects moving forward, to rebuild community and support each other's struggles in the new environment, in a community that was reduced to half its size as many students elected to live at their non- university homes all over the state of California.

We have probably fared better than most organizations in these changed circumstances, and the students among us have probably coped better than most of their peers around the U.S., both of these outcomes effects of the community we had already built and the possibilities we have found of

working in the remote on-line environment.

We hosted an Eco Vista community event on Earth Day, April 22, and [a webinar](#) on our work for Transition U.S. We launched an ambitious new project, the [Eco Vista Climate Justice Press](#) this month and published the first in what we hope will be a long line of inspiring and cutting-edge free offerings to the world, a work of climate fiction by local novelist Maía with the beautiful title [See You in Our Dreams](#).

We have continued to pursue a project for the food forest, to help feed the community with Food Not Bombs, to bring out a weekly [newsletter/zine](#) for the first time, to deepen our knowledge of our own history with the help of Carmen Lodise's book and a conversation it has started between the activists of the 1970s through 1990s and ourselves, to prepare a synergizing proposal for consideration by the local government that would create a position for an Eco Vista organizer to draw our projects more tightly together with the many other popular initiatives and institutions of Isla Vista, and to seek the funds to pursue them.

There are ongoing collaborative research projects this spring involving over 200 students engaged in conducting interviews, designing surveys, and unearthing the archival record of the past to further the transformation of the community. There is [a household carbon-reduction program](#) underway, and plans for continuing to meet over the summer, which would be a first for this student community!

We are seeding the future of our community and the network of communities with whom we hope to be in alliance as this “decade of decision” unfolds, in all its uncertainty.

Conclusion: a far-reaching significance?

We are aiming high: to assist in and lay the foundations for the establishment of an ongoing, multigenerational, student-community project for an equitable and just transition in Isla Vista, California, and to put the result, Eco Vista, forward as an experiential model that other small towns with college students might want to try in their own communities. We consider what we are trying to do as experiments in sustainable, resilient, participatory development, in a space we call Eco Vista, a very real place and also a timeless, cosmic community of radical visionaries and seekers.

I close with this passage from our mission statement:

In the end, Eco Vista is ... a promise, a pledge, a dream, a future.

The promise of Eco Vista is that together we might create a place that is life-affirming for all its inhabitants and that might inspire others elsewhere – particularly young people in their own communities – to use their imaginations to create the innovative future communities we all want to live in, right now!

Our pledge to each other is to co-create, imagine, dream, and transform our community into a place that matches the name of Eco Vista. We want to dream and make manifest this vision together with you!

The Eco Vista dream is a communal, shared, joyful adventure – may it transport us to a place worthy of the love we feel for it.

The future of Eco Vista is ... well, that's what we hope and aim to find out!



Designed by Julia Samuel

About the author

By day John Foran teaches sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Most of the time, he lives the life of a scholar-activist in the global climate justice movement, at the center of the struggle for achieving social

justice and radical social change in the 21st century. He also feels that far too much activism falls short of its potential for liberation because groups and individuals fail to acknowledge and work on the inner transition and nurturing of relationships that the best spiritual practices enable in us. Some of his work along these lines is available at www.resilience.org. He can be contacted at jforan5@gmail.com

Positive Psychology Interventions/Practices

Eduardo Ramirez-Medina

Gratitude Letter

Think of someone who did something for you that you are extremely grateful for. This could be a friend, partner, family member, etc. Write a letter expressing your gratitude for them and their impact on your life. Be specific in what they did, and how they impacted you. If possible, deliver the letter to this person and read the letter aloud to them.

Three Good Things Exercise

The Three Good Things Exercise is a gratitude journal exercise. For at least a week, write down three good things that happened each day. These could vary from something super small (someone opened the door for me) to something huge (I got a raise at work). Provide an explanation for why these things went well for you. It is important to create a physical record, so please write them down! (Mental notes do NOT count).

Loving-Kindness Meditation

For at least a week, engage with loving kindness meditation. There are a variety of Loving Kindness Meditations, so please pick one that suits you the best. If possible, write about how you are feeling before you begin the meditation and again after.

Examples of Loving Kindness Meditation can be found here: <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>

Self Compassion Letter

Follow these guidelines <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#exercises>). “Self-compassion involves acting the same way towards yourself [as you would a friend or loved one] when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don't like about yourself.” Follow this link for more information: <https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/>

RAIN of Self Compassion

An acronym to help you remember how to foster self-compassion:

Recognize what is going on

Allow the experience to be there, just as it is

Investigate with interest and care

Nurture with self-compassion

Click on this link for more detail: <https://www.tarabrach.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/RAIN-of-Self-Compassion2.pdf>

Significance

Gratitude has been associated with an increase in positive emotions which benefit an individual's overall well-being. All four exercises previously stated can help build one's gratitude to some extent. McCabe, Bray, Kehle, Theodore, and Gelbar's (2011) research focuses on positive psychology interventions and their implications on one's everyday life. They analyzed both the gratitude letter and the three goods things in life exercise and found their effects associated with "[promoting] happiness and life satisfaction in children and adolescents" (p.

177). McCabe et al. (2011) states "utilizing positive psychology techniques such as writing a letter of gratitude...can increase happiness and life satisfaction in children and may foster better emotional competence and provide benefits over time" (p. 178). This further supports the positive effects of gratitude and its important role in promoting one's well-being. Leary (2013) also illustrates the importance of gratitude interventions and their effects on positive emotions. Interventions like the gratitude letter are associated with a "[increased levels] of life satisfaction, positive affect, happiness, prosocial behavior, and perceived support" (Leary, 2013, p. 361).

Thus, this further emphasizes the importance of gratitude interventions and their ability to promote positive emotions. Personally, I do believe the gratitude letter has had an overall positive effect on my well-being. I have not been practicing the exercise long enough to say that I have seen a dramatic increase in positive emotions and mental health, but I can confidently state it has helped my motivation in accomplishing tasks.

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Black Lives Matter Canva

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAEDsdZK-c8/fIIWwXGo8FRZv-gw2S08Ww/edit>

Black Lives Matter WHY YOU SHOULD CARE.

Policing History

In order to understand the current relationship between the **Black community** and **police**, we must understand their **history**.

The policing of **Black, Latinx, and Native American communities** in the **United States** initially took the form of **occupation, surveillance, and pacification**.


During the **18th Century** in Antebellum South, policing served as a mechanism for reinforcing and maintaining slavery.

In **1865**, at the end of civil war and the abolishment of slavery, President Johnson's plan for Reconstruction practically handed the South back to ex-confederate control.

At the same time, we see the rise of KKK and other racist groups that **policed and targeted Black communities** to instill **fear**.


In **1865** the Black Codes served as **restrictive laws** designed to limit the freedom of **African Americans** and ensure their availability as a cheap labor force after **slavery**.

Incarceration

The United States is home to about **4.5%** of the world's population, but holds about **25%** of the world's prison population. 

The **War on Crime & War on Drugs** were **racist** policies implicated by the then-current white power structure in order to further oppress and criminalize POC and the Black Community.

Black individuals are incarcerated at **5x** the rate of their white counterparts.

Black Women are incarcerated at **3x** the rate of white women. 

As of today, there has been a **832%** increase of incarcerated women since **1977**—a dramatic percentage of these women are POC or Black.

Jails are specifically **designed for men**. This system was not built for **women**. It **lacks basic essentials** for **proper health care and hygiene**.

Defunding the Police



The **goal** is to focus on **reallocating funds away from police departments** and back to the people through social programs.

This means moving our resources to different areas of need like the ones listed below, **NOT** necessarily abolishing the police.

- Mental Health Services
- Crisis Intervention Services
- Housing Services
- Affordable Health Care Services

Intersectionality

All Black Lives Matter.

In **2020**, there have been at least 25 Trans or non gender conforming deaths. These individuals were violently attacked and killed on the basis of their identity.

It is important that we recognize all Black identities until we have the whole community recognized, appreciated, and respected.

Black Lives Matter works to highlight systemic racism and oppression of that the Black community has endured. It is about attaining equality and equity for the Black community. We must understand intersectionality in order to truly combat racism and other types of oppression that manifest in our current, eurocentric power structure.

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Isla Vista Photo Essay

Andrew Dao with Eduardo Ramirez-Medina



Photos by Andrew Dao



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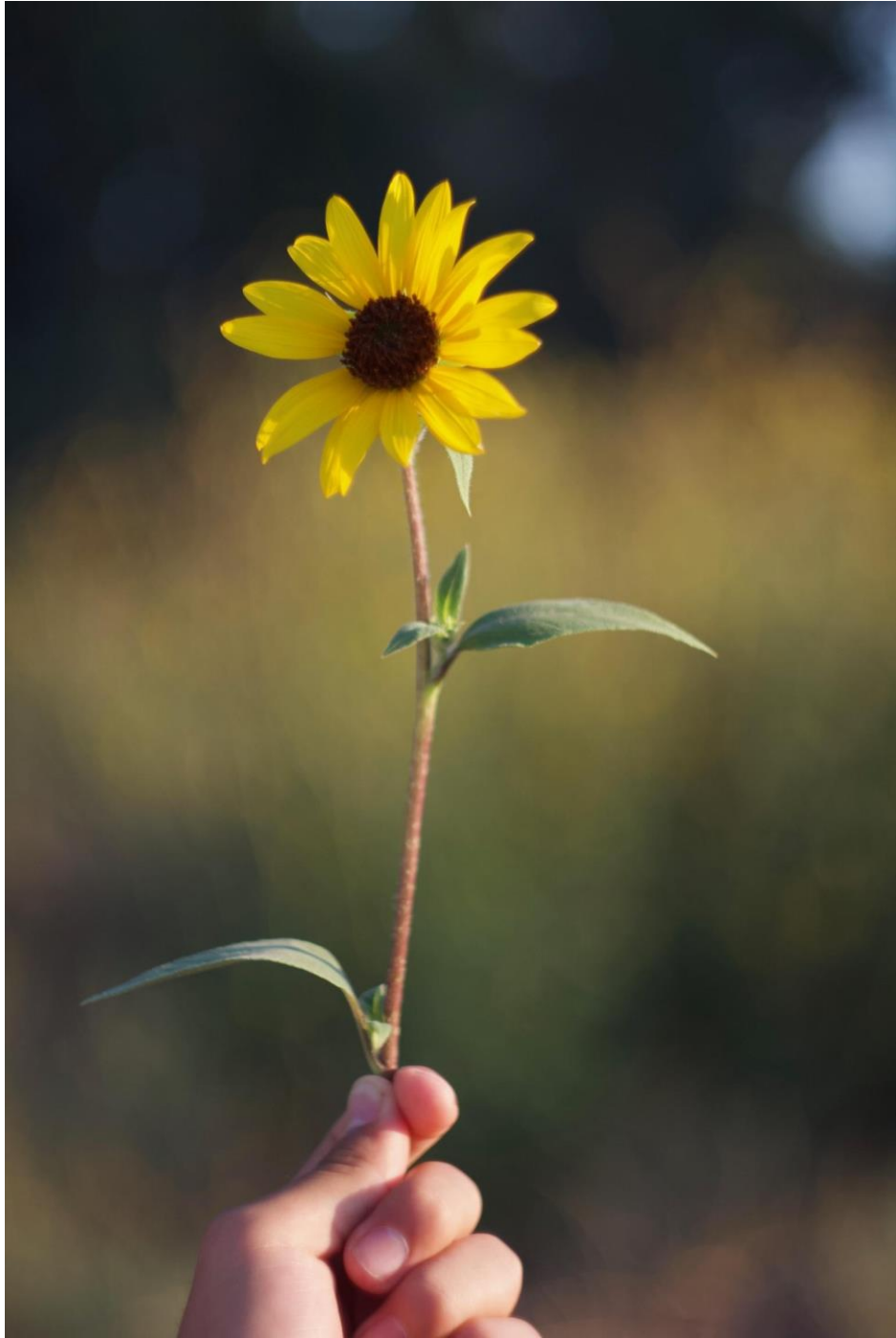


Photo by Eduardo Ramirez-Medina

What role can student-led transition play in place-based sustainability? An investigation into Eco Vista using strategic niche management theory



An artistic interpretation of Eco Vista by Dominic McLeod (Eco Vistacommunity.com)

By: Geordie Scully-Allison

A dissertation presented for the degree of Master of Science,
University of Edinburgh, 2020

Statement of Originality

“I hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed by me and is based on my own work.”

Signed: *Geordie Scully-Allison*

Abstract

Last year the world witnessed the largest international student-activated strike for climate awareness in history. This is just one example of how youth and student activism around climate change is spearheading radical approaches to this problem. This youth/ student-led climate activism is largely based around ‘systemic change’ a significant departure from our current system: the “business as usual” economics model. These youth movements are combining political and grassroots activism in order to grow the movement.

Concurrently, in the broader area of climate activism, significant work is being done on place-based transition initiatives such as the Transition Town (TT) movement. The TT movement was established in 2006, with an emphasis on addressing the twin concerns of climate change and peak oil. To date, TTs have largely existed in rural, middle-class areas. The movement has been criticised for its apolitical stance and lack of diversity. Many argue that these factors could be stifling the movement’s ability to disperse.

This dissertation examines a single case study that is an amalgamation of these two growing movements: student-led climate activism and the TT movement. This student-led TT is based in Isla Vista, California and is called Eco Vista. Through this study, this research demonstrates that Eco Vista exhibit a unique symbiotic relationship between Transition Towns and student-led climate activism.

The methodology of this research is bipartite. First, a thorough literature review was completed on TTs and student movements to synthesize a body of heretofore disparate data on this subject. Second, data was collected in the form of participant observation coupled with 13 in-depth interviews from Eco Vista group members and outside stakeholders. This data was analysed using thematic coding and Strategic Niche Management (SNM) theory. TTs can be described as socio-technical niches. Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) have used SNM and its three key processes, defined as

important for niche development: i) managing expectations/visioning ii) building social networks and iii) learning to analyse TTs' potential for development and upscaling (Kemp et al., 1998). This research builds on this using SNM to evaluate the student-led TTs' potential for upscaling.

Results indicate that, similar to other TTs, Eco Vista could potentially struggle with expectation management and maintaining social networks, exacerbated by the transitory nature of the student community. However, the developmental 'youth stage' of the group members and the unique association with a traditional learning institution combined with a 'standard' TT show promise as a potential path forward for dispersing the TT niche. Eco Vista excels in the 'learning' aspect of SNM. Additionally, this model can utilize institutional participation designs to make the TT movement more inclusive. This relationship also provides a potential source of much-needed funding for TT initiatives. Finally, the political nature of student climate activists shows the potential to grow this niche as a legitimate competitor to the regime.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all interview participants especially John Foran, Jess Parfrey and Eco Vista for allowing me to undertake research on your movement. John Lewis said, "Ordinary people with an extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America" and Eco Vista is the embodiment of this quote.

Emily Creamer thank you for being a calming, caring and committed presence during the stressful combination of dissertation writing and the pandemic. Your passion for sustainability and participation is apparent. You are a huge inspiration to me and your passion helped me bring zeal to my research.

To Dad, Connor, Sophie, Oscar and Juanita, my family who enabled me to accomplish my dream of attending graduate school in Scotland. I would not be here without each one of you.

To my environmental sustainability women Gemma, Heather, Naoise, Maya and Hope. You were my teachers, counsellors and comrades and I am grateful to each one of you for the year of friendship and support.

To my mom, this whole degree is owed to you. Thank you for being the best feminist role model, lockdown buddy, and support system.

In memory of Maryellen Allison

1923-2020

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List of Abbreviations

TT — Transition Town

UCSB — University of California Santa Barbara

IV — Isla Vista

IVCSD — Isla Vista Community Services District

SNM — Systemic Niche Management

GHG — Greenhouse Gas

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

“I want you to act as if the house is on fire, because it is” (Thunberg, 2019). In the past year, student-led climate activism has mushroomed. In early 2018, Greta Thunberg began a solo ‘climate strike’ protest. By September of 2019, she and other climate activists inspired the largest global climate protest in history (Marris, 2019; Thew et al., 2020). Society is entering the golden age of youth-led climate activism, also described as the “age of dissent”. The movement earned this sobriquet because the contemporary youth-led climate activism movements are largely based around “systemic change” which is a significant departure from our current system, the “business as usual” economics model (O’Brian et al., 2018).

Recent research on climate change stresses the requirement for system-wide transformation in order to satisfy the goal of halting the global average temperature rise to a maximum increase of 1.5° C to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, as laid out in the 2015 Paris Agreement (Rockström et al., 2017; IPCC Report, 2014). Youth activists are increasingly cognizant of the fact that climate change will negatively affect them (Thew et al., 2020). As a result, they are addressing the issue by participating in local place-based initiatives extending to global climate justice organizations, combining political and grassroots activism (O’Brian et al., 2018).

Another growing trend, geared toward addressing climate change and its plethora of comorbidities, is place-based transition initiatives, such as the Transition Town (TT) movement. This movement began in the UK and has reproduced rapidly since its inception in 2006. TTs are grassroots community projects that help to build community resilience, shift away from non-renewable energy and create more localized economies (Hopkins, 2008b). The TT movement, similar to that of the environmentalist movement, is commonly criticised for its apolitical stance, overly rural existence, lack of diversity, and its majority middle-aged, middle-class membership (Aiken, 2012; Trapese Collective, 2008).

Isla Vista, California, a small urban community with a majority student population, has recently become the first documented student-led TT initiative, called Eco Vista. Eco Vista is forming an amalgamation of the spirit of the youth-led climate movement and the rapidly growing TT movement. It is a place-based manifestation of the student climate activist movement. It is reimagining the concept of community and TT town movement. Eco Vista is political, based in an urban area, more diverse than the average TT, and student-led. Eco Vista is, therefore, a unique embodiment of the combination of two powerful contemporary movements, making it an interesting and important case study in grassroots climate action.

1.2 Research Aims

The aim of this research is to examine the role and potential of student-led TT movements in contributing to sustainability transitions, using Eco Vista as a case study. Drawing on data collected through a combination of participant observation and qualitative interviews, this research will analyse the extent to which Eco Vista expresses traits associated with successful grassroots social innovations, and how this compares to other (non-student-led) TT and place-based initiatives. The research aims to further understanding of place-based, community-led sustainability initiatives within student communities, which has received very limited academic attention to date.

1.3 Dissertation Structure

To address the aims and objectives of this research, chapter 2 begins with a review of the extensive literature on TTs, student movements, and the multilevel perspective. In chapter 3, the methodology of this research and the research question will be outlined. Chapter 4 will contain the results and analysis. Chapter 5 will go further and discuss the possible implications of this research. Finally, chapter 6 will consist of the conclusion and further research identified.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transition Town Movement

Short TT History

The Transition Town (TT) concept began as a college project in Kinsale, Ireland in 2005. Rob Hopkins, the movement's co-founder, was a permaculture teacher at the time. Permaculture is a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature, in a holistic fashion (Brain and Thomas, 2013). This project in Kinsale was a prototype for the first official TT and was started in 2006 by Hopkins in Totness, England (Connors and McDonald, 2011). Just three years after its inception, the movement grew to over 150 official TTs with nearly 1,000 global initiatives to date (Transitioninitiative.org. n.d.). Hopkins describes it as “one of the fastest-growing community-scale initiatives in the world” (Hopkins, 2008b, p. 133).

TT Process

The TT movement began as a means by which communities can address the looming twin concerns of climate change and peak oil, sometimes referred to as the “hydrocarbon twins” (Hopkins, 2008b). Peak oil is “the point at which the rate of

growth of oil production begins to decline” Seyfang (2009). In more recent literature on TTs, it can be found that some researchers refer to TTs as addressing a triple threat, including capitalism (Foran, 2020; North and Longhurst, 2013). Transition initiatives are designed at a grassroots level with the purpose of enabling cities or towns to shift away from non-renewable resources and work toward the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and as a result achieve a more localised economy (North and Longhurst, 2013). In an empirical study conducted on UK based TTs, Seyfang (2009) found that other top priorities for transition initiatives are building local self-reliance, community building, and improving health and well-being.

The TT movement is based on the concept that the world will eventually have to live a lifestyle that requires decreased energy usage and less reliance on the globalised existence we depend upon today. TTs can provide a structure for which to design more resilient communities, localize food production and strengthen local economies (North and Longhurst, 2013).

The TT model has six overarching principles as well as a twelve-step plan that emerging TTs can use as a blueprint for setting up their initiatives. The six principles of transition are:

1. Visioning
2. Inclusion
3. Awareness-raising
4. Resilience
5. Physiological insights
6. Credible and appropriate solutions (Hopkins, 2008b, p.141)

These six principles align very closely to the community development process, which also encourages coalition-building using networks. These principles in both community development and TTs recognize the vastness of the issues and the importance of working toward achievable solutions (Connors and Macdonald, 2010). The TT twelve-step plan is a prescriptive process with the ultimate goal of creating a community Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP). These steps are an essential aspect to being recognized as an ‘official’ transition town. The twelve steps are as follows:

1. Set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset;
2. Raise awareness;

3. Lay the foundations;
4. Organize a great unleashing;
5. Form groups;
6. Use open space;
7. Develop visible practical manifestations of the project;
8. Facilitate the great reskilling;
9. Build a bridge to local government;
10. Honour the elders;
11. Let it go where it wants to go;
12. Create an EDAP (Hopkins, 2008b, p. 148 – 175).

Connors and Macdonald (2010) note the dichotomy that exists between step 11 and step 12. Step 12 is prescriptive in nature but 11 allows for freedom in the movement. The dogmatic nature of step 12 has the potential to place limits on the freedom of TT initiatives.

TT Critiques

There are also other critiques of the transition movement that can be found across transition literature, most notably in a report by Trapese Collective, *Rocky Road to a Real Transition* (2008). Trapese Collective criticises the TT movement for its apolitical stance, overly rural existence, lack of diversity, and its majority middle class membership.

The lack of diversity within the TT movement is significant because TT was founded on the concepts of permaculture, which values diversity and inclusivity. Rob Hopkins posits that Transition has taken an apolitical stance so as not to alienate anyone, which he hopes will encourage diverse and wide participation in the movement (Hopkins, 2008). However, the TT movement is notably lacking in diversity of membership. Creamer and Grossman (2016) found that the “passively inclusive approach...is insufficient for delivering internal group diversity” (p. 179). One non-passive approach to increasing participation of traditionally marginalized or excluded actors is the institutionalised participation approach. This approach posits that traditionally marginalised actors can be encouraged to participate with better institutional designs and practices. A fairer distribution of resources is one example of

an institutional design that would increase participation from marginalised actors (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007). Aiken (2012) also provides an in-depth critique of both the concept of community and TTs, as outlined below. These critiques of TTs are similar to critiques surrounding the concept of ‘community’.

2.2 Community

The concept of community is at the core of the transition town movement. Ben Brangwyn, a cofounder of the TT movement once said “If we wait for governments, it’ll be too little, too late. If we act as individuals, it’ll be too little. But if we act as communities, it might be just enough, just in time” (qtd. in Aiken, 2012). TTs are place-based initiatives as they are usually contained in a territorial boundary (Aiken, 2012). However, Walker (2010) argues “Places and communities are not synonymous” and there are many different meanings and definitions of ‘community’ (p. 778). For the TT movement, the view of community that most closely applies is the view of community as a “means for grassroots innovation” that serves as a “bottom-up” response to local issues (Walker, 2010, p.779). Although there are benefits of these notions of community and TTs, a criticism of this concept is based upon the all-encompassing nature of the word, when in actuality these ‘communities’ rarely encompass the entire population of a physical space. Additionally, the abstraction of community is sometimes utilized by the government in order to legitimize a “the neoliberal shift” to “offload governmental responsibilities” (Walker, 2010, p. 777). In addition, a function of communities is that they can serve as a protected space to foster ‘niche innovations’ like the transition town movement, which will be discussed further in the multilevel perspective section 2.4.

2.3 Student/ Youth Activism

This paper is concerned with youth climate activism in combination with community as the case study (Eco Vista) is placed in a majority student community. It specifically focuses on student activism; however, a broader term of ‘youth’ activism is used in climate change literature seemingly because the UN holds a “youth climate summit” and defines youth as anyone between the ages of 15-24 (O’Brian et al., 2019).

There is something unique and powerful about youth and student-led movements and activism. Students have been instrumental in systemic change from toppling an autocratic regime in Ukraine to the civil rights Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins of the 1960s (Altbach and Klemencic, 2014; Astor, 2018). More recently, Greta Thunberg has shed significant light on the state of our climate crisis (Thew et al., 2020).

There are varying theories as to why student/youth movements wield so much power. The developmental ‘youth stage’ is “characterized by openness to diverse cultural beliefs and behaviours” and therefore they are learning about the experience of others, which in contemporary times, comes with an increased awareness of climate change disproportionately currently affecting the global south (O’Brian et al., 2019). Students are being educated on these issues and possess an excess of time, which enables them to work on/ protest about them. This learning process is amplified by social media in a “feedback loop”, a perpetual cycle of more and more people joining the movement. Students have the ability to bring awareness to global issues most notably via social media (Altbach and Klemencic, 2014; Marris, 2019).

Another source of youth cogency stems from the fact that youths are not representing anyone else’s agenda, resulting in clear and unvarnished messages. A ramification of this is youths are perceived to have more integrity than adults do. This is particularly significant for climate activism because young people will be more susceptible to the negative repercussions of climate change and therefore are fighting a very personal battle (Marris, 2019; Thew et al., 2020; O’Brian et al., 2019).

Foran et al. (2017) and O’Brian et al. (2019) both note the spectrum of opinions that exist within youth climate activism. Foran et al. (2017) discuss that youth climate activists are polarized between systemic reform versus full system change, like their elders. However, the opinions of youths in this realm seem to be more fluid, based on shared experiences of the already apparent “steady worsening of the climate crisis” (p. 375). O’Brian et al. (2019) frame this same concept as “youth dissent” and places the spectrum into three categories of activism “dutiful, disruptive, and dangerous dissent” (p. 1). These are named for their potential political impact on the status quo; hence, “dangerous dissent” would be considered a full system change, whereas dutiful dissent would be closer to reform of our existing systems. In an Isla Vista case study about the turbulent student movement of the late 1960s, Whalen and Flacks (1980) found that students (youths) are more hopeful for systemic change as they have yet to enter the capitalist economic system, whereas, 10 years after, they found that the same activists had become slightly more disillusioned.

2.4 Multilevel Perspective

This relationship between micro-level actors (e.g. grassroots activists) and macro-level structures (e.g. ‘the system’) has been analysed using the Multilevel Perspective in studying sustainability transitions (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). The Multilevel Perspective uses lessons gleaned from “evolutionary economics, sociology of technology, history of technology and innovation studies” to comprehend system innovations (Geels, 2005, p.684). There are three levels in the multilevel perspective: the meso-level, the micro-level, and the macro-level.

The macro-level comprises the socio-technical landscape. This is described as the “landscape” of society. This is the lived-environment and issues that affect it. This includes “material and spatial arrangements of cities, highways, and electricity infrastructure”. These are parts of society that are not susceptible to being readily changed based on the guidance of actors (Geels, 2005, p.684).

The meso-level is socio-technical regimes. These regimes are “actively created and interact with each other” (Geels, 2005, p.684). These are the systems that comprise the majority of our current society. The meso level is the regime that consists of groups such as finance, the supply chain, production, societal groups, public authorities, and research (see Fig 2.1 for how these groups interact).

Niches & Protected Space

The micro-level is composed of “technological niches” which can be described as radical innovators. The TT movement in its current state is in the micro-level. Niches are imperative for incubation of radical innovation as they provide a space for learning and network building (Geels, 2005, p.684). Niches, like community, have a

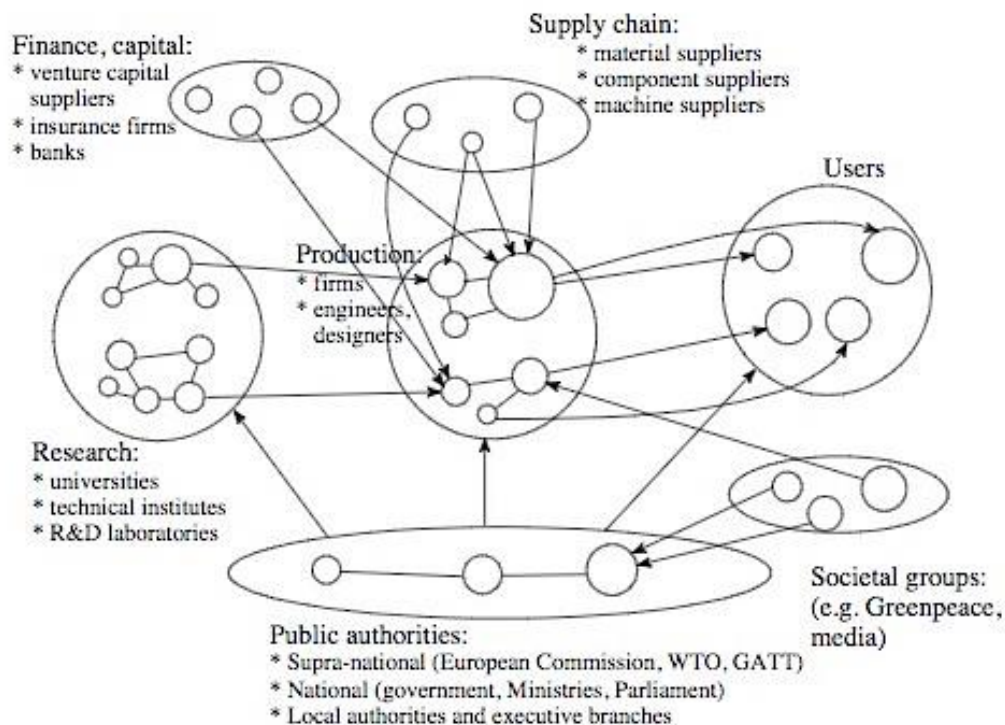


Fig 2.1 The complex interactions of socio-technical regimes (Geels, 2005, p.684)

multitude of different definitions across the literature. For the purpose of this paper, a niche can be defined as “a protected space where sub optimally performing

experiments can develop away from regime selection pressures” (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012, p. 383). Niches emerge as an alternative to the current socio-technical system (regime) for various reasons.

In the case of TTs, this niche has emerged as a solution to climate change and peak oil. Capitalism is an example of one aspect of the existing system (regime) that is enabling the problems to occur. Change within regimes can be difficult and gradual, whereas “revolutionary change originates in niches” (Smith et al., 2010, p. 440). An important element of niches is the ‘protected space’ where it exists. In the case of TTs, this is a local place-based community. This space protects niches from “mainstream market selection”. These spaces are important because the performance of radical novelties is initially low (Geels, 2005, p.684). This paper will mostly focus on the TT niche and the processes which they use to evolve with the goal of competing with or ousting the current regime. These processes have been described as “Strategic Niche Management” (Geels, 2005; Kern and Smith, 2008). Fig 2.2 illustrates the nested relationship between the three levels and the arrows provide a visual representation of the niches that are attempting a regime shift (Geels, 2005, p.684).

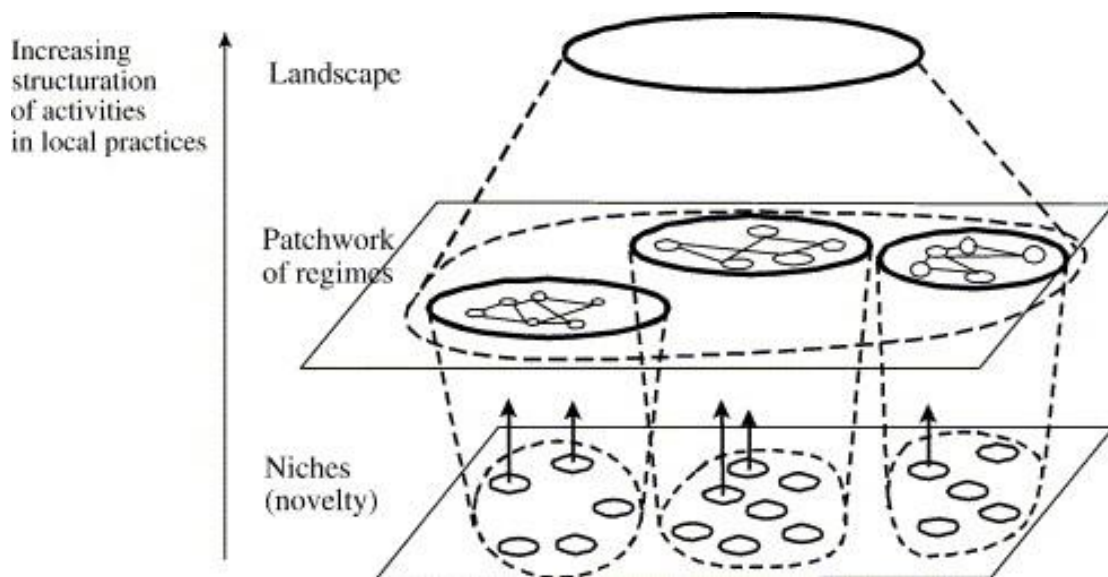


Fig 2.2 A nested representation of niches and regime interactions within the landscape (Geels, 2005, p.684)

Strategic Niche Management

Strategic Niche Management (SNM) began as a strategy for technological innovations to be tested by users in protected spaces so that the technologies could be improved upon before entering into the larger more unforgiving market (Kemp et al., 2000). However, this model has been adapted to be used for socio-technical niches, like the TT movement. These are social innovators as opposed to technological innovators with the shared goal of transitioning toward a more sustainable regime (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). The research of these social innovations, that are geared toward more sustainable alternatives, is particularly salient because the current dominant structure is actively contributing to unsustainable development (Guy, 2006). The SNM model “offers a set of both conceptual tools and nascent management tools for understanding and governing transitions towards the normative (but rarely defined) goal of sustainable development (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012, p. 383). Kemp et al. (1998) have identified three important aspects needed for technological transition: managing expectations, building networks and learning processes. Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) have identified that TTs have been successful in these three categories and this is what has allowed the movement to grow and disperse more rapidly than other grassroots innovations.

2.5 Research Gap

The TT movement is fairly new and therefore many gaps still exist in TT literature. Although now a bit outdated, Barry and Quilley (2009) outline 20 potential research projects in their paper *Transition to Sustainability: Transition Towns and Sustainable Communities*. They specifically point out that studying the relationship of TTs and politics would be an “extremely pertinent topic for research” (p. 6). Additionally, Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) point out that transition literature to date tends to focus on “technological aspects of sociotechnical transitions” and therefore social innovations and movements would benefit from more research (2012, p. 382). Additionally, due to the fact that the TT movement began in the UK, much of the existing literature is surrounding UK based TTs. This study will contribute to the literature on TTs outside the UK, and specifically on their interactions with US-based local governments.

As previously stated, TT is commonly criticised for being rural, middle class, and lacking in diversity (Aiken, 2012). This case study of Eco Vista is a TT initiative that was initiated by two young women of colour in an urban environment. There is limited literature surrounding diversity and inclusivity within TT initiatives (Grossmann and Creamer, 2017). Finally, Eco Vista is one of the first (if not the first) documented cases of a student-led official TT. Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) have

used SNM theory to analyse ‘standard’ transition towns however, this theory has not yet been applied to a student-led transition town, as is done in this paper.

3. Methodology

This chapter will begin by discussing the design, aims and methodology of this research project. It will then outline the methods used to meet the research aims. Finally, it will address the ethical considerations, the positionality of this researcher, and the limitations of the research.

3.1 Design & Research Question

This research was designed as a mixed-methods approach, loosely based in Strauss and Corbin’s (1994) interpretation of Grounded Theory. I gathered a variety of data for comparison, which is imperative to a grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). The research methods used were participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, document and literature review, and the use of secondary data. This is an ethnographic study as defined by Atkinson and Hammersley. It is a single ‘T’ study. The data analysis was carried out by identifying themes, which worked to interpret “meaning and functions of human actions” (1998).

The combination of the literature review, preliminary data gathering via participant observation, and a preliminary interview with co-initiator John Foran guided the research question and aims of the project. The grounded theoretical approach allowed for preliminary data gathering and inductive reasoning to guide the research aim and question, which is as follows (Strauss and Corbin, 1994):

1. How do student-led transition towns differ from other transition towns and what role can they play in place-based sustainability transitions?

3.2 Participant Observation

I was invited to the ongoing meetings by John Foran, a co-initiator of the Eco Vista movement and the professor of the Eco Vista class. Upon the commencement of my research, the Eco Vista core organizing group agreed to allow me to observe them for the duration of my project. This research began after the COVID-19 crisis emerged. For this reason, Eco Vista had moved their weekly meetings from local parks to the Zoom platform. This allowed me to observe all meetings from Scotland. At the beginning of each meeting, I introduced myself and stated that I was researching Eco Vista for a master’s dissertation at the University of Edinburgh.

I observed a total of eight regular Eco Vista meetings, as well as a Transition Town US webinar that Eco Vista participated in, totalling approximately 24 hours of observation. See table 3.1 for specifics on each meeting.

Table 3.1 Eco Vista participant observation log

Date	Meeting Time (approx.)	Number of Attendees (approx.)	Meeting Type	Meeting theme
April 17, 2020	3 hours	25	Regular meeting on Zoom	IV History with Carmen, Jeff and Johnathan (#1)
April 21, 2020	1.5 hours	unknown	Politics and Policy Transition Town Webinar	Politics and Policy in Transition
May 1, 2020	3 hours	25	Regular meeting on Zoom	Focus of meeting undefined
May 8, 2020	2.5 hours	20	Regular meeting on Zoom	Presentation from Bonfire Collective on consensus decision making
May 15, 2020	3 hours	19	Regular meeting on Zoom	Discussing a path forward for Eco Vista
May 22, 2020	3 hours	19	Regular meeting on Zoom	IV History with Carmen, Jeff and Johnathan #2
May 28, 2020	2.5 hours	21	Regular meeting on Zoom	Presentation from IVCS D

June 5, 2020	3 hours	28	Regular meeting on Zoom	Presentation from IV Rec and Parks
July 3, 2020	2.5 hours	8	Summer meeting on Zoom	Presentation from Ecosystem Restoration Camps

3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

I chose semi-structured interviews for this research as it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of my research while also allowing freedom for the respondents to discuss other topics that they deem significant for the research (Bryman, 2016). This is the most commonly used data collection method for qualitative research (Kallio et al., 2016). These interviews were all conducted via Zoom video calls. All interviews were recorded following a verbal agreement, as well as a signed consent form. After each interview, the interviewees were sent a typed transcript of their interview with a reminder that they could request that any of their answers be changed or removed from the transcript. This was done to ensure that ethical and accurate data was collected.

I created two interview guides. One was for interviews with Eco Vista members (see Appendix I) and the other was for the interviews for representatives from organizations that collaborate with Eco Vista (stakeholders) (see appendix II). These guides ensured that the same information was collected from all participants but was not strictly followed in order to ensure a naturally flowing conversation (Kallio et al., 2016). The questions were formulated with the intention of being open, broad, and unbiased. All interviews were conducted via video call to build rapport. Additionally, I made a concerted effort to remain neutral throughout the interviews so as not to sway the respondents in any particular way (Rapley, 2004). However, my interviews were not devoid of interaction on issues that could potentially result in bias. As suggested by Rapley, I posed open/broad questions, followed up on some answers, and most importantly, “provided a space for interviewees to speak for their desired amount of time on any topic” (Rapley, 2004, 22).

The Eco Vista members interviewed were asked 17 questions. The other stakeholders were asked 12 questions. The interviews lasted between 27 minutes and 1 hour 13 minutes. The average interview time was approximately 46 minutes.

3.4 Participants & Selection

Altogether, 13 participants were interviewed for this study. Eight of those are current Eco Vista members, the remaining five are stakeholders from three different local government agencies and one from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Table 3.2 is a record of each interview I conducted. The ‘quote codes’ will be used to identify interviewees in the analysis and are based on the interviewee’s category listed as follows: movement co-initiator (MI), current member (CM), government representative (GR) and Director of UCSB sustainability (UC).

In order to answer the research question posed, I recognised the need for a variety of Eco Vista members as well as representatives from collaborating organizations (stakeholders) to gain a well-rounded perspective. The stakeholders were identified using a stakeholder analysis. The key stakeholders are illustrated in Figure 3.1 in an interest/power grid (Reed et al., 2009). Each stakeholder’s position has been determined through preliminary research and participant observation, as well as a power analysis, coupled with this researcher’s interpretation.

It was determined that each stakeholder interviewed could provide a different or important perspective on Eco Vista. Therefore, their existence in the study was important (Robinson, 2014). Stakeholders’ positions are able to be disputed and are not fixed. Although there are many sources of power, the three sources of power used to determine each stakeholder’s position in this analysis are personality, wealth and organization (Reed et al., 2009).

Table 3.2 Participant interview log

Name	Quote Code	Category	Date completed M/D/Y	Length Hour:Min:Sec
John Foran	MI1	Current Member/ Professor of Class/ Eco Vista Movement Co- Initiator	5/12/20 6/30/20	23:23 1:13:18
Chris Kracha	CM1	Current Member	6/2/20	1:05:16

Anonymous	GR1	IV Local Govt. Representative	6/8/20	37:16
Anonymous	GR2	IV Local Govt. Representative	6/10/20	44:42
Winter Sierra	CM2	Current Member	6/3/20	39:15
Jess Parfrey	MI2	“Mother” of Eco Vista, Movement co-initiator, and Current Member	6/9/20	58:54
Oliva Adair	CM3	Current Member	6/4/20	56:15
Tyler Barton	CM4	Current Member	6/4/20	56:15
Joan Hartmann	GR3	County Supervisor	6/15/20	28:29
Charlotte Mahoney	CM5	Current Member	6/9/20	33:38
Kyla Gorman	CM6	Current Member	6/12/20	33:04
Anonymous	GR4	IV Local Govt. Representative	6/10/20	26:15
Mo Lovegreen	UC1	Director of UCSB Sustainability	6/12/20	27:11

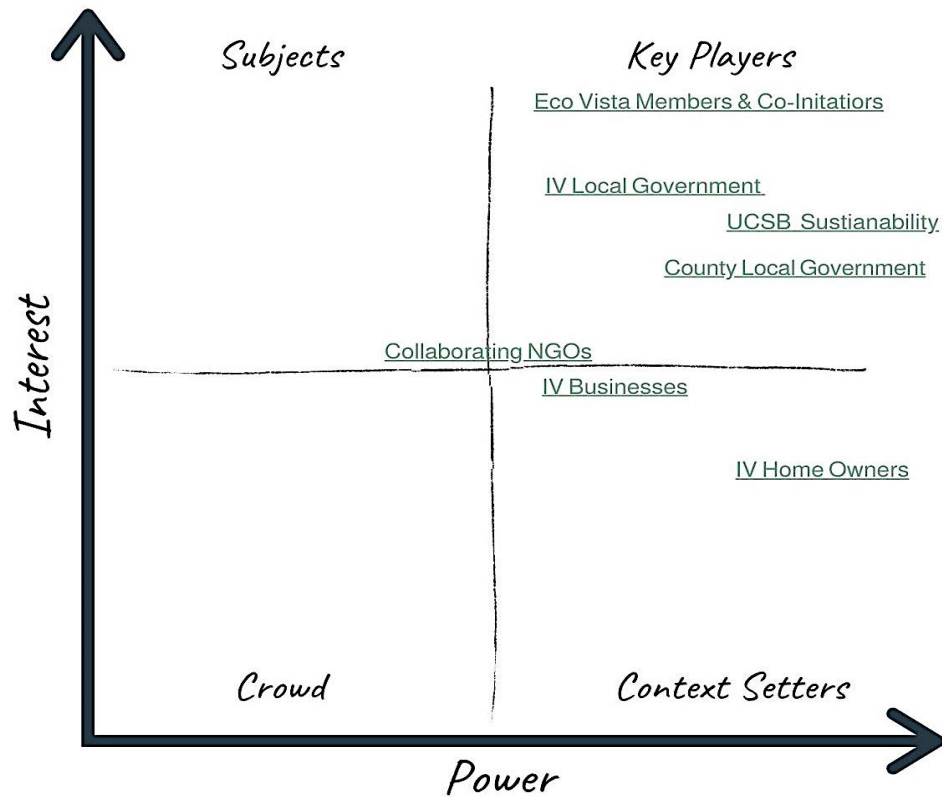


Figure 3.1 An interest/power grid of Eco Vista stakeholders (Reed et al., 2009)

For example, the county local government is placed higher on the power scale than IV local government because it has more resources and is a larger organization. The IV local government has more interest in Eco Vista succeeding as it is more connected to the IV community but it has fewer resources than the county government. Whereas Eco Vista’s position was determined mostly by personality and organization (Reed et al., 2009).

I approached the organizations that fell within the “Key Players” section of the interest/ power grid for an interview. All stakeholders approached agreed to participate. Since I used grounded theory, I allowed the preliminary data analysis to guide the need for more or fewer participants (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). As I approached eight Eco Vista member interviews, I determined that I had sufficient data for analysis. Theoretical saturation had not necessarily been reached, however, Eco Vista membership interviewees were self-selecting and the number was sufficient (Robinson, 2014).

The Eco Vista members were selected on a self-selection basis. I chose this method because I undertook this research during the COVID-19 crisis and felt this was the most ethical and appropriate approach at this time. To recruit participants, I

announced my interviews in four different Eco Vista meetings and sent an interview request email to the 250-person Eco Vista list-serve, which includes past and present members, as well as supporters of Eco Vista. The participants contacted me via email or sign up form.

3.5 Data Analysis

The primary data collected via participant observation and semi-structured interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis. This analysis began after the first interview, as suggested in Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Themes were identified and shifted throughout as more data was collected. Each interview was transcribed using a combination of the transcription software Otter, combined with my edits and reviews. After every transcription was completed, it was uploaded to Nvivo.

Using Nvivo, I employed a thematic analysis to analyse each transcript manually. The software was used only for categorizing the data into codes. These themes arose from carefully reading and rereading the data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A deep understanding of the data enabled me to identify “good codes” which are defined as “capturing the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, 84). This process was iterative and codes were added and removed as the process continued (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Grounded Theory suggests that this flexibility should exist when analysing data (Strauss and Corbin, 1994).

I have used the paper “Growing grassroots innovations: exploring the role of community-based initiatives in governing sustainable energy transitions” by Gill Seyfang and Alex Haxeltine as a framework for my analysis. In the paper, Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) use SNM theory to analyse TT potential for development and upscaling. My analysis has been framed by the three important processes that have been identified as significant for niche development i) shared and realistic expectations, (ii) building networks and (iii) learning (Kemp et al., 1998).

3.6 Ethical Consideration

Ethical research was of the utmost importance to me. This was particularly significant during this research because it was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was imperative to me that everyone who participated in the research did so of their own volition and desire. To ensure this, I provided each participant with an informed consent form (see Appendix III) prior to their interview. Additionally, at the beginning of each interview, I asked them if they would consent to the interview being recorded and let them know that the data would be kept securely, only until it

was needed. I have attempted to limit the impact my bias could have on this research. However, as with any research, some bias may still exist. There is no research that can be considered truly objective (Ritchie, 2014).

3.7 Positionality

In qualitative research, it is important to reflect upon one's own experiences and how this can shape research outcomes (Corlett and Mavin, 2018). As such, I have been cognizant of my positionality and its potential to shape this research. I chose Eco Vista as a case study for several reasons. As an environmental sustainability student, I am motivated to identify grassroots initiatives that are working toward a necessary goal of living within our planetary boundaries. I was connected to this study by a UCSB Professor, John Foran, who I found to be an inspiring force for systemic change.

I have a few connections to this case study. I undertook my bachelor's degree at UCSB, although, I did not know John Foran in my time there. Additionally, before moving to Scotland, I was involved in local government in the Santa Barbara area. Finally, I recognize that I am a white, female researcher and historically, in research, people of colour have been underrepresented. Historically, researchers have "given privileged status to dominant, White voices, beliefs, ideologies, and views over the voices of people of colour" (Milner, 2007, p.389). With this recognition, I made a conscious effort to accurately portray and amplify voices of colour within this research.

3.8 Limitations of the study

This study was conducted with a time constraint of 3 months. For this reason, this research is only able to provide a snapshot in time of Eco Vista. Eco Vista is a living organism that is constantly changing. This study has documented the beginnings of this TT initiative, which could be helpful for other burgeoning Transition Towns. However, this single case study and its findings are only about Eco Vista and IV and may not necessarily apply to other case studies.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected this research. The fieldwork for this study was originally planned to take place in person. As a result of global travel restrictions, this could not occur. I undertook this research from Scotland, which is physically distant from the case study. However, I lived in the area where this case study is located for the past ten years, which enabled me to have a deeper understanding of the location without being physically present during the study.

In an effort to be respectful of the stressful nature of the pandemic, I chose self-selection as my interviewee selection method, which has the potential to result in a lack of group representation in interviewee subjects. However, I also observed over 24 hours of virtual group meetings to ameliorate this issue, which helped to incorporate the opinions of group members who did not partake in one-on-one interviews. I also acknowledge that group dynamics may have shifted as a result of virtual meetings during the pandemic. For that reason, I asked all interviewees about the pre-COVID group dynamics to be able to provide an accurate portrayal of the group. Although the COVID pandemic created a difficult research environment, I also recognize that it allowed me a unique view into Eco Vista (through watching virtual meetings) that I would not have been able to see otherwise. Additionally, due to the fact that all of my data was collected virtually, each interview was recorded which resulted in extremely consistent and accurate data that may have been difficult to obtain with in-person interviews.

4. Findings & Analysis

This section will provide a short history and background on Isla Vista (IV), where Eco Vista began, as a place-based transition approach to local issues and the climate emergency.¹⁰ It will then go into the history and founding principles of Eco Vista. It will attempt to define Eco Vista, although it is commonly described as a living organism, ever-changing. The section will then analyse Eco Vista using SNM theory as a framework. Finally, the discussion section will take a broader view to discuss how Eco Vista can contribute to the wider community of place-based sustainability transitions.

4.1 Short Isla Vista History

IV is a small (0.55 sq. miles/ 1.4sq kilometres) and densely packed urban community situated in Southern California (Lodise, 2019). The town is currently surrounded by the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) campus on 3 sides and the Pacific Ocean to the west. In Fig. 4.1 below IV is the white portion of the map.

IV, and its surrounding area, was originally inhabited by the native Chumash Tribe until the Spanish colonized the area and decimated the population. More recently, the area is commonly described as a ‘student ghetto’. This was created by design, in an effort to build the maximum amount of student housing possible while also gaining

¹⁰ It is important to note that the co-initiators have routinely expressed that Eco Vista is a movement and, therefore, one does not have to exist in IV to be a part of this movement.

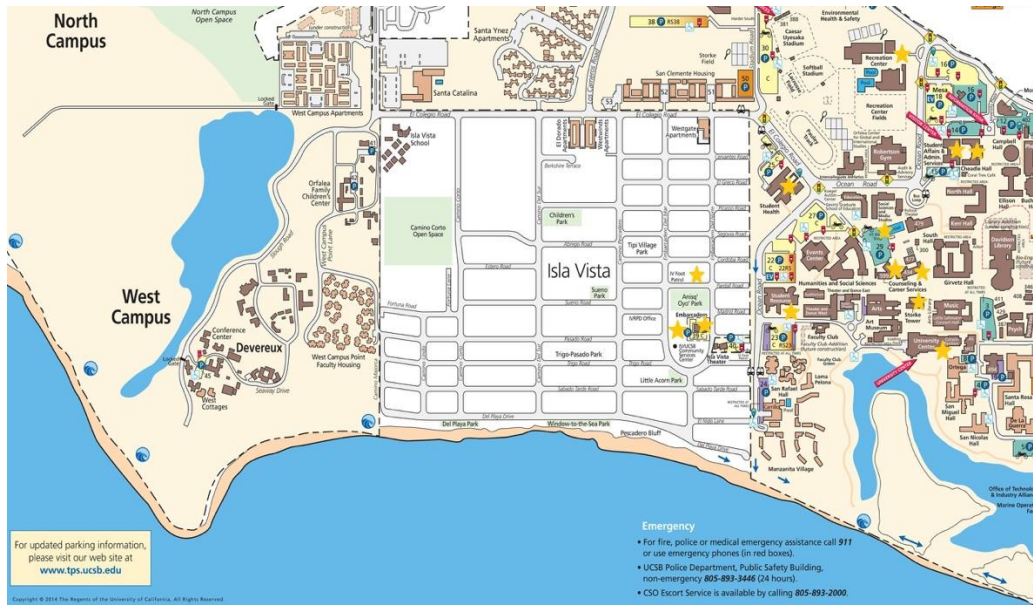


Figure 4.1 A map of Isla Vista surrounded by the UCSB Campus

Source: *Sa.ucsb.edu*

maximum profit. Property developers, the University, and the County worked to rezone the area to allow dense housing to be built. As a result, throughout the 1960s there was a ‘building boom’ in IV and the town is now at full capacity. The housing creeps to the very edge of the ocean causing a dangerous condition because many houses are now hanging off the side of the bluff, due to erosion (Lodise, 2019).

Following the building boom in the late ‘60s, was a period of significant civil unrest in IV and many college communities. This period was marked with riots and military occupation that resulted in the student demonstrators burning down the local branch of Bank of America. These protests were a reaction to a mix of issues including nationwide dissatisfaction with the US involvement in the Vietnam War, and locally with students pushing for a Black Studies curriculum, as well as an oil spill in the ocean that devastated the IV beaches and wildlife. Carmen Lodise, who has written a “Citizen’s History of Isla Vista”, opined that the “cynically thrown together [community] by local political and propertied interests” is now thought to be the “fundamental cause” of the civil disturbances in the 1960s (2019, p. 18).

4.2 IV’s Current State

Currently IV’s population is approximately 23,000 people (Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2018). It comprises about 85% students (The Santa Barbara Independent, 2015). Additionally, between 96-99% of IV residents are renters. The majority of IV is owned by a very small number of absentee landlords or investment companies

(Lodise, 2019) (GR3). The rental prices in IV are very high with average monthly rent of approximately \$2,500 for a two-bedroom apartment, irrespective of its condition. However, because these properties were purchased decades ago and have not been sold since the 60s their tax rates are not commensurate with inflation or other properties similarly situated. As discussed by a government representative in their interview, this has resulted in a lack of funding, necessary resources and governmental representation in the area (GR2). These deficiencies resulted in a group of committed students and citizens, who campaigned to make IV a Community Services District (CSD) in 2017 (Abboud, 2019). A CSD can best be described as a “junior city” that is only allowed to provide certain services, less than that of a city (Sbcounty.gov, n.d.). The property owners were not in support of this. It was an uphill battle to get the measures passed to accomplish the IVCS. Ultimately, they were successful and feel they now possess some level of self-governance. They can now provide services such as rental housing mediation, community beautification, and waste disposal. However, they are still limited and ultimately lack the resources and power to provide all the services of a city (Isla Vista Community Services District. n.d.).

4.3 Short History of Eco Vista ¹¹

The indigenous and radical history of IV, coupled with the purposeful design of the ‘student ghettos’, are important to the Eco Vista story because the group puts an emphasis on local history to solve current problems. Eco Vista emerged in 2017 as a concept by ‘co instigators’ Jessica Alvarez Parfrey and Valentina Cabrera as a project in a UCSB class. They shared experiences, as women of colour, of not feeling welcomed into the existing environmental spaces that were currently in place within the university and in IV. Additionally, Jessica Parfrey “wanted more hands-on, applied, practical work” and to create a group that was “aspirational and just different.” Because of their shared experiences they also wanted to create a space that placed a greater emphasis “on justice and that felt more inclusive and open” (MI2). As they were planning the first iteration of the project, John Foran, a UCSB professor, came to give a presentation to their class. That fortuitous event resulted in a collaboration of the two students and John Foran. They will be described as ‘co initiators’ throughout this paper. Jessica Parfrey described this as a “series of really beautiful synchronicities or convergence...The original magic of us meeting”. Relationship building, in general, is an essential part of Eco Vista’s history (MI2).

John Foran is a sociology professor at UCSB and focuses on “the climate crisis, 21st-century movements for radical social change, and sustainable development or

¹¹ This is an abbreviated history adapted from an oral history of Eco Vista as told by Jess Parfrey and John Foran.

‘building better futures’’. He teaches courses entitled: Activism, Climate Justice, Earth in Crisis, Radical Social Change, and The Global Justice Movement (Soc.ucsb.edu., n.d.). After the meeting with Jess Parfrey and Valentina Cabrera, John Foran started to integrate the concept of Eco Vista into his classes. This gave Jess Parfrey the platform to continue to learn while also teaching her classmates. Jessica Parfrey believes in the importance of this concept because it is “the pedagogy of the oppressed where everyone has something to teach and everyone has something to learn”. Eco Vista began with students working in community gardens and at student housing projects and slowly emerged into a TT.

4.4 Eco Vista as a Transition Initiative

Although these students have been working on community projects in IV since 2017, Eco Vista officially became a TT initiative in February 2020. They are a member of Transition United States. UCSB students are able to receive credits for their work on Eco Vista projects through John’s class. However, there are many members of Eco Vista who are not current students or who do not take part in the class. Eco Vista also operates in IV, as opposed to the UCSB campus, making it a community group. Although it is important to note that Eco Vista is physically situated in IV and the vast majority of the group is composed of university students, it gratefully accepts anyone who is interested. Due to the nature of this student majority community, most of these members will not remain in IV for more than four years.

When asked to define Eco Vista, no two participants provided the same definition. Eco Vista is different for every member. John said of the group, “It’s really a network as much as anything; we know we’re not going to do everything. We’re going to try and capitalize our part, and work with others” (MI1). Eco Vista’s website provides a mission statement:

“Our long-term goal is to establish an ongoing, multigenerational, student-led community development project for an equitable and just transition in IV.

We aim to encourage and inspire the foundation of an eco-village in IV through renewable energy, a flourishing and regenerative agro-ecology of public urban gardens, cooperative, affordable eco-housing, a circular eco-economy based on solidarity and meeting the real needs of the inhabitants, a vibrant web of visionary cultural creativity, radical self-governance, and community priorities determined by all who reside here.

We hope that Eco Vista can become a model for other sustainable communities!” (Eco Vista Community, n.d.)

Eco Vista works to accomplish this mission with projects that can also be found on their website. They have a diverse range of projects. To name a few, they publish a weekly newsletter called the Radicle Zine, they have a litter picking group, a gardening group, and a group working on a “green new deal” for IV. This paper will highlight one project to discuss throughout, the IV version of the Cool Blocks program.

Highlighted Project: Cool Blocks

The Cool Blocks program began as a concept by David Gershon who works to design “community empowerment programs” that focus on “integrating civic, public and private sectors into whole system solutions” (Coolblock.org, n.d.). The concept of the program is that there is a member of a community who invites neighbours to meetings over the span of 6 months, with the purpose to “build community, prepare for disasters and protect the planet” (Coolblock.org, n.d.). In addition, David Gershon and the Cool Blocks program created the vision of IV achieving carbon neutrality by 2025. When respondents were asked about the IV Carbon Neutrality goal of 2025, many stated that it was a possibility, but there was a need for Eco Vista to work with the IV homeowners in order to move forward with phasing out the use of natural gas in houses, which is assumed to be a large portion of IV’s GHG emissions.

Cool Blocks, similar to the transition town movement, originally began in a suburban area with a more settled community than the constantly shifting itinerant IV community. Neither was originally designed for a majority-student community. Tyler Barton and Olivia Adair (two Eco Vista members) attempted to incorporate the Cool Blocks program into IV and described it as a “complete failure”. After the launch effort, they realised this program was designed for homeowners and long-time residents of communities, elements of which are completely absent in the IV community. After the first launch struggle, Tyler and Olivia went back to the drawing board, with a willing group, ultimately deciding to redesign the entire program to suit the needs and resources of college students living in rental communities. This process is currently in motion. They plan to rename the project before the next launch. Tyler Barton described the benefits and concept of the new program:

“Cool Blocks is a bottom-up, mixed with a top-down approach to create more sustainable lifestyles and ultimately reach carbon neutrality. And it works from households to blocks to cities and then kind of hopefully builds itself from there as more people participate and educate themselves. It focuses on water stewardship, living a less carbon-intense life, and disaster resiliency. One of the things that attracted me most to it was that it was meant for the same people who didn’t necessarily have a big background in this stuff. It brings in everyone

and does it through that community level. The hope is that it becomes the new normal, and we grow from there” (CM4).

The Cool Blocks program was chosen to be highlighted as the most data was gathered on this program. Additionally, it is similar to programs that exist in many other TTs with various names such as “Transition Circles”, “Carbon Conversations”, and “Transition Together” (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012).

4.5 Eco Vista Governance Structure

The group considers itself a “sociocracy” and commonly describes its members as “horizontally organized”, in which there is no formal leadership structure. The group is still in the process of developing the structure and organization. As with everything in Eco Vista and in permaculture, this process is constantly shifting and developing. However, when participants were asked how they would improve Eco Vista, almost every member responded that they would like more organization or structure, while maintaining the “horizontal” and unique structure of the group. Eco Vista has a loosely organized design in part to meet the needs of the community, as it currently exists.

“The nature of the projects are fluid, because the needs of the community are fluid. So that’s what’s kind of nice about it, you can really see a need in the community and start a project...I feel like we are on the pulse of what the people around us need and want” (CM3).

Jess also stated the need for some written processes for the group, while at the same time stating the importance of continuing to share oral histories. “I think it’s the attitude that we hold around these processes when you write them, like they’re the 10 commandments and you cannot touch them. I think there’s a problem with that.” However, she stated that basic processes would be beneficial if written:

“How do we onboard people? What is our go to process for looking for funds? What’s our go to process for like doing collaborative work, and outreach through social media? I think those things are important, and that’ll just allow folks the space and energy to continue to innovate” (MI2).

4.6 Eco Vista Inclusivity

In the interviews with participants and stakeholders, several interviewees described the group as welcoming and inclusive (GR1; CM1; CM3; MI2). At least three interviewees listed this as their favourite aspect of Eco Vista. In contrast, in an anonymous survey of Eco Vista members and people who have interacted with Eco

Vista, one respondent stated that the group is “too radical” as the reason they are not more involved with Eco Vista. However, this is one respondent out of 60.

Others stated a lack of time for decreased involvement in the group. This is a common issue with grassroots initiatives because “they are motivated by enthusiastic volunteers who often give generously of their time and resources to local initiatives” (Middlemiss and Parrish, 2009). The time and resource commitments required for these initiatives can become a barrier to participation. It appears that Eco Vista actively attempts to remove any barriers to participation. It strives for this in various ways. Pre-COVID-19 all Eco Vista’s meetings were held in public parks, welcoming anyone walking by to join meetings.

“When we met in person. A lot of different people came, and it was a really open chill hangout space, and we were literally sitting in the park. There was free food, and so you would get people just walking by that would come and sit. And then if they were interested, they could get more involved, or maybe they would just come to the meeting and sit and never really go any further than that” (CM3).

Additionally, anyone who attends meetings or believes in the mission of Eco Vista is considered a “member”. John Foran actually prefers the term “core organizing group” to “member” as it is more informal. Multiple members have reported that when they asked how they could join the group, John responded, “You’re officially joined”. This is how Eco Vista attempts to remove barriers to participation. However, according to the anonymous survey of Eco Vista participants, some did state that they struggled to find a project to get involved with as a reason they are not more involved.

4.7 Analysing Eco Vista Using Strategic Niche Management (SNM)

Eco Vista, as a transition initiative, could be described as a form of social niche innovation (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). Therefore, SNM theory is a useful framework for analysing its potential for development and upscaling. Three key processes have been identified as important for niche development: i) managing expectations ii) building social networks iii) learning (Kemp et al., 1998). In Seyfang and Haxeltine’s paper, *Growing grassroots innovations: exploring the role of community-based initiatives in governing sustainable energy transitions* they use SNM theory to analyse several UK based TT initiatives. My analysis works to build upon this paper and gain an understanding of the extent to which this student-led TT is attending to these same factors. Additionally, this analysis will explore if this student-led initiative differs from a ‘standard’ TT in terms of its potential for niche growth and diffusion.

4.8 Group Visioning and Managing Expectations

SNM theory suggests that managing internal and external expectations of the group is key to the success of a niche movement. These expectations need to be “widely shared, specific, realistic and achievable” (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012, 390). In order to set these expectations, the TT model encourages visioning as a way for the group to see a future for its community without dependence on peak oil (Transitionus.org. n.d.). Visioning exercises set TTs apart from other environmental movements because they focus on how people would like to see the future rather than dwelling on the possibility of a disastrous future that will exist if climate change is not addressed (Alexander and Rutherford, 2018). Two interviewees referenced Eco Vista’s Retreat, which was a full-day visioning session, as their favourite experience as a member of the group so far.

“It was crazy to feel the energy and the buzz of people collectively working towards something that they all really care about. The ideas that we generated, just in one day of collective thinking, were incredible and I’ve never been in a brainstorm situation that was so lucrative like that one” (CM3).

It was also apparent through participant observation that visioning and new project ideas were welcomed and encouraged in every meeting. In this vein, Eco Vista “offers a positive vision that inspires people to join in” (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012, 390). This is imperative to the transition town movement. Through participant observation and interviews, it is clear that co-initiators, John Foran and Jess Parfrey, hold a space for participants that encourages visioning and creativity, while also inspiring the group to undertake concrete actions.

Some of the group’s plans and visions have been described as overly ambitious by Eco Vista group members. An example is Eco Vista’s goal to make IV carbon neutral by 2025. Overly ambitious goals could potentially have a negative impact on the outward expectations of the group from stakeholders (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). However, when one governmental stakeholder was asked about Eco Vista’s carbon neutrality goal, he remarked “The fear of not being able to make ambitious goals will prevent us from taking the first steps. We need ambitious goals to get us going in the right direction” (GR1). Additionally, Jess Parfrey said, “The idea that Eco Vista could change the world, I don’t think is silly at all...That’s the world we’re living in now, where one small innovation or idea could be shared across these networks and could set in motion”. The passion and hope that Eco Vista could change the world are what keeps it in motion, but not accomplishing stated goals could result in stakeholders having a negative view of the group for lack of follow-through (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012).

Another unique vision of Eco Vista is the possible formation of an ‘Eco Vista party’, as some members have expressed frustration with the current US two-party system and their lack of action on climate change issues. The members of Eco Vista do not hesitate to be a political force when necessary. When respondents were asked if Eco Vista was ‘political’, all respondents stated that it was. “I feel like whenever you’re doing this type of work, and like this type of organizing around important issues, we are, the organization is, inherently political” (CM3). The same sentiments were echoed by another group member, “Eco Vista, by nature is absolutely political” (CM1). Connors and McDonald (2011) agree with this, making the argument that working toward systemic change is a political act and requires a commitment to human rights and social justice.

A notable element of each Eco Vista member interview was the emphasis on social and environmental justice. One participant stated that when she entered Eco Vista, she was only interested in environmental conservation work but throughout her time in the group, she realised that all environmental issues are inextricably linked with social justice issues (CM6). Additionally, last year Jess Parfrey ran for a County Supervisor’s seat. She ended up stepping down from the campaign after some discussions with another candidate. Because of these discussions, Eco Vista endorsed the candidate who ended up winning. In the next few years, there will be some decisions made by this elected board regarding oil extraction and transportation through the region (Smith, 2020). One Eco Vista member highlighted the importance of this endorsement, stating that the opposition was pro-oil and that it is in direct opposition with Eco Vista’s mission. In addition, some members of the group plan to run in upcoming local elections. The group’s involvement in local politics have also allowed it to expand its networks.

4.9 Forming and Managing Networks

Eco Vista is a highly collaborative organization. It is evident that the group recognizes that in order to achieve its goals, it will need many partnerships and a large network. One participant described the nature of the network:

“Eco Vista is this big umbrella. And then under that umbrella, there’s all these separate sectors and groups that are working on either art activism, or a green business group, or a housing group. And so we’re all trying to tackle different parts of IV and how to make them more sustainable” (CM5).

Additionally, John Foran said about the group, “It’s really a network as much as anything; we know we’re not going to do everything. We are going to try and capitalize our part, and work with others”.

Seyfang and Haxeltine discuss the importance of networks for TTs. They have found that most TTs are very well connected within the Transition Network but commonly their other networks are “ad-hoc and patchy” (2012, p. 394). Due to the horizontal design and loose structure of Eco Vista, it could be said that their networks are at times ad hoc but also by design. There are working groups formed that result in natural networking. They cover all local sectors including local government, the university, local business, and non-profits. Although there are many projects in Eco Vista, it has been found that every project has some level of networking included. The Cool Blocks program is a good example of an Eco Vista program that has a complex and well-connected network.

Local government

Transition stresses the importance of building bridges with the local government. In alignment with UK transition towns, Eco Vista’s strongest network seems to be with local governments (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). It has a “local government” working group and every level of local government has interacted with it. One local government representative remarked that the connections have strengthened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the meetings have been online, making them more easily accessible for local representatives to attend. Five of the eight virtual meetings observed were attended by one or more local government representative and in some meetings they gave a presentation about their organization. In addition, all Eco Vista participants interviewed expressed positive reactions when asked about the group’s relationship with local government. Although one local government official remarked that network building is difficult for majority-student communities.

“Since the community moves around so much, you really have to continue to get community investment. Whereas in a more settled place, if you can reach that consensus, once, you might just have to do a lot more minimal work to keep that level up” (GR4).

Eco Vista is working to form even closer ties to local government. Some members of the group are working to run for open seats on the locally elected boards (IVCSD and the IVRPD) in an effort to have a representative voice from their group. The local IV government is very newly established and struggles with a lack of resources. One local representative said, “We don’t even have the resources to measure what our carbon footprint is” (GR2). The county has more resources, but IV’s county representative also represents the needs of five other towns. This lack of resources from local government could potentially be a barrier for Eco Vista; however, local government representatives show a willingness to be involved with this

niche. Additionally, the University (UCSB) is also in Eco Vista's network and has larger resources than those of the local government.

UCSB

The Eco Vista connections to the University are partly attributed to the fact that Eco Vista was created by two UCSB students and a UCSB professor. However, they have made a clear delineation that Eco Vista is an IV community group, not just a university class. It does appear to be both, as members of Eco Vista can receive university credit for their time spent on Eco Vista projects. The connection with the university provides Eco Vista with a level of legitimacy but it also leads other stakeholders to believe that UCSB is providing funding to the project when in reality the group receives less than \$2,000 per year, with restrictions attached. The limited funds from UCSB cannot fund group organizers who are putting in many unpaid hours of work. Jess Parfrey made two comments about this issue.

“We need investment. We need resources. We have folks who are ready, willing, and are already doing the work, can we figure out a way to align?”

“I think the challenge that I'm running into, and a lot of students who really want to stick around to continue to do this work, it's just like, how do we get paid to do this kind of organizing?” (CI2).

Although there is limited funding from the university, Eco Vista is collaborating with the university on a variety of projects, most significantly the Cool Blocks program. The head of the sustainability department at UCSB has expressed a lot of interest in working with Eco Vista on this program but also mentions that the relationship between UCSB and IV groups are historically sensitive.

“I think they [UCSB] are supportive in that and they're really supportive of positive change in IV. And so if you put those things together, I think there's a huge opportunity to get that level of support. The hard part is, IV is really reticent of the 800-pound gorilla of UCSB coming over and taking charge of anything” (UC1).

Cool Blocks is being formed with many ties to the university, however other Eco Vista projects are not tied to the university at all. The connections with UCSB could be a potential path forward for scaling Eco Vista, as UCSB is part of a larger University of California (UC) system that consists of 10 campuses (University of California, 2020). The UC network also has a goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2025. Some members of Eco Vista are working on a UC Green New Deal, which is

lobbying the UC system to expand sustainability goals beyond carbon neutrality goals (CM1).

Other Networks

The group has also built networks with local businesses through the Eco Vista Green Business working group and through various projects. Finally, the non-profit networks are largely created through members of Eco Vista crossing over and having dual memberships. “I think a lot of students who are a part of Eco Vista are also involved in a lot of other spaces. And so that’s kind of how we’ve been doing our collaborative work” (MI2). This highlights the ad-hoc nature of the networks within Eco Vista, which is in line with other TT initiatives.

4.10 Learning

The learning aspect of Eco Vista is perhaps the most unique in relation to other TT movements. This is because of the connection it has with a university. SNM theory suggests that in order for a niche to develop into a regime both first-order and second-order learning will need to occur (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). First-order learning is geared toward a specific objective; this is ‘traditional’ classroom-type of learning. Second-order learning is about problem-solving and learning as an iterative process; this is the hands-on type of learning (Allert et al., 2004).

In addition to the need for learning, according to SNM theory, a significant portion of the “twelve ingredients of the transition model” is about raising awareness (learning) around the issues concerning peak oil and climate change. This portion of the transition town-building can “soon saturate a local market, and groups hope to grow by repeating the process with new audiences—but one real problem is that interested people drift away” (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012, 390). Eco Vista brings a unique perspective to this issue. While it seems sometimes people do drift away, because they do not find a project that sticks with them, it is not a result of a lack of tangible projects that exist within Eco Vista. It is a fairly new Transition Town initiative but has many projects currently in motion. The awareness-raising and recruitment process has been built as a function of the classes that John Foran teaches at UCSB. While not all Eco Vista members are students, the vast majority of members have been a student of John Foran’s at some point. The traditional learning structure paired with a transition town movement is a potential solution to the barrier that other transition towns face, which is with the education and recruitment phases. Many TT initiatives use “doom and gloom” films for community educational purposes and to recruit members (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). This has not been the most successful method to spur concrete systematic change. Eco Vista works to recruit and

educate through a mix of John's classes and fun community events and has future plans to implement social learning with its Cool Blocks program.

As a result, for many Eco Vista members, this dual level learning occurs in one of John Foran's classes. He notes that Eco Vista is a means by which college students can "design and implement systemic alternatives outside the classroom in their own communities" (Foran, 2020). The head of the UCSB sustainability department stated that more than 80% of students take a course on sustainability while at the university (UC1). This is where a majority of first-order learning occurs. Eco Vista's projects provide a second-order learning mechanism where these students and community members can enact legitimate change. A local government representative also mentioned they see a gap being filled by Eco Vista's dual learning model.

"It can be really easy to get in the ivory tower mentality, and professors are talking about all of these theories and, the history behind things, but sometimes it's detached from the present and local context. So, I have always been very enthusiastic about any efforts that have tried to bridge that gap" (GR1).

Seyfang and Haxeltine suggest that TTs should "adopt social and experiential learning strategies" as behaviour change research shows the need for consideration of social and psychological factors (Shove, 2004). For social learning, other transition towns have adopted programs called 'Transition Circles', 'Carbon Conversations', and 'Transition Together'. These programs are functionally the same as Eco Vista's Cool Blocks initiative. For Eco Vista, the programs can deepen their community connections and continue to learn and teach about low carbon lifestyles. These programs have been successful for behaviour change because they tap into humans' "needs for group membership, belonging, identity, community, self-expression, lifestyle creation, and reciprocal exchange" (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012).

One member interviewed felt that behaviour change (and therefore the Cool Blocks program) is not the best solution to the climate emergency and for that reason, Eco Vista should instead be focusing on the 70% of global GHG emissions that are being emitted by just 100 companies, all of which are fossil fuel companies (Riley, 2017). This member also emphasized the importance of political activism in Eco Vista and all environmental movements. Every member interviewed also mentioned the importance of political activism in the Eco Vista movement. This is also commonly discussed in the environmental community, "Individual action to reduce emissions and energy use is worthwhile, but inadequate given the scale of the challenges" (North and Longhurst, 2013, 1424). However, Agyeman and Evans (2004) argue that given the fact that GHG emissions do come from communities and therefore collective action at a community level is a fitting "scalar response".

This issue highlights the mixed opinions on different approaches and exhibits the range of viewpoints that exist within Eco Vista. Some interviewees expressed the need for an activist approach to climate change while others focus on behaviour change and waste reduction. The horizontal structure of the group allows for all of these projects to co-exist under the Eco Vista ‘umbrella’. IV’s version of the Cool Blocks program has a large focus on how renters can work with their landlords to shift from their reliance on fossil fuels. This is bringing in a novel aspect to these social learning strategies that have been taking place in transition towns. The program is being modified specifically for IV, which could result in a blueprint for other student communities, high turnover communities and/or communities that have a high percentage of renters.

In conclusion, Eco Vista is a new TT but has already begun to develop these three key processes that are important for niche development. Eco Vista specifically excels with learning and it is in the process of creating blueprints through the Cool Blocks program that could enable diffusion of the niche. Additionally, Eco Vista excels in visioning which is encouraged by group initiators and seems to be the driving force for keeping up project momentum and new project creation. Visioning processes and inclusivity of new ideas and projects are fostered by group members. Eco Vista members have big visions, which could result in a struggle with expectation managing further down the line. As with most TTs, Eco Vista has done well with “building bridges to local government” and has also built networks with other local entities, however, its networks do tend to be ad hoc and patchy as with many other TTs. This has the potential to be exacerbated by the student turnover that is prevalent in IV and Eco Vista.

5. Discussion

The SNM model has been a valuable tool in evaluating some factors that may contribute to Eco Vista’s ability, as a student-led TT, to create a socio-technical regime transformation. It has highlighted some novel additions that Eco Vista’s TT model can contribute to the wider transition community. Through the analysis, it was

also determined that Eco Vista exhibits many similar traits as ‘standard’ TTs. The SNM analysis indicated that while Eco Vista has similar traits to other TTs, the student-led aspect is the most significant factor that plays into all 3 categories i) managing expectations/visioning ii) building social networks and iii) learning (Kemp et al., 1998). This discussion chapter will now take a broader view and focus on how lessons learned from Eco Vista, as a student-led TT, can contribute to the wider community of place-based sustainability transitions.

Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) report that many participants lose interest in TT and the movement becomes stagnant. This is similar to the apathy found by Whalen and Flacks (1980) when they studied student activists 10 years after they were deeply involved in protests in the 70s. The former student activists were still politically active but did possess a newfound disillusionment about the possibility for systemic change. While there are downsides to the natural process of student turnover in Eco Vista, it has the potential to keep the momentum going with a constant source of new ideas and energy with each successive class of freshmen. Much of the critique of “community” and transition towns is based around the concept that it is “homogenous” and with “arbitrary boundaries” (Walker, 2011). The constantly shifting nature of IV and student communities breaks up some of this homogeneity. Additionally, there are downsides to students moving away as Eco Vista will have to recruit more members and continually seek community buy in, however, students will be moving to new areas with the knowledge of TTs and the skills they gained working on this transition town, which has the potential to contribute to dispersing the niche.

5.1 Scaling Up

Replication, scaling up, and translation are important aspects for a niche movement to oust a current regime. Seyfang and Haxeltine (2011) have found that the TT movement has been most successful at replication, finding difficulty with scaling up, and only considering translation, which would bring the movement into the mainstream. There are over 975 official TT initiatives currently listed on the transition website, which has doubled in the past 10 years, exhibiting the success rate of replication within the movement (Transitioninitiative.org. n.d; Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2011). However, in a UK survey of TTs, 76% reported that they have struggled with growing the movement because it is difficult to recruit people who are not already interested in these types of ‘green’ movements (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2011). In the interviews with Eco Vista members, many expressed a similar struggle with recruiting people who had not already been involved in the environmentalist movement.

One interviewee expressed this more widespread recruitment as a top interest for him. He feels that the IV version of the Cool Blocks program could begin to incorporate these less involved citizens into the movement. Additionally, IV shares many similar attributes to other college communities in California and the US. The IV version of Cool Blocks is potentially creating a scalable, low-income, urban version of the programs that have been originally developed in rural middle-class areas for established residents. A potential path for scaling Eco Vista would be through the UC system in correlation with the UC Green New Deal, in which some members of Eco Vista are involved. There are also goals for Eco Vista scaling up/out with the Cool

Blocks program. John Foran will be a panellist on a “scaling up” webinar for Transition US later this month and Jessica Parfrey will be taking an entire class on this topic next year.

5.2 The struggle with scaling up

Eco Vista has a large number of projects that intersect with all different networks as previously discussed. Eco Vista’s “Cool Blocks” is forming “formal” networks, and as a result, has brought in many outside stakeholders. In addition, the program is being thoughtfully designed with the possibility of “scaling up”, which is important for the micro-level to graduate to the macro-level transition (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). This seems to be the most contentious issue for the group as some have expressed concerns with the project. Most reservations are based around a misunderstanding of the project and the concept of using a program that did not originate in IV and therefore may not align with their efficacy as an organization. This is a common issue in transition and activists’ groups. “The value clash between the niche sociotechnical system and the regime might preclude the mutual exchange of ideas, but a niche that intends to gain a wider influence cannot risk stagnating in a small group of like-minded activists; it must communicate effectively with wider audiences” (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012, 394). There is a potential that this could occur for the Eco Vista movement. However, the initiators and members continue to express a clear and concerted vision that Eco Vista remains an ‘umbrella’ under which many different projects exist, with varying levels of activism involved.

5.3 An argument for politics

Another critique of the transition movement is its apolitical nature. “TTs are based on the idea that communities can create different systems, but this is only possible if the malignant forces and entrenched power that people have been struggling against for hundreds of years are recognised, challenged and TTs become a political force for change” (Trapeze Collective, 2008, 34). Although many have critiqued Rob Hopkins and the TT movement’s apolitical approach, he stands firm in this approach stating, “I make no apologies for the Transition approach being designed to appeal as much to the Rotary Club and the Women’s Institute as to the authors of this report” (Hopkins, 2008). Here, Hopkins is specifically referring to the critique discussed by the Trapeze Collective.

It is apparent that Eco Vista does not make an effort to be apolitical even though it is officially a member of Transition US. The apolitical nature of TT initiatives is based on the desire for inclusivity and to encourage maximum participation from the community (Hopkins, 2008). However, Kenis and Mathijs (2014) argue “Differences of opinion or power inequalities do not disappear just by

ignoring them” (p. 180). The fact that the Transition movement disregards politics could lead to its demise. Stevenson (2012) suggests that the movement is at risk of being “reduced to a form of middle-class lifestyle politics, unable to cross borders and engage with other experiences and class histories” (p. 77) (qtd. in Grossmann and Creamer, 2017). Eco Vista values inclusivity and diversity in alignment with the principles of Transition and permaculture but has opted for a different, more political approach to accomplish it. This connects with the political approach taken by youth climate movements. Hopkins remains apolitical in an effort to achieve maximum inclusivity; however, successful youth climate movements have highlighted the inherently political nature of regime change (O’Brian al., 2019).

5.4 The Need for Resources

In the survey of UK TTs, a “struggle to grow the movement” was the most frequently reported barrier to TT initiatives. The second most frequently reported barrier was “limited resources and time” with 58% of TTs reporting this as an issue. Similarly, this has also been reported as an issue for Eco Vista, that it is not able to pay organizers. The Trapeze Collective (2008) also stated the importance of resources for TT initiatives, “To make any real policy changes, communities need room for manoeuvre at a local level – they need power and resources” (p. 34). It went on to suggest that the relationship with local government and networks are imperative for these niches to grow. This issue is discussed across the board in grassroots and transition literature. Eco Vista is providing an outlet for eager participants to contribute to their community, but the group is frustrated with the lack of resources available for this type of work. Middlemiss and Parish (2010) also list this as the common demise of grassroots initiatives, stating that these initiatives are built on people who give generously to their communities but the strain of unpaid work with limited support “takes its toll” (p. 7559).

Jess Parfrey mentioned how Eco Vista attempts to embody inclusivity rather than seek out ‘diversity’. This sentiment is mirrored in a study by Polk and Servaes that found even the word ‘inclusive’ is a turn off to some people of colour and it ignores the historical informal systems that have been put in place before this formal TT initiative (Polk and Servaes, 2015). Eco Vista actively attempts to remove any barriers to participation, seemingly in accordance with the institutionalist argument that contends the best way to increase participation is through institutional designs “in rules and decision-making processes that encourage actors to participate” (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007, p. 8). The fact that Eco Vista is also a class enables them to create these institutional designs. UCSB students can receive university credits for participating in Eco Vista. This is an incentive for joining but also can be seen as a form of payment for the hours of work these students are putting in, serving the local

community; this has the potential to encourage participation for those that are short on time or resources. This could be viewed as an effort to provide a “fairer distribution of resources” which aligns with the institutionalized participation approach to increase participation from traditionally marginalized actors (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007).

The existence of Eco Vista as a class is also beneficial for growing the movement because almost all of the participants are recruited through John’s classes. This is a unique benefit of student-led transition towns. Another inclusive institutional design is that Eco Vista attempts to make its projects accessible and easy to join with varying levels of commitment. This tactic has varying success rates as some did report that they struggled to find a project to join. So, rather than working toward inclusivity by remaining apolitical, Eco Vista is doing this with institutional designs that have been proven to increase participation rates.

Although students can receive some university credits for the class, it is not enough to sustain Eco Vista in the long term. Eco Vista will require investment and community support from stakeholders in order to sustain the movement. It is providing services to the community and filling a gap that some would argue should be a function of the government. Walker (2010) argues that governments have been increasingly using the concept of ‘community’ as “...part of broad neoliberal shifts toward reducing the size and scope of the state and offloading governmental responsibilities” (p. 777). With the climate crisis looming and an increasing number of governments declaring carbon emission targets, niches like Eco Vista, and the TT movement, are filling a much-needed gap before bureaucratic government regulations catch up.

However, in low-income communities like IV with governments lacking in resources, it can be difficult to fund much-needed projects like Eco Vista. Due to the fact that Eco Vista is targeting emissions reductions and working to build more resilient communities, it should garner more investment. The student-led transition town model has the potential to open up new partnerships and funding opportunities that non-student-led movements did not. The UC system has a substantial amount of resources that could be made available to these movements. Funding for Eco Vista could assist with the barriers the group is facing. An example of this is that although Eco Vista is building networks, it does not have the capacity to formalize these networks, which is a key component to SNM theory. With financial resources, someone could be paid, and therefore have the capacity to work on more formal network building.

5.5 Group Governance

Finally, “group governance issues” were the third most commonly reported barrier for TTs, according to a UK survey (Seyfang and Haxletine, 2011). Group governance is defined by Seyfang and Haxletine (2011) as “issues such as maintaining momentum, managing group dynamics, and developing the group” (p. 390). Eco Vista is still in the process of deciding on a governance structure that suits its needs but is open to a flexible group structure that is malleable so that new members entering the group can have input into the group governance structure. This is particularly important for Eco Vista as the membership is constantly shifting. Similar to that of creating formalized networks, defining these processes are time and labour intensive and could be more easily established with some additional resources.

6. Conclusion

In congruence with the wider contemporary youth environmental movement, Eco Vista is more political, diverse and inclusive than ‘standard’ TTs, which is a reflection of its initiators. Eco Vista has a wide range of projects spanning from political activist projects to grassroots community improvement projects (Foran et al., 2017; O’Brian et al., 2019). The open-mindedness and inclusive nature that students possess enables them to coexist in Eco Vista although some members favour “dutiful” dissent while others favour “dangerous” dissent (O’Brian et al., 2019). The ever-changing nature of the student community results in a difficult environment for creating and maintaining networks, although students’ ability to utilize social media and form global networks could ameliorate this issue. Additionally, the natural cycle of the student community is assisting with diffusing these ideas into the wider society. Finally, the developmental ‘youth stage’ enables Eco Vista members to engage in learning on a level that has been proven to be difficult for ‘standard’ TTs because youth is traditionally unhampered by societal restrictions and adult cynicism. Eco Vista is proactively confronting the climate crisis and encouraging increased community participation with limited financial support. With community investment, all of these factors can enable this niche innovation to scale up and eventually compete with the regime.

SNM analysis revealed that Eco Vista experiences many similar struggles as ‘standard’ TTs. However, it has also revealed that adding a student-led component to the TT movement provides benefits to recruiting, educating and learning: three processes that many TTs traditionally struggle with. Grossman and Creamer (2017) discussed that TTs tend to be a reflection of their founders and, so far, TT movements have largely reflected Rob Hopkins and his positionality. TTs have contributed a substantive hands-on approach to place-based sustainability initiatives,

but the apolitical stance and lack of diversity are stifling the movement's ability to diffuse its innovative ideas. Conversely, the contemporary youth environmental movement has not hesitated to recognize the systemic flaws ingrained in our society, and that recognition, as well as the unbridled efforts to call out these flaws, has contributed to the recent growth of the movement. The combination of these two movements has the potential to result in a new wave of successful student-led TTs.

6.1 Further research

Potential research opportunities have been identified within IV as well as the larger TT community. Due to the fact that Eco Vista is a new TT, it would be valuable to have this research updated in 2025 to gauge the group's progress on the carbon neutrality goal as well as gain an update on its visioning, network creation and learning.

Additionally, the majority of interviewees mentioned that the main barrier for a carbon-neutral IV would be convincing the landlords to update the housing. Eco Vista is owned by very few people/companies. A study surrounding housing in IV and gauging the willingness of the landlords to improve the housing and shift away from natural gas will be needed for the carbon neutrality goal.

Due to the fact that the TT movement began in the UK, the vast majority of TT literature explores UK based TTs. For this reason, more research is needed on TTs based in other countries. In the same vein, more research is needed on politics and TTs. There is a specific gap in the research around local government's interactions with TTs in the United States. Filling this gap could benefit US-based TTs.

Finally, research consistently demonstrated that the TT movement is apolitical and is commonly critiqued for this. However, the official Transition Network appears to be decentralised and allows TTs to operate how they wish. When transition began in 2006, the world was less politically polarised. It would be worthwhile to research if the newly formed TT movements were functionally apolitical.

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Appendix I: Interview Guide for Eco Vista Members

General Questions/ Benefits & Barriers of Student-Led Transition Town:

How long have you been a part of Eco Vista?

How did you find out about the class?

Can you describe the project to me in your own words?

In your opinion, how is Eco Vista different from other transition towns?

What has been your most interesting experience while being a part of eco vista?

What has been your most challenging experience?

Group Dynamics/Diversity

How would you describe the Eco Vista group dynamics?

How does the transition work from semester to semester?

Can you tell me your thought on the diversity of participants in Eco Vista?

Community Collaboration

Does the group do any community outreach?

For new members

To let people know about Eco Vista

Are you involved with other clubs/ groups outside of Eco Vista?

If so what groups?

Does Eco Vista work to collaborate with other similarly-minded community/ UCSB groups?

Do you feel the university is supportive of Eco Vista?

IVCSD?

Parks & Rec?

Closing

Do you plan to continue working on Eco Vista Projects next semester?

why or why not?

Looking ahead, how do you think Eco Vista Could improve?

Is there anything we didn't cover that you think is important to document about Eco Vista?

Is there anyone else you think would be beneficial to talk to?

Appendix II: Interview Guide for Stakeholders

Can you tell me a bit about your role at _____?

Does [govt body] have any environmental goals/ targets you are working toward?

Is community engagement a part of these plans?

In what form?

To what extent have you engaged with the work of Eco Vista?

In your own words, how would you describe Eco Vista?

Would you consider Eco Vista a Community Group or a UCSB class?

What are your initial thoughts on the value of Eco Vista?

what are the positive/negative aspects of EV?

how have you found working/interacting with EV?

Could you see a future of a partnership with Eco Vista?

What aspects of your work could Eco Vista support?

Are you familiar with the IV carbon neutral goal by 2025?

Do you think it is a possibility?

Are you familiar with the transition town movement?

Description: The Transition Movement is comprised of vibrant, grassroots community initiatives that seek to build community resilience in the face of such challenges as peak oil, climate change and the economic crisis.

Eco Vista aims to make IV a TT - What do you see as the biggest hurdle to IV becoming a transition town?

Appendix III: Participant Information and Consent Form

Eco Vista: A Student-led Transition Town Initiative

Information about the study

My name is Geordie Scully and I am a student at the University of Edinburgh. I am undertaking a master's in Environmental Sustainability and would like to invite you to participate in my research.

What is this research about?

My research will be investigating Eco Vista (A budding student-led transition town initiative). The aim of the project is to document the beginning of a unique transition town. Additionally, I will be investigating the benefits and barriers and of a student-led transition town, what motivates students to join the Eco Vista movement and finally how Eco Vista works to collaborate and connect with the surrounding community and stakeholders.

What does taking part in this study involve?

If you choose to take part in this study, I will ask you some questions about Eco Vista. The interview is expected to take 30-60 minutes.

How will data be collected and used?

With your consent, I will audio/video record the interview. After the interview, I will listen back to the recording to help me write up my findings. Based on these findings I will prepare a dissertation that will be submitted to the University of Edinburgh on August 13, 2020. All responses will be anonymised so you will not be identifiable as a participant in the research.

All data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). This means that any personal data I collect will be held securely whilst I am analysing the data and will be disposed of once my project is complete.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is entirely up to you to decide if you want to participate. There is no reason to take part if you don't want to. If you agree to take part and then change your mind you can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

What if I have more questions?

If you have any further questions or require more information about any aspect of this study, please contact me s1993141@ed.ac.uk or geordiescully@gmail.com or my supervisor, Dr. Emily Creamer (emily.creamer@ed.ac.uk).

Eco Vista: A Student-led Transition Town Initiative

Participant Consent Form

Please read the following statements and write your initials in the box next to all the statements you agree with:

Initials

I have read the information about the study.	
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I have had the opportunity to ask questions and I fully understand the aims of the project and my rights as a participant.	
I understand that participating in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to end the interview at any time without giving any reason.	
I understand that I have the right to review any data collected from me and that I can retract any statements I have made.	
I agree to participate in this research.	
I agree to the interview being audio/video recorded.	
I agree to my words being quoted anonymously.	

Participant's Name (Printed)

—

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Name (Printed) _____Geordie Scully_____

Researcher's Signature: _____Geordie Scully_____ Date: May, 23, 2020_____

Self-Care for Quarantine & Activists

Affordable, Accessible, & Sustainable

Bethesda Sandoval

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eReNWcTdgKNpwaWICQ3dIa7zeQ4FmbjsRd5xYFN7yag/edit?ts=5f639370>

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” – Audre Lorde (“Self-Care and Sustaining Activism: Infographic” 2019)

In today’s world burnout is more common than we would like it to be. Burnout can be defined as a state of exhaustion. It can resemble PTSD, depression, and acute stress disorder. It is not to be confused with long hours of studying. It can be described as “the perception that the energy they have invested into a task had yielded insufficient returns” (“Self-Care for Activists: Sustaining Your Most Valuable Resource | New Tactics in Human Rights” n.d.).

Thus, it is important to talk to others around you involved in activism or similar work within your community. This can help eliminate the feelings of loneliness and isolation. Some examples of how to do this are, ask them how they look after themselves and switch off, swap reading materials and spread love if one is feeling off... (EarthCorrespondent.com). It is really important when dealing with intersectional problems to “remember your slice of the pie” in other words activism can become overwhelming when you feel incredibly passionate. In order to do the most effective work you must “choose your slice of the pie” (EarthCorrespondent.com). I’ve combined a list of my favorite self care activities and I hope they are useful...

Excerpts that Resonate with my Psyche:

- **Examples of Self-Care Activities:** “yoga stretches that can be done sitting in a chair; breathing meditations; loving kindness meditations; open-ended, theme-based art activities; journaling; rituals such as giving and receiving; guided visualization

exercises; listening to music” (“Self-Care for Activists: Sustaining Your Most Valuable Resource | New Tactics in Human Rights” n.d.).

- **“Tuck yourself into bed early with a good book and clean sheets.”** (“101 Ways to Take Care of Yourself When the World Feels Overwhelming.” 2016).
- **“Watch a comforting/silly/funny/lighthearted TV show or movie.”**
- **“Breathe. Deeply. Slowly. Four counts in. Six counts out.”**
- **“Make art.** Scribble with crayons. Splash some watercolors. Paint a rock. Whatever. Just create something.”
- **Allow yourself** to fantasize about what you’re hoping or longing for. There are clues and energy in your reveries and daydreams that are worth paying attention to.”
- **Eat your favorite, most comforting foods.** (reference recipes in Eco Vista Zines)
- **“Get your sleep** “I can’t stress this one enough. Sleep deprivation lowers resistance to illness and stress, hinders cognition, and increases emotional irritability. Research shows that people who are sleep-deprived do not realize how significantly impaired they actually are. Activists often claim not to have time to get enough sleep and, of course, some circumstances do make it difficult. However, anything you can do to make time for sleep will pay off in both increased productivity, improved thinking, and enhanced ability to bounce back from stress.” (“101 Ways to Take Care of Yourself When the World Feels Overwhelming.” 2016)
- **“Seize pleasure however you can.** When you are happy or experience pleasure of any kind, your body releases hormones that not only feel good but also help to protect you against stress and depression. So, seize any opportunity you find to feel pleasure, whether that is by listening to music, tasting something delicious, seeing something beautiful, or engaging in consensual pleasurable activities with another person. When you catch yourself feeling happy, consciously savor the experience, drawing it out as long as possible.” (2016)
- **“LET YOURSELF GRIEVE, AND LET YOURSELF CELEBRATE”** When something shitty happens, allow yourself to cry about how shitty it is. When your candidate loses, oppressive legislation passes, or you hear about yet another heartbreaking instance of racist police violence, allow yourself to grieve. Seek out your support system and share in mourning. Additionally, when some progress is made, allow yourself to celebrate.” (“Self-Care for Activists” n.d.)

- **UNFOLLOW, UNFRIEND, AND BLOCK** It can feel draining and disheartening to see hateful messages being posted by acquaintances on social media. It can feel even worse to see these posts coming from friends and family. It's important to be aware of destructive viewpoints, but if you're already spending lots of time and energy fighting against these stances, you're obviously aware. You don't need the constant reminder every time you open Facebook or Instagram. Consider disengaging in whatever way you feel comfortable, so that you have time to recoup and re-energize before the next march, meeting, or political event. ("Self-Care for Activists" n.d.)
- **"Switch off – completely"** Whether you choose to keep your notifications turned off, disconnect for a day or a week, or set time limits for your work, make sure you find the time to switch off regularly, whatever that means for you" ("11 Self-Care Tips for a Happy and Effective Activist" 2019).
- **"Take a tech break."** Delete or deactivate social media if it feels too triggering right now ("101 Ways to Take Care of Yourself When the World Feels Overwhelming." 2016).
- **"Or maybe get on tech.** If you've been isolating, maybe interacting with friends and family online might feel good (2016).
- **"Talk to other activists in your sphere.** Ask them how they look after themselves and switch off, swap reading materials and spread love if you're feeling off. Chances are, they'll spread it right back" ("11 Self-Care Tips for a Happy and Effective Activist" 2019).
- **Remember your slice of the pie** "Activism work can get a bit overwhelming when you are passionate about a lot of causes- and although most issues are extremely intersectional, you can't personally tackle them all. So choose your slice of the pie. It doesn't mean you have to stick to it, and it doesn't mean you have to steer clear of other topics, but it limits your compassion scope down just a smidge. This leaves room for more effective work, less overwhelm and more clarity in your cause" ("11 Self-Care Tips for a Happy and Effective Activist" 2019).
- **Get Outside** ...being outside is proven to reduce stress. It doesn't need to be intense exercise, it's just about sunshine and fresh air. If you are feeling anxious or just need a way to reconnect with yourself at the end of the day, try putting on a podcast and going for a light walk. Take your time to explore a new neighborhood at a comfortable pace. You don't need to get super sweaty to benefit from moving your body ("Self-Care for the Activist" 2020).

- **Go wander** around outside in your neighborhood and take a look at all the lovely houses and the way people decorate their gardens. Delight in the diversity of design. (“101 Ways to Take Care of Yourself When the World Feels Overwhelming.” 2016)
- **Go to the ocean.** [Soak up the negative ions](#) (2016).
- Go to the mountains. Absorb the strength and security of them (2016).
- Get up early and watch a sunrise (2016).
- Go outside, set up a chair, and watch the sunset (2016).
- Put your hands in dirt. If you have a garden, go garden. If you have some indoor plants, tend to them. If you don’t have plants or a garden, go outside. Go to a local nursery and touch and smell all the gorgeous plants (2016).
- Take your dog for a walk. Or borrow a friend’s dog and take them for a walk (2016).

“Finally, remember, what you’re going through right now is temporary. It may not feel like that from inside the tough time you’re in, but this too shall pass and you will feel different again someday. If you can’t have faith in that, let me hold hope for you” (2016). I hope this alleviates anxiety and other potential suffering during these uncertain times. Lastly, stay safe and sane! No matter how challenging it may be to do this, it is worth the effort.

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A Collective Ethnography of the Summer-Fall 2020 Eco Vista General Assembly

Introduction

The students of Interdisciplinary Studies 133B: What's Wrong with the World? What Can We Do about It?, co-taught in the summer of 2020 by John Foran and Ken Hiltner, were tasked with attending an Eco Vista General Assembly meeting on August 7, August 21, or September 4 and writing short ethnographic accounts of what they observed.

The following is a sample of their ethnographies. It is followed by a few accounts from the Fall 2020 Group Studies class on Eco Vista.

From the Summer of 2020

Isaiah Aly

This past Friday, I attended my first Eco-Vista General Assembly. Going into the meeting, I did not know what to expect in regards to potential topics, the nature of the meeting's discussions, and my ability to meaningfully participate; My only knowledge of the organization and its operations is that which I obtained from the few relevant reading assignments for 133B and a quick online search at the beginning of the quarter. However, despite my previous uncertainty, I walked away from the meeting feeling inspired, gratified, and excited about the power and promise of local environmental activism. The Eco-Vista General Assembly was an extremely positive experience that granted me and others the opportunity to think hopefully about the climate crisis, and to contribute ideas and perspectives that may impact not only the organization, but our community as a whole.

This General Assembly was focused on brainstorming ideas and objectives for Eco-Vista that take the ongoing pandemic and its uncertain future into consideration. It seems like necessary precautions such as social distancing and limited group interaction, along with the university's COVID-19 response (closing student housing, encouraging students to stay home) have made it more challenging for Eco-Vista to collaborate and make progress on ongoing projects. To ensure that the organization gets off to a running start after the pandemic has subsided, Professor Foran emphasized the importance of remaining active, and doing everything we can to prepare for future opportunities as they arise. This sentiment spoke to me, serving as

a gentle but stern reminder that regardless of the fights and struggles our world may be facing today, the climate crisis continues to grow more and more severe and requires just as much (if not more) attention and concern. Therefore, we must actively keep the environmental mission at the forefront of our minds and continue to take action, even when it is difficult and other issues demand our time and effort. Additionally, it made me appreciate the current global situation as an invaluable opportunity for environmental activism. As industry and travel have slowed, stories describing the positive environmental effects of reduced emissions and waste have shown people how seemingly small and brief changes to our current behavior can have a huge impact on the world's well-being. This may garner greater support for environmental protection, both socially and politically. While some businesses and industries may fail in the long run because of the pandemic, there's a chance for them to be replaced by companies producing sustainable and renewable products. Keeping the climate crisis relevant during a time when many people and nations are in a state of transition may lead to great outcomes in the future.

To come up with some of these ideas, we were sent into Breakout Rooms where we discussed different ways we could improve the community following the pandemic. While I was eager to discuss with my peers, I did not think coming up with ideas would be as difficult as it was. I realized that much of my thinking about the climate crisis was at a global level, and the solutions and actions that immediately came to mind were those broad “we-musts” you hear so often when listening to the call to action (reduce emissions, transition to renewables, impose carbon limits, etc.) While many of these are very achievable on a small scale, I think the challenge in attempting to tailor these actions to a local level was because of two things: One, I had never really taken the time to think in-depth about how I could positively improve IV in a sustainable way: Two, I don't feel I still have an adequate understanding of how to most effectively impact the climate crises at any scale. Despite everything I've learned in this class and my newfound passion for the cause, this instance made me realize that if I ever hope to be a valuable contributor to fight for our planet, I need to go beyond the classroom and begin turning information into action. I must learn more and more, and actively seek the opportunities to apply it. This may sound as though it were disheartening, but I actually felt quite motivated to work harder, do more, and become a genuine part of the movement. Overall, I had a wonderful experience with the Eco-Vista Collective, and as I become more committed to doing my part, I hope to attend more of these meetings in the future. Thank you for the lessons you've taught me, and for helping me realize that I can make a difference.

Precious Anyanwu

The meeting began with a call for volunteers to facilitate and take notes for the meeting. The selected facilitator, Jess, creates an icebreaker that asks everyone to share their name, pronouns, and where they see themselves in the year 2030. Answers to the icebreaker question included living on a farm, being surrounded by animals, working for non-profits, and working as a lawyer to help combat climate change. Everyone shared, including regular members of Eco Vista, first time participants, and observers (like me). As people went around sharing, tangential conversations arose, and I was impressed by the age diversity in a group that I assumed would consist only of young college students. One participant, Carmen, was 81 years old! Carmen mentioned he wouldn't be around in 2030, but with his spry disposition, I beg to differ.

I bring up this range of ages because there were points at which I think generational differences impacted the dynamics of the meeting. The first point was during introductions. While I think most people said their pronouns, I assumed that those who didn't had forgotten or weren't in the practice of doing so (including the oldest participant, Carmen). I didn't think it possible that some were purposefully rejecting the pronoun-sharing until the chance to speak was passed onto another older participant (although I don't know his exact age), Jeff. When it was his chance to introduce himself, he said his name and announced something to the effect of the 'doesn't need silly pronouns to validate himself.' This gridlock between Jeff and the assumed intentions and values of the other participants persisted throughout the meeting. It left me wondering if these incidents were saying something about the convergence of climate activism and social activism and their effects on engagement with those who may not share the same social values.

The meeting went on to discuss cannabis and how it would affect IV. Questions were answered about proposition 4, when it was passed, and how much recreational possession it allows. Jeremy mentions mental health and community wellbeing; he would like to see more resources put toward helping substance abuse. The participants then go on to ask and answer questions about the minutiae of cannabis laws and the ecological impacts of different growing methods were discussed. Then Jeff chimed in. He insists that this discussion is a detriment to the campus community. People in the chat sound off saying that people in IV are still going to find weed, whether efforts to make it more established happen or not. Jeff then likens weed to other substances, saying "yeah and I guess people in IV are still gonna find coke and crystal meth." This was interesting to me because, in my lifetime, I had seen the cultural conversation overwhelmingly move away from the demonization of weed. I was surprised to see the safety of weed use still being debated.

The environment is a social issue, because it affects us all, and I do believe it closely connects to other social categories, like gender, race, economic status, and politics. We should not segment these categories as separate from climate activism. However, the tense interactions between Jeff and the rest of the group showed me how activism had become its own space, with its own short-hand, conventions, and values. When challenged, activists are forced to either ignore their challenger or unravel and explain the decades-long threads of discourse that had led to every meeting beginning with people sharing their pronouns. There are some people who reject this discourse or are not privy to it. How does this affect their involvement in activism?

Jeff's frustrations with the group, coupled with miscommunications and Wi-Fi connectivity issues causing his speaking time to be skipped over, continued to build up until a series of intense conflicts erupted toward the end of the general assembly. Jeff had concluded that he was unwelcome.

I found out that one Eco Vistan, Chris, was running for IVRPD while another, Ash, had already won a position. Eco Vista's involvement in local government is hopeful and important. I thoroughly agreed with Chris' goals to address homelessness and reserve resources for permanent residents, not just students.

This general assembly was much more of a roller coaster than I described here, but it ended with a check in, people's goals for taking care of themselves, and words of encouragement from Jess to try not to think too hard about the future and to try to be present.

Xochitl Briseno

In the hearts and minds of every Isla Vista resident exists a deep love for their community. What I have taken from this course and attending the Eco Vista group is that we are not separate from the environment we are a part of it. Folks in the meeting have no alternate motivation other than being genuinely concerned about the detrimental effects of environmental deterioration. It was evident that they are concerned about what might happen to their own lifestyles and the lifestyles of future generations of Isla Vistans because of environmental degradation. The role of this group is apparent, and it is to see an environment improved with living standards raised for all those around us.

It was expressed during the meeting that one promise of Eco Vista is to create an innovative future through radical self-governance. Local environmental grassroots activism is important to Isla Vista because it makes community priorities at the forefront of policies determined by all who reside in it. Some folks today are

motivated to be environmentalists because it is a popular position. Yet, it is clear that those in Eco Vista are creating a sustainable space that breeds local activists and social representation. Two of the members of Eco Vista were declaring their candidacy for local government. They talked about creating sustainable housing for houseless folks. There is a lot of public concern over food, resources, and various environmental threats to Isla Vista. Creating a political party of community activism can help the community realize the vital relevance of environmental discourse. I think what was also encouraging to see was the support for proposing ideas to run their campaigns on. Encouraging college students to engage in local politics brings forth an important question: What is the relationship between local and county state-federal activism particularly in a place with limited formal governance? As well as how does environmental activism bring forth environmental issues to a community and how do we frame our discourse around it for all Isla Vistans? The facilitator of the meeting did a great job of getting the group to synthesize the main environmental issues facing the community. By encouraging others to think of environmental issues as interlinked with social issues, the conversation on the preservation of houseless folks in Isla Vista emerged. Conservation and preservation of nature are tied to the relationship between human life and nature. Eco Vista as a community encourages ideas more directed to the everyday thinking and way of life of humans to the structural forces of the environment. One of the key concepts I would like to see more incorporated into the framework of Eco Vista is the promotion of autonomy. Autonomy in governance and not relying solely on formal governance for environmental policy promotion. Progressive environmental activism made big strides to protecting human health and nature, but social inequalities meant that White middle-class citizens were the main group that enjoyed these new environmental rights. Places like Isla Vista have particularly high challenges in garnering political participation of students for long term change. Policy level expansion of environmental policies is often placed at the hands of the county and state jurisdictions. Yet as a community there is a lot of marginalized social groups living in such a small area. Thus, the policies often do not have a recognition for the diversity of experiences in Isla Vista, and that is why participation in the political process should emerge in a two-way relationship. The first is protecting the environment as a social justice activity, and the second is enforcing the participation of environmental activism at all levels of our community. I think those who run for office should also be held accountable to create and manage environmental policy that encompasses a wider range of Isla Vista Citizens.

Shayne Chen

With the advent of the second decade in the 21st century, the world suffers from the tremendously negative impact of the foul system and ignorance of the leadership; climate change creates an increasing number of catastrophes worldwide;

systematic racism spurs ruthless riots nationwide; the pandemic leaves countless people terrified and locked up in their own house. As Read pointed out in the Extinction Rebellion, a radical change is urgently needed, and the society cannot afford to wait for any second longer to implement the change. Contrary to the popular beliefs, rendered by the seemingly prospering world with advanced technology and growing economy, the foundation which all these wonderful things are built on is rotting; the venomous effect of overusing fossil fuel is significantly downplayed by the politicians, elites in the society, and the so-called experts. The collapse of civilization is foreseeable if people don't make the transition into a more equal, just, and environmental-conscious system. However, the transformation on a large scale is not only impossible but also extremely difficult, because the interest of numerous stakeholders simply cannot be reconciled rapidly. Therefore, a great starting point is located in Isla Vista, in building the Eco Vista project.

Eco Vista committee consists of very bright, open-minded, and caring individuals, making the atmosphere of the meeting incredibly welcoming and friendly. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the discussion, to create an inclusive environment that forbids systematic discrimination and inequality. A great feature of the discussion is the presence of a facilitator who is hugely impactful in prompting the discussion and encouraging everyone to speak and contribute to the meeting in a meaningful way. Everyone would not be intimidated to speak, and the facilitator would give even the most introverted person a chance to speak and open up about thoughts one may have for a given subject. The friendly environment also resulted from the warm introduction that begins every meeting. By introducing everyone to each other, people get a sense of the personality each one may have and become willing to talk about issues. Although the topics we discussed during the meeting were still embryonic, this form of discussion takes a long-term perspective by weighing in everybody's opinion and is greatly effective.

Another aspect that really stood out is the willingness for people to listen to each other, despite the intensity of the discussion. In the meeting on the Friday of week 3, participants discussed the possibility of opening a marijuana dispensary in Isla Vista. Undoubtedly, this decision ultimately has to be analyzed from a multi-faceted perspective, because of the multitude of implications. Traditionally, marijuana was seen as a medical product and vice; although the concept shifted quite hugely in recent years and the branding started to imply a healthy alternative to alcohol as a recreational drug, people still cannot deny the danger of abusing the substance. However, from an economics perspective, under the extreme circumstance of closing campus, the college town's economy declines because of moved-out college students; in the light of this extremity, opening a marijuana dispensary thus seemed absolutely necessary. What really stood out is the willingness to listen by people holding the

opposite perspective, which is invaluable. One of the principles of effectiveness lies in the willingness to listen; only by listening, people can reach some point of agreement. Therefore, Eco Vista meetings are really effective in this sense.

To sum up, the Eco Vista meeting left me a great impression and I am considering joining in the fall if I don't have too many other responsibilities, because of its friendly environment and willingness to listen. Although the transformation is only in its infancy, the participation of everyone collectively will make magic happen. I am lucky to be part of the process.

Anjan'ae Davis

I attended the Eco Vista meeting on September fourth. The meeting went very well and was very informative. We began with an ice breaker explaining how each member of the group planned on beating the heat. I thought that this was very helpful in easing the discussion. Given that this weekend is hitting above the 100-degree mark in certain places, the heat seems almost inescapable. I also had the chance to learn more about the upcoming details involving Eco Vista. One thing I found interesting was that Eco Vista had a magazine. The summer catalog called for content on the ways Isla vista has coexisted with the surge of the pandemic.

This was a great segue into the big general discussion question taking up the remainder of the time for the meeting. During this meeting, we discussed how Eco Vista can be beneficial to the community in the future in regard to the pandemic. Some of the ideas were very innovative and in tune with the youth and pop culture. I think the idea of incorporating social media into advertisements for the group was a great start. This stems from the lack of knowledge about the group around campus. Students would be more inclined to join and have an impact if the networking opportunities were more accessible in the next school year. Because this is the age of social media and personal interactions are limited, social media is a great way to communicate as well, especially about environmental issues. Joining the app TikTok and Instagram could be very successful in reeling in freshmen as well who seek a sense of community and bonding.

Moving to the breakout sessions my group discussed how homelessness is a common problem in Isla Vista. Little parts of the community are full of tents because of the loss of employment and housing. People are left outside with no assistance. We brought up the lack of help issued by the university in regard to this issue that the community is facing. Some of our discussion also surrounded the negligence of the university's compliance with students about the pandemic and prior natural disasters. There is a lack of communication that we felt is needed in regard to the response of the pandemic. We further suggested that the university could lend out its utilities like

bathrooms and living areas since the students are not occupying the spaces currently. This would provide an opportunity for those in need. It also could give a lending hand to those affected by this pandemic, given that the university and its students are a big part of the Isla Vista community. We have seen other universities reach out to their students and neighboring communities during this pandemic. We thought UCSB could follow in their footsteps.

Overall this meeting was a great success. It provided a very interesting conversation regarding the future of UCSB and Eco Vista in the midst of a pandemic. I enjoyed the dialogue and hope to continue seeing or even being a part of Eco Vista outside of my undergraduate experience, as I am graduating after this summer session.

Jason Gonzalez-Mejia, Eco Vista: A New Horizon

After attending the Eco Vista general assembly on September 4, I had a strong sense of solidarity and community rush over me like a bucket of ice cold water. During the meeting, I had a premonition that Isla Vista would be in good hands after I graduate this summer session. I also realized that although I never attended an Eco Vista meeting before or participated within a likewise meeting in which I spoke heartedly about what I desired to see in this vibrant beach community, I want nothing but the best for it. Much like many of my classmates, this Eco Vista meeting had a profound impact on the way I see this lovely community and the ability I have as a UCSB student/alumni to change it for the better.

During the Eco Vista meeting, I realized how Isla Vista took center stage for every single point of conversation that was brought up amongst the attendees. It was moving to realize just how many people present expressed a desire to see this longstanding community improve in ways such as waste management, better tenant/landlord relationships, homeless housing, and sustainable community efforts to reduce carbon footprints. I entirely appreciated everyone's feedback, thoughts, and opinions on the subject matters as it reminded me that although many students were about to graduate, the impressions they left in response to these issues would remain forever.

After the meeting, I realized just how important it is to take a moment to recognize just how privileged we are to call this town our home. IV is a great place with an extremely formidable sentiment of community and unity that runs through its veins. It has something for everyone, despite all our physical and personal differences. What I took from this Eco Vista meeting informed me that it is our responsibility as citizens of this beautiful neighborhood to think of ways to improve it and find solutions to the issues that are becoming mainstay within it. Many times, we forget

that as a community we have the ability to change things for the better.

Likewise, things will only improve if we search for the correct solutions ourselves.

On that note, Friday's Eco Vista meeting was a great experience to be a part of and the goodwill that emanated from everyone's discussions truly struck me at my heartstrings. It was amazing to take a moment and realize that there is more that goes on within IV than can be seen at surface level. IV is a town that becomes part of every UCSB student, alumni, and faculty's heart. It eats, sleeps, and breathes friendship, respect, and love for one another. IV deserves nothing but the best from us; it is a town that is at its best when everyone looks out for it. Not only that, but with sustainability efforts like Eco Vista bringing to us the current events and efforts that focus on improving IV for the rest of us are to be praised. I would love for more UCSB students to do what I didn't do and join the cause to make our home the best it can possibly be because Eco Vista and IV were truly made for each other.

Rahul Gowthaman

The assembly from September 4th featured voices that focused on the Eco Vista and Isla Vista community. I found it interesting that incoming freshman college students have no dorms ready for them, something which almost every freshman was looking forward to that also provided a great melting pot where they are allowed to meet new people and create new friendships. The issue of mental health was brought up because of quarantine, since so many more individuals are stuck at home and behind a computer screen for the majority of the day a solution was brought up that I found to be very interesting, by creating gratitude interventions and mental health promotion interventions it would be so beneficial for those who need it and feel stuck at home. I personally found this to be a great idea, another idea was a social media campaign that provided information and safety tips to incoming and current students, as someone who transferred to University of California Santa Barbara, to have info regarding upcoming issues and news around the campus would have been extremely beneficial. The idea of a Tik Tok campaign was really modern for the times as well, since it is an app that is widely used by the majority of young adults today, using it as a way to campaign or even creating an account regarding Eco Vista and sharing information through that would be useful in reaching out and teaching upcoming students who use social media.

The topic then shifts to budgeting, I really enjoyed knowing where the money was coming from, ideas it will be used on, and all the details in between. I've been in many clubs and organizations that fail to provide details about budgets and funding, understanding where money is going and coming from is an important detail

that I appreciated during the assembly. Another pressing issue about homelessness and rehousing/assisting was brought up, since UCSB should definitely use their dorms for the homeless who really need, the ones out in the weather without protection from a deadly virus. This was a great idea, not only does this help and protect the homeless, it also prevents them from possibly spreading the virus to students and residents around the area. The issue of homelessness is very prevalent in Goleta, very rarely is anything done to assist them and provide them with care they need. To rehome them temporarily in the dorms would help many in need, even with most of the utilities such as the cafeteria being closed, just a bed and place to sleep is so helpful to anyone in the long run. The entire Eco Vista assembly touched on very important topics that surrounded both the students, faculty, and surrounding residents. Overall the assembly was very interesting to listen to and it really warmed my heart to hear people so passionate about bettering their community. This is exactly how change begins within communities and groups, so Eco Vista is on the right track towards turning the community towards a better light, it also makes me proud to be from a space that cares so much!

Hailey Hennigan

On Friday, August 21st, 2020 I attended a meeting for Eco-Vista Summer. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via Zoom so that people could still be a part of the discussion virtually in the comfort of their own homes. Once I joined the meeting at 12 pm, I was quickly welcomed by a host of friendly faces. My first impression of the group was that it seemed very inclusive. Something that I noticed right away was that the twenty or so of us ranged from all different ages and backgrounds. We started the meeting with a check-in. We went around popcorn style and introduced ourselves to the group by stating our name, preferred pronouns, and “where we think we will be in 2030”. I thought this was a great question considering that there is so much uncertainty in the world right now, the possibilities are endless. I said that by 2030 I would hope to be working in the non-profit sector, promoting something I am passionate about; as well as, teaching my children the importance of a sustainable lifestyle and happiness. For now, I am just starting to feel like my life is beginning so I too am still figuring out what my future goals and aspirations are but those are just a few that top my current list.

We then discussed the topic of introducing a cannabis company to our community of Isla Vista. In the near future, the county board of supervisors will be selecting a retail business to grant a cannabis license in Isla Vista. UCSB alumni and employee/spokesperson for the cannabis company “Cookies,” Elijah Ettinger spoke on behalf of the business and its initiatives to engage in community outreach with local residents on the subject. In an effort to show their support and commitment

towards our community, Cookies said that if chosen they would be willing to make a small donation toward Eco-Vista as well as other local organizations. In addition, if Cookies is permitted to operate in IV, they would be interested in collaborating/partnering with community members on possibly creating a cannabis cultivation certification program. After listening to Elijah's points on the topic, I came to the conclusion that I support the collaboration with the Cookies company and Isla Vista. Since cannabis is already heavily used recreationally within the community, I think it could be a great way to generate revenue to help support and give back to Isla Vista.

Other topics and ongoing projects that were discussed were the Santa Barbara Cooperative, a certification program for inspiring farmers; Zine, asking for art submissions for the local magazine; Local government campaigns, members of Eco Vista Ash and Chris are running for IVCSA & IVRPD.

Overall, the Eco-Vista general assembly meeting was very collaborative and welcoming. I have been a part of John's Eco-Vista newsletter for some time now and it was that newsletter that introduced me to this class at the beginning of the summer. Now that I have officially participated in a meeting I am interested in being an ongoing member of this organization and using my voice for input on collective action in our community. I look forward to creating a better future with my fellow peers and friends of Eco-Vista.

Devan Joseph

The meeting started off very openly. Professor Foran began by announcing a main theme to discuss: community well-being during the pandemic. He invited anyone to share a thought, a solution, or anything that comes to mind. In my opinion, this was extremely effective in setting the tone as conversational. Sure enough, people began to voice their concerns about the COVID 19 situation in Isla Vista. Some general topics were discussed such as overcoming the challenge of widespread and increasing mental health. When you're cooped up inside and away from old friends and family, it can be really difficult to access those support systems when the only contact you have with them is through a phone or zoom call. An assembly participant made a good point by addressing this problem and proposing a few great general solutions. It is important that we integrate public psychology conventions in Isla Vista. Mental health is often overlooked and it is the starting point to improving our community.

The concern of COVID safety was also discussed. One student proposed a social media campaign aimed towards educating people about ways to keep safe as well as local and national statistics. She also mentioned that it would be a good idea to

use the platform to promote the psychological public services that were talked about previously. It was super cool to hear that exchange take place and it made me realize why having these meetings in an assembly type format is so important. Ideas bounce off of each other and even combine to make the best collaborative improvements.

Another theme that stood out to me was the importance of involving freshmen in this discussion. In fact, I think this is critical because they have the greatest amount of time to set the pace of how Isla Vista improves from an ecological standpoint. Participants discussed different ways to target freshmen including a presentation during student orientation. While this approach makes sense, I don't know how effective it would be given that most freshmen are pretty "disoriented" already when they show up to college, a completely new and different environment for them. Nevertheless, I think everyone should join this cause, not just for the environment's sake but also to form relationships through a common passion for sustainable living. Finally, the idea that Eco Vista does not have an established governance structure really stood out to me. Part of the reason for this is because it simply has not been established, but as professor Foran mentioned, it is partly intentional. Having a governing structure within the organization contradicts the message it tries to send: let's all have a say in how we run our community. In fact, it kind of reminded me of Rupert Read's "Extinction Rebellion" (Chapter 15). He talks about how the UK should run on Citizens' Assemblies because direct representation has essentially ceased to exist.

I found a lot of similarity in that concept to the Eco Vista Assembly and I hope it gains traction in Isla Vista in the coming years.

Jessica Kelton

I really enjoyed attending the Eco Vista meeting. I feel that Eco Vista is a group which is made up of many kind, passionate individuals who are working hard to improve our community. I was particularly impressed during our use of breakout groups, in which I was able to speak more closely with two other new Eco Vista members. Both were very rich in ideas on how to impact the community and environment, and both were eager to make long-term commitments to the organization despite being in their first couple of meetings. I felt very comfortable speaking my mind and was encouraged by other members to participate despite it being my first meeting.

Likewise, I felt that the group had a great dialogue with many great ideas to offer. One of the most important questions posed during the discussion was What can Eco Vista do in the coming years, especially focusing on the pandemic? One idea that really stood out to me was the involved discussion of how to expand Eco Vista's

outreach and become more well-known with the community. This would enable us to grow significantly as an organization in size, support, and power. Likewise, this would be focused on virtual outreach and recruitment as an adaptation to pandemic circumstances that would showcase our consideration for the health of our community and ability to adapt and persevere. For these reasons, I was particularly delighted to observe that finding ways to reach out to many more UCSB students and IV residents is currently being considered as Eco Vista's most important local issue. Some of the key ideas for accomplishing this included more posts on the Eco Vista Instagram (using designated social media managers), creating PSAs for incoming freshman and transfer students about the community, and developing an informational video explaining Eco Vista's mission. One of the key topics was to focus on recruiting freshman since they are eager to be involved with the community and have the ability to make a multi-year commitment to the organization. Another key strategy for accomplishing this could be the use of a campus-wide email and subsequent listserv. One of the organizations I am involved with the leadership for is UCSB's Phi Sigma Pi Honor Fraternity, and we see our most recruitment success from sending out a campus-wide email to students of certain years that informs them of who we are and how to get involved. By doing this, Eco Vista would quickly get on many new students' radars and begin to spread the word throughout the student community. Another idea is to create an Eco Vista Tik Tok or snapchat, in which short videos can be created that display Eco Vista's current projects and highlight current members.

Lastly, I was really excited to learn about Eco Vista's upcoming summer catalogue. I think the idea of creating a summer catalogue documenting the group's summer accomplishments and goals looking towards the future will allow the group to not only reflect on its progress, but to demonstrate its perseverance and hardworking nature to the larger community. I also appreciate the open call for content and I would love to see this catalogue succeed with community members so that it can become a more regular endeavor.

Blaise Lemos

In the opening of the Eco Vista General Assembly held on September 4th, a call for all mediums of content was expressed. During such a chaotic time it is refreshing to hear that people can express themselves still. The pandemic is still a threat to our community. Isla Vista has seen a sharp increase in COVID cases and it scares me to think that things may never be "normal" again. Major props to Eco Vista, continuing to meet and bring a resemblance of normalcy during such uncertain times.

Civic engagement at all levels is vital and I'm pleased to hear that Eco Vista has multiple members running for local positions. IV Park and Recreation can help with Isla Vista's housing crisis. Vulnerable members of our community are currently shelterless and deserve the dignity of shelter. John mentioned local food insecurity issues as well. I was part of the Santa Barbara City College Equity community and I helped run the SBCC Food Pantry. I helped with every process of the operation from picking up the food to collecting demographic data. Food insecurity is a major issue in our local community and it disproportionately affects college-aged students. I'm very pleased to hear that Eco Vista is trying to minimize food insecurity within the Isla Vista community.

The Fall quarter at UCSB being held completely online is a huge deal. The pandemic is closing in on almost half a year long. The global death toll may cross a million within the year. A member brought up the importance of bringing up the importance of staying safe during this pandemic. Eco Vista can post informative information on the Eco Vista social media pages.

Eduardo brought up the importance of mental health awareness during the pandemic. Social isolation and despair on the rise due to the pandemic. I think Eco Vista can play a role in community education on the topic. I was a Peer Health mentor at Santa Barbara City College and mental health awareness is one of my passions. Mental health unfortunately still has a lot of stigmas. I think it's important that communities such as Eco Vista play a role in de-stigmatizing mental health.

The local homelessness issue is a pressing issue in our local Isla Vista community. Riley mentioned how the city of Los Angeles has begun utilizing empty hotels as temporary homeless shelters. Riley brilliantly pointed out that the UCSB dorms are currently empty and they could be utilized in a similar fashion. I think this a brilliant idea and we need to start thinking of more alternative issues to curtail the homelessness issue. John stressed the importance of bringing these ideas to the community board.

Housing companies are acting irresponsibly and not taking the pandemic seriously. Speakers rightfully expressed concerns over these various companies advertising to college students from other universities. We need to encourage social distancing and this is the exact opposite. Cases of Covid-19 are rapidly rising in Isla Vista and the landlord doesn't care because they don't live in the community. We the students of UCSB are the community and we need to voice our concerns.

Aurora Sanchez

The Eco Vista meeting was very eye-opening and I am really grateful that I was

able to join such a team who is dedicated to changing the world. The meeting went phenomenally and it is very comforting to know that there are many people like you who share the same goals. It was a great safe space to express your concerns on what is happening in your community. Eco Vista truly does have potential to become something big and something that Isla Vista *needs*. There is no doubt that Isla Vista is one of the most beautiful places I have ever lived in. I mean, come on, when is the next time that I will be living in a beach house? But it is exactly why we must need a community to preserve its beauty. Not many appreciate how refreshing Isla Vista is until it is too late. Being born and raised in Los Angeles where the weather gets suffocating due to its massive pollution, it is fully obvious that Isla Vista is truly a privilege to live in. However, this small town is not completely unflawed. It has issues of its own such as a dense population, gentrification, high rents, and much more. Eco Vista is there to bring these issues up and to come up with solutions in order to keep its livelihood.

The environmental movement can be quite intimidating, especially when one fully realizes that in order to solve environmental issues, we must first solve other social issues. One can even argue that the whole aspect of environmentalism is just a mixture of other social movements. Trying to find the solution to end climate change so as to achieve living in a better sustainable environment is absolutely frightening, especially for one student. However, Eco Vista gives these students the chance to make them feel like they are a part of something important, even if the change isn't on a global scale. It was clear to me in this meeting, that many of us are frustrated with the slow process in environmental issues. But slow change doesn't mean no change at all. I cannot wait for all the ideas that students come up with to be carried out and enforced in Isla Vista. Big change is coming to this small community. And changing things for the better in Isla Vista is not as hard as trying to change other bigger communities. For one, it is the community who, for better or for worse, likes to see change. Residents of Isla Vista know that there is hardly any connection between UCSB and them. And in these hard times, it has become even more clear of the blind eye UCSB has given to us. Eco Vista must act as that bridge and expose the threat climate change has over our community and to make such environmental topics a priority in our to-do list in Santa Barbara.

Owen Schvarcinger

On Friday, September 4th, I had the pleasure of participating in one of Eco-Vista's remote general assembly meetings. Though we had discussed some of Eco-Vista's origins and aims previously throughout the course, I still had very little idea as to how that translated over into actual structure and meetings, therefore I was somewhat nervous as to how I might be able to participate and contribute. To my

pleasant surprise, the format of the general assembly was incredibly welcoming and similarly non-judgmental and open much like our class “What’s Wrong with the World.” Seeing this, I decided to volunteer to be a co-facilitator along with John and help guide discussion in an orderly and equitable fashion. Many of the assembly’s attendants were students from our class, however there were also some unknown faces in attendance, so the meeting started off with a round of introductions. To my surprise, several of the unknown names in attendance were similarly first or second-time Eco Vista assembly attendants, further putting me at ease. The meeting then transitioned into a free-form discussion of some of the issues plaguing IV and Eco Vista.

Following a brief breakout room in which individual groups of students and Eco Vista members brainstormed and discussed some of the most salient problems visible to them, the group reconvened and discussed their ideas. Firstly, the shadow of Covid understandably tainted nearly all our discussion points. From the most obvious drawbacks of having to have the general assembly online to a discussion of IV’s most marginalized residents, houseless persons, Covid and its complicating elements interfered with or was the direct cause of most of the issues we discussed. Further Covid-related concerns included housing in IV during and post-Covid, partying and large beach gatherings continuing to threaten the community, and UCSB’s shutdown hampering efforts for further Eco Vista integration. This line of discussion was of particular interest to me as I for the most part had already finished with my UCSB education by the time Covid reached the US, only seeing its earliest effects during Spring quarter. It has profoundly changed the community I am from and have now returned to, so it was expected but nonetheless solemn to hear how Covid has altered the IV that I knew pre-pandemic.

However, hopefulness remained as several potential positive externalities of the pandemic were discussed, as well as how to further advance the goals and membership of Eco Vista. As it pertained to housing, the idea of sustainability-focused, student-run cooperatives came up as both a great alternative to the overpriced and overcrowded student options in IV, as well as a way of shifting power away from the landlords and leasing companies. Coop’s geared towards environmental sustainability have the added benefit of being great organizers of labor, which could provide the support and workforce needed to greatly further the Eco Vista cause. Additionally as discussed before in class, the group shared some of their regrets in not discovering the Eco Vista cause sooner. With myself included, several of the attendants were only finding out about Eco Vista in the final few courses at UCSB, thus prompting a fruitful discussion of measures to increase both visibility of the movement and membership. To this end, some actionable ideas emerged which hold a ton of potential in my opinion, such as social media PSA’s regarding Covid

safety in IV as well as my suggestion of a slick introductory video to Eco Vista and its goals. Overall I found the Eco Vista meeting to be incredibly refreshing with its proactive approach to the community and our group discussion, and hopefully look forward to contributing further to the movement at future meetings.

Taylor Tipton

Just like many in the class, this was my very first Eco Vista meeting. I was not sure what to expect nor was I sure that I would have anything to contribute, but I was hopeful that it would be a great experience. To start us off, John asked us to go around and introduce ourselves, I knew of most of the people there, with a few exceptions of those who are not enrolled within the class. So, this made me feel more comfortable about speaking and giving my tip on “how to stay cool during the heatwave we’re expecting Labor Day weekend.”

Next, John posed an important question: what would be good for Eco Vista to engage in within Isla Vista during the 2020-2021 school year? I did not feel inclined to speak as I have lived in University housing all 4 years here at UCSB, and I’m not as knowledgeable about environmental issues as others. But, thankfully, John broke us up into smaller breakout groups. This made me feel more comfortable about making suggestions. My other two counterparts within my breakout group also felt the same anxieties that I felt as far as not knowing much about sustainability and how to get involved with environmental issues/ solutions. So, we posed a question: during this time within the pandemic, how and can Eco Vista and the surrounding community allocate funding and resources towards their cause? We brought this question up and John ensured us that there were a plethora of ways that resources and efforts could be distributed by Eco Vista to the community.

As the conversation continued, many people brought up different issues that they were concerned about. Many of these concerns dealt with how the University itself (UCSB) was handling the pandemic and its support (or lack thereof) for its students. It then hit me that there were other people who felt the same way that I felt about many issues that we are facing as university students. I did not feel so alone about wanting to address these issues brought about. Simultaneously, it felt so good to hear each of us bounce ideas off of one another as we had this discussion. Personally, I still did not feel inclined/ comfortable enough to speak in the general discussion. But, my peers helped me feel very informed about what was going on in Isla Vista, what types of recurring issues they were concerned about, and about ways that we as students can go about addressing and hopefully solving these issues.

In summation, my first meeting with Eco Vista was a very great experience! I had no idea what I was to expect at first, but in the end it made me feel very informed

and hopeful about the future of Isla Vista and the University. I wish that I had known about the club before I had graduated, thus I could have gotten involved sooner and could have become more knowledgeable about these things instead of being so ignorant to these issues. So, I will be informing my friends about the club and hopefully get more people involved with everything! Thank you :)

Riley Traut, Eco Vista: A Blueprint for Future Growth

Eco Vista: A General Assembly

I attended the Eco Vista Summer General Assembly on August 21st, and September 4th at noon. Unfortunately, my first time around I was unable to stay for the entirety of the meeting due to internet issues. However, I do remember toward the beginning of the meeting we discussed where we hoped to see ourselves ten years into the future. This warmup inspired hope in me I had yet to feel for several months. Given the global pandemic, fascist semblances of our current government, civil unrest, and underlying anthropogenic climate change, it has been hard to be hopeful and inspired. As I sat and listened to the various dreams, passions, and driven ambitions of the young [and old] participants of the assembly, I couldn't help but push back at the ominous doom that has crept over our day-to-day lives.

Community for Change

Eco Vista provides a platform for members from all walks of life to chime in with their novel ideas to shape a better future. Something, that we desperately need in our current situation. In the August 21st meeting, an elderly alumnus from UCSB joined in on the assembly and described the beautiful community that Isla Vista fostered. The way she described the passion of our community stayed true to the Isla Vista I see today. While the free-box may be removed for COVID-19 concerns right now, the spirit that sits behind those features is true as ever.

Students Toppling a Regime

In Geordie Scully-Allison's Thesis on Eco Vista, they describe the potential for student climate activists to grow the much-needed niche of Transition Towns in order to topple the socio-technical regimes of our current society. I believe they are capturing a unique phenomenon that we are seeing across the globe today: the voice of the youth against the oppression of the old ways. We have seen our world fall into chaos from the combination of a few simple but major factors. COVID-19 sparking fear throughout the masses, and denied by the foolish, has exacerbated the fundamental flaws in our system. The BLM movement has shown great success in identifying the failure of justice for equity among individuals under systemic

oppression. The anthropogenic climate change crisis has begun to visibly surface in a chaotic display of disasters across the globe. In the face of these monumental changes, the youth have risen up to take a stand.

The Youth's Turn

Rupert Read explains in *Extinction Rebellion: Insights from the Inside* that, “it is no longer for us[adults] to tell our children what to do. We ought rather to take up the role of supporting them in their uprising, asking how we can help them in their struggle for survival,” (p. 37). This is exactly the idea that Eco Vista is fostering. Rather than have a coalition of adults, guiding their younger partners in how to act, Eco Vista is a group of members looking to the youth for answers. In the discussion on September 4th, members such as John Foran took a back seat to allow us as college students and young community advocates to describe our vision for the future. We were provided with a platform to express ideas that we thought would help. Some students vocalized the need for online outreach to approach our freshman that may not be here in person but have a valuable voice of input. Another student described how we need to expand our community support systems; we need to publicize and grow our food banks, provide Wi-Fi to students in need, and provide funding for those who are struggling without it. The world requires the growth of groups of this nature. If we can bring in the impassioned, desperate (sadly a new reality), and ambitious youth of the nations of Earth, then we can see change. We must ask our adults for the support to help form these groups, facilitate discussions, and guide us through the bureaucratic mazes, while offering a helping hand to bolster the success of our own creative solutions. If we follow these steps, then we may create a more just and beautiful future from the ashes that we wade through today.

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From the Fall of 2020

Hana Kawamura

October 23, 2020

This Eco Vista meeting was really interesting and it was cool to see how some members come back but there are also new people coming to each meeting and telling us about their own projects, like the woman from Cool Block. I really enjoy the loose structure of the meeting, as I've definitely been part of groups where the meeting agendas are really strict, which sometimes cuts down on time but I like that people can jump in with new things and you can tell it's a welcoming environment that will be open to new topics/conversations. I think it would maybe become overwhelming with a larger group of people but with the group sizes so far it works well. I also really just enjoy how nice everyone is and I felt like people could feel the welcoming vibes already at the beginning when Ash asked such a good introduction question and everyone was really open answering it. I appreciated how everyone also helped each other with their projects and were willing to share resources. Since we're all so separated during the pandemic it's nice to feel that sense of community even if it's online. I think one of the best parts is that everyone is working on different realms of Eco Vista and so during the meeting you can hear updates and hear about new things and potentially join a new project. Also because there are so many different people doing different things it feels like it's reaching a good amount of Isla Vista and different organizations/people working here.



Jacqueline Schwartz

October 23, 2020

We opened up our meeting today with a particularly salient discussion of our fears and what gives us hope. For the most part, all of our fears were pretty similar: election anxiety, the future of the natural world, Covid, capitalism, and a score of other environmental concerns that you would expect from a group like Eco Vista. What surprised me, however, was how similar our hopes were. Each speaker pretty much

said the same thing: the people who are working towards a better future give me hope. It really felt like a special moment, one in which we collectively recognized just how important community is in the creation of a better world. From that point onwards, my hope only grew. I loved hearing each individual speak about what they've been working on and the ways that they can help each other. I personally connected with Olivia during today's meeting, and I am really excited at the prospect of attaching my project onto something much bigger. I know that time is limited during our general assemblies, but I think it would be impactful if we could form breakout groups at some point to help facilitate connections like the one Olivia and I made today. I bounced so many ideas off of other attendees today and I want everyone to be able to receive the same feedback. On another note, it's been interesting to see the composition of our meetings change week to week. I've only been to a handful of general assemblies, but the demographic has nonetheless shifted in that time. The first two general assemblies I attended were primarily made up of community members rather than UCSB students. It was especially evident during today's meeting in which the vast majority of attendees were students. It's exciting to see so many young people wanting to get involved! I do hope, though, that more community members attend meetings in the future because Eco Vista affects everyone in IV, not just the students. Regardless, today's general assembly was my favorite one so far and I look forward to checking in with everyone again in two weeks.

Sitara Slee

November 20, 2020

There was a sense of peace at this meeting that I can't quite put my finger on. Starting the meeting with music put me in a really good place, especially because it was such good music! I hope that can be a tradition we continue. I really enjoyed having Artemisia and June at the meeting - they brought a tangible wisdom and warmth with them that blended with our dynamic so beautifully. As always, it was wonderful and inspiring to hear about everyone's projects and project progress. I'm always so pleasantly surprised by the help that everyone offers when it's needed.

In regard to the break out rooms - I thought it was nice to have a pointed conversation at the end of the meeting. Perhaps the topic of that conversation should be decided ahead of time so I can prepare my thoughts on it. I think the way we did it - just having a topic to chat about instead of lots of little groups - worked well with the Eco Vista flow. It'll be interesting to see what these pointed conversations lead to in the future!

Blaise Lemos

November 20, 2020

I firstly would like to give major props to Liz McDonough; they did a fantastic job facilitating the meeting. The attendees seemed in a particularly good mood. The recent election results have definitely alleviated a tremendous amount of societal anguish. Although we are still in the midst of global pandemic and climate crisis, the recent presidential election results provided a temporary moment of solace.

Ash talked about the Eco Vista Gardening plot and how additional help would be needed. I have since joined the Eco Vista groupme and I look forward to contributing in any way possible. I was involved with the Santa Barbara City College Equity Permaculture Garden and I really enjoyed growing food for the greater good of the community.

I shared about how I have been collecting resources pertaining to EBT benefits and the Santa Barbara's farmers market. I have been going every week since the quarter started and I've been taking advantage of spending 10 dollars in EBT and receiving a free 10 dollar credit. My recipe list and resources have been coming together nicely.

Jacqueline Schwartz

December 4, 2020

Today's general assembly felt more like a gathering of old friends than a formal meeting (to the point that I feel comfortable writing 'general assembly' in lower case). Our intros and outros might have been ice breakers towards the beginning of the quarter, but it doesn't really feel like that anymore. It seems that we are all genuinely checking in on each other rather than breaking the ice of unfamiliarity. That being said, the Eco Vistans continue to charge onwards in projects and initiatives with the same zeal of the summer. Thus, what general assemblies seem to provide its attendees is twofold; first, they form a pragmatic foundation for progress, whether that be finding people and organizations to collaborate with or supplying feedback on projects. Second, general assemblies provide a community that gives the projects a purpose. This is where the check-ins come back to play; even the simple act of seeing faces multiple times creates a sense of community, greatly bolstered by the kindness and empathy specific to the Eco Vista community. I feel very lucky to have been a part of Eco Vista this quarter; I not only feel like I've contributed to a tangible environmental initiative, but I also feel like I've created a community at UCSB. Thank you all for giving me that chance and I hope to see you in Eco Vista next quarter (:

Sitara Slee

December 4, 2020

Hello Hello dear Eco Vista,

I was keeping some personal notes as we had our meeting this week so I'd remember what to write in my reflection. The first thing on my list is "Lily was a wonderful moderator" - and that's before we had even finished the meeting! She was truly lovely - so warm and inviting. She mentioned that she was a little nervous beforehand but it absolutely did not show. Hope she will facilitate again soon! The next thing I wanted to touch on was how nice it was to have Sue at the meeting. I always like to hear from members from the community who aren't students, it makes our meetings feel even more diverse and varied than they already are. Cool Block seems like a really interesting initiative - if I wasn't already so busy, I'd love to give it a go. The next point on my list was about Ash. They are truly so connected to the community and I am continuously astounded by everything they are doing! They always ground the meetings with thoughtful insight. It was also exciting to hear about Tony's updates - always interesting, especially the new, German, soil technique - a potentially exciting way to make use of old Christmas trees (it always did bother me to see them on sidewalks awaiting the dump). Though I never usually catch all the details, it's so nice to hear about the collaborative gardening that is going on between different Eco Vistans - I've never had much of a green thumb myself but it does seem like such a lovely and therapeutic hobby, not to mention the community benefits.

I also very much enjoyed the discussion on COVID and was happy to see so many new people sign up to the resilience task force! One thing COVID has definitely been is a harrowing learning experience. It has really shown us everything that is broken and subsequent consequences. Part of that resilience will hopefully be addressing these societal pitfalls, learning from our mistakes.

It's always so nice to see all the projects come together, especially now that we are nearing the end of this year. I remember feeling so nervous for my first ever Eco Vista meeting - I dared not to speak because I didn't feel that I had the right to yet. Quickly, I was shown how ridiculous that sentiment was and was pulled into the warm hug that is Eco Vista. I looked at Jacqueline's meeting reflection and she noted the feeling of familiarity that had come with this final meeting. I couldn't agree more. It has been such a blessing to be a part of the Eco Vista this quarter - it couldn't have come at a more important time for me and for the community. Thank you for being a source of inspiration, support, motivation and comfort. I have learnt so much in my few months with Eco Vista and am so pleased to move forward with you all into the new year.

Here's to changing the world!

Love,

Sitara



12/4 Meeting Reflection

Lillie Fike - (She/Her/Hers)

Hello!

It was my birthday yesterday and I totally forgot that today was not Monday -- I'm so sorry.

The meeting on Friday was fun! I was pretty nervous because Zoom makes me a little uncomfortable because I can't actually look at everyone. I realized very shortly that that was silly and that I needed to just go for it and it seemed to work! I felt like the meeting ran smoothly and people only had kind things to say. Everyone in Eco Vista is so kind and I am so glad to be a part of this team. I can't wait for next quarter!

It was nice to have Sue come. When people outside of our organization come, it really shows how much of an impact we have and how working together with other organizations really strengthens our community. Cool Block sounds like an amazing initiative! I was looking at their website and I didn't realize that it wasn't centralized to UCSB and Isla Vista! I don't know if I can put another item on my plate by joining the certificate program, but I will certainly do my own part in lowering my carbon footprint.

It is always nice to hear from Tony and Ash about the gardens they grow as well! I would love to be more involved, but they seem to always do it while I'm at work. Hopefully, soon I can find some time to go garden!

It's also very exciting to hear about your COVID resilience project and the momentum it is gaining! It is so important that we do everything we can for people that are less fortunate. Working with low-income individuals, I see how much COVID has affected them and how a lot of the services that support them aren't running right now.

It was absolutely wonderful being a part of this group. Thank you thank you for accepting me with open arms. This was an amazing experience and I am so glad to get to know you all. This last meeting felt more like a group of friends gathering -- not a meeting. I only have good things to say about this group and the people in it!

I love you all, can't wait to hear your presentations, and I hope to see you next quarter!

Echo

for Rachel Carson

Maia

At the edge of light in the rhythm
of the hammock, under a steady fall of ash
from Pittsburgh steel mills fourteen miles
away, over cottage and outhouse lit
by candle-stub, kerosene, in the choke
of coal-drift dusting the pond and every
leaf, pea-vine, sheet and nightgown
on the wash-line—you were born.

Through Springdale woods you spoke first
to the dawn—*hermit thrush! cardinal!*—
consulting the starlings' dark burble—ocean
wing-beat, coastal murmur in your ear
la mer calling you

blood-pulse, swinging arms and legs
on long walks to school—grass-ripple
breath-rise wind-fall—never-seen-
or-heard-*Atlantic*, liquid clamor rushing
to sudden silence—

2

*All through the lunar month as the moon
waxes and wanes, so the moon-drawn
tides increase or decline...*

as you, muse of fallen seaside sparrows,
gave your life away to those who needed you,
sustained your spirit in slender
crevices of time, ink moving your mind
over the sandy page

In the sea nothing lives to itself.

The great body of mother-ocean
circulates hormonal instructions altering the fate
of beings who haven't arrived yet, lives
touching lives distant in time

spruce groves and kelp, comb jellies, grey gulls,
anemones, green crabs, whelks and periwinkles,
flowering dunes, laughing women...

In the beginning...was the plankton

Before almost anyone you heard the largest
alarms that would be ours 50 years on—cold-loving
creatures shifting north, away from tainted,
warming waters—stone by stone, the ocean
taking back her ancient coasts.

*we who live today can only wonder;
a rising sea could write a different history*

3

And because you loved night and water-by-starlight,
you loved her, quiet woman reflecting your wild
or sacrificial seasons, withdrawals, restorations

wave after wave of love letters, then the long
wait between, dreaming her voice by the loud Atlantic
or at your hermit's desk in the company of oceanic
language, undulations of storm-light, she

the lee, sea-wall to your cross-winds—she, the land,
not famous Anemone Cave or Thunder Hole, but
an unnamed niche behind a living curtain
of greenery, sea-cove woman

pulling against publisher's deadlines—beach walks
with your orphaned grandnephew, with friends...
and those lost woods on the Maine coast

you ached to snatch from developers

Instead, your gift to Earth, to generations, *Silent Spring*,
book of revelations—biocides and corporate lies—
grave warning delivered to Congress while you were barely
able to stand after radical mastectomy and radiation...

already leaving us—*returning*
to water air wind rock wing-back ash at dawn—*almost*
physical immortality

receding to our flat blue future
in the Anthropocene, firm horizon melting
to mirage, time foreshortening
your rosaries of tentacle and carapace

Sea Around Us, Edge of the Sea,
Under the Sea Wind

beyond our hearing-range, the plover's warble,
seaside sparrow's diminished whistle,
leap-tide neap-song

—our end
in our beginning

echo obeyed in childhood before you
ever heard it—echo
 from fiery sea-bed—cliff-edge
where terra firma whirls
 to star and foam

and time stops and you wander and everything
worth saying is being said by the sea



Notes:

1. *all through the lunar months...* from *The Edge of the Sea*

2. *the muse of fallen seaside sparrows*: adapted from “the God of fallen sparrows” in Rachel Carson’s field notes. (She also wrote, “before the lab, the field.”)

3. *In the sea nothing lives to itself... In the beginning... we who live today...* from *The Edge Of The Sea*

4. “the woman”: Dorothy Freeman. Stanley Freeman, Dorothy, and RC were close and mutually supportive friends. (*Always Rachel: The Letters of Rachel Carson and Dorothy Freeman*)

5. *almost physical immortality*: an insight concerning the whole of Life, which was omnipresent in her work

6. *The Sea Around Us, Edge of The Sea, Under The Sea Wind*, her three works of scientific poetry, lushly written, balancing subjective experience and up-to-date fact, best sellers during her lifetime, but not much read in the 21st century compared to *Silent Spring*.

7. *everything/ worth saying is being said*: adapted from “all that was worth saying was being said by the sea” from *Lost Woods: The Found Writings of Rachel Carson*, Linda Lear

Interview with Ash Valenti

October 2020



What is your background? What do you care about?

I'm Ash Valenti (they or he). I was born in 1993 during a Blizzard in Virginia, grew up in San Diego, and have lived in Isla Vista since 2011. I love Isla Vista and have called it home for many years. I also love music, food, and friendship. My major at UCSB is Political Science and I also study Intersectional Feminist Studies, Critical Environmental Justice, and more. My passion is working together toward a world that is more connected, just, and healthy. I especially care about building a culture that honors and uplifts folks from historically marginalized communities, a practice

of respecting nonhumans, and seeing ourselves as part of, not separate from, the environment on Earth that gives us life. This means listening to, fostering leadership among, and meeting the needs of students, children, parents, elders, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, People of Color, Queer, Trans, Poor, Houseless and housing insecure, Disabled, Undocumented, Formerly Incarcerated, chronically ill, and all folks as well as animals, plants, fungi, and earth. In Critical Environmental Justice studies, we learn that marginalized communities have hurt the most from colonization, pollution, capitalism, over-policing, disconnection with nature, food insecurity, health conditions, etc.; yet also are the very folks who have a lot of the skills and knowledge to be essential to the solutions (“Close to the problem=close to the solution” Indigenous, Latinx, Black, and other POC activist communities have created amazing mutual aid, solidarity, and creative counters to the crises we face, and are owed support and compensation for this ongoing work). I am passionate around the idea of **Just Transition**, which means that as we live through the Climate and Inequality Crises, we come together—honoring indigenous wisdom and activism—in adapting, regenerating the Earth, rethinking technology and consumption, and building the kind of communities we want our children and the next seven generations to thrive in. Educating and including children and everyone in this regenerative work is vital.

Why did you run to be one of the five Isla Vista Recreation and Parks District Board Directors?

I ran for this position because my friends in IV Food Not Bombs and our mutual aid community were concerned, more than ever because of the pandemic, that our houseless neighbors sheltering in the parks were in danger being displaced. As a part of Food Not Bombs I regularly do wagon meal delivery service (donned with N-95's) in the parks, through that and other community life I actually talk with the houseless folks in the parks and know they deserve shelter, food, sanitation, and respect, and have skills and values to share and give back to the community if the foundation exists to support it. While RPD has vowed to not just kick people out, they often remove or threaten to remove people's belongings— which can be basically the same thing—, do not have a democratic policy making process, and co-opt work Food Not Bombs and others are doing to get out of doing real outreach. We did the math and less than 1% of our land is being used for shelter, so the relatively small amount of land affected is no excuse to demonize our neighbors.

By serving on the board I can model a style of governance that puts people and planet over property and profit, push for more communication, compassion, and responsibility to engage those most affected in the policy making process, connecting folks with services, fostering a supportive and regenerative

community, get the cops out of parks, etc.

What are the most important ways parks play a role in a Just Transition?

Just Transition is our framework for living in times of Climate, Inequality, and Disconnection Crises where we come together, honor and give power to indigenous folks, workers, and marginalized communities, utilize permaculture and regenerative technology to adapt and build the kind of communities we want our children and the next seven generations to thrive in. In Isla Vista, as home to the environmental movement, thousands of brilliant visionary people, and some of the best weather for growing nutritious food, we have a uniquely perfect opportunity to utilize public park lands for Just Transition principles. It would be a crime to the next generation to not be doing everything we can to meet this potential. My vision for Isla Vista parks is to invite broad coalitions with volunteer power to plant edibles, restore healthy soil and natives, be climate and drought resilient, and educate and empower children, people of color, students, parents, queer, trans, houseless, disabled, and formerly incarcerated folks, and everyone to be a part of the land and the community.

I'm enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve on the Parks Board because public parks are key to **regenerative land use** and including a multiplicity of community folk in the process of learning and growing together. I am part of networks like Eco Vista and the upcoming IV Food Forest Project which are dedicated to turning Isla Vista into an eco-village that serves as a model Just Transition town. Parks land use is an essential part of this in what I see as a moral imperative to restore the soil, sequester carbon, increase food security, manage drought, and increase community connection through age-old technology like native plant restoration, forest gardens, rain gardens, local composting, and other permaculture pillars. IV RPD oversees 56 acres of parks and open spaces. By having a seat on the board and utilizing our coalitions for community and volunteer power I will do all I can to get these amazing Eco Vista projects moving!

How could Isla Vista rise to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic in the best way?

During the pandemic I have been religiously distancing and mask-wearing because our actions to prevent germs from spreading can save lives and reduce the risk of severe illness, especially for our elder, immuno-compromised, and houseless neighbors. At a time when folks are unable to participate in most of the things we're used to for socialization and engaging in-person, parks, gardening, food forestry, and outdoor Place-Making (a word our dear friend M said often) are more

important than ever. Adapting to the best science we currently have available is key. I have been hearing consistent reliable sources saying it is safe to spend time outdoors, with nature. While there could be some risk, most experts and Santa Barbara officials agree it is low- risk to invite a friend or two to be with you outdoors—by wearing masks and staying about six feet apart, and keeping it to a small number of people, you are empowering yourself and your community to socialize safely and stay healthy—mentally and physically. The Parks in IV can and should step up to accommodate healthy socialization and engagement with the land and community.

Any final thoughts for the community?

COVID-19 is a serious crisis that has had severe impacts on folks’ health and well-being, but it isn’t the first and it won’t be the last. For generations we have been suffering from a disconnection crisis, dealing with the mental and physical effects of settler capitalism. I think to heal from this we need to come together, envision a future that is regenerative instead of extractive, and rekindle stolen ancestral practices of living in harmony with our environment and community.

As my friend Tony of the Food Forest project says, “Building community through building the soil!” And as we say in Food Not Bombs, “Solidarity Not Charity; Comida para todos!”

If any of these goals resonate I would love to meet about building coalitions. Welcome to email me at ash.valenti.cares@gmail.com, I’m on social media @ash.valenti. I also recommend engaging with our up-n-coming @IslaVistaFoodForestProject, which is being planned around Sueño and Estero Park.

Thanks! May you be happy and healthy. With Peace, Love, and Solidarity,

Ash Valenti
They/them &
he/him

Ash.valenti.cares@gmail.com



An open letter to the young people of the United States: We still have time to avoid devastating climate change ... if we vote

New scientific understanding shows we can drastically reduce the time it takes for our environment to stabilize if we elect a leader who will get us back on track with IPCC carbon emission guidelines.

Sierra Emrick

October 13, 2020

Hi my name is Sierra, I am 23 years old and this is beyond an opinion piece; for me, this is a piece of my heart and a plea to everyone, young, old, black, white, brown, purple, democrat or republican to vote to save our collective future.

Starting now and until November 3rd we must vote-in someone with the best interest of this planet and its people in mind.

In Environmental Studies at UCSB, a lot of us would joke (but more like inwardly cry) we have ESD(Environmental Studies Depression) because almost every day we went to class after class learning about how modern human behavior mixed with greed has and is causing irreversible devastation on planetary health.

I graduated from UCSB simultaneously feeling fired up to make change and completely burnt out and hopeless.

As the Trump administration continued to endanger the wild/natural world I loved and continued to ignore and beat down historically oppressed communities(ex: low income/underserved and indigenous communities) I found myself asking, *where is my passion-my energy to fight?*

As I struggled to find jobs (LOL and myself) and the global pandemic took off, my energy fizzled and reignited at the same time. I found myself, and still find myself, riding a roller coaster of depression and elation, feeling immense love and within seconds intense hatred and anger, feeling like I know my place in the world and then like I'm floating in an endless dark paralyzing abyss.

People often say that's just how this stage in life feels and that's just how it goes in your early twenties but WHAT THE ACTUAL HELL THIS IS NOT JUST "HOW IT GOES"!

We live in truly unprecedented times (I would say un-president-ed times because we clearly lack a presidential leader) and it is really hard to be a young person right now because the future often looks really shitty with all the news spewing doom and devastation.

But it is not all doom and gloom.

Last Sunday on 60 minutes professor, Michael Mann, from Penn State University, dropped a good news BOMB on our world in relation to climate change. Mann revealed new scientific understanding that our planet still has a chance to avoid climate breakdown... and recover faster than previously predicted if, and only if, we stick to IPCC guidelines to reduce our emissions by 5 percent every year and halve emissions by 2030. If we elect a leader who will get us back on track to hit these marks global warming lag time (The time between halting CO2 emissions and halting temperature rise)could be "more like three to five years" instead of the previously thought to be 50.

We can turn things around but we gotta V-O-T-E.

I speak to you – the recently graduated – the what-the-hell-do-I-do-now-ers.



Let me say – I feel you.

But as crazy as the outside and inner world is right now and as much as it feels debilitating, there is something you can do right now and that thing is vote.

We must vote president Voldemort *excuse me* President Donald Trump out of his little White(supremacist)House to give our planet, our people, our plants, and our animals, micro and macro, a chance at life. Another 4 years with Trump as our president (who refuses to fight emissions and instead rolls back climate regulations) would kill our chances of preventing a catastrophic rise in global temperature.

All the issues we face today are interrelated, from racism to global CO2 concentrations. If we start to tackle one part of the beast we will start to weaken the whole beast! Yes, we have a fucked-up system that is all tangled up and our problems are complexly interrelated but this also means solving one issue helps resolve others simultaneously. Injustices happening to marginalized communities and the earth are interconnected and one in the same @Intersectional environmentalism!

We still have time to reverse the previously thought to be “irreversible damage” and hit IPCC guidelines for emission reductions and reduce the warming time to “more like three to five years.” instead of 50. But we have to

VOTE

We have to give the USA the chance to do its part in protecting our planet and our people.

If you don't know who to vote for, vote for your future, and not for Donald Trump.

Yes, Biden may not be the best, you may not like him in the slightest, but voting for Donald Trump ensures 4 more years of climate inaction and solidifies the devastating fate of our environment and front-line communities (communities at the front line of climate change's negative effects).

I'm writing this because I love you and I love the fricken world so much and I know there are so many of us out there... and if we choose to not label ourselves by our political affiliation, color, who we choose to love, what diet we eat, or god we pray to, and we have to focus on our common ground, literally, our common ground (our earth below our feet – our air that which we breathe – and water that we drink)and come together and vote for it and vote for us, then we will have a chance to turn things around and bring into reality an America and world we are proud of.

About the author

Sierra is a UC Santa Barbara, Environmental Studies alumna who writes for a Regenerative Organic Farm in coastal California and a seaweed harvesting startup. Sierra writes to educate the general public on topics such as intersectional environmentalism, ocean and terrestrial farming, and expose the connection between human and environmental wellbeing. With experience working in aquaculture, environmental education, marine conservation, university research labs, and terrestrial conservation institutions, she brings her broad perspective to every piece she writes.

“I hope my writing challenges you to think differently and empowers your own self-exploration and love journey. I truly believe a more fulfilling and environmentally/socially just way of living exist if we come together on our common ground and see each other for what we really are ... one of the same.”

–Sierra Emrick

Election of the Decade? Why We Need a New Kind of Party

John Foran

October 8, 2020



Mural by Garrison Buxton and Stacy Harshman. Photo: Garrison Buxton.

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build something that makes the existing model obsolete”

– Buckminster Fuller

Ah, the elections. Breathe in deeply. Hold. Exhale.

The November 3, 2020 U.S. and local elections loom as the decision of the decade in this decade of decision. On the national level, having any chance of a survivable future depends utterly on the decisive defeat of Donald Trump, Democratic gains in, and retention of control of the House, and a turnover of seats in the Senate sufficient

to give the Democrats a majority there. Absent all of these outcomes, the future will be ... dismaying in its cruelty, at best and horrifyingly dystopian at worst, with rapid accelerations of our Covid, economic, and climate crises guaranteed.

What could bring an alternative about?

My own best strategic idea is that what is needed to transform global societies is the emergence of new kinds of social justice-oriented “parties” that come out of and are more tightly coupled with diverse social movements than in the past, so that they are at once more accountable to the social forces that comprise them, and broader. We have caught glimpses of these social movement-driven parties in the long experience of Kerala, India with left-wing governments, the rise of Podemos in Spain out of the Indignados movement after 2012, or the experiment in left-green rule in Iceland after the Saucepan Revolution overthrew the conservative party of the bankers who brought on the crash of 2008.

Perhaps what we ought to consider is a new *kind* of party altogether, not just another party, one that would be both more global in its ecological vision and more empowering of local communities in its domestic policy than parties or movements have been in the past. The role of transition initiatives such as Eco Vista in this scenario would be to create local spaces for a cooperative community economy that self-governs with a profound sense of the need for resilience and a degrowth-inspired transition away from fossil fuels. Buen vivir and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth complements this from a Southern perspective that is very much in line with its Northern counterpart and draws on indigenous values through the lens of the multiple crises of the present. Intersectional ecosocialism – an approach very much in its infancy – might be a national-level goal for a new kind of party.

Toward an Eco Vista Party

Closer to home, how would any of this apply to us in Eco Vista? Well, what if we could prototype such a new kind of party and see what happened?

We are fortunate, as are Californians generally, to have decent government (better actually in Isla Vista than in the state as a whole). And the election of Eco Vistan Ash Valenti to the Isla Vista Recreation and Park District board will be another milestone worth celebrating. What we must do after this happens in November is to lay the foundation for Eco Vista-inspired majorities on both the Community Services District and Recreation and Parks by the mid-2020s.

Before we imagine that, let's recall the Eco Vista Mission Statement, written in February 2019:

Our long-term goal is to establish an ongoing, multigenerational, student-led community development project for an equitable and just transition in Isla Vista.

We aim to encourage and inspire the foundation of an eco-village in Isla Vista through renewable energy, a flourishing and regenerative agro-ecology of public urban gardens, cooperative, affordable eco-housing, a circular eco-economy based on solidarity and meeting the real needs of the inhabitants, a vibrant web of visionary cultural creativity, radical self-governance, and community priorities determined by all who reside here.

We should also reflect on the "Community Values and Principles" that follow the Mission Statement:

We are inclusive.

We are democratic.

We are non-violent.

We work collectively whenever possible, and all are free to organize their own activities and projects.

We are open to all points of view that are aligned with these values and supportive of the Eco Vista Mission.

We act and live out of love for the dignity of all living beings, and base this love on social and climate justice, and on radical hope.

The Alternative in the UK suggests a few principles worth considering:

WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE UK?

We are a political platform, not a political party.

Our purpose is to catalyse a new politics that goes far beyond our current reality. We focus on engagement more than elections, on values

over ideology, on futures that include, not exclude. We care about solutions, challenges – and great questions.



Beneath the democratic deficit lies an imagination deficit.

Through political laboratories, creative practice and sociable meet-ups we are launching a “friendly revolution”, where we support all citizens to engage deeply with the complex issues that face our society.

Eco Vista can study this experience and others as well as evaluate our own progress after the November 2020 elections and beyond.

The World in 2025

The world that is coming can take innumerable forms. We cannot map it because we cannot see it. Knowing what we want is a crucial step but knowing that what we design will emerge only in the process of going towards it is a useful check on thinking in the old ways about how to transform the present into the future.

Will we get what we want? The world will warm, and there is no escaping the fact of the Anthropocene in which we have landed ourselves and a (hopefully) endless number of future generations. So, what we can get is circumscribed by the transgression of planetary boundaries, an inexorable constraint on any better future. But within those hard terms lies a range along which humanity will strive to place

itself as far as possible in the direction of living differently, living better, and living closer to our full potential. What seems impossible today might become otherwise, if we are wise enough to let our actions and imaginations emerge together.

We believe that creating our own new kind of party could have many short-term and long-term impacts. The short-term impacts will include co-creating a network of active community members, sharing great ideas, and starting a conversation about turning IV into a truly sustainable community and leader in the “eco-futurist design movement.” In the long-term, we are hoping to take back the power of the design and decision-making process and put it into the hands of students and the community. IV has a long history of leading the way – with UCSB being the birthplace of the Environmental studies program we are hoping to inspire and challenge students, faculty, and the community to make a real plan for change, have an out of this world experience, and to build and create utilizing the most innovative tools, and our highest ideals of equity and justice.¹²

How to build from such a local alternative to a participatory confederation on the scope of California or the United States/Turtle Island without sacrificing our autonomy would be one question such new “parties” would have to engage. How to integrate local cooperatives into regional and national-level economies based on degrowth would be another. Working together with and supporting like-minded governments on a global scale would be required to coordinate action on the climate crisis. The best guarantee that such experiments could work toward all these ends would be the autonomy of the social movements and economic cooperatives that enabled their rise to a position of power to confront the entrenched political and economic elites and international institutions that set the rules of the game today.

These are huge questions, made visible by the joint contributions of the new movements for radical transformation of the twenty-first century. Seeking answers to them is a worthy task for engaged scholars and activists. The community members and youth of Isla Vista who are now inspiring a newly energized climate justice movement globally and Eco Vista locally deserve and demand nothing less. We must now learn to listen to their voices.

¹² This paragraph was written by Eco Vista co-founder Jess Parfrey in an essay titled “Eco-Futurism, Disruptive Design, and Building Community Resilience: Can We Party with a Purpose?” The epigraph from Bucky Fuller is also found there.



About the Editors

John Foran he/they



By day I teach sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Most of the time, I live the life of a scholar-activist in the global climate justice movement, at the center of the struggle for achieving social justice and radical social change in the 21st century. One manifestation of this locally is the Eco Vista dreamworld at www.ecovistacommunity.com I participate as much as I can as an active member both at home and beyond with Transition US, System Change Not Climate Change, the Ecoversities Alliance, and the Global Tapestry of Alternatives, among others.

I believe that just as spirituality remains a wasted gesture unless put into some kind of practice outside of oneself in the world, I also feel that far too much activism falls short of its potential for liberation because groups and individuals fail to acknowledge and work on the inner transition and nurturing of relationships that the best spiritual practices enable in us.

I am an unabashed eclecticist when it comes to both spirituality and activism, and I believe that we are called at this time to be applying our imagination, our deepest being, our most creative and unbounded imagination to the task at hand, which is nothing short of a complete transformation of the way we live.

My books include *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution* (1993) and *Taking Power: On the Origins of Revolutions in the Third World* (2005). Climate justice essays and books can be found at found at the International Institute of Climate Action and Theory [<https://www.iicat.org/john-forans-iicat-research-portal>]

Kimberly Lim



Kimberly Lim (she/hers) is a senior majoring in sociology and is also minoring in education studies. When she has free time, you can find Kimberly at the beach, hiking, or going on an adventure with her friends. During quarantine, she has been working on graduate applications, experimenting with new recipes, and redesigning her room!

With this special edition Kimberly hopes that it will inspire and give hope to people during these challenging times. Eco Vista has a special place in her heart and has provided not only countless friendships but a supportive community.

Eduardo Ramirez-Medina, he/him/his



Hello, my name is Eduardo Ramirez-Medina, and I am transitioning into my fourth year at UC Santa Barbara. I am earning a Sociology B.A. as well as minors in Applied Psychology and Education. I joined Eco Vista with the goal of getting involved within my community. Being a part of the *Radical* Catalog Team has been an insightful and wonderful experience. Given the current context with COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter Movement, it is critical that we not only stand together in solidarity, but also cultivate community and support in order to progress forward. To me, Eco Vista is hope and the future. My aspiration with this catalogue is to educate and inform in addition to provide accessible resources for the community to stay connected and flourish during these times.

Julia Samuel



As a Sociology major and Feminist Studies minor at UC Santa Barbara, I first became involved with Eco Vista after taking a lecture course on climate crisis with professor John Foran. I have been so lucky to meet a network of dedicated and creative minds through Eco Vista, and I have learned new ways to incorporate my loves of art and writing into activism. Before I graduate this June, I will earn a certificate in Environmental and Climate Advocacy, Leadership, and Advocacy. There will always be a special place in my heart for Isla Vista, and the unique spirit of change this spirit community holds.

Bethesda Sandoval



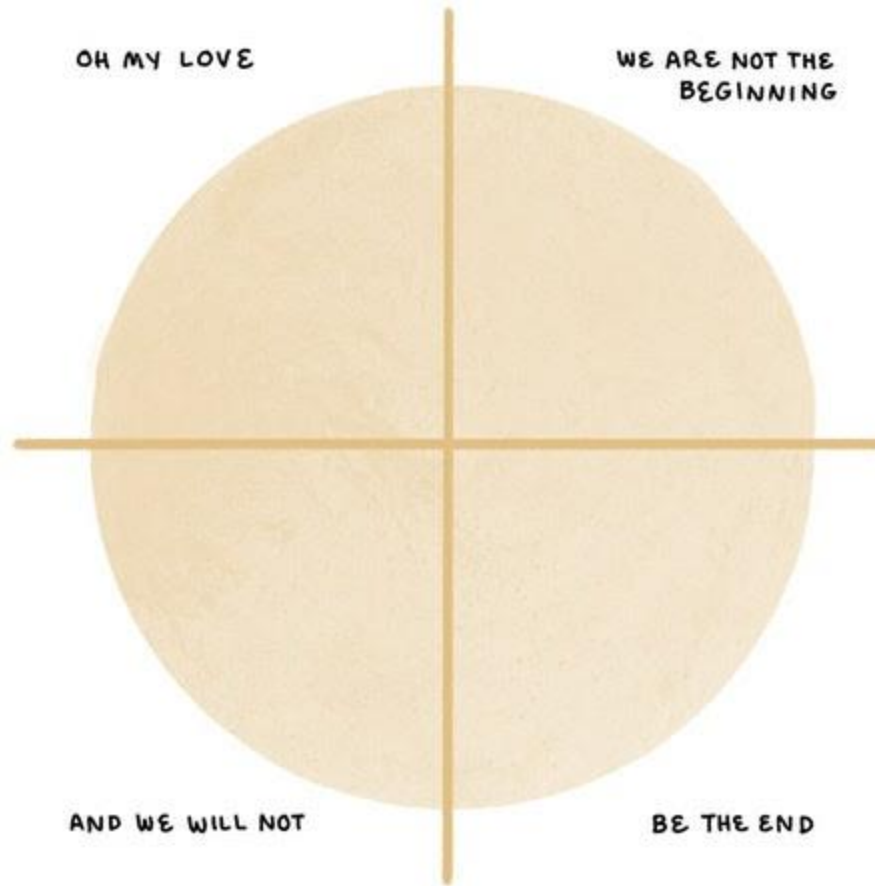
My name is Bethesda Sandoval, and I am a 4th year going on 5th year at UCSB. As a Sociology major and minor in Applied Psychology student, Eco Vista came into my life at a time where I was puzzled on how to use the knowledge I had acquired when entering the workforce. Eco Vista aligns with my motivations to have a community that values my voice and the change I'd like to implement for the future. Throughout this challenging year, I found myself dreading the future and losing hope in the prognosis for the fate of our world. Having the community of Eco Vista galvanized my developing existential dread into action. This year has taught me the true importance of community (however that may look) and the importance of self-care. Thus, my current interests are in sustainable housing for all and accessible self-care. I'm looking forward to finishing my remaining units on continuing my projects for Eco Vista!

Elena Salinas O'Toole



Elena Salinas O'Toole

Elena Salinas O'Toole is a committed activist fighting for climate justice. Within her work in community organizing, she has always focused on involving peers through art. Elena was first introduced to the issue of environmental injustice through witnessing her Dad's work advocating for an Indigenous tribe that has been continually exploited by oil companies and the Colombian government. She uses her passion for visual art and community relations to raise awareness about the intricacies of environmental justice and the need for large-scale, systematic change.



Adrienne Rich's words, Illustration by [Madeleine Jubilee Saito](#)