SPIRITUAL MEMES
IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
AS INDICATORS OF
SOCIAL CHANGE

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BASIC CONCEPTS

Sustainable communities
Practical spirituality
Cultural capital
Social change
Memes
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

A diverse human settlements including eco-villages, eco-cities, cooperative living and cohousing projects, residential land trusts, urban housing cooperatives, and alternative communities where members share a common vision.

(Fellowship for Intentional Communities, n.d.)
PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

Vattimo: vulnerability, self-emptying (kenosis), love and non-violence.

Dallmayr: ontology which touches the height and depth

Prophet: creative techniques we can use to uplift ourselves and the world around us.
MEMES

A meme is an idea or concept that replicates itself, spreading from mind to mind in a similar way to a gene replicating physical structures.  

(*Dawkins, 1998*)

This propensity of duplication of memes from brain to brain is like a spread of a virus.  

(*Blackmore, 2003*)
CULTURAL CAPITAL

Cultural capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange that includes the accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and status”.

(Barker, 2004)

Cultural capital has three subtypes: embodied, objectified and institutionalised

(Bourdieu, 1986)
SOCIAL CHANGE

Patterns of social change: linear, cyclical, bifurcation, pendulum and spiral pattern which are studied within the framework of history with the aim to inform foresight and future perspectives.

(Galtung & Inayatullah, 1997)
Sorokin’s pendulum theory
of social and cultural change

➢ ideational (spiritual)
➢ idealistic (synthesis)
➢ sensate (materialistic)
➢ chaos ... and back

The pendulum shifts – when we exceed the principle of limits ...
SOROKIN’S CULTURE MENTALITIES

**Ideational values** are absolute, eternal, and ever lasting. The external empirical world and its material values are viewed with either contempt or indifference. “Ideational art is symbolic, its physical exemplars being merely the visible signs of the invisible world and inner values” (p. 34).

**Sensate values** are immediate, transient, short lived with preference for materialism, eudaemonism, hedonism, utilitarianism, sensualism; the morals of “Carpe diem,” of “Wine, women, and song” (Sorokin, 1970, p. 34). Art work is aimed at arousing and satisfying the senses.

**Idealistic values** are a mixed class which unifies the Ideational and Sensate, with, a predominance of the Ideational elements. Its needs and cultural expressions are both spiritual and material, involving “modification of self and the transformation of the external sensate world: in other words, it gives *suum cuique* to the Ideational and the Sensate” (Sorokin, 1970, p. 27).
THE POSTMODERN PARADIGM

SOROKIN: Sensate culture
- reality revealed through our senses - sexualisation
- consumerism
- agnosticism

CONNECTED WITH:
- urbanisation, crime
- congestion
- pollution
- stress
THE DOMINANT CULTURAL PARADIGM: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS
Movement of the pendulum back to ideational
CASE STUDY

Damanhur Federation of Communities

Temples of Humankind

longevity (40 years history)

uniqueness (new technologies)

new memes (ideograms, mythologies)

purpose (to transform humanity)
DAMANHUR: New technologies

Sustainable agriculture
Selfic Healing Jewellery
Music of the Plants
Damanhurian creativity
WHAT ARE THE TEMPLES OF HUMANKIND?

• The Temples of Humankind is a tribute to the human being, who is understood to be the bearer of a divine spark that must be awakened.

• The temples are “more like a transcultural time capsule, a glyphic and geometric compilation of cumulative wisdom and memory of humanity”.

• Temples of Humankind is a sophisticated instrument for contacting higher Forces and galactic intelligence.

(Ananas & Pesco, 2009, p. 82)
The Temples of Humankind have been built at a meeting point of the Synchronic Lines, the "rivers" of energy that link the Earth to the cosmos.
A massive hand-dug complex started in 1978. Rests on a bedrock of black asteroidal mylonites (oldest formations on the planet). It consists of eight halls adorned with numerous paintings, mosaics, sculptures and glass art, created to celebrate universal or secular spirituality; honouring diversity of belief systems and “invites everyone to seek answers to life’s fundamental questions within themselves, but through exchange and discussion with others”. (http://www.damanhur.org/en/spiritual-vision/secular-spirituality)
IDEOGRAMS (symbols) & SACRED ART

...communicate with the spiritual ecosystem. Rituals and sacred dance enhance the connection with invisible worlds.
HALL OF EARTH
Enemy of Mankind the impersonal forces of stasis, inertia, and conditioning
THE CUPOLA OF THE HALL OF MIRRORS

The largest underground stained glass dome in the world (8.5m diameter)

The masculine principle with the feminine principle
Divinity protector of humanity, towards union in transformation
THE LABYRINTH

Paintings of Earth history and 38 windows, each dedicated to a different deity

“Civilizations, inventions, invasions, revolutions and wars: many crucial events of documented history are represented in this Hall. These images serve as a memory, a warning and a propitiation for future choices that lead us toward respect for cultures and diversity, harmony, peace, and the evolution of humankind”(http://www.thetemples.org/en).

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Messages:

- *Value diversity of life on our planet*
- *Observe the cycle of life*
- *Blend with individual and cosmic time*
- *Actively engage in promoting the sustainability of the earth*
VISION OF THE FUTURE HUMAN BEING

*The Androgyne:*
Male and female energies united in a non-dual world
TIME
SHAPING THE PRESENT: Weaving the present from the past and future

BOUNDDED PRESENT
(HERE AND NOW)

PAST

FUTURE

UNBOUNDDED PRESENT
(THE ETERNAL NOW)
## DEEPENING THE FUTURE

*Four Quadrants – mapping for cultural capital and emerging realities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTIVE - inner</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE – inner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>personal development leading to personal transformation, culminating in discovery and connection with inner divine nature of individuals</td>
<td>spiritual memes and new mythologies created secular spirituality promoted unique language, ideograms (universal symbols)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECTIVE – outer</strong></td>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE – outer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>global citizenship &amp; non-dualism unique philosophy of relationships nurturing and transforming inner and outer environment (sustainability thinking) social engagement / activism</td>
<td>unique schooling system paired with a unique philosophy of parenting alternative political structures unique economic and monetary system sustainable technology use and selfica science (art, healing, Temples of Humankind and Temples of Peoples)</td>
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References


https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=3o69I8X-WWI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=I9ieW-FcCs8