



RESILIENCE, COMMUNITY ACTION AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

People, Place,
Practice, Power, Politics
and Possibility in Transition



3.2. Resilience and Community Action in the Transition Movement

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3.2.1. Background, Definitions and Characterisations

Since its foundation, the Transition movement has held resilience as a key operational concept and stated goal. However, the actual meaning of 'resilience', and the implications of this for practice, is neither fixed nor consistent. No-one has attempted to put forward a single guiding definition, and its meaning and interpretation have changed over time as the movement matures, becomes established in new places, and encounters changing global conditions. Within Transition, resilience therefore means different things, to different people, in different places, at different times.

This paper initially emerged from attempts to identify suitable monitoring and evaluation methods and strategies for Transition groups and projects, and for the movement as a whole. The initial aim was to do this in relation to the stated goal of building resilience. It quickly became apparent that this was an unrealistic goal, at least in the short term and in relation to immediate practical needs.¹⁰⁵ As a concept, resilience is employed in a fluid and dynamic way, and so defies ready generalisation. As a goal, it is emergent over the long term in complex systems whose dynamics are markedly non-linear. This means that the short term changes that come about through resilience-building efforts do not necessarily reliably map onto the longer term changes that come about when the system shifts to a more resilient state.

Alongside this realisation, we became aware of a need to explore the relevance of resilience to community action more fully and critically. This piece of work presents some preliminary findings from that work. It examines relationships between approaches to and experiences of resilience within the Transition movement and their relationships with key theoretical

¹⁰⁵ This line of work eventually morphed into the Monitoring and Evaluation for Sustainable Communities project, a partnership among Transition Network, the Low Carbon Communities Network, and the School of Geography at Oxford University: <https://mescproject.wordpress.com/>

treatments. In conclusion, it responds to attempts to appropriate the concept of resilience in the service of neoliberal agendas. It argues that this opens up a discursive space within which a scientifically and ethically grounded concept of resilience can act as a 'Trojan horse' by

revealing inherent contradictions in the political economy of neoliberalism, and growth-oriented economics more generally.

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ever-increasing inputs of energy derived from inherently limited sources and accumulation of pollutants beyond the biosphere's capacity to absorb them.¹⁰⁶ Transition's practical programme is based on the conjecture that the nature and outcome of this transformation will depend on the extent to which communities take responsibility for it through pre-emptive action, and the recognition that it is also an opportunity to build resilience against future crises.¹⁰⁷

Assessing Transition's characteristic early discourses on resilience against technical literatures, Haxeltine and Seyfang have identified three main weaknesses.¹⁰⁸ Firstly, there is an emphasis on resilience to specific threats – notably peak oil – and a lack of explicit recognition that responses to this may not promote resilience to other types of change.¹⁰⁹ Second, there is a tendency to equate resilience rather uncritically with localisation; extreme localisation may in fact reduce resilience in certain respects.¹¹⁰ Third, there are costs associated with resilience-building – in particular, there seems to be a trade-off with the efficiency that has dominated economic policy in recent decades – so the ideal goal may be not to maximise resilience, but to achieve some necessary or optimum level.

¹⁰⁶ Heinberg, R., 2004. *Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publications. Jackson, T., 2009. *Prosperity without Growth*. London: Earthscan.

¹⁰⁷ Hopkins, R., 2008. *The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience*. Totnes: Green Books. Holmgren, D., 2009. *Future Scenarios: how communities can adapt to peak oil and climate change*. Totnes: Green Books.

¹⁰⁸ Haxeltine, A., and G. Seyfang, 2009. *Transitions for the People: theory and practice of 'Transition' and 'Resilience' in the UK's Transition movement*. Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research Working Paper 134.

¹⁰⁹ Also see the distinction between general and specified resilience in Folke, C., S. R. Carpenter, B. Walker, M. Scheffer, T. Chapin & J. Rockström. 2010. Resilience thinking: integrating resilience, adaptability and transformability. *Ecology and Society* 15(4): 20. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss4/art20/>

¹¹⁰ North, P., 2010. Eco-localisation as a progressive response to peak oil and climate change – a sympathetic critique. *Geoforum* 41 (4): 585-594.



Figure 3.2.1 – Cattle at Kattendorfer Farm, a CSA in Germany. Credit: Gesa Maschkowski.

Subsequent developments have addressed these issues to some extent. The most thorough theoretical exploration of resilience directly in relation to Transition remains that in a doctoral thesis by Rob Hopkins, based on action research within Transition Town Totnes¹¹¹ undertaken in parallel with preparation of the Totnes Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP).¹¹² This informs the ideas of resilience expressed in Hopkins' non-academic work on Transition,¹¹³ which in turn are major influences on resilience thinking throughout the Transition Movement. It was also the basis for a set of 'Resilience Indicators' employed in the Totnes EDAP, which build upon resilience evaluation tools developed elsewhere. Many of these resilience indicators could equally be seen as localisation indicators; this to some extent upholds Haxeltine and Seyfang's second point above. The thesis also begins to move beyond localisation in considering the appropriate scale for various kinds of economic activity, arguing that some of these are best located at higher geographical scales.

¹¹¹ Hopkins, R., 2010. *Localisation and resilience at the local level: the case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK)*. PhD thesis, Plymouth University.

¹¹² Hodgson, J. and R. Hopkins, 2010. *Transition in Action, Totnes 2030, an Energy Descent Action Plan*. Transition Town Totnes. <http://totnesedap.org.uk>

¹¹³ Hopkins, R., 2011. *The Transition Companion*. Green Books, Totnes, Devon. Hodgson, J. and R. Hopkins, 2010. *Transition in Action, Totnes 2030, an Energy Descent Action Plan*. Transition Town Totnes. <http://totnesedap.org.uk>

Hopkins identifies four major concepts of resilience in academic literatures relevant to theory and practice in Transition:¹¹⁴

- › That of social-ecological resilience developed by the Resilience Alliance, as a system's capacity to maintain structural and functional continuity in the face of ongoing change.
- › Dominant in the risk management literature, and prevalent in much government and related discourse on climate change adaptation, that of resilience as the ability to 'bounce back' after major shocks and/or crises, such as a natural disaster or terrorist attack.
- › The notion of personal resilience, or a person's ability to cope with personal setback, hardship, trauma or other crises, commonly applied in social work, counselling and psychotherapy.
- › The idea of community resilience, at the time developed largely as practical/evaluation tools by a range of organisations, more recently entering the formal scientific literature on resilience.

Sections 3.2.2 to 3.2.5 examine each of these in turn.

3.2.2. Social-Ecological Resilience

A typical definition of social-ecological resilience in the work of the Resilience Alliance is, "[T]he capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure and feedbacks".¹¹⁵ Originally based on observations of the self-maintaining properties of ecosystems,¹¹⁶ this was later linked with insights from human ecology and ecological anthropology about how human societies negotiate ongoing change and inherent unpredictability in the ecological systems that provide their productive base.¹¹⁷ Walker *et al* link resilience to two related capacities: adaptability, the capacity of human actors in the system to manage for resilience, and transformability, the system's capacity to undergo a fundamental reorganisation when changing circumstances mean it can not persist in its existing form.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Hopkins, R., 2010. *Localisation and resilience at the local level: the case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK)*. PhD thesis, Plymouth University.

¹¹⁵ Walker, B., C. S. Holling, S. R. Carpenter, & A. Kinzig, 2004. Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society* 9(2): 5, p. 32. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss2/art5/>

¹¹⁶ Holling, Crawford S., L.H. Gunderson and G.D. Peterson, 2002a. Sustainability and panarchies. Pp. 63-102 in Gunderson and Holling (eds.). Holling, Crawford S., 1992. Cross-scale morphology, geometry, and dynamics of ecological systems. *Ecological Monographs* 62(4): 447-502.

¹¹⁷ Berkes, F. and C. Folke (eds.), 1998. *Linking social and ecological systems. Management practices and social mechanisms for building resilience*. Cambridge University Press.

¹¹⁸ Walker, B., C. S. Holling, S. R. Carpenter, & A. Kinzig, 2004. Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society* 9(2): 5. [online] UØRL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss2/art5/>

Subsequent work revealed common patterns affecting resilience in social and economic as well as ecological and social-ecological systems.¹¹⁹ It would nonetheless be naïve to assume that ecological resilience is identical to social resilience, or that either implies the other.¹²⁰ In particular, people provide capacities absent in non-human systems, including anticipating and planning for crises, modifying ecological properties and potential responses to these through technology, and enhanced abilities for learning and management.¹²¹ Extending the scope to socio-technical systems, in which technologies (especially for energy conversion and use) have a major influence on flows of matter, energy and information, reveals further complexity.¹²² Adaptability in social-technical systems depends on flexibility in both their technical aspects and the sets of formal and informal rules, agreements and customs that regulate their use.¹²³ Recharacterisation of this body of theory as evolutionary resilience maintains the emphasis on adaptive change identified in ecological studies while broadening the perspective to include insights from the social sciences, avoiding the risk that confusion over definition makes the concept of resilience effectively meaningless in the way some consider sustainability to have become.¹²⁴ This confusion in large measure derives from a failure to ground both academic and vernacular discourses on resilience in a sound understanding of resilience theory.

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¹¹⁹ Gunderson, L.H. and Crawford S. Holling (eds.), 2002. *Panarchy*. Washington DC: Island Press. Berkes, F., J. Colding and C. Folke (eds.), 2003. *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: building resilience for complexity and change*. Cambridge University Press.

¹²⁰ Adger, W.N., 2000. *Social and Ecological Resilience: are they related?* *Progress in Human Geography* 24(3): 347-364.

¹²¹ Gunderson, L., 2009. *Comparing Ecological and Human Community Resilience*. Community and Regional Resilience Initiative Research Report 5.

¹²² Smith, A., and A. Stirling. 2010. The politics of social-ecological resilience and sustainable socio-technical transitions. *Ecology and Society* 15(1): 11. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss1/art11/>

¹²³ Genus, A., 1992. Social control of large-scale technological projects: inflexibility, non-incrementality and British North Sea oil. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* 4(2): 133-148. Genus, A., 2012 (forthcoming). The governance of technological transitions: the case of renewable energy. In G. Marletto (ed.), *Creating a Sustainable Economy*. London: Routledge.

¹²⁴ Davoudi, S., 2012. Resilience: A Bridging Concept or a Dead End? *Planning Theory & Practice* 13(2): 299-307.

Holling, whose work on the structure and dynamics of ecological systems is the original basis of resilience theory, describes a four-stage *Adaptive Cycle* common to all ecological systems, which go through successive phases of growth, stability, decay and reorganisation/renewal.¹²⁵ In terms of resilience, the key phase is that of reorganisation, at which the system is particularly sensitive to the influence of both internal and external factors. Small changes in key variables during this phase may affect whether the system recovers its previous condition, shifts to a new and more desirable state, or breaks down into some simplified or degenerate form. Reorganisation is thus a time of crisis at which the system may change in unpredictable ways, and at the same time an opportunity for learning, where it may build in new features that strengthen its ability to respond to environmental change. The outcome of reorganisation – and hence the trajectory for subsequent renewal – often depends on context: whether and how the wider environment supports particular pathways of renewal.¹²⁶

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porating nested adaptive cycles at different scales of space and time. Some cycles involve very localised, fast-changing variables; others operate over broader spatial areas and longer timescales. In a deciduous woodland, for example, individual leaves grow, live, drop and decay over timescales of months. Trees have lifetimes of decades, and parallel cycles in the lifetimes of woodlands or forest patches may operate over centuries. In any systems, these different scales have very different properties and must be described and analysed in different ways. Resilience is to a large extent an outcome of *Panarchy*, or the ways in which cycles at these different scales interact.¹²⁷

Resilience theorists have identified two main types of cross-scale interaction. The *Remember* effect is where large and slow variables buffer the influence of smaller, quicker factors: for example, when a tree dies in a forest, the presence of other trees around it and in the seed-bank ensures another tree grows in its place. Such effects may also inhibit necessary change,

125 Holling, Crawford S., 1992. Cross-scale morphology, geometry, and dynamics of ecological systems. *Ecological Monographs* 62(4): 447-502. Holling, Crawford S. and L.H. Gunderson, 2002. Resilience and adaptive cycles. Pp. 25-62 in Gunderson and Holling (eds.). *Panarchy*. Washington DC: Island Press.

126 Folke, C., J. Colding and F. Berkes, 2003. Synthesis: building resilience and adaptive capacity in social-ecological systems. Pp. 352-387 in Berkes, F., J. Colding and C. Folke (eds.), 2003. *'Navigating social and ecological systems. Building resilience for complexity and change'*. Cambridge University Press.

127 Holling, Crawford S. and L.H. Gunderson, 2002. Resilience and adaptive cycles. Pp. 25-62 in Gunderson and Holling (eds.) *Panarchy*. Washington DC: Island Press.



Figure 3.2.2 – Bicycle Lanes, Copenhagen. Credit: Gesa Maschkowski.

as we are currently experiencing in relation to carbon lock-in, the interlinked linked social, technical and political/institutional barriers to a shift away from fossil fuel dependency.¹²⁸ The Revolt effect is when changes at small, fast scales escalate to higher levels while the latter are in their release phase, and thus become the dominant influence on the trajectory of the next regeneration phase.

Transformability often depends on the interplay between remember and revolt effects. The 2008 banking crisis originated when what were initially isolated actions of individual traders became pervasive in the financial system as a whole at a time when it was moving into a release phase.¹²⁹ Subsequent failure to reform global finance reflects a pernicious form of the Remember effect, akin to carbon lock-in, where established institutions, customs and norms conspire with self-interest among powerful actors to limit the possibility of desirable change. Transition and other social movements, in contrast, are seeking to build transformability by themselves becoming the seeds of positive change; the sources of future positive Revolt

128 Unruh, G., 2000. Understanding carbon lock-in. *Energy Policy* 28(12): 817-830. Mitchell, C., 2008. *The Political Economy of Sustainable Energy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

129 Mellor, M., 2010. *The Future of Money*. London: Pluto Press.

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small scales for sustainability in industrialised economies is the most likely source of future transformability, when the inherent unsustainability of economies whose stability relies on continuous financial growth make this a necessity.¹³²

The vernacular notion that Transition, through numerous local efforts at building resilience, may have the emergent effect of promoting wider transformability – or of maximising the chances that inevitable transformations are for the better – is thus well grounded in resilience theory. This, however, assumes suitable conditions at higher levels. As the next section describes, predominant understandings of resilience at these levels reflect very different theoretical perspectives and ideological narratives.

3.2.3. Resilience and Disaster Response

Treatments of resilience in literatures on disaster response were until recently unconnected with theories of social-ecological resilience, and historically tended to emphasise two contrasting properties. First, what has been termed 'engineering resilience': the ability to resist change and hence maintain a constant state. Second, the capacity of a system to return to its original state following a disturbance. Tony Hodgson's typology of resilience labels these, respectively, as Type 1 and Type 2 resilience.¹³³ Both may be at odds with resilience theory's more dynamic conceptualisations, which emphasise change through systemic learning and/or the possibility of transformation: Types 3 and 4 in Hodgson's scheme. A system that either resists changing at all or seeks only to return to a pre-determined target state limits its own

responses to crises at higher levels.¹³⁰ Adaptability in social-ecological systems inhabited by traditional resource users depends on management practices that mean different local areas are at different stages in the adaptive cycle at the same time, maintaining patchiness and heterogeneity at the level of the landscape.¹³¹ In a similar way, innovation at

¹³⁰ Smith, A. and G. Seyfang, 2007. Grassroots innovations for sustainable development: towards a new research and policy agenda. *Environmental Politics* 16(4): 584-603. Seyfang, G., 2009. *The New Economics of Sustainable Consumption*. London: Palgrave.

¹³¹ Berkes, F. and C. Folke. 2002. Back to the future: ecosystem dynamics and local knowledge. Pp. 121-146 in Gunderson and Holling (eds.) *Panarchy*. Washington DC: Island Press.

¹³² Gallopín, G.C., 2002. Planning for Resilience: Scenarios, Surprises and Branch Points. Pp. 361-392 in Gunderson and Holling (eds.) *Panarchy*. Washington DC: Island Press.

¹³³ Hodgson, A., 2010. Transformative Resilience. <http://bit.ly/2hpOQVF>

capacities for adaptation, reorganisation, learning and evolution.¹³⁴ More recent work in this area has moved beyond this to more dynamic concepts, more consistent with resilience theory, with greater emphasis on ongoing developmental process that responses to crises both reflect and support.¹³⁵

Evidence from many different fields supports the observation that instantaneous responses to disturbance, and resilience, are intimately related to adaptability and transformability. Resilience in indigenous resource use is often the product of systemic learning from past crisis events.¹³⁶ There is evidence, particularly from research involving Arctic peoples, that existing mechanisms for coping with extreme weather events in the short-term may be the basis for long-term adaptation to climate change.¹³⁷ UK government mechanisms for disaster and crisis management show evidence of adaptive and incremental development based on learning from experience at institutional levels.¹³⁸ Many other historical examples exist where reorganisation and renewal following natural disasters has increased resilience to future disturbances, when responses have increased adaptive capacity in both infrastructure and associated management institutions.¹³⁹ This notion of resilience as an ongoing, developing condition, although perhaps most obviously manifest in crises, is consistent with the Transition idea of a property we should seek to build through community-level responses to peak oil and climate change.¹⁴⁰ It also fits the reconceptualisation of climate change as a wicked problem, lacking any solution as such and helping shape the context within which consideration of all other issues is framed.¹⁴¹

The inherently conservative implications of Type 1 and Type 2 resilience mean they conveniently fit discourses that seek to normalise and hence perpetuate existing imbalances of power.¹⁴² In particular, neoliberal rhetoric increasingly draws upon concepts of resilience both as a justifying principle, and a device for transferring responsibility for environmental and social

134 These features fit the characterisation of addictive organisations in Schaeff, A. W. & D. Fassel, 1988. *The Addictive Organisation*. San Fransisco: Harper and Row.

135 Brown, K., & E. Westaway, 2011. Agency, capacity, and resilience to environmental change: lessons from human development, well-being, and disasters. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 36: 321-342.

136 Grove, R.H., 1997. *Ecology, Climate and Empire*. Cambridge: White Horse Press. Berkes, F., 2008. *Sacred ecology: traditional ecological knowledge and resource management*. Second edition, revised. London: Routledge.

137 Berkes, F., 2008. *Sacred ecology: traditional ecological knowledge and resource management*. Second edition, revised. London: Routledge. Pp. 161-180.

138 Rogers, P., 2011. *Comparative Approaches to Resilience*. Paper presented at the conference Resilience for Future Energy Systems, Newcastle Civic Centre, Northumbria University, 24th October 2011.

139 Gunderson, L., 2010. Ecological and human community resilience in response to natural disasters. *Ecology and Society* 15(2): 18.

140 Hopkins, R., 2010. *Localisation and resilience at the local level: the case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK)*. PhD thesis, Plymouth University. Pp 72-74.

141 Hulme, M., 2009. *Why we disagree about climate change: understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity*. Cambridge University Press.

142 Neocleous, M., 2013. Resisting Resilience. *Radical Philosophy* 178. <http://www.radicalphilosophy.com/commentary/resisting-resilience>. Accessed November 27th 2013.



Figure 3.2.3 – Beach art, Baltic Sea. Credit: Gesa Maschkowski.

damage from their perpetrators to their victims.¹⁴³ In equating resilience with persistence, such discourses ignore the complexities and nuances of resilience theory in particular, most notably its attention to transformation as a vital component of resilience. Blanket assertions that all uses of the term resilience pander to these agendas are equally simplistic. There are, nonetheless, sound arguments that apolitical usage of the term resilience may tacitly and inadvertently privilege existing patterns of social relationships, which in most cases exhibit marked power imbalances, and consequently permit definitions and conceptualisations of resilience to be imposed in a top-down fashion by powerful actors.¹⁴⁴ Failure on the part of grassroots movements for resilience building to challenge these hegemonic notions of resilience - either explicitly or at least by making clear how, by whom, in whose interests and on what ethical premises resilience is to be defined – creates real dangers of appropriation.¹⁴⁵ Such appropriation would reduce personal and community resilience to, respectively,

143 Joseph, J., 2013. Resilience as embedded neoliberalism: a governmentality approach. *Resilience* 1(1): 38-52.

144 MacKinnon, D., & K. D. Derickson, 2013. From resilience to resourcefulness: A critique of resilience policy and activism. *Progress in Human Geography* 37(2): 253-270.

145 Brown, K., 2014. Global environmental change I: A social turn for resilience? *Progress in Human Geography* 38(1): 107-117.



Figure 3.2.4 – Bike Workshop, Copenhagen. Credit: Gesa Maschkowski.

individual and social capacities to endure the externalised costs of rampant profiteering; in its extreme form the ‘Disaster Capitalism’ described by Naomi Klein.¹⁴⁶ The next two sections consider more sophisticated approaches to both these concepts. This completes the basis for an overtly politicised notion of resilience for Transition, taken up in the final section.

3.2.4. Personal Resilience

Attention to personal resilience is prominent in Transition through its emphasis on Inner Transition (sometimes referred to as ‘heart and soul’): the personal and psychological challenges that come with accepting major environmental and social change and taking active responsibility for addressing them.¹⁴⁷ In academic literatures, this has followed a similar trajectory to the disaster relief literature: from simplistic emphases on Type 1 and Type 2 resilience (“bouncing back”) to more situated, ecological approaches which pay attention to contextual factors.¹⁴⁸ These more sophisticated understandings fit with practical efforts to ensure that

¹⁴⁶ Klein, N., 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. London: Macmillan.

¹⁴⁷ Johnstone, C., 2006. *Find your power*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing. Macy, J., & C. Johnstone, 2012. *Active hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy*. New World Library.

¹⁴⁸ Brown & Westaway *op. cit.*: 326-330.



Figure 3.2.5 – Repair Café, Transition Bonn. Credit: Gesa Maschkowski.

Transition creates salutogenetic environments, conducive to these personal challenges, as Maschkowski and colleagues describe in the previous chapter in this volume.¹⁴⁹

It remains obscure whether any discernable patterns can be identified in the relationships between individual and contextual dimensions of personal resilience. One study (not specifically about Transition) suggests that people involved in various forms of political activism tend to have high levels of wellbeing and personal resilience.¹⁵⁰ However, data on links between wellbeing and active involvement in Transition Town Totnes corroborate this only partially, and equivocally.¹⁵¹ A wider survey of activists in established Transition initiatives showed many were motivated by a sense of personal disconnection resulting from their

149 Also see Henfrey, T., 2014. Edge, Empowerment and Sustainability: Para-Academic Practice as Applied Permaculture Design. In *The Para-Academic Handbook: A Toolkit for making-learning-creating-acting*. London: HammerOn Press. <https://www.hammeronpress.net/shop/books/the-para-academic-handbook/>

150 Klar, M. and T. Kasser, 2009. Some Benefits of Being an Activist: Measuring Activism and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being. *Political Psychology* 30(5): 755-777.

151 Hopkins, R., 2010. *Localisation and resilience at the local level: the case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK)*. PhD thesis, Plymouth University. Pp 307-10.



Figure 3.2.6 – Real World Economics Workshop on the Max-Neef Model Run by Inez Aponte and Jay Tompt, Bonn, 2014. Credit: Gesa Maschkowski.

dissatisfaction with the current state of society, and saw Transition as a vehicle for overcoming this.¹⁵² Alistair McIntosh considers ‘cultural resilience’ arising from supportive community structures essential for promoting personal resilience and allowing effective grassroots action.¹⁵³ Cultural innovations of the types documented at road protest camps,¹⁵⁴ and in protest cultures more generally,¹⁵⁵ may be examples of mechanisms for achieving this. Hodgson’s typology may be relevant here: personal resilience of Type 1 (putting up) and Type 2 (recovery) intuitively seem to resonate less with Transition than Type 3 (adaptation through ongoing learning) and Type 4 (openness to, or indeed encouragement of, personal transformation); all may have contributions to make to creating salutogenetic environments.

Whatever their relationship with individual conditions, there is evidence that these health benefits can extend beyond the Transition group itself. A Health Impact Assessment of the Transition Together and Transition Streets projects in Totnes, Devon (England) identified positive effects on lifestyle, social environment, and physical environment, all of which reliably

152 Haxeltine, A., and G. Seyfang, 2009. *Transitions for the People: theory and practice of ‘Transition’ and ‘Resilience’ in the UK’s Transition movement*. Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research Working Paper 134. Pp. 19-20.

153 McIntosh, A., 2004. *Soil and Soul: people versus corporate power*. London: Aurum. McIntosh, A., 2008. *Rekindling Community*. Schumacher Briefing No. 15. Totnes: Green Books.

154 Butler, B., 1996. The tree, the tower, and the shaman: the material culture of resistance of the No M11 Link Roads Protest of Wanstead and Leytonstone. *Journal of Material Culture* 1(3): 337-363. Reprinted in Harvey, G. (ed.), 2003. *Shamanism: A Reader*. London: Routledge. Letcher, A., 2001. The scouring of the shire: fairies, trolls and pixies in eco-protest culture. *Folklore* 111(2): 147-161.

155 McKay, G., 1996. *Senseless acts of beauty: cultures of resistance since the sixties*. London: Verso.

correlate with improvements in health and wellbeing.¹⁵⁶ Many of Transition's key concerns – environmental degradation, climate change, ability to maintain provision of essential services in the face of declining availability and affordability of energy, and the equity implications of

the uneven distribution of impacts of climatic and economic instability – are also major public health issues, and there are huge potential synergies with centralised public health initiatives that take a systemic rather than responsive approach.¹⁵⁷

Human Scale Development framework developed by Manfred Max-Neef and colleagues rests on the important distinction between needs and satisfiers. The framework identifies several categories of fundamental human needs: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, recreation (in the sense of leisure, time to reflect, or idleness), creation, identity and freedom.

A possible operational link between the individual and social-ecological dimensions of personal resilience lies in the Human Scale Development framework developed by Manfred Max-Neef and colleagues.¹⁵⁸ This rests on the important distinction between

needs – the basic requirements for human survival and flourishing, assumed to be universal – and satisfiers – the many and varied ways in which these needs can be met. The framework identifies several categories of fundamental human needs: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, recreation (in the sense of leisure, time to reflect, or idleness), creation, identity and freedom. Each of these encompasses four existential categories: being, having, doing and interacting. These two dimensions generate a 36-cell matrix in which different kinds of satisfiers can be placed:¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Richardson, J., A. Nichols, & T. Henry, 2012. Do transition towns have the potential to promote health and well-being? A health impact assessment of a transition town initiative. *Public Health* 126(11): 982-989.

¹⁵⁷ Poland, B., M. Dooris, & R. Haluzka-Delay, 2011. Securing 'supportive environments' for health in the face of ecosystem collapse: meeting the triple threat with a sociology of creative transformation. *Health Promotion International* 26(suppl. 2): ii202-ii215.

¹⁵⁸ Max-Neef, M., A. Elizald, and M. Hopenhayn, 1989. *Human Scale Development. Conception, Application, and further reflections*. New York and London: Apex. Pp. 8.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

Table 3.2.1 – The Human Scale Development Framework.

FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NEEDS	BEING (QUALITIES)	HAVING (THINGS)	DOING (ACTIONS)	INTERACTING (SETTINGS)
Subsistence	physical & mental health	food, shelter, work	feed, clothe, rest, work	living environment, social setting
Protection	care, adaptability, autonomy	social security, health systems, work	cooperate, plan, take care of, help	social environment, dwelling
Affection	respect, sense of humour, generosity, sensuality	friendships, family, relationships with nature	share, take care of, make love, express emotions	privacy, intimate spaces of togetherness
Understanding	Critical capacity, curiosity, intuition	literature, teachers, policies, educational	analyse, study, meditate, investigate,	schools, families, universities, communities,
Participation	receptiveness, dedication, sense of humour	responsibilities, duties, work, rights	cooperate, dissent, express opinions	associations, parties, churches, neighbourhoods
Leisure	imagination, tranquility, spontaneity	games, parties, peace of mind	day-dream, remember, relax, have fun	landscapes, intimate spaces, places to be alone
Creation	imagination, boldness, inventiveness, curiosity	abilities, skills, work, techniques	invent, build, design, work, compose, interpret	spaces for expression, workshops, audiences
Identity	sense of belonging, self-esteem, consistency	language, religions, work, customs, values, norms	get to know oneself, grow, commit oneself	places one belongs to, everyday settings
Freedom	autonomy, passion, self-esteem, open-mindedness	equal rights	dissent, choose, run risks, develop awareness	anywhere

The framework identifies five types of satisfier, which differ according to their relationship with needs:¹⁶⁰

1. Destroyers – those that although directed to meeting a particular need, prejudice the long-term possibilities for its satisfaction, as well as jeopardising other needs. An obvious and topical example is continued reliance on conversion of fossil fuel and nuclear energy for the provision of energy services, violating other needs in many different ways and reinforcing lock-ins and path dependencies that undermine long-term energy security.¹⁶¹
2. Pseudo-satisfiers - that give a false impression of meeting a particular need. Much frivolous consumption can be understood as pseudosatisfaction of affective or existential needs.¹⁶²
3. Inhibiting satisfiers – that oversatisfy a particular need and thus undermine the possibility that others are met: perhaps a defining feature of the condition of saturation with material goods that has come to be known as Affluenza.¹⁶³
4. Singular satisfiers: that satisfy a single need and are neutral with respect to others.
5. Synergic satisfiers: that simultaneously stimulate and contribute to satisfying multiple needs. A good example might be a community food growing project, that can help satisfy needs for participation, connection, leisure, belonging, exercise and many others, at the same time as providing sustenance.¹⁶⁴

This framework has some limitations: whether the needs described are universal remains to be demonstrated, and it doesn't encompass relationships between people and the natural world. Speculatively, however, it can potentially deepen our understanding of what resilience means, in the context of Transition, in various ways. Intuitively, the convergence of material and subjective factors in the relationship of needs and satisfiers feels like it fits well with Transitions attention to the balance between inner and outer work. Ability to sustain delivery of satisfiers might well provide a working definition of resilience.¹⁶⁵ Discrimination among different types of satisfiers can also allow evaluation of competing proposals for what

160 *Ibid.*, pp. 31-34.

161 Leggett, J., 2013. *The Energy of Nations: Risk blindness and the road to renaissance*. London: Routledge.

162 Jackson, T., 2006. Consuming Paradise? Towards a social and cultural psychology of sustainable consumption, 367-395 in Jackson, T. (ed.) *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Consumption*. London: Earthscan.

163 Hamilton, C. & R. Dennis, 2005. *Affluenza: when too much is never enough*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.

164 E.g. see Kneafsey, M., R. Cox, L. Holloway, E. Dowler, L. Venn & H. Tuomainen, 2008. *Reconnecting Producers, Consumers and Food*. Oxford: Berg.

165 For more informationon on possible applications of Human Scale Development to practical efforts at economic relocalisation, see Tompt, J., 2014. Relocalisation: does it meet your needs? *Stir Magazine* 5 (Spring 2014): 24-27, and <http://wellandgoodproject.wordpress.com/>.

constitutes resilience: those that emphasise destroyers, pseudo-satisfiers and inhibiting satisfiers immediately appear less credible than those that seek to create synergic satisfiers. By extension, a system whose putative resilience relies on undermining resilience (or assuming ever-increasing levels of Type 1 and Type 2 resilience) in interacting systems or its own constituent sub-systems is likely, on closer examination, to turn out not to be resilient after all.

The concept of synergic satisfiers may also help to operationalise resilience. The multifunctional nature of synergic satisfiers implies redundancy in capacities to meet particular needs. They also provide multiple possibilities for reorganisation and restructuring of flows of matter, energy and information, whether in response to disturbance or within ongoing processes of learning and development. More specifically, and in relation to salutogenesis, we can tentatively define desirable synergy in relation to Eric Fromm's distinction between existential dependency on having – not just ownership and control of material objects, but the instrumentalisation of all human and other relationships – and being.¹⁶⁶ This is consistent with Sophy Banks' work for Transition Network on Inner Transition, which seeks to emphasise relational aspects of human existence. These include relationships with ourselves as experienced through thought, feeling, embodiment and their interactions; interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, and their effects on team building and successful collaboration; and relationships with the natural world. If we adopt this as a basic social goal, sustaining the ability of our social-ecological system to support modes of existence based on being and the subjective, social and ecological conditions this implies becomes a key defining criterion for resilience. It seems likely that resilience, defined in these terms, will be best supported by synergic satisfiers whose functions include meeting needs related to being in whatever category. In these terms, a resilient community would be one with an existential focus on being, supported by access to multiple synergic satisfiers.

3.2.5. Community Resilience

Until recently, there was no consistent definition or characterisation of community resilience in either academic or grey literatures. While the concept of resilience was increasingly commonly used in community development as the first decade of the 21st century unfolded, these tended to be *ad hoc* approaches that drew inconsistently upon a range of theoretical perspectives, and did not build on each other in any systematic, cumulative fashion. They nonetheless contributed some useful practical insights, and show a similar trajectory towards more holistic perspectives as the theoretical approaches in disaster management and psychological development on which they draw. Recent approaches, for example emphasise resilience as a state of preparedness for unexpected events that depends on ongoing activity to build and maintain capacities for community responses.¹⁶⁷ An important practical guide to community resilience produced by the Carnegie Foundation notes that community resilience, as a 'wicked

¹⁶⁶ Fromm, E., 1995. *The Essential Fromm: life between having and being*. Ed. R. Funk. London: Constable.

¹⁶⁷ e.g. Edwards, C., 2009. Resilient Nation. DEMOS. https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Resilient_Nation_-web-1.pdf; UK Cabinet Office, 2016. Community Resilience Framework for Practitioners. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-resilience-framework-for-practitioners>.

issue', requires a flexible approach that allows integration of multiple perspectives. It likens resilience to a muscle, in that it is developed through ongoing community activity as a means of building the social capital that will allow the community to mobilise in response to a crisis.¹⁶⁸

Recent work has attempted more systematically to integrate relevant insights from social-ecological systems on the one hand, and disaster management, community development and

Carnegie Foundation likens resilience to a muscle, in that it is developed through ongoing community activity as a means of building the social capital that will allow the community to mobilise in response to a crisis.

psychological development on the other, to move towards a consistent scientific approach to community resilience.¹⁶⁹ As summarised in Helen Ross's contribution to this volume, this synthesis identifies key qualities that promote community resilience: capacity for self-organisation deriving from positive outlook, suitable infrastructure, economic diversity and innovation,

relationship to place; and the capacity to exercise agency through appropriate forms of leadership, suitable knowledge and skills and means to develop these further through learning, appropriate values and beliefs, engaged governance, and the ability to mobilise collectively through social networks.

While Berkes and Ross tend to treat community as a specific organisational and analytical level within the panarchy, many of the same insights apply to a broader and more flexible view. Emergent within Transition and other social movements over the years is an experience of community not necessarily as a specific geographically localised group, but as a modality of interactions, of developing and mobilising alliances and other forms of relationships around common interests and understandings. These are often manifest at local levels, within a community of place, as a Transition initiative conventionally operates. They may also arise at higher levels or across scales, linking actors with specific interests or skill sets. Examples of these include the network of national Transition Hubs,¹⁷⁰ ECOLISE network,¹⁷¹ the Transition

¹⁶⁸ Wilding, N., 2011. *Exploring Community Resilience in times of Rapid Change*. Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust. <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk>

¹⁶⁹ Berkes, F., & H. Ross, 2013. Community resilience: Toward an integrated approach. *Society & Natural Resources* 26(1): 5-20.

¹⁷⁰ <https://transitionnetwork.org/transition-near-me/hubs/>

¹⁷¹ <http://www.ecolise.eu>

Research Network,¹⁷² Research in Community,¹⁷³ and various individuals and groups investigating low carbon economies and livelihoods through the REconomy Project.¹⁷⁴ These all intersect and cross cut each other, with local Transition initiatives and other projects and national and regional networks, and with other communities of practice with common interests. How they might operate across scales is the topic of the next, concluding section.

3.2.6. Action Across Scales: Framing and Diversity

The *pathways* approach to sustainability highlights the importance of framing.¹⁷⁵ A 'system' is an analytical construct – implicit in any usage of resilience - that identifies a certain set of relationships (exchanges of energy, matter and/or information) as the most important features of a complex, messy reality. Different models can describe and analyse the same reality in different ways. These differences in large part depend on framing, which in relation to system definition means decisions about which features either to emphasise or to exclude.

Framing is crucial to the way this chapter defines and treats resilience: it influences which inputs, outputs and feedbacks are treated as important as well as what potential and other contextual factors are taken into consideration. In

other words, answers to the questions, 'Resilience of what, to what, and in whose interests?', depend on framing. As allusions to resilience in neoliberal discourse show, not all framings of resilience are as inclusive, equitable and/or sustainable as those in the Transition movement would wish. The Common Cause report highlights the importance of making framing explicit, both in order to express openly the values that support one's own position, and to reveal implicit values and hidden agendas that may lie behind those of others, particularly those in power.¹⁷⁶ This has two main implications for Transition. First, a need to identify where its own framings and associated actions create barriers to inclusion and so undermine efforts to build resilience. Second, to provide a means to reveal and engage with power without compromising what is necessarily a politically radical agenda.

Answers to the questions, 'Resilience of what, to what, and in whose interests?', depend on framing.

Diversity in perspective, and hence framing, is an important feature of adaptability and resilience. The community of people co-dependent on a particular local resource base and/or

172 <http://www.transitionresearchnetwork.org>

173 <http://www.researchincommunity.net>

174 <http://www.reconomy.org>

175 Leach, M., I. Scoones and A. Stirling, 2010. *Dynamic Sustainable*. London: Earthscan. Pp. 43-52.

176 Crompton, T., 2010. *Common Cause: the case for working with our cultural values*. Godalming: World Wide Fund for Nature. <http://www.wwf.org.uk/change>.



Figure 3.2.7 – Beds at Neuland Community-Garden, Cologne. Credit: Gesa Maschkowski.

infrastructure may have different outlooks and priorities, and both perceive and use it in different ways. The UK's Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience, for example, stresses a need to maintain global food supply chains, a marked contrast with Transition's emphasis on reducing dependence on these.¹⁷⁷ Studies of traditional resource users have shown that this diversity can contribute to evolutionary resilience by keeping different parts of the system in different ecological states and maintaining a broad base of human and natural capacities through which to respond to change.¹⁷⁸ Recognising this, Transition's emphasis on including as wide a range of voices as possible is practical as well as ethical. It is therefore a key concern – pointed out by many commentators and widely recognised within the movement – that in practice it falls short of its aspirations to be genuinely inclusive.

¹⁷⁷ Cabinet Office, 2011. *Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience*. Pp. 7-8.

¹⁷⁸ Berkes, F. and C. Folke. 2002. Back to the future: ecosystem dynamics and local knowledge. Pp. 121-146 in Gunderson, L. and Crawford S. Holling (eds.) *Panarchy*. Washington DC: Island Press. Crane, T. A. 2010. Of models and meanings: cultural resilience in social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society* 15(4): 19. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss4/art19/>.



Figure 3.2.8 – Beds at Allmende-Kontor Community Garden, Berlin.

Barriers to inclusion in Transition can take many forms. For many, the term ‘community’ can connote a sense of affluent rural England, reinforcing caricatures of Transition as appealing only to a largely white, university educated, middle class demographic.¹⁷⁹ A commitment to methodologies intended to be inclusive and empowering can, ironically, favour those with the confidence to express themselves in public or semi-public settings, often reflecting relative privilege of background, status, or education.¹⁸⁰ Transition’s flexible, non-prescriptive DIY methodology offers a ready framework for addressing this.¹⁸¹ Attention to concrete local issues, such as food, engages a wide range of actors and perspectives without overt or direct interest in peak oil or climate change, the original high level drivers of Transition.¹⁸² Nonetheless, in practice becoming a truly inclusive movement remains a work in progress at all levels.

179 Aiken, G., 2012. *Community Transitions to Low Carbon Futures in the Transition Towns Network (TTN)*. *Geography Compass* 6(2): 89-99.

180 Cohen, D., 2010. *Reaching out for resilience: exploring approaches to inclusion and diversity in the Transition movement*. M.Sc. thesis, Centre for Human Ecology.

181 Senior, L., 2011. *The Links Between Resilience, Diversity and Inequality: The View from Transition Durham*. Masters dissertation, Durham University.

182 Mycock, A., 2011. *‘Local Food’ Systems in County Durham: The capacities of community initiatives and local food businesses to build a more resilient local food system*. Masters dissertation, Durham University.

Differences of perspective between grassroots and top-down framings provide opportunities for synergy as well as conflict in cross-scale working. In the later stages of research towards the Totnes EDAP it became apparent that the grassroots approach to information gathering had omitted vital perspectives from business and local authority.¹⁸³ The indicators it derived differ markedly from those in a more top-down study by the New Economics Foundation,¹⁸⁴ indicating different - and complementary – perspectives and priorities at community level compared with those of local authorities. The Carnegie Foundation report notes that activists, professionals and policy-makers offer different and possibly complementary contributions, and sees this as a basis for collaboration.¹⁸⁵

Examination of urban Transition initiatives in the UK, which have tended to converge on a tactic of connecting separate local neighbourhood initiatives across larger cities, suggests that partnership with local authorities operating citywide is a key prerequisite for progress.¹⁸⁶ The case studies from Peterborough, Bristol and Spain in Section Two of this volume support this finding. They also highlight the risk inherent in any form of engagement with incumbent regimes: that it will entail compromise of a type that conflicts with the ultimately radical goal of transformation to a fair, sustainable and prosperous society.

There is also evidence that such collaborations can be subversive of the status quo and the agendas of those who would seek to maintain it. Resilience can be a powerful conceptual tool for achieving such outcomes. Post-earthquake reconstruction in Canterbury, New Zealand, involved extensive collaboration between community groups, and municipal authorities and emergency services.

Examination of urban Transition initiatives in the UK suggests that partnership with local authorities operating citywide is a key prerequisite for progress.

Collaborating around the conceptual theme of resilience enabled the community groups involved to assert their own understandings of what, in practice, resilience implies, and to renegotiate the premises of local democracy through the fact and nature of their participation – or not – in key decision-making processes.¹⁸⁷ In the UK,

¹⁸³ Hopkins, R., 2010. *Localisation and resilience at the local level: the case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK)*. PhD thesis, Plymouth University. P. 337.

¹⁸⁴ Hopkins, R., 2010. *Localisation and resilience at the local level: the case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK)*. PhD thesis, Plymouth University. Pp 338-340

¹⁸⁵ Wilding, N., 2011. *Exploring Community Resilience in times of Rapid Change*. Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust. P. 2. <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk>

¹⁸⁶ North, P., & N. Longhurst, 2013. Grassroots localisation? The scalar potential of and limits of the 'transition' approach to climate change and resource constraint. *Urban Studies* 50(7): 1423-1438.

¹⁸⁷ Cretney, R., & S. Bond, 2014. 'Bouncing back' to capitalism? Grass-roots autonomous activism in shaping discourses of resilience and transformation following disaster. *Resilience* 2(1): 18-31.

the trend towards community ownership and governance of energy generation infrastructure, when locally articulated as part of a strategy for building resilience, directly challenges national policy measures based on elite framings of energy security.¹⁸⁸

Engaging power, particularly on its own terms, is always an uncomfortable experience for those who seek to subvert it, one which both Transition and Resilience Theory have been accused of evading. A recurrent criticism of Transition is that the absence of any explicit account of power makes it politically naïve, and hence capable neither of achieving its goals in practice nor avoiding co-option by existing regimes.¹⁸⁹

Resilience theory, too, has been criticised for being apolitical.¹⁹⁰ However, a scientifically grounded resilience, that makes explicit its ethical conviction to social justice, is deeply subversive of neoliberal values.¹⁹¹ The

Open Space session on Resilience and Community Action at the Resilience 2014 conference, reported in Chapter 4.1 of the present volume, held multiple accounts from direct experience of the personal challenges involved in pushing against entrenched institutional barriers to positive transformation. This intransigence, and the discomfort involved in confronting it, reflects the power of a felt and enacted politics of resilience. When this is the basis of direct engagement with power, it may challenge it more effectively than an overtly politicised position that undermines possibilities for constructive dialogue.

Confusion over the definition, meaning and implications of resilience in many of the discourses in which it has become prominent opens up a discursive space with powerful critical possibilities.¹⁹² Resilience, according to the definitions used here, in practice implies the replacement of

Resilience, according to the definitions used here, in practice implies the replacement of centralised power structures with open and inclusive governance mechanisms.

188 Butler, C., S. Darby, T. Henfrey, R. Hoggett, & N. Hole, 2013. People and Communities in Energy Security. In Mitchell, C., J. Watson & J. Whiting (eds.) *New Challenges in Energy Security: The UK in a Multipolar World*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

189 Alloun, E. & S. Alexander, 2014. *The Transition Movement*. Simplicity Institute Report 14g. http://www.vikalpsangam.org/static/media/uploads/Resources/transitionmovement_simplicity_inst.pdf

190 Cretney, R., 2014. Resilience for Whom? Emerging Critical Geographies of Socioecological Resilience. *Geography Compass* 8(9): 627-640.

191 Nelson, S. H., 2014. Resilience and the neoliberal counter-revolution: from ecologies of control to production of the common. *Resilience* 2(1): 1-17.

192 Blewitt, J., & D. Tilbury, 2013. *Searching for Resilience in Sustainable Development: Learning Journeys in Conservation*. London: Routledge.

centralised power structures with open and inclusive governance mechanisms. It also implies transformation in systems that can persist in their current form only by continually undermining resilience elsewhere. Accordingly, a combination of robust science and explicit, unwavering ethical commitment empowers us to take control of this space and within it reveal the inherent contradictions in neoliberal discourse on resilience. This may in turn contribute to the transformation in thinking called for in Maja Göpel's chapter in the present volume.

This radical conceptual deployment of resilience also compels Transition to examine its own agenda, and to consider its relationship to political ecology in a global context. As Henfrey and Kenrick argue in Chapter 4.2, alongside other efforts to oppose the ongoing enclosure of material and cultural resources within the market realm, Transition can be seen as part of a wider global movement to defend and extend the commons.¹⁹³ In Chapter 4.3, Kuecker argues that moving from a rhetorical alignment with majority world struggles to genuine and meaningful solidarity involves ongoing critical examination of the ways in which the practice of Transition reflects its origins among relatively privileged sections of the global population. Challenging power means revealing and confronting our own power and its legacy, a necessary and desirable implication of taking action for resilience.

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193 Also see Kenrick, J., 2012. The Climate and the Commons. In Davey, B. (ed.), *Sharing for Survival*. Feasta. <http://www.sharingforsurvival.org/index.php/chapter-2-the-climate-and-the-commons/>



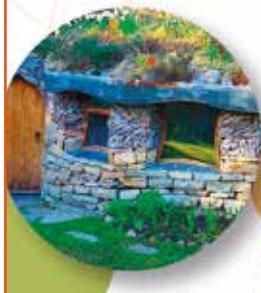
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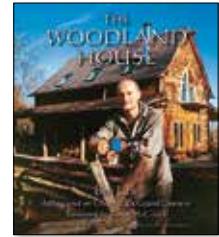
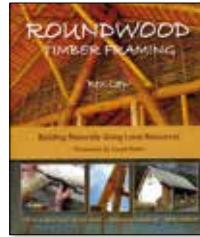
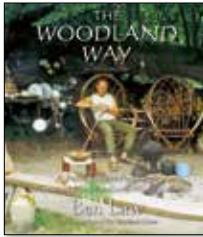
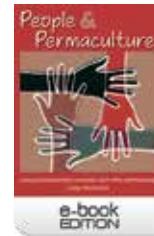
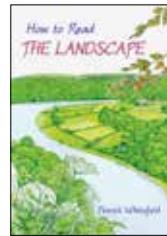
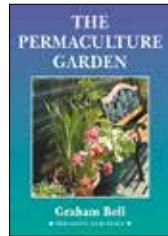
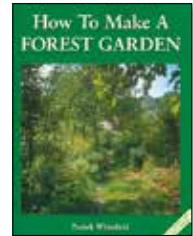
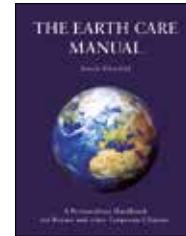
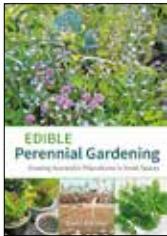
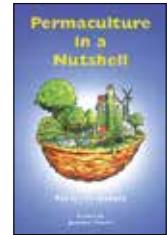
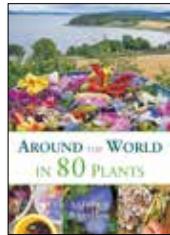
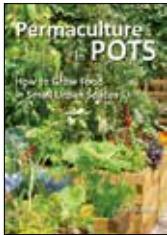
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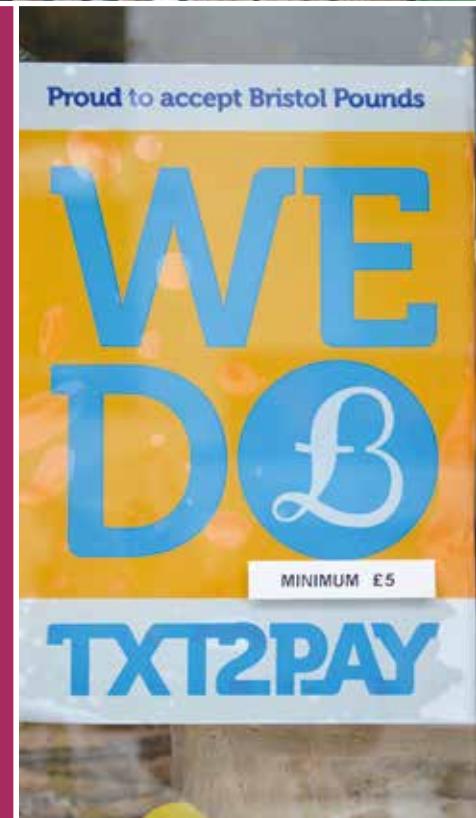
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