



ALLIANCE FOR ECOLOGICAL & SOCIAL TRANSITIONS

CO-CREATING THE
PLURIVERSE

Compiled and prepared by Culture Hack Labs

Executive Summary

The Brief

In the face of rapidly-accelerating climate collapse, trust in governments to provide effective solutions has broken down. The Green Economy Coalition (GEC) wants to support and learn from social movements and citizen-led initiatives in approaching this urgent challenge. GEC commissioned Culture Hack Labs to undertake narrative analysis around the transition and social contracts to gain insights into the conversations of social movements, and identify narratives with potential to inform GEC's wider mission.

Our Approach

We need to connect with cultural conversations in order to drive meaningful change. Cultural narratives abound, but which ones are critical to understand in order to really resonate? CultureHack Labs has developed a methodology to help cut through the noise, identify who's saying what, why it matters, and how to use this insight to reframe initial queries and assumptions to change the narrative.

Our Methodology

We worked together with GEC to develop a point of view on the core issues and questions around the new social contract and the transition. Taking this as a starting point, we developed a listening model, captured and mapped large volumes of social data to identify critical communities and what they are saying. We analyzed the networks, language, and deep logics of these narratives to help GEC understand and reframe the conversation.

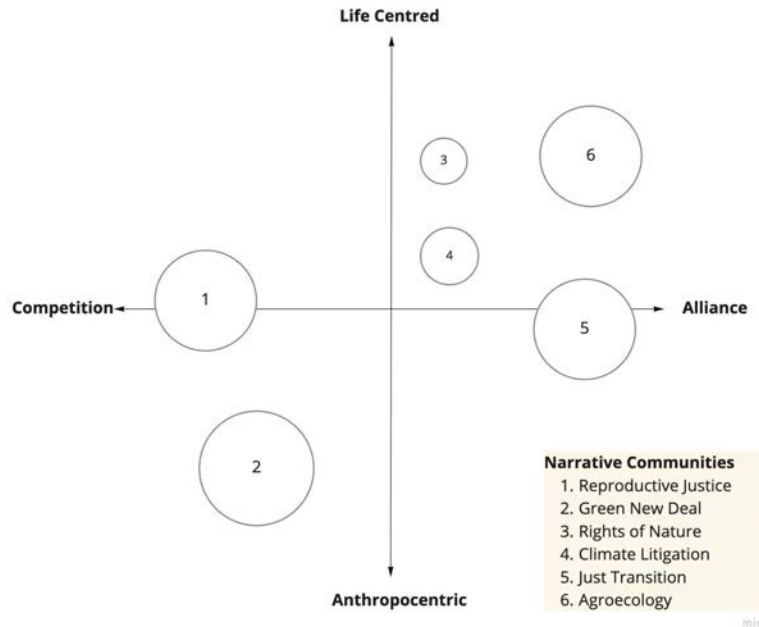
Our Findings

We identified four Narrative Communities who are driving the conversation around the transition and help us identify conversations relevant to a new social contract. These Narrative Communities are

1. Just Transition
2. Agroecology
3. Reproductive Justice / Abortion Ban
4. Climate litigation

We also identified associated communities, the most relevant of which are Green New Deal (associated with Just Transition) and Rights of Nature (associated with Climate Litigation).

Mapping the Narrative Communities



From the data we collected and the insights we gained on the four Narrative Communities, we created a map of the narrative space. We used this map to locate the Narrative Communities along the two axes and in the four quadrants of the map in order to identify overall patterns and dynamics within the narrative space. Most importantly, this map allows us to assess Narrative Communities' potential for evolution.

Narrative Evolution

The core objective we identified was to build solidarity across movements and organisations which are grappling with the complex reality of the climate collapse.

The quadrant that represents this direction of narrative evolution is situated on the top right of the map. This is where the most future-facing Narrative Communities are situated.

We call this quadrant the Pluriverse. This is because it is not merely a collection of different knowledge systems existing side by side, but an active inquiry into what possibilities for organising with each other exist and are possible in order to overcome the contexts and paradigms that have led to the climate crisis. Here, alliances and communities form to deal with the complex and seemingly intractable issues of the transition, while holding a common vision of the future; a vision for life-centred thriving on our planet.

Narrative Objectives and Reframe

From the insights gained in the mapping phase, we distilled four narrative objectives that direct both the reframe strategy as well as forming a basis for any future communication strategies. These are channelled into the narrative reframe options we propose, which together form the name of this report:

1. Alliance for Social and Ecological Transitions

This employs the frame of alliance and indicates a path forward or through. The metaphor underlying transitions specifically refers to *cultural evolution* as a series of phasic shifts in organising patterns of its constituent parts, towards greater forms of inclusion and reciprocity.

2. Co-Creating the Pluriverse

This invokes the primary frame of ‘alliance’ while indicating a directional path: ‘towards the pluriverse’.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Table of Contents	5
Introduction	9
Point of View	14
Theoretical Framework	14
The Listening model	14
Identifying Narrative Communities	18
Analysing Narrative Communities	30
Linguistic Analysis	50
Reframe Proposal	72
Appendices	78
Appendix 1 Keywords	78
Appendix 2 Narrative communities data results	80
Appendix 3 Point of View	83
Appendix 4 Theoretical Framework	85
Appendix 5 Semiotics	96
The semiotic perspective	96
Appendix 6 Culture Hack Method	98
Appendix 7 Engagement Lifecycle	99
Appendix 8 Culture Hack Ecosystem	100

Introduction

The background - What is at stake?

1. Ecological Collapse

We live in unprecedented times. Centuries of planetary exploitation have left us with a climate crisis, extreme heat waves resulting in forest fires and excess deaths, loss of biosphere integrity, widespread pollution, and ocean acidification. We are rapidly exceeding the safe zones on all of the planetary boundaries identified by The Stockholm Resilience Center¹, threatening the ongoing existence of human life on earth. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, the earth's temperature has risen by 1 degrees Celsius, and is set to exceed 2 degrees by the end of the 21st century², with catastrophic consequences for human and other life forms on this planet. In August 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC), issued an imminent warning: if we do not change the current rates of carbon emission by 2030, the damage would be irreversible and in 2050, human life on the planet could be existentially threatened.

Global crises of recent years have highlighted the interconnectedness of our collective challenges and exposed the flaws in our social systems. From the COVID-19 pandemic's connections to biodiversity loss and cross-species virus transmission³ to the war in Ukraine's linkages to the world's dependence on Russian oil, to the increase in record-breaking climate change events⁴, **we are constantly reminded of the need to transform our relationship with each other and the planetary ecosystem on which we depend.**

¹<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>,
<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.1259855>

²<https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-temperature-projections#>;

³<https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanmic/article/https://www.medact.org/2021/resources/briefings/the-public-health-case-for-a-green-new-deal/>

⁴ <https://vclimateconnections.org/2022/01/the-top-10-global-weather-and-climate-change-events-of-2021/>

2. The Social Contract: no longer fit for purpose?

From its origins in Western political theory of the 17th century, the modern social contract has been in crisis. Originally conceived to regulate the relationship between state and citizenry, **it is clear that trust in governments to govern well in the face of ecological crisis has been broken**, and that there is no clear consensus on where to go from here.

The Project

Considering these challenges and the urgency to effectively address the climate crisis, [the Green Economy Coalition](#) (GEC), a global alliance of over 60 organisations committed to accelerating an inclusive and sustainable transition, wants to support civil society movements that are collectively pushing for the transition. The GEC wishes to foster a space where Governments, institutions and policymakers not only listen but also co-create with people, civil society organisations and activist groups.

This is where we come in: GEC has asked Culture Hack Labs to study narratives related to the transition that are currently circulating across social movements. GEC want to identify narratives that are redefining the parameters of the relationships between key stakeholders in society and moving society towards a new model: a new social contract.

The Culture Hack Labs Method: Narrative Analysis

The Culture Hack Methodology is based upon three key assumptions:

1. We can gain deeper insight into human behaviors by analyzing the narratives that drive them.
2. Through the intentional and deliberate reframing of these narratives, we can bring about changes in our belief systems and actions.
3. To dismantle systems of inequality and oppression, we need to change narratives.

In order to analyse and change narratives salient to the social contract and the transition, we took this project through the following stages:

- **Ask** – Where we developed a Point of View together with GEC, identified core issues, and formulated questions for the next phase
- **Listen** – Where we gathered data through Big and Small Listening, which means listening to online conversations and who's having them
- **Understand** – where we analysed the data around the narrative communities gathered in the Listen phase, created a map of narrative evolution, and identified where each of our Narrative Communities is located in the trajectory
- **Recode** – Where we identified narrative objectives and make proposals for two possible reframes based on the insight gathered in the previous phases: Alliance and Pluriverse.

Our Findings

We identified four Narrative Communities who are driving the conversation around the transition and help us identify conversations relevant to the new social contract. These Narrative Communities are;

1. Just Transition

A movement originating in the alliance of trade unions and environmental justice groups. It focuses on securing health & wellbeing for all living beings and the planet.

2. Agroecology

Agroecology promotes farming practices that mitigate climate change - reduce emissions, recycle resources and prioritise local supply chains. It applies ecological, social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems.

3. Reproductive Justice / Abortion Ban

This community is composed of conversations around the abortion ban happening in the United States, and encompasses larger issues such as forced sterilisation and reproductive justice.

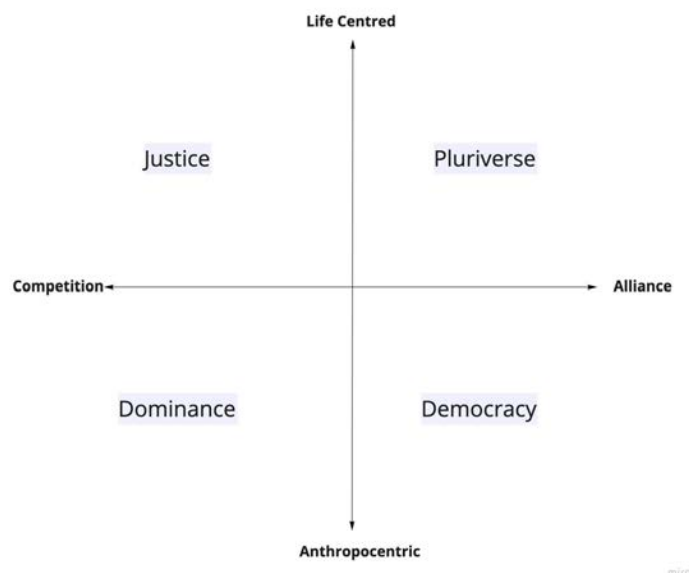
4. Climate litigation

A rapidly growing body of environment law and legal precedents that seek to address climate change through the legal system, targeting both public (the State, local government) and private actors (fossil fuel industry) for failing to take necessary measures to protect the environment or actively contributing to harming it.

We also identified associated communities, the most relevant of which are Green New Deal (associated with Just Transition) and Rights of Nature (associated with Climate Litigation).

At the time of our inquiry, these were the most active conversations, producing and replicating a lot of narratives. They all spoke about the role of the State vis-à-vis people, cohere around a set of principles and values that paint a new and different vision of society.

Community Mapping



From the data we collected and the insights we established in relation to the four Narrative Communities, we created a map of the narrative space. This map is constituted of two axes, each representing the spectrum of narratives that exist within

this space. We used this map to locate the Narrative Communities along the different axes in order to identify overall patterns and dynamics within the narrative space. This map also allows us to assess Narrative Communities' potential for evolution. We determined 'narrative evolution' through our Point of View statement, co-created with GEC, because this gives us a directive for the desired direction of narrative evolution. The core objective we identified was to build solidarity across movements and organisations which are grappling with the complex reality of the climate collapse.

1. The Axes

Horizontal Axis: Competition to Alliance

This first axis relates to how we understand the role of the State in society, but also how we understand relationships between different living entities in society. We found in our analysis, in particular the linguistic analysis, that narrative communities range from embracing competition to embracing alliance.

In narratives of competition, relationships are constructed in a top-down manner, and there is a competition over access to power. Decision-making powers are held in the hands of a few who make decisions for the majority. People (activists, social movements, citizens assemblies, etc.) are in a position of asking their Governments to make decisions on their behalf or on behalf of the public interest. This is the case of communities like the Green New Deal or the Reproductive Justice community.

At the other end of the horizontal axis, we find communities embracing narratives of alliance. Relationships are understood as a co-creative process between equal entities that can together achieve a common objective. On this side of the spectrum, the State is a facilitator or a mediator of processes instead of a provider of assistance. This way plural demands can find their way to legislation and execution, and will not stem from a top-down but rather from a bottom-up dynamic.

Vertical Axis: Anthropocentric to Life Centric

The vertical axis relates to how we define, understand and value Life - in particular nature (more-than-humans).

An Anthropocentric Culture is our current paradigm. In this culture, humans are at the centre of the ecosystem. What is commonly referred to as 'nature', the more-than-human, is considered resources that serve humans and the socio-economic systems they have designed. Conversely, humans can also be turned into commodities and controlled. This is what is denounced by the Reproductive Justice narrative community.

Opposite this spectrum, we find narratives that promote a Life-centred culture. This is where we find communities seeking to safeguard the sovereignty of Life, whether it is the human or non / more-than human. Life here is multiple, and all these multiple living entities have their own agency and are equals. Closer to this side of this spectrum, we find narrative communities like Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, and Reproductive Justice.

2. The Quadrants

In this mapping, we see four quadrants that contain specific types of narrative communities. It is important to note here that these communities are united in their purpose of dealing with the critical issues around the new social contract and crises of the transition.

- *Dominance*: In this quadrant we find communities that seek to gain or overthrow power in order to better deal with critical issues that threaten human endeavour.
- *Democracy*: Although this quadrant maintains its central concern with anthropocentric modes of life, it aims to gain solutions through collaboration, alliance and democratic modes of governance.
- *Justice*: This quadrant is concerned with redistributing power through challenges to dominance, and archetypal communities here include a range of decolonial, intersectional and racial justice movements. It aims to deal with the critical issues of the transition through calling out the culprits and demanding for remediation and reparations.

Pluriverse: Finally the Pluriverse quadrant displays qualities of epistemic fluidity, alliance, co-creation and cooperation. These qualities allow narrative communities in this quadrant to find novel approaches to what may seem to be intractable issues.

Narrative Evolution

The top right quadrant of the map – ‘Pluriverse’ – represents the most future-facing narratives, the direction in which emergent narrative communities are moving. In our map, we see that Agroecology is the narrative community whose concepts, conversations and models are the furthest along this evolutionary trajectory. This quadrant represents the space where society moves towards a Life-centric culture and relationships between all living entities are forming alliances to achieve the common goal of living harmoniously and sustainably on the planet. This must inform the design of a new social contract that can achieve the necessary collective transition and move out of the polycrisis.

Narrative Objectives and Reframe

From the insights gained in the mapping phase, we distilled four narrative objectives that direct both the reframe strategy as well as forming a basis for any future communication strategies. In brief, these are:

1. The reframe and subsequent narrative strategy must be **within the proximity of the above communities**, meaning that they must be seeking ways of dealing with the crises of the transition and as they involve systems of domination, exclusion and inequality.
2. The second narrative objective is to actively seek those communities that are ‘proximal’ and engage them in building a shared vision and common set of values, and alliance both ideologically and practically. This community will be considered the **core catalytic community that is able to hold the vision of pluriversality while engaging in a diverse range of social and cultural practices**.
3. Thirdly, the narrative strategy must actively engage those communities that are found within the top left ‘justice quadrant’ of the narrative map (Reproductive Justice and associated communities) because the underlying logics of *justice against inequality, reparations and deep diversity* are closely akin to that of *life-centred alliances*. **These communities offer opportunities to build momentum and power.**

4. Finally the fourth narrative objective is to seek emerging and populist narrative movements such as The Green New Deal as potential communities that can be converted through engaged dialogue, specifically centred on the need to find pathways through the transition that are **effective, radically inclusive and life-centred**.

These are channelled into the narrative reframe options we propose, which together form the name of this report:

1. Alliance for social and ecological transitions

This similarly employs the frame of alliance and indicates a path forward or through. The metaphor underlying transitions specifically refers to *cultural evolution* as a series of phasic shifts in organising patterns of its constituent parts, towards greater forms of inclusion and reciprocity.

2. Co-Creating the Pluriverse

This invokes the primary frame of 'alliance' while indicating a directional path: 'towards the pluriverse'.

Point of View

The Culture Hack Labs methodology starts with the articulation of the Point of View: Who is part of the project? What is the goal of the narrative study? What is the team hoping to achieve? What is our North Star as we move throughout the methodology that will allow us to map the narrative space and identify those who shape it?

The Point of View revealed that:

- GEC perceives a rupture between civil society and governments, with citizen initiatives and social movements taking the lead and demanding more from their governments to address the crisis
- GEC wants to support people-led movements and structures
- To this end, GEC wants to understand the criteria and parameters of a new social contract *that encapsulates the relationship between the State and people in times of multidimensional crisis.*

For the full version of the Point of View, please refer to **Appendix 3**.

Theoretical Framework

Before researching the narrative space, we establish a theoretical framework to ground our research utilising a lens which both speaks to the point of view and the issues we aim to address. This is where we deep-dive into academic research to help contextualise the data we find in the listening phase, and to help guide our analysis in the understand phase. Please refer to **Appendix 4** for this.

The listening model

The listening model sets the parameters for our research into the narrative space: What do we listen to? Where? How? For How long? Importantly, the listening model and the ensuing research is geared towards identifying narrative communities: clusters of voices that use similar narratives that effectively shape the narrative space. These narrative communities are the crux of Culture Hack Labs' methodology. Through their analysis, we are then able to draw a picture of the narrative space: What are the most

influential voices? What are they saying? Do they interact? What are the overall trends and patterns? The parameters of our research are informed by the objectives and questions outlined in the Point of View and the Theoretical Framework.

In these times of crisis and rupture of trust between States and people, GEC seeks to understand how to support a people-led transition while redefining the relationship between States and people. In the Point of View, we therefore highlighted that we would be looking for new ethics, principles and other criteria that can underpin this new social praxis. In our theoretical framework, we have also emphasised the importance of considering the role of the State while envisaging alternative forms of societal organisation that are more autonomous and centre collective organising as opposed to top-down forms of governance. These alternative forms of governance have sprouted across the Globe (mutual aid, sharing cultures), but they also already exist within Indigenous communities.

This research or listening phase will therefore focus particularly on social movements, grassroots initiatives, communities that are challenging the traditional understanding of the State's role and are proposing ways to transition away from the systems that have created the climate and socio-economic crisis (among other crises) we are witnessing.

What did we listen to?

To consider and explore new forms of social contract between people and States, we looked at current social movements, how they organise, how they articulate their demands, position themselves vis-à-vis power and what future and society they are aspiring to. The following map produced by GEC provides guidance as to what spaces to listen to in search for narratives of social contract.



We know that the social movements which are currently gaining traction into the narrative space exist at the intersection of environmental justice, new economy, racial justice, decolonization and indigenous rights. These movements encompass various claims that often overlap and work hand in hand. We therefore decided to listen to the following spaces:

- Indigenous Rights
- Climate Movement
- Gender and Racial Justice
- New Economy
- Direct Democracy

How did we listen?

We used a combination of software and manual listening. While the software gives us a quantitative look at the narrative analysis (what are the conversation nodes, what are the top conversations, frequency of words), the manual listening (social media and general media search) allows us to fine-tune our findings and spot other dynamics and patterns within the narrative space. Given the thematics that have been identified, we have listed keywords that we have searched through our data-collection software. The table containing the keywords can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Where did we listen?

We understand this is a global issue so we looked at the global space. It is important to bear in mind that the Global North gets overly represented in mainstream, global media. One way to capture non-Global North conversations is by searching a specific issue/theme through the keywords. For this particular research, we looked at conversations in English, as this is language commonly shared by the team.

How long did we listen for?

We listened to these communities for approximately one month, using the parameters of '90 days' in order to see how these issues trended on social media and news sites in order to grasp their importance, relevance and social interests.

Identifying Narrative Communities

The listening phase is geared towards identifying narrative communities: active conversations using similar narratives to discuss a particular topic. It is how we start our analysis of the data to tease out the [existing frames of the narrative space](#) and based upon this, formulate a [reframe strategy](#). The data we used and collected can be found in [this document](#).

Why narrative communities?

Culture Hack Labs' methodology seeks to map the narrative space by identifying hubs of conversations that shape and influence narratives on a specific topic. We focus on narrative communities because this is where we find the information necessary to intervene successfully in the narrative space. It is important to note that we do not seek to identify all narrative communities that exist within the narrative space. Rather, we focus on narrative communities with the highest potential for evolution: the potential to achieve the goals outlined in the Point of View, to address questions from the theoretical framework and to contribute to the evolution of our culture.

To identify these communities, we look at the keywords which yield the biggest results (see [Appendix 2](#)), which is indicative of an active conversation. We also search for interesting and relevant language that can be indicative of current or emerging narratives. We look for conversations that cut across different conversations and thematics, which signals the capacity of a narrative community to gather subjects and various audiences e.g. a conversation that discusses together the commons, Indigenous land rights, decolonization and climate change.

We have found four narrative communities that are worth considering for the purposes of our inquiry. At the time of our inquiry, these were the most active conversations, producing and replicating a lot of narratives. They all spoke about the role of the State vis-à-vis people, and they seem to be cohering around a set of principles and values that essentially paint a new and different vision of society. Although community analysis, strictly speaking, is time bound, our experience in the analysis of narrative spaces is that these communities often represent archetypal behaviour that indicates the general shape of the discourse in the space. For this reason these community structures indicate important information for the purposes of

communication and strategy. The four communities we found that are most interesting are:

1. Just Transition
2. Agroecology
3. Abortion Ban / Reproductive Justice
4. Climate litigation

We describe below each of these communities. We also highlight other communities that have less influence (less significant in size and in narrative “richness”) but that share similarities with the main community.

Just Transition

Associated communities: End Fossil Fuel, Green New Deal, Tax the Rich, Agroecology, Land Back, Food Sovereignty, Degrowth

Just Transition is a movement that comes from the alliance of trade unions and environmental justice groups. It focuses on securing health & wellbeing for all living beings and the planet.

Just Transition “is a framework forged by the trade union movement and environmental justice groups, rooted in low-income communities of color, who saw the need to phase out the industries that were harming workers, community health and the planet; and at the same time provide just pathways for workers to transition to other jobs. It was rooted in workers defining a transition away from polluting industries in alliance with fence line and frontline communities.” [Climate Justice Alliance](#).

The term has evolved to encompass all efforts to move from an extractive, fossil-fuel driven and profit driven economy to a regenerative economy, ridded of fossil fuel and centering life and solidarity.⁵

This community manages to [bring together issues](#) related to the current economic system (workers rights, costs of living, socio-economic inequalities, etc) with

⁵ [An official EU document](#) states: *The Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) is a key tool to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind.*

environmental concerns (climate change, environmental harm, environmental racism, etc.).



Just Transition is [a counter argument](#) to 'green growth' or 'green capitalism' which seeks to integrate the current economic model (economic growth) with the pressing need to protect the environment (biotech solutions, techno fixes, etc). It is why the Degrowth community is relevant to Just Transition. So are Indigenous rights. Indigenous people, in fact, have developed their own framework for [Just Transition](#), in which they argue that Just Transition measures should be grounded in Indigenous knowledge.⁶

Agroecology

Associated communities: Food sovereignty, Land Back, Just Transition

[Agroecology](#) promotes farming practices that; mitigate climate change - reduce emissions, recycle resources and prioritise local supply chains. [It is a holistic and integrated approach](#) that applies ecological, social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems. It optimises the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment while also

⁶ <http://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/IENJustTransitionPrinciples.pdf>

addressing the need for socially equitable food systems within which people can exercise choice over what they eat and how and where it is produced. It is also a social movement and a transdisciplinary field that includes the ecological, socio-cultural, technological, economic and political dimensions of food systems, from production to consumption.

Many Indigenous communities have practised forms of agroecology long before the definition existed. In fact, the narrative communities “Agroecology” and “Land Back” share similar concerns, as the idea is to protect and heal the land and the relationships of humans to the land. For this to be possible, securing land rights, in particular Indigenous land rights is vital. Agroecology involves returning to Indigenous food systems and food security as it concerns methods of farming which tie back to indigenous agricultural methods.⁷



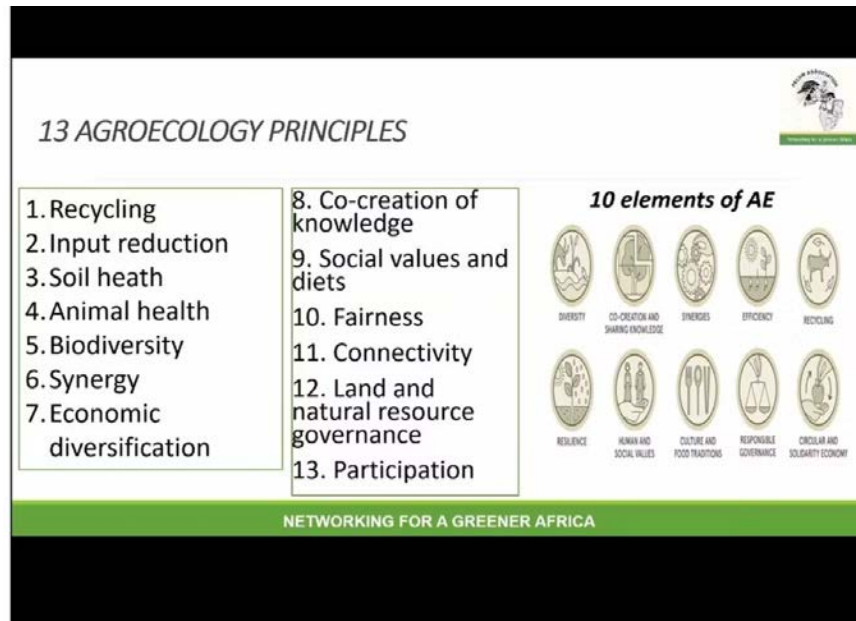
⁷ An influx of large-scale, conventional agriculture in the North could also have significant social and cultural implications for Indigenous peoples and traditional food systems. Agriculture has been an effective tool of settler colonialism in North America through land dispossession and assimilation (Laforge and McLachlan 2018). Many Indigenous communities in the North continue to experience trauma from agriculture programs associated with the residential school system and forced assimilation from traditional foods to a settler diet (Rudolph and McLachlan 2013; Johnston and Spring 2021). Furthermore, Indigenous communities across the North have deep relationships with the land, waters and animals, and these connections form the basis of their food systems. Well-being comes from knowing and sustainably maintaining natural landscape, and a high-value is placed on sharing labor and food. - Price et al. (2022)

Agroecology and the food sovereignty community both relate to food that nurtures bodies, communities and the environment, generation after generation. Agroecology is about caring for the soils, for water, for the life cycles of microorganisms, insects and other animals of the agroecosystem, for seed and plant as well as breed biodiversity, and for the people who work the land, as well as those who process, transport and eat the food.

Agroecology is also a concern to feminist practice⁸ and has become increasingly relevant due to the increasingly gendered nature of agriculture, farming and what is deemed as ‘women’s work’ in the household. Social movements are utilising the saying, “Without feminism, there is no agroecology.”⁹ This is partially due to the fact that women play such a pivotal role in agriculture as “the seed keepers, domesticators of plants and breeds and as the guardians of diversity” (Milgroom, 2021, p.3). Traditionally women have taken on roles as caretakers, agricultural workers as well as food and homemakers and it is women who tend to bring about alternative and social movements; however, they continue to be excluded from essential economic spaces and opportunities. Below are 13 principles underpinning Agroecology. See also [here](#).

⁸ Likewise, the values at the heart of feminisms are what ties it closely to agroecology and food sovereignty. These three movements are intertwined emancipatory movements and political projects that fight for autonomy, self-determination, egalitarianism, epistemic reconstitution and social justice. [Linking food and feminisms: learning from decolonial movements - Agroecology Now!](#)

⁹ Iridiani Graciele Seibert, Azra Talat Sayeed, Zdravka Georgieva and Alberta Guerra https://www.righttofoodandnutrition.org/files/rtn-watch11-2019_eng-42-50.pdf



Reproductive Justice

Associated communities: Forced sterilisation, Missing and Murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirits, Food Sovereignty, Agroecology

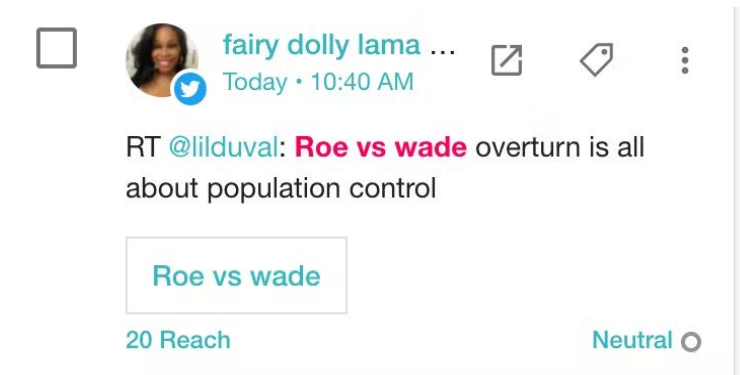
This community is composed of conversations around the abortion ban happening in the United States, as half of U.S. states are expected to ban abortion or impose heavy restrictions following the Supreme Court decision to overturn a landmark ruling that legalized pregnancy terminations nationwide.

The conversation is close to another conversation: “forced sterilisation” which has been legalised in many states in the U.S since a 1927 U.S. Supreme Court decided upholding a state's right to forcibly sterilise a person considered unfit to procreate.

However, this conversation is not only relevant to the United States. There are a number of countries that practise forced sterilisation of mentally disabled people, racial minorities and other marginalised populations.¹⁰

¹⁰ The recent cases of forced and coerced sterilisation target women living with HIV, women who are ethnic and racial minorities, women with disabilities, and poor women, among others. [Forced sterilization of women as discrimination | Public Health Reviews | Full Text.](#)

Indigenous womxn's rights and *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirit* are conversations tied to the abortion ban and forced sterilization. These constitute narrative communities that are centred around the importance of bodily autonomy, and denounce the State's violation of this fundamental right.



The issue of bodily autonomy gets entangled with Indigenous sovereignty when it comes to Indigenous womxn's bodies. Their bodies have been infringed upon by colonisation, colonisers and the state until today. Missing indigenous women are [not tracked](#) by the state as accurately as other ethnic groups. This is ultimately the same sovereignty that is discussed in food sovereignty & agroecology: a sovereignty which treats life of all living beings equally, that envisions a system of co-existence where each being is sovereign. A sovereignty that does not dominate the other.



Thomas Moore
@TomAandTom1

...

Replying to @TomAandTom1 and @HammerMoc

During climate change emergency the EPA got dismantled last week.

Indigenous tribes lost sovereignty.

States are going to establish border police to catch pregnant women trying to get abortions.

4:42 PM · Jul 7, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone



hammer_moc @HammerMoc · 15m

...

Replying to @TomAandTom1

You are listing off issues that exist because of the two party system... stop defending a broken system just because it's all you know. Both sides are responsible for this.

Imagine forcing them to compromise via a third party in the house that represents America.



1



Thomas Moore @TomAandTom1 · 11m

...

I'm not defending the Dems or the party system. I'm attacking your inference.



1



Show replies



hammer_moc @HammerMoc · 12m

...

Replying to @TomAandTom1

Keep in mind - the majority of voters in America are neither D or R, and they have no real representation on the national level.

Hell in states like Pennsylvania the 2 party system has banned them from voting in primaries.



Climate Litigation


Associated communities: Ecocide, Rights of nature

Climate litigation¹¹ is a rapidly growing body of environment law and legal precedents that seek to address climate change through the legal system, targeting both public (the state, local government) and private actors (fossil fuel industry) for failing to take necessary measures to protect the environment or actively contributing to harming it.

Climate litigation has risen in the past few years, as a result of an increasing number of legislations (across the North and South) aimed at protecting the environment, including by giving nature a legal personality to stand in court. As a result, this community is strongly connected to the Rights of Nature and Ecocide communities - also very active and growing narrative communities.



¹¹ Climate change litigation refers to a heterogeneous and diverse group of climate change-related cases before courts as well as regulatory bodies and their tribunals. More specifically, there are cases seeking accountability, others aiming at damage reparation and others focusing on testing legal tools in the courtroom for the achievement of the 1.5 °C objective. Nevertheless, the overarching rationale underlying climate cases is that courts can assume the rightful role in holding governments and companies accountable for their insufficient action on the climate challenge and, by extension, offsetting the missing political will and engagement as well as the lack of effective enforcement of the existing climate provisions. [Editorial: a short history of the climate change litigation boom across Europe | SpringerLink](#)

 **watchitallburn**
@isaacsaavedra1 · [Follow](#)

Replying to @isaacsaavedra1

Article 5.
1.
Chile recognizes the coexistence of various peoples and nations within the framework of the unity of the State.
Pre-existing indigenous peoples and nations are the Mapuche, Aymara, Rapanui, Lickanantay, Quechua, Colla, Diaguita, Chango, Kawésqar, Yagán, Selk'nam

5:02 PM · Jun 23, 2022

2 Reply Copy link

[Read 121 replies](#)

 **watchitallburn**
@isaacsaavedra1 · [Follow](#)

Replying to @isaacsaavedra1

Article 103.
Nature has the right to respect and protect its existence, regeneration, maintenance and restoration of its functions and dynamic balances, which include natural cycles, ecosystems and biodiversity.
The State must guarantee and promote the rights of nature.

10:59 PM · Jun 23, 2022

1 Reply Copy link

Interestingly too, some cases are being driven by young people suing for their right to have a future. They are often the same young people who are part of the Fridays for Future movement. However, climate litigation proves to be more impactful because it uses institutions that are often used by fossil fuel industries to evict communities and enforce contracts that can allow them to extract resources.



Direct Democracy

We did not identify a sufficiently big narrative community or one with narrative potential that could speak to the thematic of direct democracy. Efforts, initiatives, movements falling under direct democracy are either not covered/discussed enough in the media, or they are not discussed as such. In fact, concepts like “ecological democracy” are discussed within communities like “Just Transition”. Initiatives like “C40 cities” are found in the “end fossil fuel” narrative community.

We do find however that “locality” is a recurrent concept that comes up in the conversations that fall under direct democracy. For instance, municipalism or cities network present an alternative in light of the inactions of the national government. We also find similar logics within the Degrowth, Agroecology, and Just Transition narrative communities. Direct democracy can therefore be analysed through these other communities, if what we look for is a set of ethics, principles that can define a new social contract.



↳ BLC-1 🇺🇸 Bernie would have won, twice 🇺🇸 Retweeted

Nick Fitzpatrick
@NickClimate



4. Governance and geopolitics

Degrowth demands deeper and more direct forms of democracy such as radical ecological democracy, defending/reclaiming the commons, dismantling hierarchies, regulating lobbying, reforming int. orgs, and ending the military-industrial complex

1:49 PM · Jun 21, 2022 · Twitter Web App

4 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 19 Likes

Analysing Narrative Communities

Once we have identified the narrative communities that respond to our Point of View, we move to analyse each of them, going into the deep layers of the narratives before reframing them. Our analysis of the narrative communities consists of three parts. Each analysis is followed by a summary of its main takeaways.

Logics, Potential & Power

When we highlight narrative communities, we strive to highlight narrative communities that are representative of the most frequent and influential narratives within the space. In other words, the logic, purpose & narratives they contain can be found elsewhere in the narrative space, either in smaller narrative communities or in narrative communities that may emerge in the future. We call this “archetypal behaviour.” In this analysis, we outline the archetypal behaviour of each community, by articulating their underlying logics.

We also consider the purpose and potential of each narrative community to push the boundaries of the narrative space: their capacity for narrative evolution. This is in preparation for the mapping (next phase) where we focus on each narrative community’s capacity to change culture within our context i.e. bring about the transition, create sustainable ways of living between humans and more-than-humans.

Just Transition

Archetypal Behaviour

At the core of this community is the belief that society and our economy must transition away from fossil fuel industry and reinvent itself with principles that centre Life and Solidarity.

“Just” signals this idea of fairness. So far, the system has not been fair to everyone, in particular low-income communities of colour, Indigenous people, the Global South. It is time to build a system that centres equity and justice (does not leave anyone behind). This is why Just Transition can be tied to Land Back, which centres reparation at its core.

In this community, like in the ones that are associated, we see this recurrent mention of “independence” from fossil fuel, from extractive industries, from systems that harm people and the environment.

Purpose & Potential

Just Transition is an active conversation, spreading across different geographies in the Global North and South. It encompasses various social justice movements and actors.

This is a narrative community with a lot of potential to build cross-movement solidarity. It has the potential to bring together all the other related communities: degrowth, food sovereignty, GND, tax the rich, and end fossil fuel. It is not as polarised as the GND community, which has become quite politicised, and received a lot of backlash. However, the talking points are the same.

Note that we see this recurrent mention of “independence” from extractive industries, from systems that harm people and the environment.

It also speaks to the relationship between the State and citizens. In fact, both in the GND community and the Just Transition community, **the State is denounced for its failure to act adequately in light of the polycrisis. However, there is broad recognition that the State is needed.** There is a need to have [elected officials](#) who can legislate¹² and implement Just Transition measures. The State in alliance with the public sector and community ownership can drive the just transition.

Agroecology

Archetypal Behaviour

Concepts of caring for, healing the land and nature are key to this narrative community. The right to define your own food systems - one that coexists with nature - is profoundly decolonial. The need to secure land rights where local farmers can practise sustainable agricultural practice is part of this decolonial & reparative approach.

¹² *Only the public sector and community ownership can drive a just transition away from fossil fuels and prioritize the needs of workers and all impacted communities over and above private profit. We need just transition legislation that creates new public institutions to transform our economy and expand public ownership of the sectors and services we need to decarbonize. With these investments, we can make the deep transformation that the climate emergency calls for. We can have privatization or a just transition, but not both. Only a just transition, driven by workers, communities, and the public sector, can get us out of the climate crisis. Anything else is greenwashing.* [Privatization is a climate killer – Canadian Dimension](#)

Interestingly, this narrative weaves in better the gender aspect in addressing climate collapse. Women as caretakers in most societies become pivotal in an agroecology framework. In fact, land, like women, are spaces where life happens. The body is an interesting component of this narrative community: healing nature, healing our relationships to the land so we can better nurture our bodies, but also all other livings on Earth.

The Narrative communities “Agroecology” and “Land Back” share similar concerns, The core logic of these communities is that by building a healthy and respectful relationship with the land, we heal humans. Nurturing the land, nurturing people and our bodies with healthy food. For this to be possible, securing land rights, in particular Indigenous land rights is vital.

Purpose & potential

Agroecology is a large community gaining traction due to the unsustainability of food systems around the world and the concern of the growing climate crisis. It is mostly occurring in the Global South. There is also conversation occurring amongst Indigenous communities in the United States and Canada. It is therefore an ever growing and large conversation which will continue to have important insights from various movements, citizens and activists.



This narrative community brings together several other movements and groups (Land Back, Women's Rights, Feminism, Indigenous communities, Farmers communities, Just Transition). **It is worth tapping into the potential of this community to build cross-movement solidarity. In addition, it is a community rooted in a set of principles that bring these other movements together. It provides us with a set of ethics to build upon.**

Reproductive Justice

Archetypal behaviour

Sovereignty and autonomy are key concepts in this narrative community. Ultimately, this speaks about systems of oppression that exert control, surveillance, & extraction which **target bodies as they target land and nature**. These systems of oppression have been embedded into the State apparatus, and must therefore be dismantled. This sovereignty is not just about individual sovereignty, it's the conduit to dismantle othering, domination and oppression. It is the sovereignty and autonomy that was taken away by colonisation and capitalism, which treat bodies as capital and a resource for profit-making.



Indigemama
@indigemama

When I think independence, I see Indigenous sovereignty. Body autonomy. Independence from infrastructures or oppressive systems making intimate, life-altering decisions. Abortion access, safe schools, body feeding support, a regenerative economy, a different world. Not this shit.

Purpose and potential

The narrative community is large and growing with the current state decay around women's rights and bodily autonomy. The conversation is currently active in the Global North but it is also relevant to countries in the South. In fact, the Latin American feminist movement (marea verde) has been at the forefront of this conversation, and has been determining in a wave of legal decisions which have legalized or decriminalized abortions.

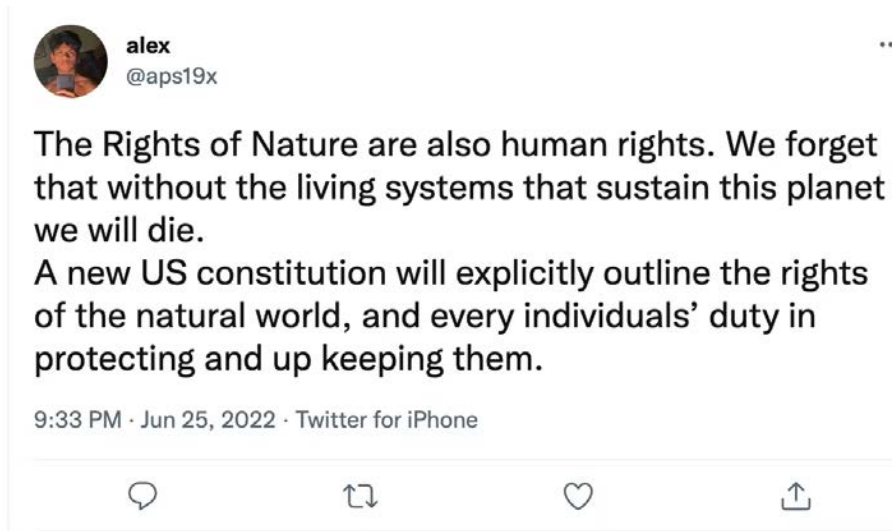
While not directly relevant to climate change and just transition, this narrative community reveals a current and growing set of concerns from citizens around the globe: the ability of the State to encroach on matters as personal as reproductive health. This phenomenon can be read as a continuation of the systems denounced under the Just Transition and Agroecology communities: socio-economic and cultural systems that harm Life on earth. In this case, Life is the body of women controlled by States with a specific political agenda. Food Sovereignty and Agroecology thus become bridges between the bodily autonomy conversations and the climate change conversations. In turn, this gives us further information as to the kind of ethics that should underpin the new social contract.

Climate Litigation (& Rights of Nature)

Archetypal behaviour

Climate litigations rely on several bodies of law: constitutional law, contract law, administrative law, etc. However, the core principle is that nature has rights, young people have rights: any living being has a right to a future.

Climate litigations that use rights of nature as a legal basis, push for the notion that nature is equal to humans. Similarly, Ecocide recalls that nature is life, and the killing of life must be punished as a crime. Ecocide has thus been codified as a crime in certain countries, and it's been argued that it should become an international crime. Importantly, Rights of Nature uses the language of the West, but it is rooted in Indigenous cosmivision (Nature is sentient, it is a living being like other beings on this planet.)



Purpose & potential

Climate litigation is a very active narrative community. It's also very international. It is not as big as Just Transition, but it holds the capacity to bring together various movements from different geographies. Another important point is that this is a community active in both the North and South, but the Global South, in particular Latin American countries, seems to be taking the lead on this phenomenon.

Climate litigation, and its associated communities: Rights of Nature and Ecocide show us how people can mobilise for climate and nature within the current system.

The connection to Indigenous cosmovision and the notion that Nature is equal to humans provides orientation as to what ethics and principles should guide a people-powered Just Transition. Note that the State remains the interlocutor (the defendant or the judge) like in the Just Transition or GND community.

Summary of Insights From the Archetypal Behaviour & Potential Analysis

- The Just Transition and Agroecology communities have a great potential to build cross-movement solidarity. Within Just Transition, as with GND, the State is denounced for its failure to act adequately in light of the 'polycrisis'. However, there is a broad recognition that the State is needed to assist in affecting real change. In addition, Agroecology is rooted in a set of principles that bring these other movements together. This provides us with a set of ethics to build upon.

- The Degrowth, Food sovereignty, and Agroecology communities are rich in valuable principles for creating a new social contract. These form the westernised version of Indigenous cosmovision with an integration into a 'more than human' life perspective.
- Issues of autonomy and sovereignty (bodily, land, resources) which highlight state decay around citizen rights and the regulation of the aforementioned. Which, while do not directly correlate with matters of climate change and just transition, reveal a current and growing set of concerns from citizens around the globe: the ability of the State to encroach on matters as personal as reproductive health. These systems of oppression have been embedded into the State apparatus, and must therefore be dismantled.
- The community, Climate Litigation, and its associated communities, Rights of Nature and Ecocide, show us how people can mobilise for climate and nature within the current system.

Semiotic Analysis

What is Semiotics?

The purpose of semiotic analysis is to dissect texts through culturally informed verbal and non-verbal cues such as: an advertisement, social media posts, an object, eg. traffic light, or a colour scheme which might signify something and create meaning. For the purpose of this research we focused on three analytics, the residual, dominant and emergent (RDE framework). The residual – sometimes called ‘rooted’ - designates that in culture which has been around for a while and has sunk into conscious and unconscious habits. Residual cultural practices may have a long history or predate current social and cultural formations, but still have a structuring impact on what is dominant. The dominant are those narratives and practices that are most common and typical of a given field or discourse: majority culture, the ‘predictable’, the baseline of where a narrative is today, official or conventional discourse. The emergent refers to new meanings, narratives, and frames as well as new practices within culture which are continually emerging.

These categories coexist at any given point in time, and their relationship is dynamic: the residual and the dominant inform the emergent, while over time, what is emergent can become dominant and eventually residual.

How we used Semiotic Analysis in this report

The four Narrative communities we identified contain different associated communities and subgroups. These, alongside the communications and conversations associated with them, fall somewhere on the RDE (Residual, Dominant, Emergent) spectrum. Below are the main findings from our semiotic analysis. We list the keywords found throughout the different conversations and narrative communities. We also identified the Dominant and Emergent discourses within each narrative community and, where relevant, the rooted.

For more information about semiotics please see [Appendix 3](#).

Summary of Insights from the Semiotic Analysis

- Generally, the semiotic analysis reveals that narrative communities are moving away from State-centric solutions to a plurality of solutions where community self-organisations is more widely recognized.
- The narrative space is moving from a short-term, reformist approach to climate towards more transformational and visionary aspirations for society. What is demanded is a society-level overhaul.
- The current discourse around the climate emergency/climate crisis is shifting from framing this issue as an extraordinary event that seems to take the world by surprise to a more combative and accusing tone where the culprits are being denounced. **The emergent discourse is the Us vs Them discourse** where activists, environmental groups are blaming the fossil fuel industry for catapulting the crisis, and the Governments for failing to act.
- Currently, **the sense of urgency is what is prevailing across the narrative space.** Recent climate events have heightened the awareness of the crisis.
- There is a call for people's mobilisation. **However, we don't see a clear plan for action.**

Just Transition

- **Just transition like the Green New Deal (associated community) is situated within the emergent discourse of the climate emergency.** Both communities have adopted an uncompromising stance, which seeks to name the culprits of the crisis and denounce greenwashing.
- **The Just Transition community is clearer on denouncing the inequalities** that exist within the climate crisis: not everyone is responsible equally, and not everyone will suffer equally.
- **The Just Transition community is linking up different grassroots struggles:** unions, environmentalists, marginalised communities, Indigenous people, etc.

Agroecology and Food Sovereignty

- **Agroecology and Food Sovereignty communities are solutions-oriented.** Their emergent discourse moves a step further than the overall emergent discourse, in that they are not talking about culprits, but rather, about actors of change: farmers, workers,

- **Big institutions are not taking up space, but rather lifting smaller actors.** Top down power dynamics are replaced by emphasis on skill sharing and knowledge exchange.
- **The emphasis is on Life.** See recurrent keywords like soil, rejuvenation, health, biodiversity, wellbeing. These communities are focusing on what supports Life.
- Similarly, **interconnectedness of humans, earth and more-than-humans is more widely recognized.**

The Reproductive Justice / Abortion Rights

- **The Reproductive Justice community is also combative in tone and tactic, but it is very action-oriented.** Hope for the future is generally present, which contrasts from the rest of the narrative space.
- **This narrative community connects bodily autonomy to all other struggles:** Indigenous sovereignty, land sovereignty, etc.

Climate Litigation

- **Climate Litigation** and its associated communities (Ecocide and Rights of Nature) are also centering Life and proposing solutions, as opposed to simply warning against the urgency. **They are part of the general emergent discourse.**
- However, there are some contrasting nuances between these three communities. **While Ecocide's tactic is to name and ask the State to hold the culprits accountable (create international crimes), Climate Litigation and Rights of Nature give more agency to people to find their own means to battle.**
- Rights of Nature, in particular, anthropomorphize Nature to give it the same rights as humans. **The emphasis is on Life: not just 'bare life', mere survival, but flourishing – both human and non-human.**

Background: The Climate Crisis

The backdrop to the conversations of our four Narrative Communities is the climate crisis and the climate emergency. This forms the macro conversation, the discursive field within which the four Narrative Communities operate. We focused on exploring the tensions within this macro conversation because it displays the inherent

complexities, contradictions and overlaps that we found throughout the four Narrative Communities. The macro conversation is characterised by a growing frustration that not enough is being done. There is also an increasing sense of urgency to mobilise the many.

The overall tone of this conversation is quite combative and uncompromising. The [keywords](#) revolve around:

- Naming the culprits – both in terms of states and industry: **Big corporations, capitalism, profit, imperialist countries**
- Alternatives and tactics: **civil disobedience, action**
- What is at stake: **water, fossil fuels, natural resources, planet, and the future**

The keywords found in the ‘Climate Emergency’ conversation frame it as a human rights issue. At stake are **bodies, countries, and the planet**. Other keywords paint a stark picture of specific recent events: **landslides, serious flash floods**.

Dominant

- More government-oriented eg. the Red Cross’s push to declare climate crisis a national security emergency
- The concern here is to maintain the status quo: The Climate Emergency is framed as something external to the ‘normal’ order of things that threatens “stability and safety”
- Rhetorical escalation: Change in CBC’s language use from Climate emergency to [Climate Catastrophe](#)
- This channels urgency, but does not provide a model for action

Emergent

- Pressure groups such as XR are driving the conversation
- More combative and uncompromising tone and demands
- Calling out those in power for their inaction and hypocrisy (e.g. travelling in cars /planes)
- Naming negative action by e.g. fossil fuel corporations

- Contrasting it positively with action – of civil society, of pressure groups such as XR, of ‘all of us’
- UN environment program: frames ocean as ally

We now move to the four narrative communities. However, whenever relevant, we include associated communities to show a fuller spectrum of dominant and emergent discourses throughout the narrative space.

Just Transition

This community is clear and uncompromising in calling out greenwashing and abuses of power. It also seeks to centre the voices of those affected by the climate crisis and collaborate to find alternatives.

Dominant

- Institutional /private sector discourse
 - e.g. GND: Relatively far-reaching in the change it demands, but still operating within a reformist framework. Top-down. Endorsed by establishment figures.
 - e.g. Businesses using #allinforcleanenergy: “governments & private sector must collaborate “ The ‘all’ here only designates governments and private sector, and suggests a no-holds commitment that is not present

Emergent

- Centering the perspective of those who have not benefited from extractivism but are at the sharp end of its consequences
 - e.g. Indigenous groups calling for inclusion “to ensure that the shift to renewables benefits all”
- Specificity as a way to avoid replicating the dominant use of ‘all’ as ‘those who are causing the harm and are largely insulated from its consequences’ ie governments, CEOs
- False vs genuine solutions

- e.g. climate activists scrutinising Japan “to ensure it won’t propose false solutions”, calling out greenwashing

The linking up of different grassroots struggles means the emergent expression of the Just Transition conversation is revitalising its rooted meaning, which originated with unions and environmentalists joining forces and forging alliances. This is a process that can be observed in many social movements, which start off with radical grassroots organising, are subsumed under institutional discourses, and are revitalised by grassroots movements again, implying an ongoing unmet demand.

Listening to and centering the perspective of those who have not benefited from extractivism but are at the sharp end of its consequences is a big part of the conversation here. This specificity also functions as a way to avoid replicating the dominant use of ‘all’ as ‘those who are causing the harm and are largely insulated from its consequences’ i.e. governments, CEOs. Instead, it counterposes an “all” that is formed of shifting alliances and communities of interests of those who are negatively affected by the status quo and are formulating collective responses and alternatives to it.

Agroecology

This community is led by those who work the land and those who seek to preserve it for future generations. It has a focus on maintaining and regenerating the earth, with skills and knowledge gained from collaboration and knowledge exchange. The keywords centre on **(connection with) soil / soil health / #savesoil / ground, and water** – crucial natural resources in the human food system and for food security. Alongside this sits a recognition of the importance of **nature, biodiversity and ecology** in the era of climate change. Who is organising, and how, forms another cluster of keywords: **movement / community / farmers; meeting /work**. Human action that actively supports the ecosystem also lives here: **Rejuvenate / support, regenerate, “bringing land back to life”**

This process is very positively associated with benefits and even pleasure. The recognition that human and earth wellbeing are interlinked is captured in the #consciousplanet.

Dominant

- Incremental, slow change, issuing from official actors
 - Eg the Parma 'Bio-district' framed as 'on the way' to Agroecology
 - E.g. Food sovereignty: USDA definition takes a rights-based approach: 'the rights of peoples to..' without clarity on how to call in those rights

Emergent

- Driven by social movements & farmers
- Solutions framing: Agroecology as a way out
- Sustainable farming must be accessible to all – that means specific groups, both in terms of making it accessible to them and recognising their contributions, e.g. women
- Interconnectedness of issues eg health and food sovereignty /human and planetary wellbeing - #consciousplanet
- Bigger organisations amplifying smaller ones, using their platform to spotlight causes, groups and activists

This community's emphasis is on mitigation & adaptation, pointing at **versatility** as a key benefit. The conversation acknowledges both the already existing harms and losses and the need to adapt to them, while also promoting a positive vision of what can be done and how the future could be different.

Food Sovereignty (Associated Community)

The specific discourse within the associated and often overlapping conversation around food sovereignty warrants analysis in its own right, as its trajectory is slightly different. It originates with indigenous / global south land workers and provides concrete solutions. In fact, the rooted vision of Food Sovereignty originates [with Via Campesina](#).

Dominant

- Institutional discourse

- USDA's definition of **Food sovereignty** takes a rights-based approach: 'the rights of peoples to..' without clarity on how to call in those rights.¹³

Emergent

- Interconnectedness of issues
 - eg health and food sovereignty
- Critiquing *and* Providing alternatives to what is being criticised
- Focus is explicitly not on legislative change as end point but as start - There is a recognition that laws and policies are not a goal in themselves but a means to an end, opening up other possibilities resulting in cascading benefits

Food Sovereignty recognises which groups and demographics are contributing and facilitate conversation, skillshare etc between them (see biodiversity network example). It suggests letting them take the lead and learn from them. It moves from 'empower them to do' framing to 'what can we learn from' framing. It is about skill share & knowledge exchange. In the Food Sovereignty conversation, bigger organisations amplify smaller ones, using their platform to spotlight causes, groups and activists – changing how power is shared and communication channels are used.

Reproductive Justice

Galvanised by the recent surge in the state encroachment on reproductive rights in the US, this intersectional Narrative Community is finding new tactics to defend bodily autonomy. This narrative community presents a variety of different angles of condemnation and attack: Government intrusion / control, health care, choice, religious freedom, and emergently a tactical focus on legal challenges (filibuster /court / Jewish law), linking it to the Climate Litigation narrative community.

13

<https://www.usda.gov/tribalrelations/usda-programs-and-services/usda-indigenous-food-sovereignty-initiative#:~:text=The%20USDA%20Indigenous%20Food%20Sovereignty,AT%2FAN%20dietary%20needs>

Dominant

- Democratic politicians in the US using it as a springboard for electioneering
- Individual politicians / states proclaiming ongoing support for abortion access
- Personal ‘boycotts’ of states limiting abortion rights

Emergent

- Beyond partisan – voting democratic is not enough to safeguard this right
- Struggles are interconnected: All liberation as set back by the attack on reproductive rights
- New tactics: Jewish law vs conservative Christian majority - not just a matter of personal bodily autonomy, but of (minority) community justice and religious freedom
- Positive vision to spur action - “I see indigenous sovereignty. Body autonomy... abortion access”

The reframing of access to abortion and reproductive rights more generally as not just a matter of personal bodily autonomy, but of (minority) community justice / religious freedom, is new. The already existing interlinking of various communities and their struggle for liberation is seeing new urgency in a combined onslaught on all of them. This narrative community is seeing many calls for action and creativity in tactics and alliances, at the same time as drawing strength from hope and a concrete positive vision for the future.

Climate Litigation

In many ways the legal arm of the energy transition movement, the Climate Litigation Community leverages legal processes with a transformatory aim, for the flourishing of human and more than human life. The keywords reveal a strong focus on **alternatives** in this narrative community: **energy products, adoption of hydrogen, renewable / energy / transition**. Keywords also name the culprits: **Greenhouse gas emissions**, but also greenwashing tactics such as **Carbon offsets**, with the worst offender the aviation sector. Finally, keywords highlight the language of official processes - Court / litigation / climate report. **Progress** is also a keyword here, whereas the other Narrative Communities focus on the future.

Dominant

- Official bodies skew the dominant discourse here
 - Example: UN SecGen: “International waters are ours”. Statements of fact such as this coming from a powerful but ultimately not powerful enough bureaucrat stand in contrast to specific callouts and litigation from civil society actors
- Occasional focus on individual decisions as a solution to climate change rather than systemic solutions in associated conversations

Emergent

- Legal action as escalation – ‘sue them if you must. We did’
- Rights of Nature tactically used to declare nature as equivalent to / worthy of the same rights as a human, while also pointing to their entanglement with human rights
- Plurality of approaches and discourses - litigation against ecocide can coexist with, learn from, and be based on indigenous cosmogony
- Transformatory – can we envisage a system that *does* allow *natural processes* a role in political processes?

Rights of Nature (Associated Community)

We focus on this associated community because the ‘Rights of Nature’ framework is increasingly being used in legislation and litigation to **defend** and **safeguard ecosystems** and **species**. What is happening in constructions such as ‘nature has the right’, at first glance, is the anthropomorphisation of nature – its subsumption under a legal framework that is in essence humanist. However, it does not necessarily draw ontological equivalences, but represents a tactical use of the Human Rights framework applied to non-human entities. As such, it also functions as a rhetorical device tactically used to declare nature as equivalent to / worthy of the same rights as a human.

Example: “The idea here isn’t to actually protect each grain of rice, or salmon, or squirrel, as if it’s a human being. You can still hunt, or fish, or build, as long as, overall, it doesn’t infringe on the right of the natural system to thrive.”¹⁴

Dominant

- There is an element of hyperbole often used in this Narrative Community:
 - **Example 1:** Some of this is apparent in the language of headlines – the surprise at nature being granted legal agency: “sued by wild rice”
 - **Example 2:** “Nature should have the right to vote”. This is obviously not feasible in a way compatible with current liberal democratic understanding of voting mechanics, and therefore in itself, though perhaps intended tongue in cheek, transformatory – can we envisage a system that *does* allow natural processes a role in political processes?

Emergent

- Nature is not separate from us – our continued existence is interlinked with it:
 - **Example 1:** “The Rights of Nature are also human rights. We forget that without the living systems that sustain this planet we will die”
 - **Example 2:** Link Rights of Nature and rights of people – “let’s not forget the social dimension” to this issue.

Ecocide (Associated Community)

Ecocide is an associated community that is worth flagging to contrast it to Climate Litigation and Rights of Nature Communities and show the clear change in discourse from dominant to emergent. The villains are clearly named: **International crime, abuses, Oil and gas** What is under threat - **Natural resources, species, lungs (of our planet – amazon)**, all of **humanity, life**, and ultimately **the planet** The keywords show what is being fought against: **Environmental damage / destruction**

¹⁴ <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-rights-of-rice-and-future-of-nature/>

Some of the tactics here are fairly staid, as a central aim of this conversation is pushing governments to **criminalise ecocide: AGMs / meeting / petition / signatures**.

The **future** is another recurrent keyword, revealing the urgency and scale of the problem.

Dominant

- Calling out specifics such as blue/greenwashing -
 - **Example 1:** Bluewashing at UN ocean conference indicted by Ocean Rebellion
 - **Example 2:** Canadian logging of ancient trees
 - **Example 3:** The threat to democratic processes posed by lobbyists for industry infiltrating government hearings in Australia
 - **Example 4¹⁵:** False solutions such as replacing old growth and ancient woodland with a plantation of new saplings – “this is still ecocide”
 - **Example 5¹⁶:** Colgate Palmolive palm oil plantation are greenwashing – a “so-called sustainable” solution

Emergent

- Calls for active participation
 - **Example 1:** Economists4Future – how can you support us and get involved with us?
 - **Example 2:** Associated #actonclimate
- Different theoretical and rhetorical approaches can coexist here -
 - **Example 1:** “Protect our elders” – the logic of eco-cosmogony - and “Stopping ecocide is an indigenous rights issue” appear in the same tweet.
 - **Example 2:** Calls for better transnational legal framework to counter fragmentation and integrate national laws (Stop ecocide intl) & call for criminalisation appears alongside emotive language, e.g. “Monstrous, desecration of nature, harm; Disastrous, devastating; insane”

¹⁵ HS2 - <https://www.hs2rebellion.earth/2021/09/06/why-hs2-cant-simply-replace-an-ancient-woodland/>

¹⁶ FoTE / Palm oil detectives - <https://palmoildetectives.com/2021/02/09/colgate-palmolive/>

- Global learning and knowledge exchange
 - **Example¹⁷:** Again we see the theme of looking globally at best practice and learning – so far only 10 countries have ecocide laws, calls for adapting them are becoming more prominent.
- Demystifying those in power, more direct accessibility and thus accountability:
 - **Example:** Similar to the youth-led litigation in the main part of this NC, here we see people tweeting at those in power to hold them to account ‘in the court of public opinion, and @ing Bayer / Monsanto on Twitter (“Time to shut down ecocide criminals”)
- Power can also shift between those who wield it, and the ethical legitimacy of this:
 - **Example:** “Glyphosate is threatening agriculture, farmworkers, and wildlife” (FotE tweet). The proposed legal action inverts this relationship –it signifies taking back power and instead becoming / issuing a threat. The frame is not static: The government can be in power (grammatically) in one sentence but in the next this can be inverted. Also statements highlighting the use of power can be used to show this is unjust, and contrast it with counter-power or people power
- Leading by example, using your platform –
 - **Example:** A prominent academic publicising his decision to not attend a conference in person in order to avoid flying, and also publishing the positive response he received

¹⁷<https://ecocidelaw.com/existing-ecocide-laws/?fbclid=IwAR0QSaciv4q5oYshPyEHc2OZwYIjkn7ltfiieb-pg-qULJKaPjpnka1iZNEE>

Linguistic Analysis

For this work, we have also analysed the semantic frames and conceptual metaphors existing across the different narrative communities using Frame Semantics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)¹⁸ to describe lexicalization patterns of key ideas related to events or processes.

A semantic frame is an underlying cognitive structure that organises our thoughts and experiences into general (or specific) categories of information that are activated by words that evoke a common conceptual domain.¹⁹ Frames can be defined as a collection of relevant categories of experiences encoded in the grammar of a language that enable speakers to understand each other. For example, when we talk about a property we own, the language used (we have, own, bought, sold, etc.) evokes the frame of Possession. This frame has as core elements a 'possessor' and a 'possession', but also value (price), duration (how long we have owned the object), manner of transfer (how we came to possess it), and transfer. This frame also maps onto abstract topics, which allows us to understand each other when we talk about ideas that someone owns that were 'borrowed, stolen, destroyed, shared, given', etc.

Conceptual metaphors are cognitive mappings that enable us to understand more abstract ideas from our primary physical experiences. More specifically, our most basic sensorimotor experiences of motion, sight, touch, and temperature provide the source of concrete experiences that structures our understanding of the abstract domain of emotions, ideas, and beliefs²⁰.

We also looked at Semantic Roles²¹ to examine the ways in which participants (State, indigenous communities, farmers, women, etc.) are represented in grammatical constructions. This provides a good deal of information about perspective-building and epistemic positioning of speakers.

¹⁸ The semantic frames presented in this analysis are drawn from two repositories: [FrameNet](#) and [MetaNet Metaphor Wiki](#), both from ICSI at University of Berkeley, California. Other sources for the conceptual metaphors presented here are Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2008). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. and Kövecses, Z. (2010) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford University Press, USA; 2 Edition.

¹⁹ Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

²⁰ Johnson, M. & Lakoff, G. (2003) *Metaphors We Live by*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. See also Kövecses, Z. (2010) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford University Press, USA; 2 Edition

²¹ Van Valin, R. D. (2001). *An Introduction to Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: Grammatical Relations, 21-79.

Summary of Insights from Linguistic Analysis

- **Narrative communities which are more aligned with the government (Green New Deal) conceive the relationship between State and citizens as vertical and unilateral wherein changes are led by government institutions for the people who are assigned the role of followers, either as subjects or servants (hierarchical power structure).**
- **On the other hand, those communities that are less aligned with the State (Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, Just Transition) see this relationship as multilateral, horizontal and people-led where desired transformations are set forth by a multiplicity of social groups who are engaged in constant dialogue with each other.**
- **Emerging patterns of language use point to a vision of a new societal model (see in particular, Agroecology and Food Sovereignty) that relies on alliances as the organising principle instead of individual competition.** The underlying reasoning in this frame is cooperation that sets equal status to citizens instead of competitiveness, which is founded on an intrinsic asymmetrical base. A mode of production based on cooperation is horizontal in nature, wherein production and consumption are both defined by sharing resources and well-being instead of profiting for accumulation. **In this model, humans can also coexist in harmony with nature by means of establishing an enduring and respectful relationship that can thrive.**
- **The unifying macro argument within this vertical vs horizontal alignment is ‘moving away from’ (transition as a path) a society founded on greed to fulfil self-interests towards a collectiveness geared at relationships where resources and knowledge are shared and not transacted.**
- **Diversity is understood in terms of socioeconomic but also biodiversity in production, multilateralism, and it is encoded in talks about participation and inclusiveness to resources and decision making.** Thereby, equality being

construed as horizontality is conceptually structured as **pluralism, connectedness (collectiveness), and solidarity.**

For example, in the narrative community about agroecology, the connection between food sovereignty and feminism is their striving for the same goal: To deconstruct hierarchical institutions such as patriarchy and unequal access to resources and food production) all of which are inherent to structural inequalities. Therefore, in order to build an egalitarian social model, the emancipation of women calls for their autonomy as well as reconstitution of their role as indispensable generative forces in society.

- **That is why the language of power, rights, and natural resources encoded as OBJECTS is not conducive to this vision of social transformation** because it perpetuates this mental frame of human relations and relationship with nature as a business transaction.

Language anchored to the idea of alliances is more suitable to shape a vision of an equitable and long lasting new social order aimed at well-being. It is not only articulated as a key concept but also utilised as an instrument of change that can restore dignity to all communities and transcend time.

- **Generally, grammatical structures reveal an absence (or very little) of agency or responsibility. Climate change and the climate crisis seem to be happening in a vacuum with no one responsible for its occurrence.** This means the language used by communities who name culprits (GND, Just Transition, Reproductive Justice) does not always match their intentions. This also gets reflected in the actions and solutions oriented where no actors seem to be identified: who are those who will actually drive the solutions?
- It is important to understand that these are not effective choices if you want to highlight responsibility and shift the focus from a negative state to one that entails choice and the ability to act. **We can argue that such constructions are less effective if the goal is to engage and mobilise people for actions, or contrarily, make it explicit responsibility for wrongdoing.**

Green New Deal

Although not listed as part of the four narrative communities, for the purpose of the linguistic analysis, we chose to highlight the Green New Deal community to contrast its logics with that of the other narrative communities. Together, they show a spectrum of patterns that vary in degree of intensity.

Conceptual metaphors	Semantic Frame
1. ABSTRACT COMPLEX SYSTEMS ARE BUILDINGS 2. ABSTRACT COMPLEX SYSTEMS ARE PLANTS 3. NATURE IS A COMMODITY	Competition

Semantic Frame: [Competition](#)

{Please note, the frames utilised in this body of work are from two of the most well-known and largely used repositories, FrameNet and MetaNet Metaphor Wiki, from the ICSI at University of Berkeley, California.}

Green economies (policies, measures, laws) are mostly thought of as a physical structure such as a building (metaphor 1). Founded on a mental schema of orientation, it provides a higher conceptual organisation for different representations considering that physical structures like buildings can be vertical or horizontal. One entailment of this metaphor is durability, where environmental policies and models are talked about as being either weak, breakable, and short-lived, or firmly grounded, solid and stable over time. This metaphor is prolific across different narrative communities being lexicalized in phrases like “*build an economy, a sustainable world, restructure markets*, etc.

This way of reasoning about environmental changes comes from a conceptual frame of competitiveness which also triggers the schema of verticality as opposed to horizontality. A competitive setting is a vertical structure where winners and losers dispute the same prize. Also construed as adversaries, this frame presupposes the inclusion of a few or one winning side at the expense of everyone else’s exclusion.

Although it does not evoke a typical polarisation of the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ it does entail opposition in that this conceptual domain requires losers and winners.

Intrinsic to green new deal talks is the idea of nature understood as a commodity. As commodities, natural resources are thought of as valuable possessions and objects of transfer in a business transaction where they can be capitalised, saved, invested, but also disputed in a competitive setting. This entails unequal access to but also control of natural resources.

Just Transition

Conceptual metaphors	Semantic Frames
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ECONOMY IS A MACHINE 2. ABSTRACT COMPLEX SYSTEMS ARE BUILDINGS 3. ABSTRACT COMPLEX SYSTEMS ARE PLANTS 4. NATURE IS AN AGENT (Personification) 5. EQUALITY IS BEING ON THE SAME VERTICAL LEVEL 6. PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS 	<p>Alliance Inclusion</p>

Within Just Transition narratives, green economies, policies, and models are also understood as a physical structure (metaphor 2), or a plant (metaphor 3). As such they have foundations able to resist turbulence or attacks. **It evokes the idea of permanence as opposed to transiency, but also resilience.** Additionally, they are also talked about as being a machine (metaphor 1), lexicalized in language related to speed and direction. Environmental policies can be slowed down or accelerated, and also controlled and geared by people to either benefit communities or a few.

“... the Fund leverages public and private resources, advances learning, and guides policy change to accelerate and scale an equitable and just economic transition.” (<https://www.justtransitionfund.org/how-we-work>)

Across different narratives in Just Transition, natural resources are seen both as commodities and a person. As a person (metaphor iv) nature is thought of as being in a relationship with people. Personified as a woman or mother, the aspects of nature highlighted in these talks are its ability to reproduce, regenerate, but also resist

destructive forces like attacks and storms. This inference of nature as a reproductive entity as people leads to the concepts of sustainability and renewability which surface in Just Transition conversations.

Many metaphors and frames are instantiated in conversations about Just Transition, however, the most important to consider is the Path metaphor. Accounts of green policies and models or social and economic organisation as ‘paths’ are rich and complex given its multiple entailments and extensions. They also abound across GND, agroecology, and climate change communities. **Just Transition is talked about in terms of a collective goal or purpose to be achieved by communities which is conceived of as a path to be followed.**

Unlike discussions about GND, which envision environmental changes as ‘reform’, a re-mapping of boundaries between humans and nature, **Just Transition centralises the conversations on changes as paths from a departure point understood as a previous bad condition to a final destination, in this case, a better economic model that is sustainable, just and safe.**

Some key entailments of this metaphor pertain to the fact that a path can be closed or accessible, hard or easy to walk, and short or long. **A Just Transition needs to be accessible to everyone but also created by many who can also collectively decide on which direction to go.** In this representation, we find a spectrum of alignment with State institutions from being a government-led process where citizens are followers and the recipients of benefits, to a change or transformation not only led by citizens but rooted in communities. With this respect, the Plant metaphor has a rich set of lexical patterns from terms like ‘grassroot’ to describe origin (communities not government) but also orientation (bottom-up and not top-down), policies, changes, movements, initiatives, proposals ‘rooted’ in the communities, but also to deeper elements related to growth, regeneration, resilience.

Also a guiding principle of the people to transform their previous reality from a dirty, inefficient, and unhealthy production model to a new safe, healthy, clean and inclusive space for co-existence, **Just Transition has common ground with agroecology and food sovereignty communities because they also have at their conceptual core ideas related to sustainability, but also equity and inclusiveness.**

Different from GND conversations, in Just Transition the conceptual frame that gives rise to many lexical patterns and inferences is Alliance and Inclusion in relation to path but also nature. Rather than structuring a vertical, unilateral and asymmetrical relationship between state and citizens, **the conceptual domains of alliance and inclusion entails horizontality and multilateralism since each member is as strong as the other to maintain the alliance intact.**

Agroecology and Food Sovereignty

For the purpose of the linguistic analysis, like in the semiotic analysis, it is helpful to analyse the Agroecology community along its associated community: Food Sovereignty.

Conceptual metaphors	Semantic Frames
1. NATURE IS AN AGENT (Personification) 2. EQUALITY IS BEING ON THE SAME VERTICAL LEVEL	Alliance Inclusion

Agroecology and Food Sovereignty narratives also draw on some of the same conceptual and structuring elements as GND, and Just Transition. **Similar to Just Transition groups, agroecology conceives of nature as a sentient entity in a permanent and harmonious relationship with people rather than an object of possession.**

“Agroecology and food sovereignty are ways of relating to food that nurtures bodies, communities and the environment, generation after generation.”

(<https://www.agroecologynow.com/linking-food-and-feminisms/>)

“agriculture: offender and victim”

(<https://www.biovision.ch/en/projects/international/agroecologytotackleclimatechange/>)

“This approach stands in striking contrast with food as a commodity guided by lineal thinking, actions, decisions and relationships based on domination, profit or individual, short-term gain.”

(<https://www.agroecologynow.com/linking-food-and-feminisms/>)

A long-lasting relationship with nature requires a collective effort to renew natural resources so they are no longer scarce but sufficient and shareable. Sustainability is again a key concept in demands for a more equitable and healthier food generation, linked to the ideas of permanence and durability. **Sustainability is then construed as resilience and permanence in relation to both natural resources and policies as these can be either strong and long-lasting or weak and short-lived.**

“ By securing land rights, teaching sustainable land management/ agroforestry skills ...” (Tweet - Third World Network)

“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy, culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound, sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.” (Tweet - USDA Rural Development Alaska)

While neoliberal governments and corporations attempt to individualize the concept of resilience and make it a matter of personal responsibility to prepare oneself for the climate crisis, climate change is a systemic problem that requires increased system resilience. (<https://this.org/2022/05/20/farming-for-the-future/>)

In talks about agroecology and food sovereignty, demands for a new sustainable mode of food production are founded on ideas related to inclusion, diversity (bio and cultural), fairness, and autonomy among others. Language used in these discussions encodes symmetry and autonomy in their reasoning of a citizen-relationship with the State as the participation of farmers and communities in the decision-making process relies on cooperation, multilateralism, and solidarity instead of government assistance. Thus, resources, knowledge, funds, and land are not seen as benefits granted by the State, but outputs of a social dynamic that galvanises on diverse contributions. Gains can thereby be shared among members of the community and autonomy be achieved from government institutions.

“Food sovereignty and the ability of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to self-determine their healthcare journey are at the centre of @SKHCsud’s work.” (Tweet- SKHC)

Womanhood appears as a conceptual element even more central than in previous communities. The role of women is described as givers, doers, leaders rather than receivers, recipients, or followers. More noticeably here than previous communities, women are depicted in close relation to the idea of autonomy as they gain subjecthood and, therefore, agency in these discussions.

“Women are creative food preservers, masters of nutrition, and transmitters of rooted history through their recipes and stories. Women secure and prepare food for their households and communities, they are caretakers, have agency, bring innovative change and build alternatives and social movements, yet they are largely excluded from economic opportunities and governance spaces.”
[\(https://www.agroecologynow.com/linking-food-and-feminisms/\)](https://www.agroecologynow.com/linking-food-and-feminisms/)

Reproductive Justice

Conceptual metaphors	Semantic Frames
1. FREEDOM IS A VALUABLE POSSESSION 2. FREEDOM OF ACTION IS THE LACK OF IMPEDIMENTS TO MOVEMENT 3. CITIZEN RIGHTS ARE TERRITORIES 4. CITIZEN RIGHTS ARE POSSESSIONS	Freeing From Confinement Escaping

Discussions about the US abortion ban evoke ideas related to freedom of movement and possession of rights. Understood as a prohibition, ban evokes the idea of impeded movement (metaphor 2) as it represents an obstacle or containment that prevents women from moving in the direction they want. **Perceived as a restraint to free movement, this metaphor is related to the frames of Freeing from Confinement and Escaping**, which entail a change from a captive state to a liberated one, but here being the opposite direction.

“We will vote out anyone who tries to restrict our freedom to make decisions about our own bodies, lives, & futures!” (Tweet - Hillsborough County Democrats @HCFLDems)

Conceived as a captive state or confinement, the ban is discussed also in terms of the negative consequences it brings upon women's physical and psychological integrity and well-being. With respect to the latter, the ultimate threat appears to be women's death from their loss of choice over their bodies. The underlying logic is the loss of autonomy over one's life understood as confinement and boundness.

"New Mexico will always be a state that protects women's access to safe reproductive healthcare". (Tweet - Michelle Lujan Grisham @Michelle4NM)

"This decision and this policy will kill people... that's what the data shows". (Tweet - Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez @ Breaking911)

"Banning Abortion will kill women. Banning Abortions will not stop abortions. I will just make them more dangerous. Banning Abortions is Violence against Women." (Tweet - Ginger Warrior @drmkchr)

Whereas the ban is construed as bound space, women's choice is thought of as a doorway or path to maintain their autonomy relative to legal but also geographical controls over their personhood. Closely linked to this idea of ban as physical confinement is the representation of rights as territories (metaphor 3). **By extension, reproductive rights is understood as women's autonomous territory reified in the campaign "My body, my choice". Not only it encapsulates very well this reasoning of reproductive freedom as setting physical boundaries to state control, but it also reclaims women's agency as subjects and deciders of their life.**

"Women's health is not a federal issue". (Tweet - @Nerdynumnums)

"I will always protect a woman's right to choose. TX needs representation that will fight for women every day in Congress." (Tweet - Michelle Vallejo for Congress @MichelleVforTX)

Climate Litigation and Rights of Nature

Conceptual metaphors	Semantic Frames
1. CITIZEN RIGHTS ARE POSSESSIONS 2. NATURE IS AN AGENT (Personification)	Possession Rights

These last two communities present interesting contrasting views of climate change and environmental laws. **Talks about climate litigation represent the environment as a possession within a transaction frame** (from business to the legal domain), constituting not the victims, but the object itself under dispute.

“Lawyers from Our Children's Trust (OCT), who are currently litigating about half-a-dozen lawsuits featuring youthful plaintiffs over climate change, the latest of which was filed on Wednesday in Virginia, are pursuing a new tack in their legal campaign to apply the doctrine of public trust to hold governments liable for climate change damages.”

https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/climate-kids-lawsuits-pursue-new-tack-2022-02-10/?utm_source=coda&utm_medium=iframe

In contrast, Rights of Nature as a living entity (metaphor ii) emerges as the most prolific and important in lexicalized patterns. These patterns circle back to the representation of nature as a living entity who, like humans, is endowed with rights and protections.

“Nature has the right to respect and protect its existence, regeneration, maintenance and restoration of its functions and dynamic balances, which include natural cycles, ecosystems and biodiversity.”

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/chile-poised-to-grant-rights-to-nature-could-become-2nd-such-country-besides-ecuador-82168>

“Last August, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was sued by wild rice.”

https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-rights-of-rice-and-future-of-nature/?utm_source=coda&utm_medium=iframe)

“The Magpie river, known as the Mutuhekau Shipu to the Innu, has just been granted legal personhood.” (Tweet - Indigenous Leadership Initiative @ILInationhood)

(29) *“This is why we need to demand the rights of nature! Nature knows what’s up- nature should have the right to vote.”* (Twitter - Heidi Harmon @heidiismighty)

(30) *“The Rights of Nature are also human rights. We forget that without the living systems that sustain this planet we will die. A new US constitution will explicitly outline the rights of the natural world, and every individuals’ duty in protecting them.”* (Tweet - Alex @aps19x)

Grammatical Constructions & Representation of Participants

Grammatical constructions provide relevant information about how participants (social groups, movements, organisations, government, etc.) are represented in narratives. Of particular interest is the encoding of subjects in terms of their lexical-semantic mappings (if they are living entities, inanimate objects, locations, processes, etc.) as well as the semantic roles to which they are assigned in respect to the events predicated. Among other notions, ‘power’ and ‘agency’ are paramount to understand different types of reasoning and the unequal statuses assigned to the various participants across narratives.

The first type of construction present in the data is non-agentive or de-agentilized constructions in descriptions of events such as climate change, deforestation, the ban on abortion, etc. These constructions include nominalizations from verbs such as *destruction* from *destroy* and *exclusion* from *exclude*, and personification of abstract ideas such as entities (nature, climate litigation), which was already accounted for in the conceptual metaphors. For example, in (31) although the conceptual structure of *promote* and *lead* include the idea of a *promoter* and a *leader*, the focus is directed

towards the actions because these nominalized verbal phrases occupy the canonical position of subjects in the sentence leaving the doers implicit.

(31) “*the promotion of palm oil as a source of renewable energy has led to rampant expansion of oil palm plantations.*”

(<https://www.sei.org/perspectives/a-just-transition-to-renewables-must-recognize-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples/>)

Likewise, in (32) the inference is on the policy as independent of human action. **These constructions naturalise events (intentions, decisions, ideologies) leading to an inference of them as inevitable, pre-existent and independent of human agency because unlike verbs, nouns do not encode time or the speakers’ perspective.** Thereby, intentional acts are construed as naturally occurring outside of human choice.

(32) “*Green New Deal will revive the economy, turn the tide on climate change and make wars for oil obsolete.*” (https://www.gp.org/green_new_deal)

The second recurring construction is less-agentive semantic roles of verbs that exclude volition from its lexical-semantic structure. In grammar relations theory, the conceptual structure of verbs can be used as a measure of power differential among participants in an interactional event based on how agentive they are²². Take, for example, the phrase *provide the necessary means* which takes a willful Actor (*a provider*) as its argument in subject position. In contrast, *receive the assistance* or *suffer the consequences* require a different type of subject that is not a ‘doer’ of an action, but the Recipient or Patient of an action, namely, ‘the giving of an assistance’ and ‘the causing of suffering upon someone’, respectively.²³

In this way, there is a clear power differential between the role of a *provider*, a *receiver* or a *sufferer* in terms of their ability to perform intentional actions. In addition to these, the role of Cognizer encoded in verbs such as *know*, *understand*, *think*, *comprehend* is argued to assign much higher status to participants than the role of Emoter in verbs like *feel*, *love*, *like* based on the notion that cognitive skills are

²² Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 27, 76. Also, Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. In T.A. Van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as Social Interaction* (258-284). London: Sage Publication.

²³ Van Valin, R. D. (2001). *An Introduction to Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: Grammatical Relations, 31.

superior than emotions. So, more-agentive roles encode more power²⁴. For example, when women or Indigenous groups are talked about, they are often assigned the role of Patient or Recipient in a sentence as recipients of a benefit, assistance, information, but also the endurers of different forms of discrimination or exclusion. In

(33) “*Indigenous People continue to pioneer, pilot and develop renewable energy projects*”

(<https://www.sei.org/perspectives/a-just-transition-to-renewables-must-recognize-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples/>)

... people are agents of their lives who have the power to make changes whereas in

(34) “*Implement a Just Transition that empowers those communities and workers most impacted by climate change and the transition to a green economy...*”

(https://www.gp.org/green_new_deal)

... they are the receivers of power by some unknown benefactor who detains this power. It could be inferred that these still reveal a way of thinking of minorities as weaker and dependent on stronger social actors to transform their reality.

Another construction is gerunds in subject position, which also encode an agentive-less way of reasoning where bad things just happen without a clear causal link or a wrongdoer. For example, see (35) and (36).

(35) “*Clearing the land for palm oil has resulted in a several human rights violations, including the killing and criminalization of environmental defenders*”

(36) “*solving climate change requires a multi-pronged approach that reins in capitalism, reduces global north consumerism and battles poverty at the same time.*”

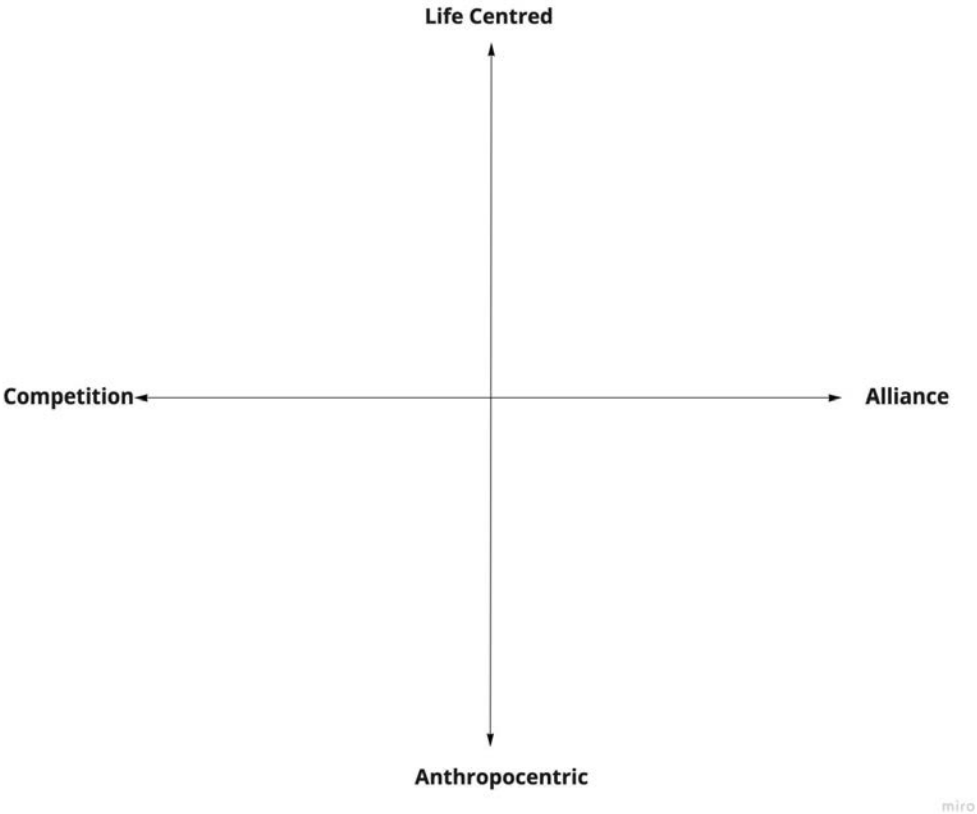
(<https://dohadebates.com/debate-recap/with-climate-change-on-everybodys-minds-three-speakers-sought-solutions-and-common-ground/>)

²⁴ Halliday, M.A.K. (1968). Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English: Part 3. *Journal of Linguistics*, 4(2). 179-215. Also, Van Leeuwen, T. (1995). Representing Social Action. *Discourse & Society*, 6(1), 81-106.

In (35) we know nothing about *who* did *the clearing* and *the killing*, because this type of construction obscures agency.. Additionally, gerunds also fulfil the task of *un*-assigning explicit responsibility for actions that require it, making it vague or unclear. In example (36), it is left for the readers or listeners of this debate to infer who might be the specific persons or organisations who should *solve* climate change and [*design*] an approach, which takes action a further step away from direct agency through personification of processes (*the approach will 'rein' capitalism, reduce global warming, and battle poverty*). Again, the focus is geared towards the actions and not the actors, which in itself is not misleading or deceptive.

Mapping Narrative Communities

From the data we collected and the insights we have established in relation to the four Narrative Communities, we created a map of the narrative space, constituted of two axes, each representing the spectrum of narratives that exist within this space. We used this map to locate the Narrative Communities along the different axes so we can compare them and identify overall patterns and dynamics within the narrative space.



Finally, we can assess Narrative Communities' potential for evolution.

Horizontal Axis: Competition to Alliance

This first axis relates to how we understand the role of the State in society, but also how we understand relationships between different living entities in society. We found in our analysis, in particular the linguistic analysis, that narrative communities range from embracing competition to embracing alliance.

In a society with a greater number of narratives immersed in competition, relationships are constructed in a top-down manner. This is the verticality we highlighted in the linguistic analysis. Decision-making powers are held in the hands of a few who make decisions for the majority. There is a competition to access this power. This affects the way we understand the role of the State. People (activists, social movements, citizens assemblies, etc.) are in a position of asking their Governments to make decisions on their behalf or on behalf of the public interest. This is the case of communities like the Green New Deal or the Reproductive Justice community. In this dynamic, States are benefactors and people are beneficiaries. Narratives of competition are also conducive to 'Us vs Them' logics: State vs People, or Power vs People.

At the other end of the horizontal axis, we find communities embracing narratives of alliance. Relationships are understood as a co-creative process between equal entities that can together achieve a common objective. We are no longer in the vertical, competitive relationships where an elite few have acquired the right to organise and decide for others. Instead, relationships are horizontal, and the alliance can exist between humans and more-than-humans. It is how Indigenous cosmovisions understand relationships, but it is also what is emerging from communities promoting and practising agroecology, food sovereignty or the commons. For these communities, cultivating equal relationships between all living beings, developing collective decision-making processes and co-managing resources is how we can find a way to live harmoniously in society. On this side of the spectrum, the State is a facilitator or a mediator of processes instead of a provider of assistance. In this system, the needs, values, demands are defined by citizens and not political institutions. This way plural demands can find their way to legislation and execution, and will not stem from a top-down but rather from a bottom-up dynamic.

Vertical Axis: Anthropocentric to Life Centric

The vertical axis relates to how we define, understand and value Life - in particular nature (more-than-humans).

An Anthropocentric Culture is our current paradigm. In this culture, humans are at the centre of the ecosystem. Humans control and manage Life: nature, more-than-humans as well as other humans. Nature and more-than-humans are considered resources or objects that serve humans and the socio-economic systems

they have designed. Humans can also be turned into commodities or they can be controlled (and therefore objectified). This is what is denounced by the Reproductive Justice narrative community: women's bodies, LGBTQ people's bodies, Indigenous people are controlled and policed by a group of ruling people who wish to fulfil a patriarchal & capitalist vision of society.

Opposite this spectrum, we find narratives that promote a Life-centred culture. It is where we find communities seeking to safeguard the sovereignty of Life, whether it is the Life of humans, the Life of nature and that of more-than-humans. On this side of the spectrum, nature, humans and more than humans are equal and autonomous. It is a post-anthropocenic reality. Life is multiple, and all these multiple living entities have their own agency. Life cannot be contained, controlled or confined to serve the goals of a few others. This is particularly important for marginalised communities (Indigenous people, Black people, women, trans people, etc.) whose bodies and lives have been subject to State violence and control. This is also important to shift the understanding that nature and more-than-humans are objects that require others to decide on its behalf. Closer to this side of this spectrum, we find narrative communities like Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, Reproductive Justice, which are communities that defend the importance of protecting Life sovereignty, in particular the Life of those who have been objectivised.

Narrative Evolution

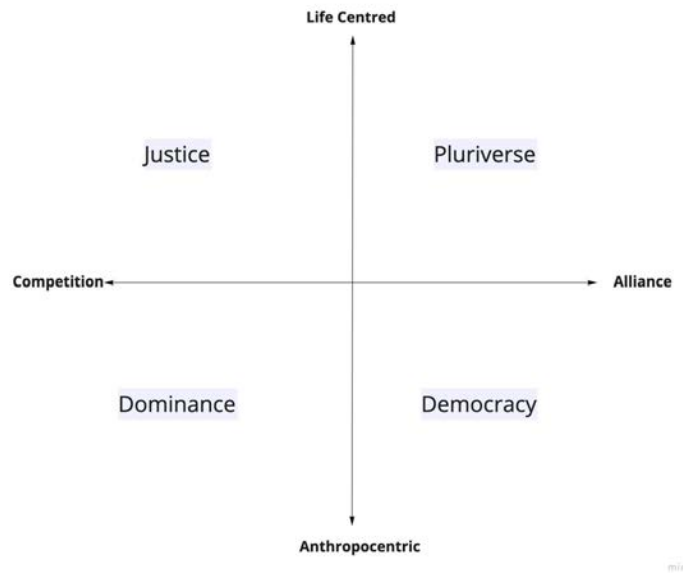
We determine 'narrative evolution' through our *Point of View* statement, because this gives us a directive for where we want the narrative space to evolve to. We can recall here that the core objectives are to build solidarity across movements and organisations which are grappling with the complex reality of the collapse. These movements vary in their individual goals and issue areas but are united in their task of creating bridges to a post-Capitalist, post-Anthropocentric and life-centred world.

Therefore given the above mapping, we can locate the direction of narrative evolution as the **top right quadrant of the map**. Power is decentralised, dispersed and shared across different groups who use their autonomy and sovereignty to achieve collective purposes. The interdependence and autonomy of each living being is recognized and necessary to create collective forms of self-governance. Importantly, Life (or living beings) include humans, more-than-humans and nature - this is the only way to create

sustainable modes of cohabiting in the planet. We call this quadrant the Pluriverse. This is because it is not merely a collection of different knowledge systems existing side by side but an active inquiry into what is 'real' and therefore what is possible.²⁵ Alliances and communities form to deal with the complex and seemingly intractable issues of the transition, while holding a common vision of the future; a vision for life-centred thriving on our planet. Fundamentally, the central mode in this quadrant transcends cultural modes of dominance, competition or the anthropocentric gaze, towards a creative process that is emergent, dynamic and self-organising. Moreover, the emphasis of these communities is not merely the petitioning of issues to a central authority, nor to usurp power over such an authority; but the creative action of finding alternative ways of knowing and being that offer pragmatic and decisive solutions for the crises at hand. This will often involve novel forms of organisation, collective action, commoning, food production, economic systems and so forth - as they pertain to a radically inclusive vision of the future. Examples of this are emerging, as we see from the *Climate Litigation, Rights of Nature, Bioregionalism* and *Agroecology* narrative communities found in our research.

In this advanced version of culture, the role of the State is to support and facilitate decentralised, self-organising practices of all these living entities while honouring their autonomy and agency. The State does not hold a monopoly over decision-making powers, but rather becomes a tool to achieve the ultimate Life-centric goal: harmonious coexistence of all living beings on the planet. Taking this into account we can develop our map by articulating general themes within each quadrant: *Dominance, Justice, Democracy, Pluriverse*.

²⁵ Escobar, Arturo (2020), *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 232 pp. Translation by David Frye



In this mapping, we see four quadrants that contain specific types of narrative communities. It is important to note here that these communities are united in their purpose of dealing with the critical issues and crises of the transition.

- *Dominance*: In this quadrant we find communities that seek to gain or overthrow power in order to better deal with critical issues that threaten human endeavour. Importantly these communities strive to maintain the human locus of interest in their activities.
- *Democracy*: Although this quadrant maintains its central concern with anthropocentric modes of life, it aims to gain solutions through collaboration, alliance and democratic modes of governance.
- *Justice*: This quadrant is concerned with redistributing power through challenges to dominance, and archetypal communities here include a range of decolonial, intersectional and racial justice movements. It aims to deal with the critical issues of the transition through calling out the culprits and demanding for remediation and reparations.
- *Pluriverse*: Finally the Pluriverse quadrant displays qualities of epistemic fluidity, alliance, co-creation and cooperation. These qualities allow narrative communities in this quadrant to find novel approaches to what may seem to be intractable issues. Rather than principally challenging power structures (political) or seeking new forms of social organisation (governance) it seeks to

find alliances that can come together to find new ways of knowing and being, and thereby offer novel solutions to the crises of the anthropocene.

Given the above quadrant mapping we can now place our chosen narrative communities on the map, to gain more insight into the reframe and strategic opportunities within the narrative space.

Through this mapping we can start to see a topography of the narrative landscape from the perspective of our *Point of View* statement.

Insights from the Mapping: Narrative Evolution

1. The most future-facing Narrative Communities

Many narrative communities (3,4,5,6) within the space recognise the importance of **alliances or horizontal forms of organisation** as the means to deal with issues of the transition.

- A few of these communities have moved this recognition to the more-than-human sphere, believing that alliances must include **both human and more-than-human** concerns (3,4).
- The Agroecology (6) community along with the Rights of Nature (3) and Climate Litigation (4) communities are archetypal examples of **pluriverse narrative communities**. In this way they offer some of the most interesting and relevant examples of the evolution we seek in the narrative space. A key strategy should then be to organise and catalyse these communities (and associated, emergent communities) to support the overarching narrative goals.

2. The almost-there's: Allies for the transition

- The Just Transition narrative community is also emblematic of the shift to self-organising and adaptive alliances, however it still places emphasis on anthropocentric values. For this reason, this community and associated communities, become the most proximal **potential allies**.

- The Reproductive Justice community (1) is important for a few reasons. Firstly it is a large and powerful narrative community that has a thriving movement behind it, and therefore holds much potential as a lever in narrative evolution within the narrative space. Secondly, this community is archetypically representative of a wide range of social justice narrative communities that display vocal and persistent narratives that call out structures of inequality and dominance. Thirdly, we often see that this type of community is an intermediary position toward greater forms of alliance, cooperation and life-centred narrative forms. Therefore this community and associated communities will play an important and central role in evolving the narrative space.

3. The populist slow-movers

- The Green New Deal community (2) was chosen because even though it is steeped in the rhetoric of combating climate change, it offers little in the way of actually changing the underlying logics of the dominant system. This community is then also archetypal of a whole range of narrative communities that seek to find incremental, yet ultimately ineffective change within the global, public discourse on the transition. These communities, due to their progressive and somewhat populist nature, have a large political momentum behind them and therefore are important vectors for change in the narrative space. However, these communities must be engaged and transformed through communication initiatives that address the issues they are concerned with while encoding the logics of deep and radical interdependence. Therefore this community (and associated ones) will become critical levers in the evolution of the narrative space.

Reframe Proposal

In this section, we outline our proposal for the reframe and narrative strategy for the ‘New Social Contract’ brief. This reframe strategy draws from the analysis of the data in the Understand phase and in particular the insights from the Mapping phase. Based on the trajectory of narrative evolution and the most future-facing narrative communities on this trajectory, we recommend **two potential reframes: Alliance and Pluriversality.**

Narrative Objectives for the Reframe Strategy

From the insights in the Mapping section, we can distil four narrative objectives to direct both the reframe strategy as well as any future communication strategies grounded in it²⁶:

1. The reframe and subsequent narrative strategy must be within the proximity of the above communities, meaning that they must be seeking ways of dealing with the crises of the transition and as they involve systems of domination, exclusion and inequality. Moreover, the **reframe and communication strategy must be accessible to proximal communities** (such as 3,4,6) often called the “just there’s”, as well as the aligned communities (1,5) often called the “almost there’s”; and also find ways to engage populist movements such as the GND community.
2. The second narrative objective is to actively seek those communities that are ‘proximal’ and actively engage them in building a shared vision and common set of values, and alliance both ideologically and practically. This community will be considered the **core catalytic community that is able to hold the vision of pluriversality while engaging in a diverse range of social and cultural practices.**
3. Thirdly, the narrative strategy must actively engage those communities that are found within the top left ‘justice quadrant’ of the narrative map

²⁶ These four narrative objectives will each entail several communication tactics and actions that will need to be structured and tested in a systematic way. Please see [Appendix 4](#) for the iterative developmental cycle of the Culture Hack method, and [Appendix 6](#) for an overview of our ecosystem.

(Reproductive Justice and associated communities) because the underlying logics of *justice against inequality, reparations and deep diversity* are closely akin to that of *life-centred alliances*. **These communities offer opportunities to build momentum and power through engaged dialogue on pathways of transition, through the frames of ‘alliance’ and ‘life at the centre’.**

4. Finally the fourth narrative objective is to seek emerging and populist narrative movements such as The Green New Deal as potential communities that can be converted through engaged dialogue, specifically centred on the need to find pathways through the transition that are **effective, radically inclusive and life-centred.**

Connecting the dots: linking the Reframe strategy to the Theoretical Framework

At the outset of this report, we focussed on outlining several theoretical lenses such as Max-Neef’s *synergistic satisfiers* and Ostrom’s *collective evolution* in our Theoretical Framework. The purpose of this was to contextualise the current report within a growing movement of narratives and systems change initiatives that focus on developing self-organising, emergent and purpose-oriented approaches to the context of the transition. These are by no means ‘merely’ theoretical: we find many examples; some ancient, as we see in Indigenous traditions, and some newer, such as the Transition Design movement of today. The common approach between these movements is that they are *epistemically radical* and *ontologically pragmatic* - meaning they are open to exploring new modes of knowing to deal with the complexity of the time, and therefore create novel ways of being.

The narrative communities we have identified as occupying the top right map quadrant – the quadrant representing the direction of narrative evolution – embody this approach, and it is this directive that we find most important when delving into the reframe zone of the ‘new social contract’. These narrative communities have a pluralistic approach to what reality is, meaning that they see life as deeply imbricated in meaning and function such that many differing ways of knowing and being not only coexist but are interdependent. This mode of radical interdependence implies that differences between species, race and gender, for example, are not mere denominations nor nominal attributes but constituent parts of an ever-emerging

complexity. They have the potential to push the conversations around the transition in a direction that recognises the entanglement of human and more-than-human life - rather than portraying 'the environment' as something to be 'saved', these communities work from the recognition that our own survival and thriving as a species is dependent on that of others. As such, they have the power to push the discussion of the climate emergency and the transition beyond the existing frame of reference.

The Reframe Strategy: Potential Frames

Alliance for Social and Ecological Transitions

We see alliance in the origin and practice of many of the narrative communities we examined – Just transition, Reproductive Justice, Agroecology. It forms the future-facing, evolutionary direction of the horizontal axis of our narrative map, representing the direction where the narrative communities of most interest to us are moving. Relationships here are understood as a co-creative process between equal entities that can together achieve a common objective. On this side of the spectrum, the State is a facilitator or a mediator of processes instead of a provider of assistance. This way, plural demands can find their way to legislation and execution, and will not stem from a top-down but rather from a bottom-up dynamic. Narrative communities and movements here are *already* connecting the dots between social and ecological justice issues and recognise that the transition must implicate both. Thus, alliance forms an important part of the reframe strategy.

Co-Creating the Pluriverse

The pluriverse itself is composed of alliances: they form to deal with the complex and seemingly intractable issues of the transition, while holding a common vision of the future; a vision for life-centred thriving on our planet. The term *pluriverse* is one that is very relevant for our current task because it indicates a deep commitment to diversity (cultural, biological, ecological, etc) as the very means of generating resiliency and therefore pathways through the transition.

Therefore we can summarise this initial directive as having twin aspects. Firstly, the social and cultural practice of dealing with the crisis we face through a deeply creative and collaborative mode - one that is interested in *what could be* rather than merely what is. Secondly, this directive recognizes that pathways through and for the transition must be led by a widening definition of what constitutes 'life', not merely for its own

sake, but because resilience and diversity are innately connected attributes of any ecosystem.

We propose to relook at the term ‘social contract’ as the overarching trope for the project. As we describe at length in the analysis in the Theoretical Framework, this term is somewhat antithetical to the current goals as described above, given that the term is wedded to structures of asymmetrical power, instituted and orchestrated by a central governing authority. Given this, it is important that this is reassessed in light of the analysis we have compiled here. We suggest that at a minimum, any future Social Contract approach will have to learn from the two frames we propose here – Co-creating the pluriverse / Alliance for social and ecological transitions – if it seeks to strive to avoid repeating the same problems that in part occasioned the commissioning of this report.

We have developed the following reframe schema as an outline for what we believe is the most cogent and effective strategy for narrative development in the narrative space.

Frames : Alliance; Inclusion

Metaphors: Purposes are destinations; Evolution is Inclusion

1° Frame	Alliance for social and ecological transitions	This employs the frame of alliance and indicates a path forward or through. The metaphor underlying transitions specifically refers to <i>cultural evolution</i> as a series of phasic shifts in organising patterns of its constituent parts, towards greater forms of inclusion and reciprocity.
2° Frame	Co-Creating the Pluriverse	This invokes the primary frame of ‘alliance’ while indicating a directional path: ‘towards the pluriverse’.
Logic	Post-Anthropocentric	The deep logic present here is that to surpass the intractable issues of Modernity we must transcend anthropocentrism, towards widening definitions of what constitutes life.
Theoretical	Cultural Evolution	Cultural Evolution as defined by Margulis and Maynard

		Smith ²⁷ define evolution, both biological and cultural, as the process of intensifying integration.
--	--	---

Next Steps

It is important to note that this is a hypothesis of the most important direction for the narrative strategy, and is the starting point for the iterative engagement strategy that comes next. The engagement strategy would develop strategies that engage the types of community defined in the mapping section while monitoring the discourse and iterating - please see [appendix 5](#) for overview of the engagement lifecycle.

²⁷ [Maynard Smith, John; Szathmáry, Eörs \(1995\). *The Major Transitions in Evolution*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press;](#) Margulis, L., 1970. *Origin of Eukaryotic Cells*. Yale University Press, New Haven.

Appendicies

Appendix 1 | Keywords

The keywords below were selected because they spoke to the point of view and areas of interest raised by the GEC team. When identifying keywords, we look at current news, movements and debates to ensure our software captures interesting data.

Narrative Space	Keywords
Indigenous rights	Land Back Indigenous communities fighting Amazon base in Cape Town - land rights We will use the data we collected for recent and previous research on Indigenous rights. Futuros Indigenas research
Climate Movement/Climate Justice	Fridays for Future Climate March Extinction Rebellion Climate litigation Rights of Nature Ecocide Climate crisis End Fossil Fuel Finland climate change act (sami people) Paro Nacional in Ecuador Anti protest laws
Gender and Racial Justice	Black Lives Matter US Abortion Ban Marea Verde (Será Ley) Forced sterilisations Indigenous mobilization on Missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW) Gender & Climate Change
New economy/Green economy	Just Transition Green New Deal Degrowth

	<p>Cryptocrash Tax the Rich Agroecology Cancel Student debt National Shutdown - South Africa</p>
Direct Democracy	<p>Deliberative Democracy Ecological Democracy Citizens Assemblies Ecological social contract Fearless cities En Comu C40 cities People's summit for democracy</p>

Appendix 2 | Narrative communities data results

The table below displays the hits from our data collection app, Meltwater, displaying those which were the most accessed on social media and news sites. Green New Deal had amongst the highest results at 317,000 interactions.

Green New Deal	317K
Just Transition	82K
Degrowth	80k
Cryptocrash	663K
Tax the Rich	257K
Cancel Student Debt	290K
Land Back	113K
Agroecology	35.2K
Food Sovereignty	30.7K
Extinction Rebellion	176K
Ecocide	59K
End Fossil Fuel	27.5k
US abortion ban	336K

(this keyword prompted us to identify the narrative community “Reproductive Justice”)	
Forced sterilisation	42.4K
Missing and Murdered Indigenous women	55.8K
National Shutdown	200K
Gender and Climate Change	136K

Below is our preliminary attempt at organising the different conversations (keywords) according to their shared narrative. This helped us identify the narrative community, and based on other criteria (relevance to the Point of View, richness of language), we decided to focus on certain narrative communities that could be representative of all of these conversations.

Nature as an Autonomous Living Entity	
Climate litigation	(5.08K)
Rights of Nature	(7.34K)
Anti Protest Laws	(2,39K)

Us vs Them (a spectrum)	
Green New Deal	317K
Just Transition	82K
Tax the Rich	257K

Cancel Student Debt	290K
End Fossil Fuel	27.5K
Extinction Rebellion	176K
Anti Protest Laws	2.39K

Sovereignty, Self Determination (Indigenous, Bodily autonomy)	
Agroecology	35.2K
Land Back	113K
Food Sovereignty	30.7K
US abortion ban	336K
Forced sterilisation	42.4K
Missing and Murdered Indigenous women	55.8K

Appendix 3 | Point of View

The Culture Hack Labs methodology starts with the articulation of the Point of View: Who is part of the project? What is the goal of the narrative study? What is the team hoping to achieve? What is our North Star as we move throughout the methodology that will allow us to map the narrative space and identify those who shape it?

Below is the Point of View established in collaboration with the GEC team.

We are a group of practitioners with expertise and experience in communications, campaigning, grassroots organising & policy-making, particularly as these relate to environmental issues, democracy and just transitions.

We see that there is a rupture between civil society and Governments. The social contract as theorised in Western philosophy is broken. Governments will not enact change whereas people across the globe are mobilising against climate change and deepening inequality; demanding urgent measures to survive the crisis.

Therefore, we want to support people-led movements and structures that can inform institutional policy-making & government decision making processes by pushing for measures that are necessary for the transition.

To achieve this goal, we must be able to identify the criteria and parameters for a new social contract that encapsulates the relationship between the State and people in times of multidimensional crisis.

This new social contract must represent the ethics, values and principles commonly shared across social movements so it can fuel cross-movement solidarity and create a critical mass that can take part in local and global people-led processes.

We want to inform policy-makers, Governments and institutions of the ethics, values and principles that must underpin the new social contract so they can integrate and enforce demands arising out of people-led processes.

In this project, we will do this by:

- Researching people-led movements finding narrative-led ways to enact a just transition while identifying a common set of values, ethics and principles that can underpin a 'new social contract'.
- Identifying and analysing narratives used by most current and active social movements, and which have the most potential to garner cross-movement solidarity and thus achieve the goal outlined in our Point of View. In other words, we want to identify the most promising "narrative communities".
- Through this the team will strive to find uniting values, language and strategic directions for change.

Appendix 4 | Theoretical Framework

The following is an overview of the theoretical concepts that we have tapped into for the purpose of this work.

If we think of the purpose of society as enabling humans to live together and reproduce the conditions of our ongoing survival at an individual and collective level, that is, to meet human needs, and given that the way we are currently organising our relationship with each other and the more-than human is destructive, then it is clear that the need for a better way of organising human life on this planet is urgently needed – that is, a fundamental change in the way human needs are met.

Chilean scholar Artur Max-Neef's²⁸ Human Development framework can help us think through not only what the fundamental human needs are, but also how to meet them in a way that minimises harm and maximises positive outcomes. For Max-Neef, the basic human needs - subsistence, protection, affection, participation, idleness, creation, understanding, identity, freedom – can be met through a variety of “satisfiers”. Some of these are narrow, only meeting one need, or worse, meeting need in a way that creates negative externalities – satisfiers that destroy the conditions of possibility of human needs being met on an ongoing basis. He contrasts these with ‘synergistic satisfiers’ which are able to meet several needs at once. These satisfiers are ‘endogenous’, borne of self-organisation: grassroots, community cooperation rather than top-down and institutionalised. Our challenge then becomes finding ways to generalise the social configurations and self-organisation practices that allow synergistic signifiers to come to the fore, in order to transition to a socially just way of living.

Nobel prize-winning political economist Elinor Ostrom argued for just such a polycentric, that is, decentralised and self-organised decision-making process. Such community-managed resources which are under neither public nor private ownership are often called ‘the commons’. Ostrom’s research effectively shows that far from the often-touted ‘tragedy of the commons’, such informal negotiated arrangements in local

28 https://web.archive.org/web/20121021020841/http://www.max-neef.cl/download/Max_Neef_From_the_outside_looking_in.pdf

communities that included all relevant stakeholders are effective methods to manage the commons and fairly and sustainably share common resources²⁹.

Ostrom's thesis of how to successfully manage the commons has had a wide influence³⁰ ([an example](#) of the spread of her work in the political and economic academic community; [an example](#) of her influence in more mainstream media). Today, for instance, some architects of publicly accessible resources – which they term as 'public goods' - for Web '3.0' have cited Ostrom as an influence ([in this case](#) blockchain-based file storage). Silvia Federici's feminist scholarship on the role of care and 'reproductive labour' in the commons has also been influential in this space.

These thinkers can help us conceptualise moving from what John Kenneth Galbraith (1958) terms "private affluence and public squalor" toward George Monbiot's notion of "private sufficiency and public luxury"³¹.

However, as important as the centering of human needs is to the transition, this focus on its own is not sufficient: we need to think beyond ourselves to the more-than-human if we are to create a transition that keeps our planet livable. The bifurcation of humanity and nature is continually called into question by the entanglements between humanity and the not-human, increasingly conceptualised by scholars³², and intensifying in these times of climate crisis³³. Indigenous academics have also pointed out the convergence of emergent scientific conceptualisation of plant life and that of indigenous cosmologies³⁴.

A successful, lasting paradigm shift for the transition must move away from anthropocentrism towards a multispecies understanding of social life.

Max-Neef's concept of synergistic signifiers and Ostrom's work on the commons show us that it is possible to meet human needs in a different and less harmful way to the

29 E.g. Ostrom, E. Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms. In: Journal of Economic Perspectives (Vol. 14/No 3), Summer 2000, 137-158 and <https://earthbound.report/2018/01/15/elinor-ostroms-8-rules-for-managing-the-commons/>

30 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseviewofbooks/2012/06/17/elinor-ostroms-work-on-governing-the-commons-an-appreciation/>

31 https://www.patreon.com/posts/post-coronavirus-38124240?utm_medium=post_notification_email&utm_source=post_link&utm_campaign=patron_engagement

32 Haraway, D. (2016) *Staying with the Trouble*, Duke University Press, Durham. Barad, K. (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Duke University Press: Durham. Braidotti, R. (2013) *The Posthuman*, Polity Press: London. Sheldrake, M. (2020), *Entangled Life*. Penguin: London, Timofeeva, O. (2018). *The History of Animals: A Philosophy*, Bloomsbury: London

33 Lowenhaupt Tsing, A. (2015) *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.

34 E.g. Wall Kimmerer, R. (2013). *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*, Penguin, London; and <https://kimtallbear.com/pubs/dossier-theorizing-queer-inhumanisms-an-indigenous-reflection-on-working-beyond-the-human-not-human/>

one that currently dominates the world. While this insight is crucial for the formulation of new principles, their models are oriented specifically towards human cooperation and human needs, leaving open the question of humanity for the non-human, and indeed the needs of the non-human. We can go further, shifting the paradigm to encompass the more-than-human, recognising that humanity forms part of the planetary ecosystem – is, therefore, part of nature.

Transition Design

Theorists of transition design such as Ezio Manzini³⁵ and Arturo Escobar³⁶ conceptualise these questions of human organisation as design problems. Design here “refers to much more than the creation of objects”, it encompasses phenomena as diverse as “functional social services, or ecologically minded production...diverse forms of life, and, often contrasting notions of sociability and the world” – in short, the collective, intentional organisation of society³⁷. Manzini, in his eponymous book, envisages a world where “everybody designs” resulting in “design for social innovation and transition to a new civilisation”. *Escobar notes the centrality of difference –biodiversity, pluriversality, and with the Zapatistas, calls on us to design “a world where many worlds fit” (Escobar xvi).* Theorists of autonomous design are realising the insight that “every community practices the design of itself” – **we are already involved in creating and recreating the configurations in which we live. The challenge is to do so communally, autonomously, and in a way that evolves beyond the anthropocentrism and exploitation of previous forms of social organisations**

Examples & sources of inspiration for a sustainable transition

There are currently in our world social and cultural spaces that are already enacting modalities of life and organisations that foster harmony between humans, nature and more-than-humans - they are already moving towards a post-anthropocentric society with a sustainable way of life. It is helpful to consider these examples, as we set ourselves to research narratives related to the transition.

35 Manzini, E. (2015). *Design, When Everybody Designs*, MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

36 Escobar, A. (2018). *Design For The Pluriverse*, Duke University Press: Durham.

Bioregionalism

Bioregionalism centres the importance of place, of locality, in questions of social organisation – ways for human needs to be met in a way that benefits humanity as well as the specific ecosystem they inhabit^[17].

This is encapsulated in poet and bioregionalist Gary Snyder’s dictum that all beings - plants and humans - form part of a community, and we should be able to greet all of them.

Bioregionalism proposes a way to live in a post-industrial, warming world by paying attention and taking seriously the claims of local ecosystems, and invents reinhabitory practices to not just restore but improve on exploited habitats by correcting past environmental harm. Thus, it can help us think through a shift from an extractive to a regenerative paradigm of relating to the land.

Bioregionalism has influenced a host of movements, and while it is not always explicitly referenced, its principles exist in many models of “community, sustainability, local culture, local food systems, “green” cities, renewable energy, habitat restoration, ecological awareness, grassroots activism”³⁸. Its concepts are constantly being pushed further – Ursula K. Heise for instance ‘advocates instead *eco-cosmopolitanism*³⁹, a term adapted from Mitchell Thomashow’s “bioregional cosmopolitanism”⁴⁰, while Eileen Crist writes about “Cosmopolitan bioregionalism”⁴¹. Heise describes eco-cosmopolitanism as “an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part of planetary ‘imagined communities’ of both human and nonhuman kinds”⁴². Bioregionalist approaches to human and more-than-human community and regeneration has also impacted more recent scholarship such as Buescher and Fletcher’s *Conservation Revolution*, where the authors advocate ‘convivial conservation’ as a way forward⁴³.

³⁸ The Bioregional Imagination: Literature, Ecology, and Place Tom Lynch, Cheryll Glotfelty, Karla Armbruster, 2012

³⁹ Heise, Ursula K. (2008) *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

⁴⁰ Thomashow, M. (2002) *Bringing the Biosphere Home: Learning to Perceive Global Environmental Change*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

⁴¹ <https://www.ecologicalcitizen.net/pdfs/v03sc-04.pdf>

⁴² Heise, K. U. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008, p. 61.

⁴³ Buescher, B. and Fletcher, R. (2020) *The Conservation Revolution: Radical Ideas for Saving Nature Beyond the Anthropocene*, Verso Books: London.

Indigenous Cosmologies and Practices

Indigenous stewardship of land preserves biodiversity around the world while instituting cooperative models of ownership. These models, in stark contrast to neoliberal models of hyper-individualised ownership, create the outcomes that lead to greater equilibrium between human and more-than-human life, leading to greater levels of ecosystemic flourishing.

Given the escalating climate emergency coupled with the foreboding warnings of the IPCC report, we must acknowledge that existing narratives about our relationship to Other and our Selves have led us astray. **Indigenous cultures are ancient, deeply diverse and life centric, making them relevant alternatives to the fragile, calcified and destructive narratives of Capitalism and Progress.** In addition to this, Indigenous peoples are defenders of 80% of the world's biodiversity and have shown that their territories are interwoven with their cultures. By protecting their Indigenous lives, cultures and territories, we will defend our collective future. Indigenous communities are at the forefront of the pushback against environmental harm, as noted by indigenous scholar Dina Gilio-Whitaker⁴⁴ - putting into practice modes of resistance and direct action as well as living alternatives to extractive anthropocentric Capitalism.

Sharing Culture in the Global North

Eleni Katrini⁴⁵ investigates how the concept of sharing culture practices manifests in four case studies of communal organising in Athens and London, encompassing the meeting of various needs: Caregiving, Shelter, Resources, Leisure, etc. **Sharing culture here designates localised, networked social practices that grow informally and are based on solidarity and reciprocity rather than profit.** As such, Katrini notes, they present a more structured form of commoning, Peter Linebaugh's term for the communal social (re)production of shared resources. Sharing cultures are 'grassroots

44 Gilio-Whitaker, D. (2019) *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*, Beacon Press: Boston.

45 https://kithub.cmu.edu/articles/thesis/Creating_the_Everyday_Commons_Spatial_Patterns_of_Sharing_Culture/9897821

innovations’, to use the terminology of another theoretical approach – collaborative “solutions that respond to the local situation and the interests and values of the communities involved”⁴⁶. Katrini concludes that sharing culture practices are examples of Max-Neef’s synergistic satisfiers discussed in the previous section – communal practices that meet several human needs at once while fostering an environment where needs can continue to be met, and thus creating robust, self-reliant communities. An example of sharing culture are the mutual aid⁴⁷ networks which quickly arose in the spring of 2020 in response to Covid-19. The speed with which these networks were organised over the course of just a few weeks points to the fundamental ability of human communities to organise for each other and meet each other’s needs without a profit motive. Additionally, it empowers people to be both givers and receivers of aid on an as-need basis, breaking down the service model of aid and care that underpins the State and many formalised civil society institutions.

As the GEC team’s focuses on new possible forms for the social contract, it is worth noting that each of the examples given above examines how communities organise themselves, without direction from State institutions and in many cases with no or minimal state involvement. **Therefore, we must also ask what role the state can and should play in enabling the self-organisation of communities, as this forms an important part of the social contract.** The following discussion offers a few concepts that can help articulate the role the State would play in a more autonomous, self-organised model of society where people are the first responders to the needs and crises arising in society. The discussion is followed by an overview of the origins of the social contract, its linguistic foundations and implications.

Together, these analyses conclude our theoretical framework, which helps us fine-tune the questions posed in the Point of View and create a research plan for our narrative analysis.

The role of the State in autonomous societies

46 Seyfang, G. and Smith, A., 2007. Grassroots innovations for sustainable development: Towards a new research and policy agenda. *Environmental politics*, 16(4), pp.584-603.

47 Originally conceptualised as a fundamental factor in human development by Peter Kropotkin, mutual aid was catapulted into 21st century public consciousness with the onset of the pandemic, when neighbourhoods came together to organise support for each other on- and offline

In the words of Katrini and Max-Neef:

“Even though sharing culture initiatives do increase a community’s self-reliance, a state retreat should not be implied, where citizens are left alone to serve their own needs. Often enough, there seems to be a policy agenda that tends to “outsource traditional welfare state functions to community groups”.

As Max-Neef states: “The role of the state and public policies is to identify these embryonic initiatives, reinforce them and help them to multiply” (1989, 63).

The role of the state is thus reconceptualised as using the tools at its disposal – e.g. policies, funding, infrastructure investments etc- to create an environment in which community-led initiatives can flourish. Likewise, Mutual Aid centers the ability of people to organise themselves and help each other, breaking down “the activist/recipient barrier. It is something that we all feed into as we can, and use as we need”⁴⁸ – something that Katrini also notes in her research on the autonomous refugee shelter in Athens.

In the words of Rhiannon Firth:

“Rather than reproducing capitalism. Mutual aid rather tends to reproduce life – potentially radical life – that is either disposable or a burden to capitalism. Whilst it may compensate for the withdrawal of the state, this does not mean that the state would step in in the absence of mutual aid groups, rather, people, mostly working class or otherwise marginalised, would simply suffer and die.”⁴⁹

The Origins of the Social Contract

The purpose of the social contract is the legitimation of the existing socio-political and politico-juridical order – to legitimate institutions through an appeal to reason and morality; in other words, why people should assent to the status quo⁵⁰. A social contract also functions as a narrative of individual and collective identity - it

48 <https://anarchiststudies.noblogs.org/article-experiences-of-mutual-aid-organising-in-glasgow-and-brighton/>

49 Rhiannon Firth (2020), ‘Mutual Aid, Anarchist Preparedness and COVID-19’ in J. Preston and R. Firth (eds), Coronavirus, Class and Mutual Aid in the United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 81-82.

50 See D’Agostino 1996, 23.

establishes a political community, comprised of citizens who together form the people: a sovereign entity in themselves.

The idea of a 'social contract' as conceived by social contract theorists of the 17th and 18th centuries⁵¹, contains two important conceptual domains that are instantiated across various contemporary discourses. The first evokes the idea of **Property and Titles** in relation to both government and citizens. According to this, citizens own rights and liberties but also civic and political duties while governments own citizens' loyalty and obedience. This relationship establishes a type of exchange or trade wherein citizens pay tributes and obey a centralised power in exchange for protection and services from the government in order to fulfil basic needs. Such exchange or 'trade' can be more or less symmetrical or asymmetrical depending on the degree and type of participation citizens have in the decision-making process within government. Greater symmetry is proportionate to how capable or willing governments are to uphold their part of the trade. For example, when the government collects taxes but does not provide the services or protection to which citizens are entitled or abuse their authority, then they are in debt with citizens and the deal is off. Similarly, citizens will contract a debt with the government if they do not fulfil their tributary obligations or become disloyal. Thus, this social arrangement becomes flawed when either party breaches the contract in any way that will render this exchange worthless.

The other domain draws out the idea of an **Agreement** between two parties who promise to undertake some actions to ensure mutual benefits. As with Property and Titles, an agreement requires certain conditions be met so that gains and obligations are equally assigned to both sides. This type of social arrangement is also binding based on a set of shared expectations and outcomes for the parties involved. However, here reciprocity is more related to normative constraints on expected behaviour from both citizens and government than on the trading of assets (money, labour, services, etc). Like with any form of agreement, a social contract requires trust, pre-defined rules or conditions, and accountability. Trust appears as a key element because it sets the rules or standards based on the actions expected from each party as well as the consequences for not conforming to them⁵². Distrust is ensued when the actions of either side deviates from these standards leading to unpredictable or undesirable outcomes for either side. Another core element is the interdependence between

51 <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/contractarianism-contemporary/>

52 For more on this frame visit https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Frame:Trust_relationship

government and citizens created from this mutual consent for the attainment of common objectives. Unlike other types of agreement though, this model of a social contract creates an unequal relationship because it is founded on the idea of a central authority who retains the monopoly of the use of force to preserve a peaceful social life⁵³.

This concept contains some interesting inferences related to the ability of the government as this central authority to protect or harm and to grant equal or unequal access to vital resources for all citizens. At stake is the degree of dependence of citizens on the actions of the government to not merely survive but, more importantly, thrive. On the other hand, the government also depends on citizens to legitimise their actions as the perception of an unfair, abusive, or dysfunctional government can terminate its ability to exercise its power. This interdependence can only cohere with the initial contractualist vision of ensuring the common good for all if both parties fulfil their promises. When citizens do not fulfil their obligations they forfeit their rights (freedom, protection, etc.) and resources (property, money, services). By the same token, when the government does not keep its side of the bargain, then it too becomes unaccountable and less valuable as an institution.

However, the relationship of reciprocity between government and citizenry is only one side of the coin: What sets modern social contracts apart is that citizens not only have the right to be governed well, as per earlier models of the relationship between state and people, but, crucially, representation: that they **govern themselves**. We are dealing not merely with a benign dictator, but always with the question of legitimacy, which is bestowed by popular or general will of a sovereign citizenry called ‘the people’.

A brief examination of the term ‘social contract’ in two large language databases reflect some of the previous points in relation to the perceived failures of the government to fulfil its promises. A search in the Corpus of Historical American English ([COHA](#)) from 1820-2010 shows that discussions about the social contract were most prominent in the decade of 1980, appearing in newspapers and academic publications. Despite the differing viewpoints, there is an overall negative sentiment infused in these discussions where central questions concern the viability of the social contract and the fitness of the government in providing citizens with the protections and guarantees

53 For more on authority see <https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Frame:Authority>

needed for a safe and stable life in face of wars, rampant crime rates, but also high inflation and the rising cost of living, all of which exacerbated the feeling of inequality. A similar search for social contract as a key word in context (KWIC) in the Corpus of Contemporary American English ([COCA](#)) also revealed negative sentiment towards the idea of a social contract as a defining principle to fulfil the desires of citizens to live in a society where all can prosper and enjoy a peaceful, long-lasting life under the safeguards of the state. Appearing mostly in academic publications, blogs and general websites, these debates do not necessarily question how viable the government is as an institution as much as how useful the concept of a social contract itself is to account for a host of different expectations yet to be met.

The surge in discussions of the social contract in the 1980s, as well as the negative connotations, are concomitant to that decade's neoliberal reframing of the relationship between state and citizenship and its re-regulation in favour of a 'small state'. However, the crisis of the social contract is not just a result of the political economy of the 1980s and 1990s and its onslaught of private interest on public goods. There is also a deeper problem, which Derrida describes as an absence at the heart of the social contract: Our collective consent to the institutions of the status quo is assumed, it is tacit, not explicitly given. This results in a political passivity implicit in the concept of a social contract, where we must rely on the state to mediate between us and the Other. Far from being active signatories to this presumed contract, the people are in fact absent from it.

The social contract is an answer to the problem of 'human nature' as political philosophers of the early modern era saw it, surrounded by the strife and conflict of their era. It is grounded in assumptions about the liberal subject implicitly undersigning this contract. Whether it be the Rousseauian take on humanity preserving its intrinsic freedom through subordination to a general will, exemplified in the state, or the Hobbesian pessimism about an essentially homicidal human nature embroiled in a zero-sum survival game, the underlying subject is an essentially selfish utility-maximising individual.

If we base our question on a different set of assumptions, or if we ask different questions about human and more than human life – e.g. 'how can we transform existing social institutions and practices from their current state to a configuration in which humanity and the more than human can live well' – we arrive at a different

problematic and thus a different solution. We can, in other words, organise a social system differently to liberal contractarianism.

Several aspects of the social contract thus point the way towards its reconceptualisation:

Step 1: Reminding those in power of their conditional positionality – they are, after all, servants of the general will even on a classical liberal understanding.

Step 2: Expand democratic practices to hold power account, right to recall of elected officials, direct democracy, etc.

Step 3: From even this most radical democratic of approaches which favours direct participation instead of representation;

- to a different form of mediation, which transforms the notion of the individual citizen-subject choosing rationally from a set of options in their own best self-interest.
- to a more holistic concept of flourishing of life – even life that is not capable of making decisions within the framework of democratic politics, such as generations to come and the more-than-human.

We see these shifts reflected to different degrees in the narrative communities we have examined.

The semiotic perspective

At its root the study of signifier and signified, semiotics has developed into a technique of 'reading', that is, studying and analysing culture as a text that conveys meaning. Its object is thus more broad than that of linguistics: A news report, a commercial, an object or a colour scheme all function as texts that signify something and thus create meaning through a choice of signifiers, verbal or non-verbal. This meaning-making practice takes place in culture, that is, within a network of other signs and signifiers - semiotics helps us see that meaning never functions in isolation.

Taking cultural theorist Raymond Williams' framework as its starting point, semiotic analysis can identify cultural, verbal, discursive, and visual tendencies as residual, dominant or emergent. For Williams, these categories coexist at any given point in time, and their relationship is dynamic: the residual and the dominant inform the emergent, while over time, what is emergent can become dominant and eventually residual. The residual – sometimes called 'rooted' - designates that in culture which has been around for a while and has sunk into conscious and unconscious habits. Residual cultural practices may have a long history or predate current social and cultural formations, but still have a structuring impact on what is dominant. The dominant are those narratives and practices that are most common and typical of a given field or discourse: majority culture, the 'predictable', the baseline of where a narrative is today, official or conventional discourse. The strongest structuring principle, the dominant, is often still impacted by the residual in that it exhibits assumptions and conventions that are in the process of being overcome.

Challenging the dominant, the emergent is characterised by newness: those practices and narratives that are constantly being created and re-created, in a development from and often in opposition to the dominant. In this process, emergent cultural developments sometimes look back to the rooted and draw on it to revitalise older concepts. The emergent are the elements that are the most interesting from a cultural change point of view, as they show a glimpse of where culture is headed.

The semiotic perspective, coupled with this analytical framework, helps us make sense of the narrative communities extant in culture and allows us to tease out future-facing

narrative practices, keywords, and other signifiers. They can then be grouped into 'codes', that is, distinct, coherent clusters of meaning and significance within the field of culture and narrative. These codes are formed of the modalities used by narrative communities to communicate certain meanings and values, and help identify the different distinctive linguistic (and often visual) worlds they create.

Appendix 6 | Culture Hack Method



Method

The Culture Hack method follows this process to define an inquiry, collect and analyze data, reframe the emerging narratives and then craft a cultural intervention.

ASK

Develop a
Point of View

LISTEN

Big
Listening

Small
Listening

UNDERSTAND

Attention
Network
Power
Analyses

Mapping
Communities

RECODE

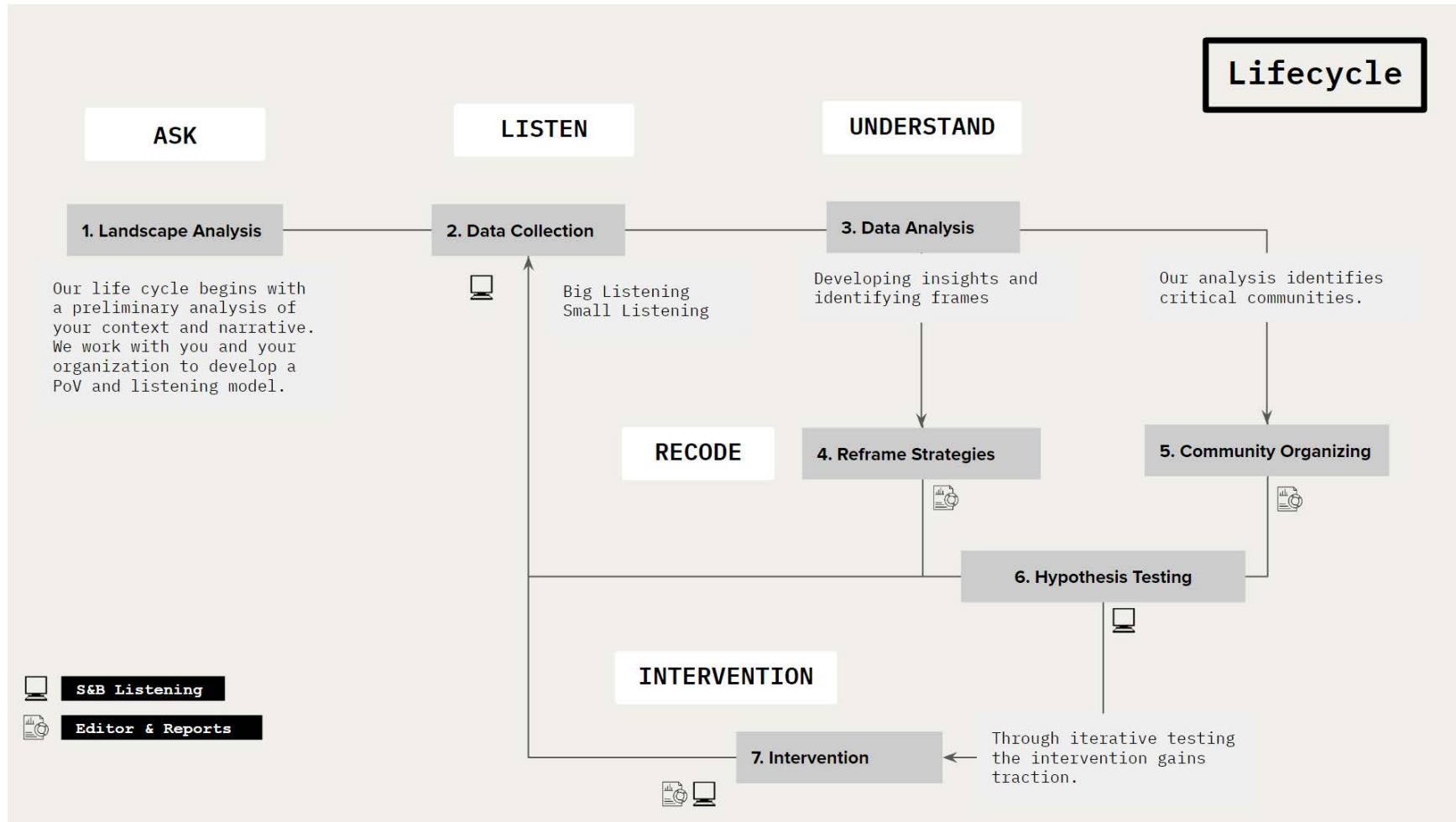
Linguistic
Analysis

Frames &
Reframes

INTERVENE

Narrative
Briefing

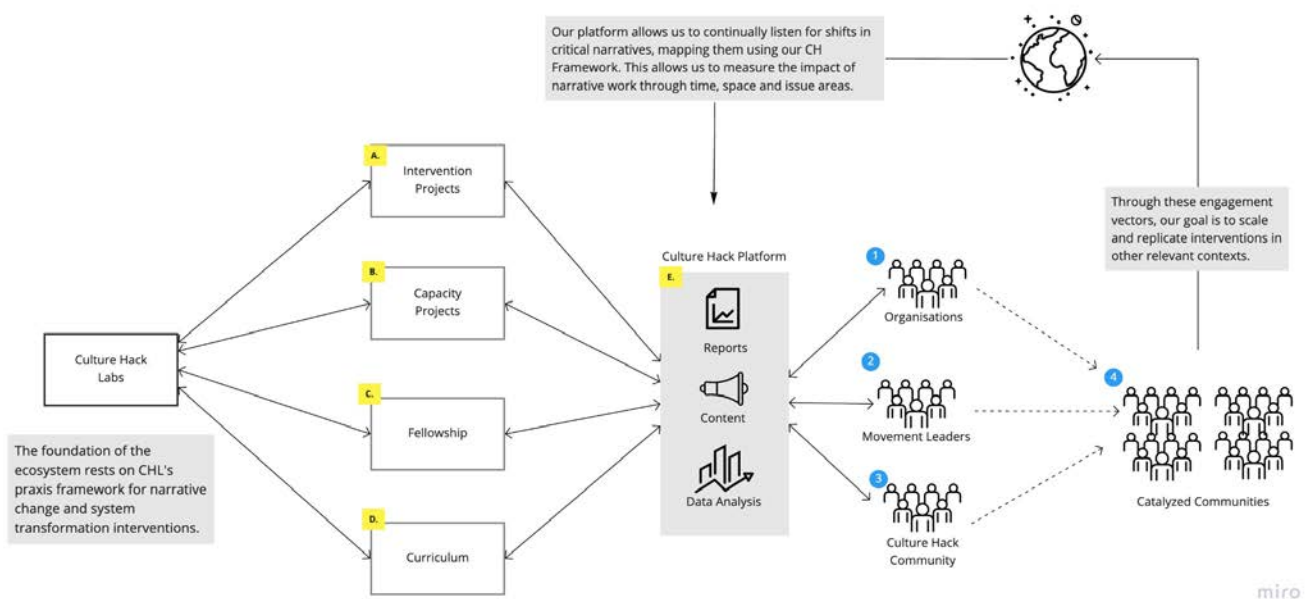
Appendix 7 | Engagement Lifecycle



Appendix 8 | Culture Hack Ecosystem

The following diagram illustrates the Culture Hack ecosystem including the different capacities of Culture Hack Labs. This diagram demonstrates how we impact communities and change narrative landscapes through interventions within the dominant culture.

We have mapped out five capacities and four communities that create the foundations for this ecosystem.



Capacities:

A. *Culture Hack Intervention Projects*: CHL leads these projects providing landscape and data analysis, strategy, and execution for the full arc of the narrative intervention process.

B. *Culture Hack Capacity Projects*: CHL works with organisations and movements to develop narrative change capacities within organisations. This is done through a specific intervention, while training a team in the methods, tools and process of Culture Hack. This also provides access to a custom narrative dashboard and your own narrative data for your project.

C. *Culture Hack Fellowship*: The fellowship program invites leaders from social movements, civil society organisations and foundations to participate in a 6-12 month fellowship program. Through this process participants become part of the core CH community, learning the Culture Hack method through a supported community of practitioners who are leading narrative hacks on their respective issues areas.

D. *Culture Hack Curriculum*: Our curriculum is a free and open creative commons knowledge repository making the Culture Hack methodology accessible through a systematic introduction to our narrative approach.

E. *Culture Hack Platform*: The platform is a data analytics dashboard and publishing platform that develops actionable insights for culture and narrative change. The platform generates customised data reports for specific issue areas and syndicated reports available monthly via subscription.

Communities:

1. *Organisations*: The amalgam of CHL partner organisations that we engage through intervention projects, capacity projects and other partnerships.
2. *Movement Leaders*: Individual movement leaders who are selected and engaged through the CHL fellowship and our broader network, creating critical community amongst grassroots organisers and practitioners.
3. *Culture Hack Community*: A close-knit community-of-practice including journalists, activists and cultural catalysts that create and amplify content within interventions; subscribe to CHL publications; and utilise the curriculum.
4. *Catalysed Communities*: These communities have been impacted and integrated into a CHL-related intervention that they form a part of. They are the growing network of culture hackers that influence others within their respective spheres and drive the scale and impact of interventions.