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Interpreting Spiritual Ecology for Modern Urban Planning

Increasing Understanding of Personal Responsibility, Community Awareness, Interdependent Action, and Spiritual Awakening in Communities

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Abstract

Interpreting Spiritual Ecology for Modern Urban Planning

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The paper begins by describing limitations in city planning approaches that originate from worldviews that do not meet long-term community environmental, economic, or spiritual needs. It posits that a graduate-level education in city planning must go beyond solutions derived or implemented through data and engineering to solutions that build human dignity, well-being, and community through relational awareness and self-reflexive practice. This paper then introduces and defines, through examples and case studies, a branch of study called "spiritual ecology" that can provide a path beyond those limitations. The examples and case studies focus on several overarching themes such as Animism; ways of knowing such as deep patience, wisdom-seeking, observation, and reverence; principles of action such as self-restraint; systems thinking frameworks such as deep ecology and "interbeing"; community development through self-reflexive practice; and decentralized, participative systems. The paper explains, through the sections, how spiritual ecology logic and

principles stemming from these overarching themes can be applied to city planning. The paper then examines the Thai Sufficiency Economy as a working model for implementation of spiritual ecology logic and principles. Throughout, the paper also explains why spiritual ecology is necessary for a graduate study in city planning. Lastly, a one-semester curriculum for a graduate course in Spiritual Ecology is outlined.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Problem

The education of city planners in modern universities emphasizes the creation and analysis of scientifically generated data and engineering to examine infrastructural, systemic, and social planning problems, as well as influence the creation of solutions. While data and engineering are very important, they limit planners to finding and using data- and engineering-oriented solutions, rather than solutions that make use of the total awareness, valuation, and skills of human beings.

For example, there are planning solutions that can be implemented by engaging community relationships and creating awareness about the larger community each resident is acting within. For example, we can solve traffic problems around schools by coordinating carpools and "walking-trains," rather than building more roads. Instead of more roads, we build relationships. These types of solutions also add to the depth of what it means to be a true community--a relational experience that provides meaning and well-being to its members through social interaction; mutual cooperation; and "recognizing the problems of others."[1] This solution creates reciprocal and meaningful exchange between the various "parts" of the "system"—families going to school—rather than creating more space or better flow for atomistic entities achieving goals without exchange.

From a larger environmental perspective, solutions that emphasize relationships and interdependence also minimize our carbon footprints because they involve cooperative action. The reduction of carbon footprints underscores the connection between urban humans and the natural world from which we draw resources. Many more city planning

[1] Bond, 19.

problems, whose root is actually a poverty of relationships and caring, as well as disengagement from personal responsibility, rather than a poverty of infrastructure or money, can be solved in this way.

The focus on data and engineering solutions also fails to include awareness of the entire system we as a culture operate in. For instance, even while cities acknowledge climate change through climate resilience plans and push towards "greener" technology, the spatial fabric and ideologies of many cities is still based on old economic, infrastructure, planning, and hierarchical-thinking models that assume access to nonrenewable energy sources. For instance, urban and suburban core spatial segregations rely on the personal automobile and burning of gasoline. These models are self-reinforcing and make it difficult for urban residents to take on moral accountability for environmental degradation, by thinking like an interdependent community, with core goals based on core values.

In addition to non-systemic approaches to natural resources, modern economic ideologies such as neo-liberalist economics and globalism promote and demand values such as overconsumption that obliterate a community's awareness of their natural surroundings and cultural heritage. These ideologies reduce economics to the production of objects that have purely material value, rather than embedding economics in the richness of cultural heritage and individual professional mastery and creativity. Essentially our current ideologies about economics substitute engineered infrastructural systems for the collective human need to evolve spiritually: to grow smaller in attachment to the material world, but larger in wisdom, kindness and friendliness, through acknowledging and acting with personal responsibility.

Planning schools strive to balance this strong focus on data and engineering with courses that address communication and relational understanding through qualitative and participatory methods; proffering a complex understanding of the city inhabitants and social justice through rights-to-the-city and identity-oriented literature; study of

complexity theory through "wicked problems" and systems thinking literature; as well as conflict resolution techniques. Yet, these courses don't necessarily cause the student to develop a transpersonal understanding of life, in which they attend to others as beings whom they are intimately connected. Patricia A. Wilson, professor in Community and Regional Planning, validates that "cultivating self-awareness may be the most immediate and effective leverage point to engaged practitioners for effecting change."[2] To have a deep caring for others stemming from transpersonal awareness, as shown by Gandhi, St. Francis of Assisi, and Buddhist philosophy is what drives personal action that is cognizant of the need of other communities, human and nature, alongside one's own. As Pope Francis wrote, "When our hearts are authentically open to the universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one."[3] It is through a boundaryless caring that we apprehend the "social ecology" and "environmental ecology" as part of a whole system, which needs attention and treatment as one entity.[4] Essentially, our imagination of social systems, economics, and ecology must be driven by caring, through mobilization of the human spirit. This caring must be inculcated through the planning education, to counteract the learned atomistic behavior inherent in those growing up in the present socio-economic atmosphere.

As a counterpoint to the incomplete focus of city planning education programs, I will be examining a branch of study called spiritual ecology, that proposes alternate methods of perceiving the human relationship to nature, community, spirit, and economics. Spiritual ecology is a way of being in the world and encompasses many worldwide beliefs and practices. Spiritual ecology proposes that nature is something more than an insensate accumulation of resources that can be used, transformed, and discarded at will, as is typified by the modern technological use of nature. Nature is also, even more than an interdependent network of biological processes playing out as ecosystem, as is typified by

[2] Wilson, 2.
[3] Pope Francis, section 47.
[4] *Ibid,* section 139.

a modern ecological view of nature. Spiritual ecology supposes that humans are spiritual beings in constant relationship and interdependence with the natural world and the spiritual world; that this connection comprises a cohesive consciousness, and that social and ecological domains are best regulated through moral and spiritual systems. Additionally, spiritual ecology recognizes the "embeddedness of individuals and societies in the cyclical processes of nature."[5]

Spiritual ecology emanates from myriad points; that is, from multiple cultures in multiple locations, across tens of thousands of years. Spiritual ecology evolved worldwide as the nexus between indigenous religious and conservation beliefs and practices, as Animistic beliefs. It has been absorbed into contemporary religions, has appeared in the writings of Western transcendentalists like Henry David Thoreau, expounded in the beliefs of western conservationists such as Aldo Leopold and John Muir, discovered in the science of physicists, employed in the community development work of philosophers and activists such as Gandhi, and is manifest in both modern and ancient Buddhist teachings. It was also expressed in the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis, as well as, saturates the work of modern systems theory thinkers like Otto Sharmer, Arne Ness, Joanna Macy, and many more. As hinted above, spiritual ecology isn't just one thing; it's a worldview, expressed in human civilizations through many types of beliefs, actions, systems, and stories. Spiritual ecology can be and has derived through many frameworks (spiritual, scientific, community development), and I will attempt to explain this tandem evolution in ensuing sections.

In the context of city planning, spiritual ecology provides alternative ways of conceiving solutions that detour from the current ideological influences on planning that include:

- anthropocentrism;
- subject/object, human/non-human, animate/inanimate, I/you divisions;

[5] Capra, 326.

- hierarchical and dominance thinking;
- atomistic unit theories; and
- the human life purpose is to succeed financially through competitive struggle.

As such, I will generally discuss how those ideologies limit city planning, and how planners could instead benefit from alternative ways of understanding the world that Spiritual Ecology describes, such as:

- bioegalitarianism (the equal right for all life to flourish);
- interdependent welfare;
- collective intelligence;
- whole systems intelligence; and
- the human life purpose is to gather wisdom; spiritually awaken through self-reflexive evolution.

The type of actions that arise out of spiritual ecology movements and from theorists generally express the following qualities:

- awareness of whole systems;
- cooperative action;
- a series of reflexive processes including self-restraint, self-inquiry, self-education, self-reliance, self-mastery;
- values-based community organization; and
- spiritual awakening.

Infrastructural systems derived from spiritual ecology movements:

- are decentralized;
- involve high citizen/member participation;
- evolve and expand through relationships; and
- limit growth, or acknowledge cycles in which action must be altered to maintain balance.

Methods

A review of spiritual ecology literature was conducted to deduce similarities across cultures and contexts that can be applied in urban, multicultural and multifaith contexts. From this review, several themes were gathered (listed in the abstract) that appeared to be core ideas. The literature review suggested that in communities employing spiritual ecology systems, spiritual and ecological preservation actions are mutually reinforcing and there is a clear two-way relationship of *tending* and *being cared for* that happens between humans, spiritual forces, and the earth. Consequently, actions that describe the "tending and being cared for" cycle, such as deep patience, observation, wisdom-seeking, reverence, and self-restraint are included in the discussion. Additionally, the readings suggested that qualities such as perceiving of inner truth, adherence to truth in action, introspection, and self-inquiry guided the actions and thoughts of spiritual ecologists. This led me to review value philosophies as examples of spiritual ecology planning practices. Through evaluation of literature pertaining to value philosophies such as Buddhism, Deep Ecology, Gandhi's socio-political movement, Bhutan's Gross National Happiness and the Thai Sufficiency Economy, it became apparent that trends associated with capitalist, neo-liberal and globalist ideologies inherited from mechanistic philosophies were negatively impacting social and economic systems globally. In some cases, the value philosophies listed above were a reaction, or a resistance, to these trends. Therefore, the introduction includes a section describing the contrasting ideologies between extant and spiritual ecology philosophies, in order to provide organizational logic to the contrasting of ideologies included in all sections. I also include a section describing the type of actions and infrastructural systems that arise out of spiritual ecology systems to provide a basis for what will be described as the spiritual ecology examples unfold. The literature also contained a sizable volume of spiritual ecology information emanating from religions.

However, in order to curtail the length of the report to reasonable limits, I chose one religion with a comprehensive base of published scholarly debate, Buddhism, from which to describe principles of spiritual ecology that could be applied to city planning and that were representative of non-harming religious philosophies. Other religions' beliefs are represented in the one-semester curriculum. One other significant theme was systems awareness, which I address directly in chapters three through five, but it could also be said that the term 'spiritual ecology' is interchangeable with the term 'systems awareness,' which means systems awareness is integrated throughout the paper.

Organization

The field of spiritual ecology literature and practice is vast and varied from worldwide context, therefore a simple definition of the term, while provided in the introduction, cannot be truly grasped without examples. Consequently, I structured the definition of spiritual ecology to unfold across several chapters, drawn out in examples of how spiritual ecology has been, and is currently being applied in various contexts. Each section also includes a description of how the spiritual ecology logic and principles discussed are important to a graduate education in planning. Chapter 1 describes: how indigenous people's perceptions of nature inform how we gather information for city planning; modern interpretations of wisdom through the field of Ecological Wisdom; and how we perceive and approach the communities we serve. Chapter 2 introduces Buddhism as a philosophy that deeply values the natural biotic community, shown through proscribed actions toward other humans and other species. The chapter introduces the concepts of "causing least harm" and self-restraint. Chapter 3 follows up with how self-restraint as a concept can be applied to city planning through actions that modify social norms and values. Deep Ecology, a philosophy which suggests the need for societal values change to combat environmental degradation, is introduced within the context of a case study and developed further into a discussion about values change through systems awareness.

Chapter 4 presents the Buddhist principle of interdependence occurring through systems awareness as being apprehended by individuals in various vocations. The Buddhist term "interbeing" is also introduced. I include a description of Jane Jacob's critique of rationalist planning in housing, which failed to perceive the interbeing nature of those communities. I then propose that Jane Jacob's theories do not adequately account for the true change-making agent, which is the individual community member. Chapter 5 describes the self-reflexive cycle, a series of actions that change the community through self-change in individuals and groups, which I saw reoccurring in many case studies. I describe the planner's role in the self-reflexive cycle, and how it manifests in structural systems such as waste and water management. In the next chapter, I examine the Thai Sufficiency Economy, which is a functional economy employing spiritual ecology principles. Finally, I provide a summary and one-semester graduate curriculum in spiritual ecology which guides students through literature, case studies, and transpersonal learning experiences that are designed to help students understand the transpersonal role of the planner.

Chapter 2: Spiritual Ecology as Animism--Practicing Deep Patience, Observation, Inquiry and Wisdom

Animism, one of the major components of spiritual ecology, comprises both the most spatially diverse, as well as, longest existing religion on the planet, dating back 60-80,000 years ago.[6] Neither is Animism outdated, but currently exists alongside the other major religions, having been incorporated into "Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism,… Islam", and European pagan practices.[7] Animism suggests that "spiritual powers permeate and animate nature, inhabiting, animals, rocks," places, "and other objects in the environment."[8] For instance, a rock or tree may have a type of "personhood," or spirit that resides within it, to which humans have ongoing relationships.[9] In an example in Thai culture, the spirit of a deceased person may take up residence in a tree after leaving the human body. Animism is an important idea in spiritual ecology because the possibility of human souls transmigrating into nature elements "humanizes nature and naturalizes humans."[10] It creates communion between humans and individual trees, which naturally extends human kindredness with all trees.

The idea that kindredship with one tree enlarges the respect given to all trees defines how Animists perceive the world. By blurring self-isolating hierarchies between humans and nature, Animism sets the space for personal and societal inclinations toward ethical normative standards that drive societal and cultural action (policy, in the urban setting) and personal development. For example, in the Ojibwe culture of Canada, "the world is full of people, only some of whom are human." The Ojibwe distinguish between persons and

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[6] Sponsel, 10.
[7] *Ibid,* 10-11.
[8] *Ibid,* 9
[9] Harvey, 18
[10] Sponsel, 2

objects, but conceive of a wider category of "personhood" than in Western beliefs. For instance, there are "'human persons', 'rocks persons', 'bear persons' and others."[11] However, "recognizing personhood in other non-human individuals is not innate, but taught by elders; those who learn to recognize personhood in other non-human individuals are intended to become better, more respectful persons."[12] Animism in Ojibwe culture contributes to the cultural goal of developing wisdom because, since "it is not always evident that some persons with whom animists relate are indeed persons until they are engaged with, animists have to learn not only ethics but empirical knowledge"; and "the sum of knowledge and ethical behaviour should be labelled wisdom."[13]

In tandem, Western Apache culture also lays emphasis on developing "smoothness of mind...resilience of mind...and steadiness of mind by acquiring bodies of knowledge and applying them critically to the workings of one's mind."[14] The Teton Sioux and other Native American cultures, as well, left records of their customs of observing nature intensely: "Sometimes we boys would sit motionless and watch the swallows, the tiny ants, or perhaps some small animal at its work and ponder its industry and ingenuity...Everything was possessed of personality, only differing from us. Knowledge was inherent in all things. The world was a library and its books were the stones, leaves, grass, brooks, and the birds and animals that shared, alike with us, the storms and blessings of earth."[15]

Such intense observation and focus on accumulating bodies of knowledge and wisdom requires and promotes practices such as deep patience, observation, and inquiry. Use of these three practices, patience, observation, and inquiry to perceive the intrinsic value of what is already in a place echoes the insights of Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) and her

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[11] Harvey, 18
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid,* 173.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Nerburn, 15-16.

critique of the rationalist planning policies of Robert Moses (1888-1981) and his contemporaries Baron Haussmann (1809-1891) and Le Corbusier (1887-1965). By observing the inherent order already in place in the neighborhoods rationalist planners sought to improve, Jacobs revealed the 'systems thinking' integral to good planning: acknowledgement of the 'heart of the community.' That is, the social interconnections, as well as, the interspersed businesses and liminal spaces such as porches that supported the interdependent, mutual welfare of the entire community.

Practicing deep patience, observation, and inquiry allowed the descriptions of a complex system (a functioning neighborhood) to arise, to inscribe its own value on the experience of the researcher/observer. By engaging in the three practices of deep patience, observation, and inquiry, the researcher/observer avoids imposing answers onto spaces that already have answers inherent to the place.

Modern spiritual ecology practice also echoes the development and practice of wisdom expressed in the field of Ecological Wisdom. Editors Bo Yang and Robert Young describe Ecological Wisdom as enabling a "person, community, or organization to achieve" the "ideal state of the unity of moral knowledge and virtuous action," as expressed by the neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming (1472-1529). [16] This ideal state is achieved through the use of modern scientific and engineering practice, practical knowledge from multiple disciplines, as well as an ecological conscience or moral mandate that is ecologically inspired, which combine together as wisdom in application. The concept of ecological conscience in Western ecology is credited to Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), considered the father of modern Western conservation practice, however, the concept of ecological conscience has existed for many hundreds of years in practice, within cultures exhibiting spiritual ecology beliefs. The Chinese philosopher Mingying Deng qualifies an ecological conscience as the "coalesced nexus of 'the consciousness of being part of a more-than-human whole; the sense of moral goodness of one's own conduct,

[16] Yang and Young, xviii.

intentions, or character; and a feeling of ethical obligation to do right or be good in the best interest of the more-than-human whole."[17]

Landscape Architect, Environmental Planner, and Professor Ian L. McHarg (1920-2001) embodied this ecological conscience through his belief that "human design decisions should be based on ecological awareness. All design should express a culture-nature symbiosis and meet human needs while being beneficial to life as a whole. Design should learn from nature and support the cultural transformation towards a more widely held ecological worldview."[18] McHarg activated the principle of deep observation through his development of the technique of layer cake maps, in which mylar maps containing different types of ecological and spatial data could be layered and cognitively synthesized in order to holistically determine best land uses. This preceded the development of Geographic Information System [GIS] mapping software.[19] He also activated the principle of deep inquiry through a "trans-disciplinary dialogue" conducted in his course "Man and the Environment," as well as on national TV. Guest speakers contributed knowledge from a wide array of fields, including: "philosophy, theology, anthropology, psychology, economics, epidemiology, sociology, and poetry."[20]

These practices of deep patience, observation, inquiry, and gathering and applying wisdom together comprise another concept, Reverence. By accepting the wisdom inherent in nature, in other beings, and in other humans, we both feel and express reverence for life. How would the concept of reverence play into planning? Would planners' processes change if they felt reverence for the communities they served? Might reverence bring about a different type of listening from planners in interactions with community members? Might it illicit a different type of listening from citizens? Might it illicit solutions that don't just offer opportunities for economic gain, like bringing office spaces and retail spaces to the

[17] *Ibid,* xix.
[18] Wahl.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*

neighborhoods, but opportunities for relational support, through care networks, affordable childcare, debt management, and other social services; solutions that increase support and well-being by acknowledging a person in their total environment, doing their best within various limitations.

Chapter 3: Spiritual Ecology Through Buddhism

Other spiritual philosophies have had a large impact on the field of spiritual ecology. Of the many spiritual philosophies, Buddhism is significant to the field of spiritual ecology in its recognition of humans as equal actors within a nature community, all of whom are tied together on a course towards spiritual evolution. The field of Buddhism is also significant because it has a 2,500-year-old history of practice in nonviolence, as well as a long-recorded history of scholarly debate and discussion about its practices and the results of those practices.[21]

The beliefs of Buddhism closely relate personal life and goals to that of nature. Buddhist philosophy is based on the premise that all sentient beings experience birth, suffering, aging, and death. The way to end suffering is by seeking and achieving spiritual awakening, or Enlightenment (*nirvana*), which ceases the cycle of endless rebirths and suffering. The way to achieve enlightenment is by following the Dharma, which can be described as 'the way things are' or 'the laws of nature.'[22] In some Buddhist writings, "every particle of existence was infused with Buddha-nature, making the natural universe a spiritual one as well."[23] Zen Buddhists "saw Enlightenment as an experience to be had in this world and in this body. Disregard of the natural world, therefore, could not be allowed."[24] From these descriptions, we can understand that Buddhists locate themselves as actors within a biotic community, and associate this community with their own spiritual awakening.

This immersion into the laws of nature, for Buddhist monks, translates into a monastic code of over two hundred regulations that prevent monks from knowingly

[21] Sponsel, 31.
[22] Dharma Data.
[23] Tucker, 168.
[24] *Ibid, 169.*

harming animals, plants, water, or any visible organisms.[25] For laypersons, it translates more broadly into living precepts such as vegetarianism, nonviolence (*ahimsa*), compassion (*karuna*), and lovingkindness (*metta*), toward all human, plant and animal life.[26] All of these actions describe a living manual for bioegalitarianism, the belief in the equal right for all creatures to live and flourish. In practice, even while Buddhists strive to prevent harm towards other living beings, they realize that some harm will come to other beings inadvertently just by walking, eating, or even breathing, yet, they engage in these modifications of their daily living routines, or patterns of self-restraint, by striving to cause the *least* harm possible.

The Buddhist, hence, locates him/herself in a community of living beings, on a momentary basis, where s/he respects and supports the biotic community in its will to flourish, by means of self-restraining actions. With respect to planner's education, these worldviews are helpful in recalibrating attitudes toward nature upheld by Judeo-Christian religions, which pose humans as the master of nature, and hence sees little need for societal self-restraint with respect to nature.[27] Since the education of planners in the U.S. happens within a culture derived from Judeo-Christian views of and policy toward nature, it is important to study other worldviews that defocus and decenter those beliefs, which limit systems awareness. Additionally, ideas about causing the *least* harm possible counter neoliberalist economic ideals about consumerism and constant growth, because it acknowledges other ways to achieve well-being for all beyond materialism and creating profit.

[25] Sponsel 14.
[26] Alexander *et al.*, 81.
[27] Sachdeva, 6.

Chapter 4: Self-Restraint and Systems Awareness

Buddhists and other cultures engage in self-restraint *because* it is a corollary of acknowledging the rights of the nature community to flourish (it is also mutually beneficial since it maintains ecological diversity). This concentration on causing the least harm by the conscious choice of self-restraint is vastly applicable to planning policies since planners essentially strive to cause the least harm by creating policies that: promote equity, deflect the impact of an unchecked financial market, and determine appropriate areas for growth to reduce environmental impact.

We can take a look at a modern urban planning solution and begin to deconstruct it with this worldview. The plastic bag ban passed by the City of Austin, Texas, in 2012 represents an example of connecting the awareness of living within a biotic community with planning policies. The plastic bag ban could be interpreted as created in order to cause the least harm (reduces plastic trash in the environment, reduces plastic bags in the diet of animals, reduces mosquitoes breeding in stagnant water caused by clogged sewage drains, reduces spending of money on clean-up) through self-restraint (resisting the ease of using free plastic bags from stores, disallowing free plastic bag supply) by modifying personal behavior (bringing one's own bag). The city itself acknowledges the concept of consciously modifying personal behavior as a tool in planning and city legislation:

> "To better understand how the plastic bag banning movement became so rampantly popular over the last several decades warrants an examination of social norms and their roles in determining societal behavior. Social norms are the 'appropriate' behaviors according to the ideas and beliefs of a society, and are often associated with a number of movements around the world, including those with an environmental prominence. The most direct way to address and change the pre-existing norms is to craft legislation which is designed to alter the behavior of the citizen. Such was the case with the bag reduction ordinance passed in Austin. While some may view governmental involvement an imposition of unwanted control, it is often the case that heavier handed intervention techniques in the form of legislation mandating change become needed. And in this scenario, the more

intense efforts will produce larger gains in terms of a social behavioral adaptation."[28]

Modifying personal behavior and social norms is a hallmark of spiritual ecology systems, since the foci of the system resides in the individual. That is, the responsibility is on the individual to engage in cooperative behaviors that are beneficial to self and the larger community. Essentially, the individual derives his/her meaning and security from the broader community by being responsible to it; humans too used to derive their meaning from the broader world called nature. From the urban planning perspective, modifying personal behavior and social norms can create impactful results, that can be seen in areas such as: using public transportation, recycling and reuse, water use, and land preservation. Modifying social norms legislatively is the equivalent of "requiring" residents to derive their meaning from the broader community of nature by accepting their "place" within the larger community of the biotic world. Of course, planners can achieve plastic bag bans and use of public transportation without awareness of spiritual ecology, but understanding the components of why it works (because it evinces the relationship between the micro-entity, the city, to the larger natural world) is a useful tool for analyzing potential solution paths in the future.

Another example, also implemented by Austin Resource Recovery, is its "Materials Marketplace."[29] This system operates similar to Craigslist, in which companies can connect with each other via an online platform for the purpose of acquiring or offloading waste materials from and to other organizations, rather than sending it to the landfill. This system also involves self-restraining actions through modification of social norms and personal behaviors, by creating an alternative to uncaringly sending undesired materials to landfills. This system not only creates a structural alternative to the normative action of sending waste materials to landfills but also creates value for the material that was seen as "waste." Additionally, the system increases relationships and potential for future

[28] Waters, 7.
[29] https://austinmaterialsmarketplace.org/

relationships, while reducing the environmental strain of processing the waste. The Materials Marketplace system goes beyond an atomistic view of life, in which each person achieves ends in their own privatized world, and instead is based on a view of life as a system of interrelated relationships.

Some spiritual ecologists, such as those from the "deep ecology" movement would also say that the Materials Marketplace, or Austin Resource Recovery does not go deep enough into the aspect of modifying social norms. Arne Naess (1937-2004), who coined the term "deep ecology," identified two types of environmentalism: shallow ecology and deep ecology. Shallow ecology identified solutions, often technological in approach, such as recycling that did not require fundamental change to ideologies, whereas deep ecology proposed change at the level of values change. Naess was inspired by Gandhi's systems change approach through *ahimsa* (nonviolence), as well as, Baruch Spinoza's philosophy of God-infused nature. Naess and George Sessions formalized a philosophy for deep ecology through an eight-point statement in order to draw broad agreement for ultimate goals across schools of religions and environmentalists. In this composition, they stated that the value of life on earth was independent of human value for it, and that the richness and diversity of life are values in and of themselves, while also contributing to human and non-human value. They then added that humans do not have the right to impede this value, that human impact is causing measurable harm, and that fundamental systemic change needs to be initiated.[30] Additionally, the eight-point "platform is not meant to be a rigid set of doctrinaire statements, but rather a set of discussion points, open to modification by people who broadly accept them."[31]

In the context of Austin Refuse Recovery and the Materials Exchanges, we could say that they stopped short at a technological change (a website for material exchange), rather than true values change, by not asking businesses to use less and buy less in the first

[30] Sessions.
[31] Harding.

place. For instance, deep ecology value change might involve the city requiring businesses to undergo resource-efficiency consulting. This process would help businesses engage in a self-inquiry process that would lead to eliminating process inefficiencies and short-sighted choices that lead to waste. At an even deeper level, the same self-inquiry process might lead to perceptions about how and why the business chooses its suppliers. An investigation into whether those suppliers engaged in environmentally sound business practices would be an appropriate action.

For instance, Judy Wicks, the founder and owner of The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE), and the Whitedog Cafe Foundation describes:

> It was a transformational moment, when I realized that there is no such thing as one sustainable business, no matter how good the practices were within my company, no matter if I composted and recycled and bought from farmers and used [renewable] energy and so on, that it was a drop in the bucket. I had to go outside my company and start working with my competitors, to build a whole system based on those values.[32]

She went on to form a foundation that taught her competitors how to "buy humanely raised pork from other local family farms" and "why it was important." She also developed a decentralized network of "place-based" businesses that was an alternative to the "corporate, chain store economy." Ms. Wick realized her inability to achieve full change without the values change and cooperation of everyone else that was also participating in, and thus constantly recreating that system. Similar to the plastic bag ban, where purely voluntary use of cloth bags is ineffectual, Ms. Wick's self-reliance in her sustainability actions can only achieve a limited amount without the cooperation of others, and requires her to acknowledge the relationship of her actions to the actions of the broader community at large. [33]

[32] Scharmer, 51.
[33] *Ibid*, 51.

Spiritual ecology is thus relevant to a planner's education in its applicability for theory; for instance, theorizing about the implications of systems change as modifying social norms and behaviors, in addition to change through technological solutions. Additionally, learning to analyze case study systems and planning solutions by analyzing the values inherent behind them, such as self-restraint, is also important. It's important because it sets the stage for a practice of planning that goes well beyond simply mitigating (through engineering or future land planning) the outsized toll of the community's desire on the environment. The practice would instead drive personal values change that creates policy and actions which complement the creation and dissolution cycles of the natural world. These types of considerations turn the planner's preoccupation from being reactive to market trends and community input to being proactive towards the community's needs in the context of the nature community. Additionally, incorporating the study of ideas such as self-restraint, which are time-tested ecological practices employed in civilizations around the world, decenters the western and modernist mindset, providing a greater range of possibilities for solutions.

From a systems perspective, analyzing planning solutions in terms of concepts like deep ecology helps planners understand the limits and gradations to which their solutions are truly disruptive of the current system they are trying to change. It also helps planners understand whether they are creating viable alternatives to the current system; alternatives that achieve change through the participation of the chain of interconnected stakeholders.

Chapter 5: "Interbeing" in Planning

One other fundamental Buddhist teaching is the concept of *annatā* or no-self, closely related to *sūnyatā*, emptiness, which understands the sensing of the phenomenal worlds as constantly arising and falling away, so that that sensation of a consistent self, (I or me), is actually an illusion. Systems theory author Joanna Macy describes it from the metaphor of a fire: "The flame burns because it is in constant interaction with its environment, because 'matter is going in and out' in the process of combustion. In like manner, the cognitive system is maintained and consists of the continual exchange, processing, and transformation of information that flows through it, from and to the surrounding world," --essentially "the individual 'self' is but an intrinsic part of a larger 'self' of system." [34] This philosophy is what the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh calls "interbeing" and is strongly related to 'interdependence ' in Buddhist philosophy.

To emphasize the importance of *annatā* (no-self), and corroborate beyond the religious and theoretical level, I would like to insert the verification of *annatā* from other career fields and cultures. Other individuals from other cultures came to understand the dignity of natural life though the indivisibility of, interrelatedness between, and interdependence of living beings upon each other. Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), considered the father of modern Western conservation practice, came to recognize the eminence and aliveness of nature as a functional, interdependent whole through an uncommon encounter with a wolf during a picnic. After killing the wolf from the perspective of a hunter, Leopold had the opportunity to see a "green fire" die in the wolf's eyes as it passed away. This transcendent experience taught him that wolves and other predators are necessary for the southwestern ecosystem. He came to understand that labeling certain species as "good" or "bad," and then attempting to exterminate "bad species," a common practice during his

[34] Macy, 112-113.

time, was an anthropocentric worldview which limited the value in biodiversity and function of the entire system. [35]

Other individuals in other career fields came to similar conclusions at another magnitude of living matter. Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) was a physicist who came to understand that since "constantly interacting electromagnetic particles were the essence of matter, ...the identity and purpose of every object in the universe arose from its relationship to everything else. All things were in flux at all times. The continuing interaction at the molecular level of all matter--animate and inanimate--defined reality. It followed…that every organism, indeed every atom, had intrinsic value if only for the contribution it made to the ongoing reality of the universe."[36] Whitehead's description of electromagnetic particles represents 'new physics,' one which comprises the discoveries of quantum mechanics. His epiphany describes the idea that not only does every sentient being (in Buddhist terminology) have value and importance, but it derives its value, and contributes to others' value, through relationships with other sentient beings.

This worldview of "interbeing," of systems indivisibility, of a constant interplay of energy that can only be defined in relation to the whole, attested to by Animists, Buddhists, modern Western conservationists, and modern scientists proposes that creating systems and solutions based on a mechanistic worldview no longer (nor ever did) provide an accurate model for envisioning our civilizations, societies and cities. The mechanistic worldview believes that "any complex system can be understood from the properties of the parts," and that "there [are] fundamental structures, and then there [are] forces and mechanisms through which these interacted, which [give] rise to processes."[37]

In rationalistic planning, this meant that systems (cities) could be split into parts and reinterpreted based on a reconfiguration or replacement of parts, which would then

[35] Nash, 65.
[36] Nash, 60.
[37] Capra, 328-329.

give rise to the "ideal" city. Functionally, the 'process' of civilization could be fundamentally redetermined through new types and arrangements of structures. For instance, in the American housing projects of the 1950s and 60s, rationalistic planners tore down entire neighborhoods, replete with small businesses, that they perceived as blighted in order to impose a new, 'completely visioned' plan on the space. The new plan imposed new types of structures: "purely residential complexes, consisting of high rises separated by wide swaths of grass and tree."[38] Unfortunately, this superimposed landscape destroyed the constant exchange and mutual support that occurred between residents as a direct result of their interaction on the street level.

> As Jacobs noted, the rationalist planners, blind to the concrete reality of tenement life, failed to realize that the mix of businesses and residences increased the safety of the residents by providing "eyes on the street"—the neighborhood shopkeeper, who knew all the residents, was out sweeping his sidewalk early in the morning; the workers going to and from their jobs meant a steady stream of pedestrians; ... Parents transporting their children to and from school would appear on the street in the morning and again in the afternoon. Mothers with preschool children would head to the parks, workers would come out to eat lunch in the public spaces of the neighborhood, and shoppers would occupy the sidewalks as they frequented the area shops. The children playing on the sidewalks could easily be monitored by all of those people….By contrast, the new, "rational" housing projects were empty of life around the buildings for most of the day. The basketball courts and the lovely green parks were unsupervised because there was no one around, since the businesses that might have provided 'eyes on the sidewalk' had all been zoned out of the development. The tenement mother who formerly had lived no further above the street than the fourth floor of an 'inadequate' walkup, from the window of which she could supervise her children's play. But after receiving the 'help' of modernist urban planners, she found herself living in a thirtieth-floor, modern apartment. From such a distance, she could not possibly regulate what her children were up to, and, therefore, she, if responsible, could not allow them to spend time in those "common" areas.[39]

Jane Jacobs theorized that processes, essentially social exchanges and relationships, were already in play that were defining the healthy functioning of the neighborhood; not

[38] Callahan and Ikeda, 16.
[39] *Ibid.*

just the structures, population densities of the structures, or presence of parks and greenspace. This idea of process as the locus of a system corresponds with the interbeing worldview proposed by new physics, in which "process is primary, that every [sub-atomic] structure we observe is a manifestation of an underlying process."

Jane Jacobs recognized already existing processes as the catalyst for the idea that public spaces be configured to induce the potential for these social exchanges and relationships to take place: "under the right conditions, large numbers of people will choose to use public spaces…the more diverse in knowledge and tastes those people are for informal contact, the greater are the opportunities for mutually beneficial exchange of goods and ideas."[40] While her perspective of social processes as indicators of mutually beneficial results is accurate, it also reflects the fundamentally mechanistic worldview she is critiquing, by locating the determining actor outside the individual, in the structures, the public spaces. It limits the purview of planners to reconfiguring space, where planners' true purview is neither to simply railroad over, incorporate, nor impartially reflect the will of the community in efforts to reconceive the community life. Planners' true purview is to help instigate personal and spiritual awakening through values and normative behavior change in their community, that underscores the relationship of the community to the broader world, the city dwellers' relationship to other communities and nature.

This purview can be interpreted through the following description given of a Lakota observation:

> "The task of the tribal religion, if such a religion can be said to have a task, is to determine the proper relationship that the people of the tribe must have with other living beings." Spiritual practices become a way of learning how to live well, and this case, to live well with the natural world. They are methodologies for reaching an appropriate level of consciousness, or mindfulness, of the world. Further, these practices, which interlink behaviours, feelings and ethics, are completely identified with the very survival of people and the land.[41]

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[40] *Ibid,* 15

[41] Selin, 334.

Spiritual ecology provides the bridge to this role for planners, of developing mindfulness and relationship in residents, because it goes one step further beyond simply enhancing the potential for exchange, and even beyond the monolithic effect of structures (infrastructure) in determining community welfare. Spiritual ecology goes further by recognizing the component of human will, empowered by human spirit, as fundamental to the functioning of an interbeing city and community. By *human will empowered by human spirit*, I mean the intentional self-inquiry, self-education, self-reliance, and self-mastery, or spiritual awakening that accompanies people and systems embracing spiritual ecology. Below I will discuss several case studies that illustrate the self-reflexive components of self-inquiry, self-education, self-reliance, and self-mastery.

Chapter 6: Self-Reflexive Practice

I have already mentioned self-inquiry in the context of a company questioning its resource use. However, there are other types of self-inquiry relevant to spiritual ecology and planning. All worldviews and ideologies are the result of some type of self-inquiry, that is, the question of humans' relationship to the broader world. Individuals and cultures have also answered these questions. For instance, Vedic philosophy describes individuized soul, *atman*, residing in human, animal, and plant life set within the overarching soul, or eternal reality of *Brahman*. In the worldly planes of civic culture, we could describe this relationship awareness as an individual's awareness of their potential within their cultural, economic, and worldview system. For instance, in the process of transformation from colonized to self-governing, or economic dependence to economic independence, the individual begins to have awareness of their life as existing as part of a dysfunctional system. Another way to describe this idea is: an individual begins to have awareness of being in a system that does not meet their fundamental needs. In a spiritual ecology approach, this awareness sparks a process of self-inquiry in which one examines their own contribution to this system, because always locating the problem outside of oneself, on some other person, cultural tradition, or political framework means there would be no option for the affected person to change the circumstances.

Peter Senge, lecturer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), describes this thinking in a discussion with his colleague, C. Otto Scharmer, senior lecturer at MIT and cofounder of the Presencing Institute and MITx.u.lab. : "Organizations...work the way human beings create them. Yet people inside these organizations maintain that it is 'the system' that causes their problems...here's the essence of what systems thinking is about: People begin to consciously discover and account for how their own patterns of thought and interaction manifest on a large scale and create the very forces by which the

organization 'is doing it to me.' And then they complete that feedback loop."[42] Sharmer goes on to summarize, "The essence of systems thinking is to help people close the feedback loop between the enactment of systems on the behavioral level and its *source* on the level of awareness and thought."[43] The process of self-inquiry is, hence, necessary for true social and normative behavior change, since systems thinking defines human organizational (also civic) behavior as self-reinforcing.

The process of self-inquiry as part of the path toward systems change is illustrated in the Green Belt Movement in Kenya in the 1970s, spearheaded by Wangari Maathai (1940-2011). In response to reports of rural women in Kenya that they could no longer feed their families off the land resources, Maathai led her people in a self-inquiry process that helped them "to examine why they lacked agency to change their political, economic, and environmental circumstances. Participants began to understand that for years they had been placing their trust in leaders who had betrayed them and that they were sabotaging their lives by not working for the common good and failing to use their natural resources wisely."[44] This process of self-inquiry became the foundation for a series of cooperative actions involving planting trees to lessen deforestation and food insecurity, as well as combatting entrenched patriarchal cultural and political frameworks that reinforced poverty in women.

The process of self-reliance begins when individuals realize that they are implicated in making changes they wish to see. The nonviolent resistance movement against the British colonists in India, led by Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948) is also a good example. For Gandhi and his followers, the process of self-inquiry led to acknowledging their own cooperation with the dysfunctional system through purchasing of British goods. Consequently, Gandhi encouraged Indian citizens to boycott British goods; not to buy salt

[42] Scharmer, 62
[43] *Ibid*, 63.
[44] The Green Belt Movement.

from the British, to spin their own cotton, and weave their own cloth. By not buying British salt, and by making their own cotton thread and cloth, the Indian citizens embark on the process of self-reliance by terminating dependence upon the dysfunctional system. Part of this process of self-reliance is self-education, because, in this example, Indian citizens then needed to acquire (or relearn) the skills to harvest their own salt, or make their own cotton. Self-mastery arrives when the confluence of these ideas gains depth and breadth to where people become fully self-reliant. Yet, self-reliance is like a yin-yang sign--its opposite is contained within because opposites are always in relationship. Self-reliance is inherently cooperative in nature, and can only be fully realized when a community works together. Thus, self-mastery or self-awakening is realized when individuals come to recognize their interdependence with others through the cycle of cooperation and self-reliance.

This cycle of self-inquiry, self-reliance, self-education, and self-mastery is relevant to planners in many ways. An urban planner can enter the process of self-inquiry in several possible ways. Self-inquiry can begin with planners in their own circle engaging in Otto Sharmer's "uncovering shared intention," which suggests: "1) listening to your own intention or to what life calls you to do (listening to oneself) 2) listening to your core partners in the field (listening to others) 3) Listening to what you are called to do now (listening to what emerges)."[45] As well, planners can contemplate how or why, we as planners co-create realities that are economically or environmentally unsustainable, through feedback loops that do not draw connections between our policies and actual well-being. Self-inquiry can also be what planners lead groups of stakeholders through. Self-inquiry can focus not only on values that groups of stakeholders hold and want to incorporate into solutions, but on those stakeholders' individual actions in achieving those values. For instance, if people want to experience less traffic, do they attempt to use public transportation? If that is not possible, what are they doing to make that goal come true--through donations, volunteering, requesting work-at-home situations, creating carpool exchanges, or moving closer to work? In this case, stakeholders should come to understand

[45] Sharmer, 78.

that individual responsibility goes beyond electing leaders and requires concerted, cooperative effort. Essentially, it is the planner's duty to draw out to the residents their relationship to the broader world (nature and other communities), since what we call the "city" is most urban people's daily bubble. It is only through seeing this broader relationship that the community sees the need to engage in cooperative, sustainable behaviors. This leads us to the self-reliance-cooperative behavior cycle.

The concepts of self-reliance and self-education are difficult to conceive of in urban environments because our cities are highly centralized in terms of administration of services. For instance, very few residents care about amounts of household waste generated, because unrelated people (the trash collectors) take it from residents' driveways without any further involvement on residents' part. Residents generally are not confronted with the effects of their actions, which is, in Austin, the ironically lovely and odorous landmark of Trash Mountain. Essentially, Austinite's lack of *education* about their own actions regarding trash generation leads to a lack of personal responsibility, the opposite of self-reliance. Due to centralized trash disposal services, the city has effectively taken on the contributory and moral responsibility for zero-waste that should be distributed across the city population by means of actions at the individual household level. Peter Hershock, an author on Buddhist Economics, describes this type of situation as a devolution of interdependence into "patterns of dependence and independence," which can be healed through "patterns of mutual contribution."[46] This means, of course, not contribution of more trash, but less trash through mutual effort. Yet, this is hard since many people don't have land to initiate compost bins on, some apartments don't have recycle bins, and in general, everything we buy comes packaged in plastic. This chain of circumstances and actors that deepens our collective foothold in a dysfunctional system spotlights the following reflection by Hershock[47]:

[46] Hershock, 56.
[47] *Ibid*, 51.

"Interdependence, we can say, has no essential self-nature. It can mean increasing wealth, skillful means, and happiness. It can also mean deepening poverty, trouble, and suffering."

From the planning perspective, beneficial interdependence can be guided into being through a stakeholder self-inquiry process that maps and addresses personal responsibility across several industries, with many stakeholders, including: individual homeowners, grocery stores, retail stores, product designers and packagers, trucking services, and waste recovery services. In this case, self-reliance exhibits *decentralization* in its spread of responsibility across many parties. It also necessitates civic participation. Self-reliance (independence from a dysfunctional system) is achieved through *cooperative action*.

Rainwater management is another good example for the self-inquiry, self-reliance, self-education, self-mastery/self-awaking cycle. The industry is slowly coming to realize the extreme drawbacks of standard practice, a centralized water-diverting system, in which stormwater is channeled away from a developed site to nearby creeks and streams, or detention ponds. This is because evidence has shown that channeling water away from the site reduces underground water tables, increases stream bank erosion, and reduces the health of riparian areas, upon which many species and ecological functions are dependent. Due to deeper understanding of the complete water cycle, keeping rainwater water on-site is now considered best practice. This practice can be achieved through a distributed network of rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, and open space that is located on people's private properties, in common areas, and abutting housing developments. In this case, the cooperative efforts of individual homeowners and housing associations in individually and collectively managing water on their site supports a healthy water ecosystem in urban, suburban, or rural areas. The larger circle of cooperation also involves developers, architects, and landscape architects in their design of developments that constrains the spread of houses and lawns in order to provide common open space, with houses pre-installed with hardware for water catchment basins. The circle also includes planners, who cooperate by providing allowance or incentives for developers to create conservation design, and, LID hardware installation. In this situation, self-inquiry and self-education

may be initiated by planners, who would need to educate the public and developers about why decentralized networks are ecologically better than the standard practices. Self-education also takes place as residents learn to manage and maintain their rainwater systems, and self-reliance results from the cooperative action of all parties. Self-mastery and self-awakening arrive when people apprehend their selves in relation to the larger natural water system, fulfilling their role through "causing the least harm" towards the human and nature communities.[48]

One last example provides a model for how the self-inquiry, self-education, self-reliance, and self-mastery cycle incites personal transformation. The Cleveland Housing Network (CHN) provides affordable housing for underserved communities such as "homeowners unable to pay their utility bills or facing foreclosure, chronically homeless individuals who need permanent supportive housing, seniors striving to age in place, and families who seek the opportunity to improve their financial position and maximize opportunities for their children."[49] They work with a housing first model, working off the idea that placing families in homes in good neighborhoods creates the stability for them to transform their lives. Services are provided, such as long-term debt counseling, home energy conservation, homeownership preparation, career path counseling, and counseling regarding educational paths for homeowners' children. The Cleveland Housing Network also works on increasing the supply of affordable housing in the region through building and real estate partnerships.[50]

This solution model is significant, because self-reliance for each homeowner is promoted through personal supportive services that help them overcome their educational and skill limitations. Education is provided through the various types of life counseling, which initiates the process of self-inquiry. Through this self-inquiry, clients learn to better their

[48] Alexander, Low-Impact Development.
[49] CHN Housing Partners
[50] *Ibid.*

lives through planned, proactive actions, such as paying off debt and saving. Additionally, client testimony reveals that several entered degree programs to further their self-education and career options. This solution is interesting because it acknowledges the whole person; i.e. the whole person in the environment of problems that s/he may faces when being part of an underserved community. It then seeks to guide people into greater self-awareness through supportive services/counseling, and also sets the path for future stability across generations by providing counseling for homeowners' children's education.[51]

[51] *Ibid.*

Chapter 7: Thai Sufficiency Economy Case Study

The Thai Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) was developed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej along with "a host of thinkers in villages, schools, non-government organizations (NGOs), research institutes, religious centres, government departments and universities"[52] as a response to the negative impacts of rapid economic growth in Thailand, through its participation in the globalized market economy. Between the 1950s and 1980s, the Thai Economy experienced extreme growth due to expansion of agricultural exports, and infrastructural investments in roads and ports that connected rural areas to urban areas. From 1970-1997, Thailand transitioned to "export-oriented industrialization," functioning in globalized production chains, to where manufacturing exports exceeded agricultural exports by 1985. Large infrastructural projects were completed to service this industrialization, such as airports, ports, roads, power generation, and waste control services. Coupled with this were large foreign financial investments from the United States and East Asia, which increased the manufacturing economy and migrated a large number of job from rural to urban spaces.[53] Resulting from this rapid growth were negative social and environmental factors, including stark income inequality between urban and rural communities due to government policies that prioritized urban development; environmental degradation due to absence of environmental protection policies; the break-up of families and traditional communal labor practices, from family members migrating to cities for jobs; and loss of control, due to "demand, technology, capital, and techniques" that originated from outside Thai markets.[54] The teams of thinkers searched for answers on how to lessen the impact of financial crises originating from foreign markets on the Thai economy, and provide financial stability from fluctuating prices for agriculture exports.

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[52] *Thailand Human Development Report 2007,* 21.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Ibid,* 23-25.

They also searched for answers that did not neglect rural areas at the expanse of urban areas through development. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis that hit the Thai economy in 1997, SEP is based on the Buddhist concept of the Middle Way, which strives to stay away from extremes of living and strike a moderate path for fulfillment of basic needs. SEP is a "decision making framework"[55] based on core values of "moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity." Below, a diagram explains what the three values mean.

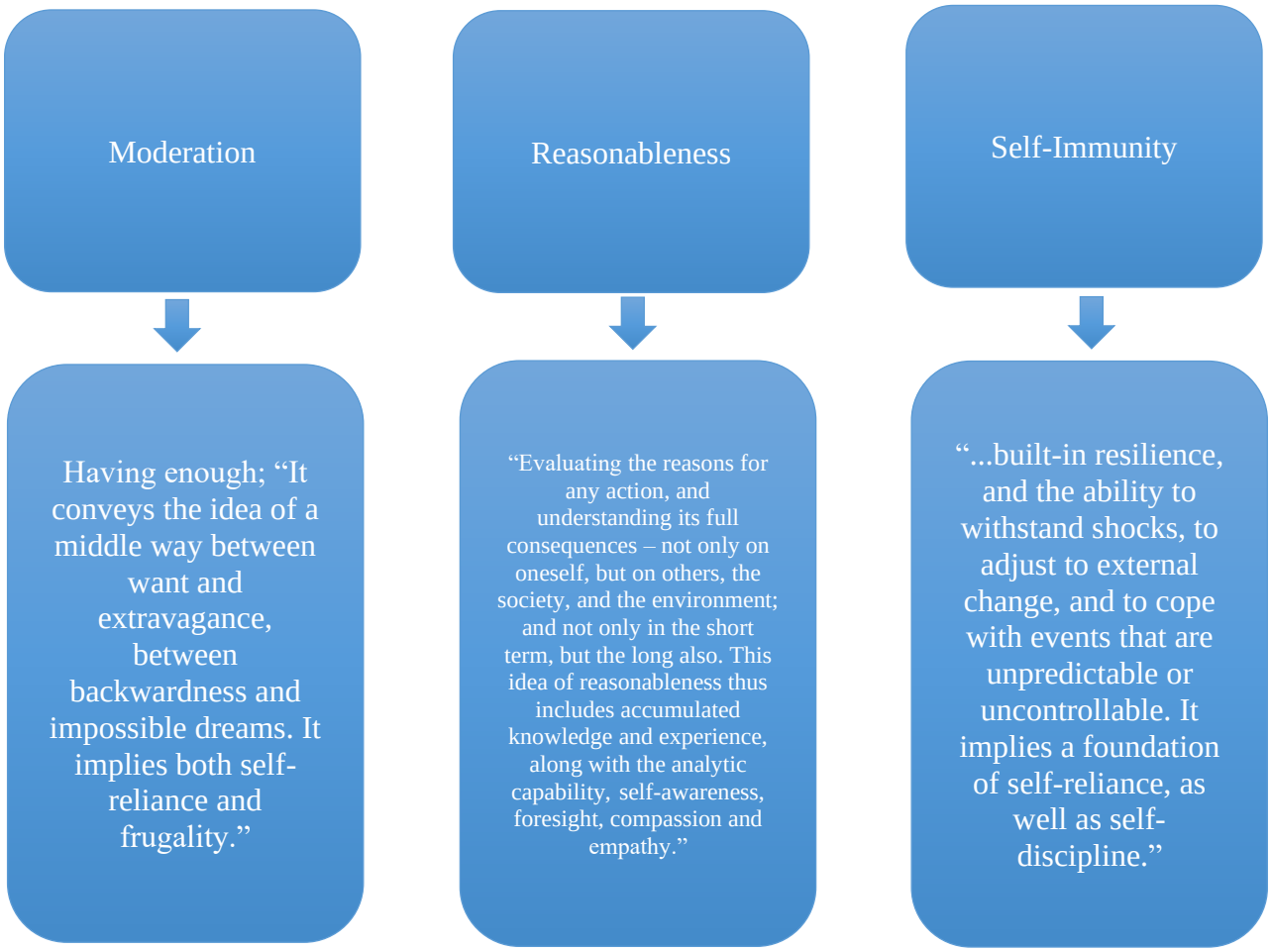

Figure 1: Moderation, Reasonableness, and Self-Immunity diagram[56]

[55] *A Practical Approach toward Sustainable Development*, 6.
[56] Thai Human Development Report 2007, 30.

In addition, decision-making is framed through the use of two other concepts:

Figure 2: Knowledge and Virtues infographic[57]

Through *moderation*, the Thai system provides a path for satisfaction, a cultural value that allows "having enough" as an acceptable goal. It describes a finite end to the constant craving associated with materialism, as well as, counters the pursuit of limitless growth touted by capitalism. The *moderation* principle identifies what Dr. Les Sponsel calls the "distinction between need versus greed" and is in alignment with following the Middle Path to modestly fulfill the four basic human needs outlined by the Buddha, "food, medicine, clothing and shelter."[58] In *reasonableness*, the Thai system assesses risk and decisions through frameworks of long and short-term impact, as well as analyzing the effect of one's actions on others in addition to oneself. The *Thailand Human Development Report 2007* explains *reasonableness* in this way: "Pursuing self-interest is not reasonable because it can result in conflict rather than happiness. Reason needs to be used with insight and compassion; then the result is wisdom rather than selfish 'rationality.'"[59] Through *self-immunity*, the Thai system creates a base platform of stability; future courses of action and risk are weighed based on one's ability to sustain risk, should the venture fail. *Knowledge*, through insight and prudent application, provides the framework for the application of wisdom in decision making; while *virtues*, also translated as *integrity*, incorporates "ethical

[57] A Practical Approach Toward Sustainable Development, 7.
[58] Sponsel, 34.
[59] *Thai Human Development Report*, 33.

behaviour, honesty and straightforwardness, but also tolerance, perseverance, a readiness to work hard and a refusal to exploit others."[60]

SEP is important to city planning because it establishes a norm of ethical values by which the community conducts business, personal, and civic affairs. This framework of ethical values is valuable because it functions at another strata from the impersonal functions of economic institutions and engineering solutions in resolving planning and development problems. These norms are also significant because they enable and scaffold "social capital" through community members considering the impact of their actions on others. Just as importantly, these norms employ individual choice and will in implementing personal and relational ethical standards, such as compassion, that factor into decision-making. Author Prasopchoke Mongsawad explains why SEP can provide urban planning answers that traditional economic and engineering solutions do not: "We all should be able to agree that the ultimate goal of development is not economic growth per se but, rather, to improve human well-being," and that:

> Improving human well-being does not only involve monetary or asset value; people's ability to make their own choices is now widely considered vital as well. The alleviation of poverty, the building of capabilities, the reduction of vulnerability, and the protection of civil and political freedom are the key elements needed to improve the quality of people's lives.[61]

The United Nations Development Programme concurs:

> Human development puts people and their wellbeing at the centre of development and provides an alternative to the traditional, more narrowly focused, economic growth development paradigm. Human development is about people, about expanding their choices and capabilities to live long, healthy, knowledgeable, and creative lives. Human development embraces equitable economic growth, sustainability, human rights, participation, security, and political freedom.[62]

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[60] *Thai Human Development Report*, 30.
[61] Mongsawad, 132.
[62] Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award.

As such, the cycle of self-inquiry, self-reliance, self-education, and self-mastery inherent in both spiritual ecology and SEP solutions becomes the method by which people achieve the stages of human development beyond mere monetary accumulation.

Mongsawad goes on to examine SEP in the context of the relationship between social capital and institutions as they contribute to human development. He cites author Gerald Meier in the opinion that "institutional failure can be caused by a wide range of economic and development problems," as well as other literature that identifies institutional failure as arising in part from cultural and societal issues that contribute to these institutional failures. He then references Deepa Narayan, who divides social capital into two types: government social capital and civil social capital. Government social capital "represents formal institutions, such as law and order and good governance," whereas civil social capital describes "informal institutions, such as trust, reciprocity, interpersonal networks, and norms."[63] He then goes on to say that civil social capital substitutes for the institutions in developing economies with absent or dysfunctional institutions, while civil social capital functions as complementary to institutions in developed economies. However, I would argue that even in developed economies, certain underserved populations do not benefit significantly from institutions. I would also argue that in some developed economies, the culture of civil social capital has degraded in favor of reliance on market solutions, leaving poorer populations without needed support.

Due to the already discussed principles of self-reliance, case studies in spiritual ecology and SEP examples suggest that city planners should support the development of civil social capital so that it partially supplants, or reduces reliance on the government social capital, since this feeds the self-reliance of community groups and hence reduces systems vulnerability to shock from external factors (I will explain this further in the next few paragraphs). Additionally, supporting communities to become self-reliant via greater civil social capital networks is beneficial because: 1) it increases the education and

[63] *Ibid*, 131.

awareness of residents as they come to understand their impact on the people and world around them through participative creation of local systems that meet their needs; 2) it increases civic participation since self-reliant actions are cooperative in nature; and 3) it increases sustainability, since in general, cooperative actions use less energy. Lastly, developing the capacity of civil social capital addresses social needs such as reduction of loneliness and isolation, and intergenerational interaction between various age groups as they face problems specific to their life phase. Whether civil social capital functions as the primary or complementary vehicle for institutional support to the community, Narayan identifies *trust* as a fundamental base of social capital, and therefore economic transactions. SEP provides the basis for an economy grounded in trust, and a guiding framework for city planning applications in Spiritual Ecology.

SEP provides examples for these economic applications in several realms: self-reliant agriculture, corporate responsibility in businesses, and city planning and governance. The *Thai Human Development Report 2007* documents many examples of farmers transitioning from cash crop farming by employing self-reliant agriculture methods that first supply basic food and herbal medicine needs for the family year-round. This technique is termed "New Theory Farming" and is significant because farmers who adhered to the system were able to pay off debt they accrued from cash crop farming, while earning more than they ever did as cash crop farmers. Farmers also transitioned away from chemical use because they realized that over time, it degraded the productivity of the land. Notable examples are the Inpaeng Network and Ban Bua community.[64] In this model, once basic needs are met,

> The second stage aimed at creating self-reliance at the community level by increasing the production and availability of local goods and services through mobilizing the surplus resources of households within a community. This might be done through cooperative forms of production, community savings groups, community health centres and community forms of a social safety net. The idea was to increase the local provision of goods and services by introducing some

[64] *Ibid*, 38-39.

> division of labour to achieve economies of scale and scope, while still relying principally on the community's own capacity and resources.[65]

The third stage involves selling surplus goods to neighboring communities, which helps the community "gain new technology and resources for projects, such as founding its own rice mill; to tap the services of banks and other economic institutions; and to negotiate with business corporations for mutual advantage."[66]

How is this model applicable to an urban society? This system is applicable because it involves the re-localization and decentralization of resources, information, technology, and solutions. Low and mid-technology solutions endemic to the place, and that are affordable to small businesses without incurring debt, are used to create food and supply security. The use of low and mid-technology allows these systems to be less expensive, less environmentally toxic, as well as easier to control and manage since partners are within the community. For instance, one resort owner affected by the 1997 Thai crisis began to grow "rice, vegetables, flowers, and fruit trees" on the resort property, while also using the resort waste to create organic fertilizers.

> As the resort's land was not enough to supply all its needs, she got the cooperation of surrounding villages to supply the deficit, and also helped train them in making fertilizer and other practices of organic farming. The employees of the resort were especially encouraged to participate. Next she invented a just-in-time system of supply by posting the following day's requirements of various articles on the local school's notice board. Local production expanded beyond food to include various cleaning materials made from local materials. As production increased, these articles were also supplied to other resorts in the area.
>
> The resort benefited from low production costs and reliable supplies. Surrounding farmers had a secure market and good prices because there were no middlemen. Soon the resort gained a reputation with the result that other resort owners, farmers, NGOs, and government officials came to learn – which gave the employees a sense of pride.[67]

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[65] *Thailand Human Development Report 2007,* 28.
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] *Ibid,* 47.

The development of local supplier networks, onsite food provision, and onsite waste management is essential to a city because, in the example earlier in this paper of Austin Resource Recovery building a self-inquiry process across stakeholders to reduce waste, it is an example of self-inquiry, self-reliance and right action by a business owner that leads to reduced waste at the source. Additionally, the development of diverse and local supply networks insulates businesses' supply-lines from shocks originating in non-local supply chains, keeps money in the local economy, and increases local jobs. Another form of insulation from shock also was created through the resort owner's development of civil social capital within her community between her employees, schools, and supply producers. "Insulation from shock" is an important principle in SEP because it prevents disasters (from poor decision making or from uncontrollable circumstances such as political and environmental events that send shockwaves through the market) that wipe out the means of individuals, families, and communities to help themselves. Lastly, this type of solution is relevant to an urban setting because it echoes the Cleveland Housing Network housing first model, which assists underserved communities in rebuilding their lives by creating a base of stability, a home--in the above example the base stability is a family farm--from which people can build on to develop greater means and capacity through their own actions.

Looking at planning problems through the lens of self-reliance and insulation from shock has also been demonstrated in other examples. One SEP solution implemented in the Koy-Rut-Tak-Wa community involved creating "house groups" of homes within close proximity to each other. Each group has a leader who represents the group in a community council. People in these house groups and community "look after each other and reach out to others," in addition to self-policing the neighborhood to prevent and reduce "violence, burglary, or drug or security problems."[68] Creating neighborhood networks, perhaps in groups of five house, in which people commit to look after or look out for each other can solve so many problems that cannot or need not be addressed by engineering and

[68] Mongsawad, 131.

infrastructure, such as, childcare, eldercare, pet care, support for caregivers, reduction of loneliness, temporary homes for people in transition, and transportation needs. This solution goes beyond creating a neighborhood Facebook page or developer-initiated block parties because it involves an actual commitment to a given set of values and helping-goals within the house groups. Additionally, this example can perform as "insulation from shock" because members of the house group have more relationships from which they can draw help before situations turn into emergency. Homelessness, a growing problem in urban areas, for instance, does not result just from a lack of finances, but also from a lack of helping relationships and family that would give someone a place to stay during difficult times. This example originated in a Muslim community in Thailand, however this type of solution is especially helpful in a racially, ethnically, and faith diverse communities, where customs for socialization and reaching out are not culturally shared and therefore not implemented, leaving weak social capital networks. The input needed from planners to the community to encourage such support networks is the idea or education, and support from the developer, who can help initiate some of these processes, or even include community gathering space in housing developments.

As shown above, SEP grounds its development focus in creating value and stability at the individual and family level, which then can be extrapolated by those individuals and families through their own self-reliant actions. With similar attention to the base level of stability, SEP also provides a model for corporate responsibility that is guided by a central philosophy of "belief in the value of the individual." The philosophy is enacted through a series of practices: hiring of young employees and training them rather than mid-career hiring; extensive investment in training current employees as technologies change; commitment to social responsibility; transparency; "adherence to fairness, business gains in a proper manner, no political alliances, no discriminatory treatment"; risk management; and environmental sustainability.[69] Siam Cement, a large multi-national company, used

[69] *Thailand Human Development Report 2007,* 51

these principles to recover from massive debt it incurred due to rapid growth before the 1997 crisis, to turn itself around, even adhering to these principles during its crisis.[70]

Smaller and mid-size companies have chosen to employ SEP principles through a process of slow, steady growth, in which, again, employees are treated with high regard through investments in training, employee benefits. Growth occurs only when expansions can be financed outright rather than through debt, versus, fast growth at the expense of debt, which involves higher risk and decisions that only consider the short-term. The slow, responsible, and ethical approach to growth increases the companies' reputations, which then increases trust, social capital, and networks, which feeds the company's growth. Here we see the principle of trust employed as the basis for economic philosophy, which then feeds the well-being of the people involved.[71]

SEP's involvement of corporate responsibility is relevant to city planning because a city is essentially managing the place that businesses engage in their activities. Therefore, how businesses engage in business is important to the city. The city is responsible, for instance, for the results of business activities such as business waste. The city also carries the responsibility for how business processes affect urban processes, such as how truck deliveries, one-day delivery and uber type car services affect traffic. The *Thai Human Development Report 2007* identifies some core characteristics of SEP company actions:

- operate under a long-term perspective
- really value their people
- genuinely focus on a range of stakeholders (including future generations)
- embrace ethical, social and environmentally friendly practices
- nurture innovation[72]

These principles can easily be applied not only directly to city planning through a philosophical approach to its decisions, but can also be the template by which cities

[70] *Ibid,* 51.
[71] *Ibid,* 52-54
[72] *Ibid,* 56.

encourage business owners to act. Again, the city can begin to implement this through stakeholder inquiry sessions, or through corporate responsibility seminars supported by these types of case studies. In doing so, the city soft-manages its problems from the start through encouraging values change in these businesses, rather than solving problems that deal with the result of unsustainable business practice. These principles are also generally humanist in nature and can be applied in diverse communities.

The SEP philosophy embodies a fundamental shift from the idea that each person is in a competitive struggle with everyone else around them, and instead poses that each person grows, both personally and economically, by acknowledging and supporting the personhood--the dignity--of others around them, through straightforward, compassionate action towards everyone else. Awareness of an alternative ideology for economics and business processes is the benefit of studying such types of case studies in a planner's education. Additionally, the very philosophy of the human relationship to economics must also be examined, so that planners can conceive of economics as more than a hollow series of transactions that they make possible through infrastructure investments.

Author Peter Hershock, in his article "Trade, Development, and the Broken Promise of Interdependence: A Buddhist Reflection on the Possibility of Post-Market Economic," tracks the history of gift-giving, or gift-exchange, as the "Roots of Economic Interdependence" through its constant presence in sociality and intimate and economic partnership. He describes the practice of gift-giving in marriages, at business meetings, between heads-of-state, and in religious ceremonies to the divine. Hershock also translates and detangles the Latin roots of the word *contribution* to mean "bringing together and fusing the horizons of place-centered groups of people through gift giving."[73] This definition becomes vivid in his description given by the Buddha of what causes social collapse:

[73] Hershock, 53.

> The account given by the Buddha of the conditions leading to poverty is both remarkably simple and profound. Poverty arises when people are not able to work in and contribute to their community in a meaningful way. Far from being a function of few possessions or not having the means to get what is wanted or needed, poverty is a function of having too little to offer that is of value to others. It occurs when either a person or an entire population is effectively blocked from contributing directly to the welfare of others.[74]

Essentially, an economy is an arena in which people exchange gifts with each other-- the gifts of their soul's occupational callings, their skills, their inherent talents, their personalities, and their social company. The economy is not only an expression of mutual contribution but also a place where we acknowledge the gift of each other. SEP philosophy is a channel for this definition, because it sees and amplifies the value of each human being through decision-making frameworks that create economic stability and moral guidance for business and everyday affairs that nurture community interdependence.

Thai Sufficiency Economy Forty Years Later

Forty years after its inception, with a new King, SEP continues to be integrated into decision-making frameworks in virtually every area of national development. Thailand's Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) continues the trend of previous plans, in basing itself on the SEP principles.[75] These areas include, in addition to agriculture and economic development discussed in the case study, employment, healthcare, gender equality, equality, education, water security, alternative energy, industry and infrastructure, urban development, climate change, marine resources, forestry and wildlife preservation, and partnership development for the realization of sustainable development goals.[76] The image below shows the range of areas in which 4,596 government development projects were initiated by type, as of September 2014.

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[74] *Ibid,* 56.
[75] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 5
[76] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand

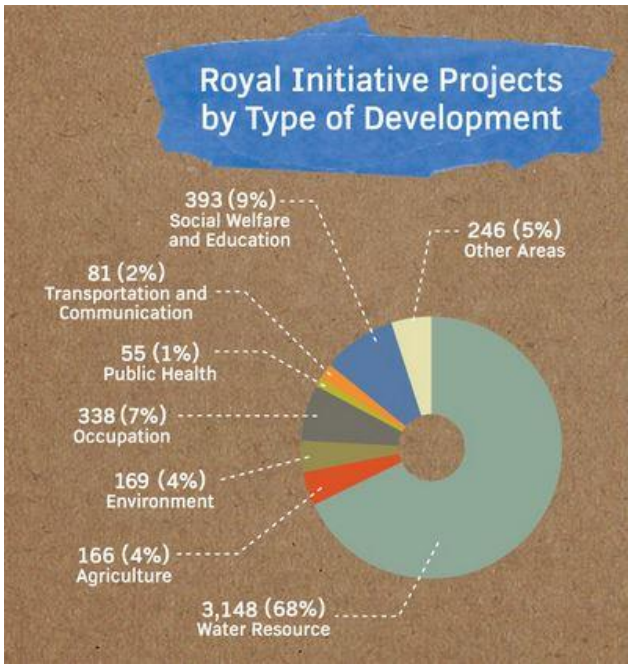

Figure 3: Royal development projects by type[77]

Notably, Thailand has reduced poverty from 67%-11% between 1986-2014.[78] New Theory Farming practices were implemented at 40,000 villages, with organic farming increasing from 1,000 to 37,684 hectares from 1998-2014.[79] Additionally, Thailand has reduced its Global Hunger Index from 28.4 to 11.9 between 1990 and 2016.[80] Six Royal Development Study Centers have been established nationwide, that help to support "agricultural research, and [help] locals to learn and apply holistic SEP-based techniques in areas like integrated soil and water resource management, land development and animal husbandry."[81]

[77] Welcome to Thailand, 1.
[78] *Ibid*, 16.
[79] *A Practical Approach Toward Sustainable Development*, 22.
[80] Welcome to Thailand, 18-19.
[81] *Ibid*, 18.

Thailand has generously shared their model for success with SEP in a number of ways. The country has shared its experience with SEP principles internationally during 2016, through the United Nations Group of 77, which currently contains 134 developing nations.[82] Thailand also spearheaded a decade-long education program offering SEP training courses to representatives from 98 countries.[83] Additionally, 21,000 of the 40,000 elementary and secondary schools have successfully integrated SEP principles into the curriculum, with students demonstrating "enhanced moderation, innovative thinking, enhanced analytical skills, and the ability to efficiently utilize and share limited resources."[84] For all his work in changing the conditions of underserved communities in Thailand, as well as environmental conservation work, in 2006, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the United Nations, the first time such an award was given.[85]

[82] Welcome to Thailand, 1.
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] *A Practical Approach Toward Sustainable Development*, 23.
[85] Lifetime Achievement Award.

Chapter 8: Summary

Spiritual ecology is vital to the field of planning because it helps planners question normative values and systems rather than simply perpetuating ones that already exist. Planning solutions based in spiritual ecology also draw on knowledge originating around the world, from masters in many career fields and spiritual traditions that base themselves in compassion and reverence for life. Spiritual ecology inspires planning pathways that challenge mundane human experience and atomistic thought through understanding of the human-nature relationship, such as through policies that promote self-restraint, and values change. Additionally, spiritual ecology helps planners increase resident well-being through initiation of the self-reflexive cycle. The self-reflexive cycle provides a path for questioning that is inclusive, with solutions originating from within residents, businesses, and institutions' own needs, through self-inquiry. Yet, this self-inquiry is systems based, which means it considers the relationship of decisions to the broader world of community and nature. The self-reflexive cycle is also beneficial because it increases: 1) personal agency in stakeholders through self-reliant and cooperative action; 2) personal capacity, through education of self and others, and mutual aid; as well as, 3) well-being and self-awakening, through expressing care and responsibility for others as acknowledgement of interbeing. Value systems such as SEP are vital to planning because they provide a framework for grounding decisions in truth—that is, not ignoring the impacts of decisions on various populations in the present or future. By grounding decisions in truth, opportunities arise to create holistic solutions that are complementary to those truths. Philosophies like SEP are also valuable to the field of planning because they place emphasis on the value of the individual, which is in keeping with the overall spiritual ecology context of reverence for life. Additionally, values as stated in SEP and SE are generalizable to humanist ethical models, and therefore are not limited to communities of homogeneous faiths or cultures. Lastly, SEP has the capacity to transform a nation, and

therefore cities, which was documented in the human development reports cited in the previous chapter.

Chapter 9: One Semester Curriculum in Spiritual Ecology

This course is based upon a series of transpersonal experiential learning experiences, such as meditation, deep listening, and role-playing exercises, accompanied by readings, all intended to expand the world or awareness of the student beyond their own experience of "I/you" and individual goals. This transpersonal experiential learning model is used because it helps students to perceive or be in a systems-thinking mental framework. This learning model is also necessary because transpersonal experiential learning involves the widening of available knowledge, through heart thinking and collective consciousness, as well as, transposes external experiences, feelings, and "objects" into the practitioner, thereby awakening insight. Additionally, because sustainable solutions are built upon truth (and trust), that is, people telling the truth, and people acting from their own authenticity (which naturally recognizes others), it is essential to develop the truth (develop the ability to perceive, accept, and perpetuate truth) within the urban planner. Through readings and exercises that cause inward introspection, and transpersonal experiences that enlarge the heart's awareness, students develop more connection to and involvement in the world, i.e. to self, and the people that students serve as planners.

Week 1: The Beginnings: Animism
Readings: • "What's in a Tree?" Leslie E. Sponsel. *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution*. • "Enchanted Nature, Animism," Leslie E. Sponsel. *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution.* • "The Original Spiritual Ecologists, Indigenous Peoples," Leslie E. Sponsel. *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution*.
This group of readings begin to define the roots and history of spiritual ecology. They readings provide an overview of how nature is perceived as sacred and how various conservation actions arise due to these perceptions.
Potential discussions topics: Interconnectedness. Concepts of scale of being in nature as it relates to implementing policy and action. Concepts of collective in nature. Indigenous conservation actions.
Activity Day A: Meditation where practitioner is asked to listen to the heartbeat, gradually developing into an exercise where the practitioner superimposes nature in their body. For instance, their veins feel like rivers coursing through their bodies. Through this meditation, the practitioner comes to identify their self, their very body with nature. Class discussion and reflection on meditation.
Activity Day B: Forest Bathing field trip

Week 2: Cultural Perspectives on Nature
Readings: • We are the Land: Native American Views of Nature, (p.329-339), Annie L. Booth. *Nature Across Cultures* • "This Land Is My Land: The Role of Place in Native Hawaiian Identity," (281-292), (297-302), Shawn Malia Kanaÿiaupuni and Nolan Malone. • "Is Landscape Heritage?" (104-115), Anna Nau. *Environmental Readings 2016.* • "Na Kapu Kai: Successfully Integrating Indigenous Epistemologies into Western Conservation Policies and Practices," Dr. Trish Kehaulani Watson.

This group of readings present how living within and interacting with nature contribute to identity and a spiritual ecology worldview.
Potential discussions topics: Identity and place. Transcendent feelings in nature. Landscape as culturally significant.
Activity Day A: Field trip to cultural landscape
Activity Day B: Stargazing field trip

Week 3: Western Conservationists
Readings: • *The Essential Aldo Leopold* • "Lady Bird Johnson: An Instinct for Beauty in Landscape Conservation," Plumeria Alexander, *Environmental Readings 2016.* • *The Training of a Forester*, Gifford Pinchot. • *The Essential Ian McHarg: Writing on Design and Nature*, Ian L. McHarg. Frederick R. Steiner, Ed. • Selections from *Ecological Wisdom: Theory and Practice,* Bo Yang and Robert Frederick Young, Eds.
This group of readings present the ideas of modern conservationists and environmentalists that are relevant to both design, policy, and decision-making.
Potential Discussion Topics: Types of conservation. National and local policy; policy and practice. Ecological Conscience. Deep Observation.
Activity Day A: Deep observation in nature fieldwork (1.5-2 hours). Class reflections and distillations.
Activity Day B: Deep observation in city fieldwork (1 hour): Students pick a different topic, such as bus stops, pedestrians, shared bike or scooter, access to nature, landscaping, and use qualitative methods to observe interactions and situations in neighborhood. Class reflections and distillations.

***Week 4: Religions, Deep Ecology, and* Ahimsa**

Readings:

- "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research, and Buddhist Economics," Thomas Weber. *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 36 No. 9 (1999).
- "Meditations on Systems Thinking, Spiritual Systems, and Deep Ecology," (295-307) Jotin C Khisty. *Systemic Practice and Action Research,* Vol. 19. No 4 (2006).
- Chapter 5: "Ahimsa: Nonviolence," (62-71) and (74-78), Michael Stone. *Yoga for a World Out of Balance: Teachings on Ethics and Social Action.*
- "Natural Wisdom and Action, the Buddha" (31-42), Leslie E. Sponsel. *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution.*
- "Medieval Radical, Saint Francis of Assisi" (43-48), Leslie E. Sponsel. *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution.*
- *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis.

This group of readings present the ideas of Deep Ecology and Ahimsa through the writings of various authors and cultures.

Potential Discussion Topics: Nonviolence and deep caring. Deep Ecology. Wisdom and Ecological Wisdom.

Day A: Deep Ecology Analysis: Students take a case study and rework it for a deep ecology solution.

Day B: Video on Responsiveness and Responsibility: Sadhguru explains how a felt sense of responsibility, normally felt towards two or three people (your basic family network), should be extended beyond those people to everyone, because not doing so negates our aliveness and interconnectedness.

Meditation Exercise: Responsiveness and Responsibility meditation-this meditation starts with imagining 3 people you deeply care for, and extending that feeling of care to 3 people you are acquainted with, to 3 strangers, to 3 elements of nature, to the planets. This meditation expands awareness of community.

Week 5: Self-Knowledge

Readings:

- *"Patience, Inwardness, and Knowledge in Gandhi's Hind Swaraj," (*417-429), Uday S. Mehta. *Public Culture.* Vol. 23, Issue 2 (2011).

- Chapter 6: "Satya: Honesty," (88-94) and (100-103), Michael Stone. *Yoga for a World Out of Balance: Teachings on Ethics and Social Action.*
- *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications.* C. Otto Sharmer.
- *The Wisdom of the Native Americans,* Kent Nurbern..

This group of readings present the idea of system as originating from within the individual, with ethics and personal honesty being the foundation for beneficial action.

Potential discussion topics: Truth and trust in systems. Personal authenticity. Openness, determination and intent for truth that literally create the future (laying groundwork for sustainable systems). Truth in native perceptions of nature. Satyagraha. Otto Sharmer: truth as people embodying systems vs. disembodied systems.

Activity A: Deep Listening theory and exercise (creating the future through deep listening).

Activity B: Social Presencing Theatre activity: revealing collective truth through role play.

Week 6: Community Development, Self-Inquiry, Self-Education, Self-Reliance, and Self-Awakening

Readings:

- "Gandhi's Swaraj,"(34-39), Rudrangshu Mukherjee. *Economical & Political Weekly. V*ol. 44, no. 50 (2009).
- "Cultivating Peace in Colombia's Cauca Valley," Patricia A. Wilson. *The Heart of Community Engagement.*
- "Building Deep Democracy in South Africa's Shantytowns," Patricia A. Wilson. *The Heart of Community Engagement.*

This group of readings present the self-reflexive cycle occurring through case studies.

Potential discussion topics: Self-reflexive cycle. Techniques for facilitating self-awareness in communities. Understanding spiritual and moral frameworks that appeal to an individual community's reasoning.

Activity Day A: Whole Systems meditation: Students are asked to perceive their entire life as a system which they created and are creating. They take a problem they have been having, long held or small, and bring this problem back into the wholeness, understanding they created the problem too, letting the energies mix and allowing solutions arise. This exercise underscores the self-reflexive cycle.

Exercise: Analyzing expanded stakeholder rings (the larger systemic influences) in a chosen case study.

Activity Day B: Organization Constellations Therapy
Students participate in a facilitated Constellations Therapy for a case study as an example of groups dynamics systems theory.

Week 7: Economics and Interdependence

Readings:

- "Buddhist Approaches to Economic Development: A Buddhist Economic Approach to the Development of Community Enterprises: A Case Study from Southern Thailand," (1171-1185), Wanna Prayukvong. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vol. 29 (2005).
- "A Buddhist Reflection on the Possibility of Post-Market Economics," Peter Hershock.
- "The Wealth of Communities," (154-176) and "All for One, or One for All," (95-128), Bill McKibben. *Deep Economy.*
- "Buddhist Economics," (37-45). E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered.*
- Case Study: Sadhguru and ISHA Foundation's development work with rural farmers in India in a country-wide river conservation project.

This group of readings present interdependence and Buddhist economics through case study and theory, as well as case studies of interdependent local economics in U.S culture.

Potential discussion topics: Trends of how cooperative economic systems come into being and are sustained. Cultural and faith influences on perceiving problems and creating solutions. How human well-being fits into extant and SE economy models.
Activity Day A: Video case study: Sadhguru's rural development & rivers conservation work in India. Class reflections and distillations.
Activity Day B: Group work project in reimagining local economies

Week 8: Value Philosophies
Readings: • *Buddhism at Work: Community Development, Social Empowerment and the Sarvodaya Movement*, (14-23), (27-30), (62-68), and (93-120), George D. Bond. • Thai Sufficiency Economy o *Thai Human Development Report 2007: Sufficiency Economy and Human Development* (38-76), United Nations Development Programme.(UNDP) o b) *Thailand's Best Practices and Lessons Learned in Development, Volume 1,* United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA). • Bhutan's Gross National Happiness o "Taking Happiness Seriously: Eleven Dialogues on Gross National Happiness," Dr. Ross McDonald. The Centre for Bhutan Studies. o "A Short Guide to Gross National Happiness index," Karma Ura, Sabina Alkire, Tshoki Zangmo, and Karma Wangdi, The Centre for Bhutan Studies. • Aloha Spirit Law, Hawaii State Government.
This group of readings present examinations of economies and social theories based on ethical value philosophies.
Potential discussion topics: Values underlying the various value philosophies. How people see these being applicable and applied in multicultural, secular domains.
Activity Day A: "As it should be" meditation. Students go through an individual meditation where they envision their life "as it should be." Then sharing topics that arose in their individual meditations—getting to the concept of feelings of safety and well-being how we create that as a community through interconnectedness.
Activity Day B: Exercise: Applying SEP and SE principles to current systems/case studies.

Week 9: Decentralization and Mutual Contribution

Readings:
• "Reshaping the public domain: Decentralization, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), and Trajectories of Local Democracy in Rural India," Harry W. Fischer and Syed Shoaib Ali. *World Development.*
• "Deep Democracy: An Organizing Principle for Community Engagement," (230-233) Patricia Wilson. *The Heart of Community Engagement.*
• Case Studies:
  o Kansas City, 10,000 Rain Garden; decentralized, distributed water systems
  o Cleveland Housing Network; Houston's Housing First initiative

This group of readings analyzes the structures and processes associated with spiritual ecology in planning: decentralization, civic participation, and deep democracy.
Potential Discussion Topics: Decentralization of responsibility and infrastructure. Cooperative systems. Civic participation. Deep Democracy.
Activity Day A: Applying SEP and SE principles to current systems, day 2
Activity Day B: Course Feedback

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