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Article

Characteristics of Renaissance Communities

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Abstract

This paper is an exploration of the characteristics and qualities of renascent communities. It concludes that environmental conditions exist in which people may spontaneously declare a common philosophy as a reason to establish a community identity. Some communities may experience a sudden freedom of culture due to a confluence of events or other catalysts. Events and radical philosophies may reveal a colourful spectrum of lifestyles. From the syncopated theatre of life, ideas such as avant-garde humanism, centre-margin counterculture, and living as nature intended, emerge to become transformative social themes and frameworks for community identity development. The process of renaissance does not seem to be affected by geography or period.

Three examples of communities have been chosen: Renaissance Florence, the present-day Gulf Islands in British Columbia, and San Francisco during the 1960s. In the first section, the nature of renascent communities is discussed along with important liminal stimuli such as the truth of being, social justice, and the magical qualities that sustain these places. One notable quality is the compressive effect of evolutionary social justice that forges community ties. In the second section, the characteristics of each community are examined more closely. In the third section, the four phases that these types of communities navigate are described: tradition and fermentation, awareness, action, and keeping, which is the final stage before new forms of traditionalism appear.

The paper may be of interest to community developers who are interested in socio-economic factors that can uplift and sustain communities. The term *renascent* is used often in this paper to describe a community or movement rising into a period of vigour that has not yet reached its potential as a socially influential environment. The term *renaissance* is used to describe a community that has experienced intense social activity that has resulted in a positive outcome of lasting change. This study is a combination of a literature review and personal percepts.

Keywords: renaissance communities, public pedagogy, social justice, counter-culture movements, intentional communities, community identity formation

Introduction

This paper explores some of the many qualities of renascent communities and the social conditions in which people may spontaneously declare common ground as a philosophy for living. I chose three regions that have experienced change in this way: Renaissance Florence in Italy, the San Francisco peace movement of the 1960s, and Canada's Gulf Islands, which are on the cusp of becoming social models of patronage and clientship. These communities share components of renaissance including the praxis of the humanities and living with a higher purpose that shapes community character (Wintz, 2015). In some circumstances, socio-political stimulation and radical philosophies scatter the beams of traditionalism so that a spectrum of lifestyles appears, like the diffusing effects of a prism. The resulting colourful rays from the social prism can stimulate actors to form communities with an intention to live harmoniously. One might recognize the rainbow metaphor in the gay community pride flag and its multi-colour bands that represent diversity. Grinde et al. (2017) researched intentional communities and discovered that “meaning in life and social support” (para. 1) is a primary issue. In Florence, classical scholarship and values produced a diffusion of social learning through art and the humanities. The San Francisco Renaissance began with poetry in the 1950s that led to an avant-garde culture of diversity and acceptance underpinned by an enlightened intellectual class. In the Gulf Islands, geographic separateness from authority and personal interconnectedness encouraged pluralistic liberalism.

Renaissance communities may appear from a critical mass of artistic and intellectual activity. The identity is formed when a concentration of like-minded individuals become movements through the concept of sub-cultures watching themselves (Wintz, 2015). Mumford's (1938) research on citizens behaviour is relevant today: when people become aware that they are different, their behaviour is manifested as self-direction, differentiation, and social action. In sufficient

concentration, these actions can become an awakening in the community through the collective realization of personal power. This can lead to the adoption of guiding principals and an approach to life that can be compared to creating a work of art; to that end, inhabitants make choices based on authentic shared values and aesthetic sensibilities (Nehamas, 2000; Shusterman, 2000). Individuals find space in the social landscape through the concept of life-as-art, or a moving self-construction of personal unity (Nehamas, 2000). The culture of life-as-art may be broadcast back to inhabitants as affirmation of the esoteric community, eliciting a "satisfying aesthetic response . . . with the same wide-ranging instrumentality . . . found in works of high art" (Shusterman, 2000, p. 10).

In Florence, social energy came from the dynamics of patronage and clientship that facilitated the creation of great works of art. In the Gulf Islands, life-artists buying scarce land has resulted in a peer-driven ecological morality that enables the art of existence. In San Francisco, humanist philosophy was enshrined in civic law which resulted in a lasting culture of inclusivity, activism, and democratic values that was broadcast back to inhabitants through popular music and commercialization of the hippie culture (Andrews & Barbash, 2021). Godwyn & Gittell (2012) suggest that "culture implies all aspects of group life . . . [social] patterning . . . emphasizes conceptual sharing" (p. 312-314). It is a lived and holistic understanding of a collective human nature, unity, and dignity; an "ability to recognize something in something else and see the beauty of an object in a different object" (Cascelli & Condon, 2021, p. 7). Thus, interpersonal congeniality in diverse social settings may indicate an appreciation of mutual strangeness that appears to be a condition for renascent communities.

Community culture can be compared to a stage curtain, which represents a homogenous public facade; it is replaced by social theatre when the curtain is lifted, revealing the interpersonal relationships of its citizens (Cascelli & Condon, 2021). Interaction between mutually strange inhabitants create a syncretism, or combinations of forms, that amplify social diversity and appreciation (Cascelli & Condon, 2021). Hybrid forms of music and visual arts encourage further strains of differentiation: Cascelli & Condon (2021) suggest that the interdisciplinary nature of

theatre is specular and keeps the momentum going. It is a "game where [participants] ... are mirrored in each other's image, a process of transformation, conversion, and conformation is set in place that continues through and beyond the medium used to narrate it" (Cascelli & Condon, 2021, p. 8). From the syncopated theatre of life, ideas such as avant-garde humanism, centre-margin counterculture, and living as nature intended emerge to become transformative social themes and frameworks for community identity formation. The culture may become familial through appreciation, mutual gratitude, and a strong sense of belonging that creates common ground (Wintz, 2015).

Examples of Renaissance Communities

The cities in this research share qualities of artisanship, intellectualism, environmental beauty, and integration of the humanities into civic life. I have focused on these characteristics to give the reader common ground for analysis, despite the differences of time and place.

Renaissance Florence, Italy – The Reemergence of the Humanities

Humanism during the Florentine Renaissance was a response to shifting mores, a separation of self from the church toward secular intellectual movements. The humanist movement provided an alternative to Christian mythology as it recognized human nature as a shared identity and ethics as social values. Revisiting the ideals of Greek humanism invited a recovery of the human spirit and innate wisdom, separate from the dogma of Christianity. By studying the humanities, Florentines could break free from the mental strictures imposed by religion and have confidence in their collective reality. The most serious humanists were referred to as professionals, or those trained in the humanities, while the less experienced were referred to as amateurs (Maxson, 2014). Both classes were supported by wealth flowing into the city from banking which financed a broad definition of charity, through commissions of art and architecture, as patronage (Burke, 2004).

Burke (2004) states that *clientelismo*, or the political effects of client relationships in the social community, was responsible for advancing socio-political agendas. He described a culture of patronage that redistributed wealth from the private domains to the public space with an aspirational message of "rhetoric of magnificence" (Burke, 2004, p. 36). Art commissioned by a patron created opportunities to increase one's social standing and became a form of currency (Burke, 2004). The ideal social image became classic humanism, "confirm[ed by] the informed onlooker's possession of the cultural capital so important for notions of social status, thus legitimizing social difference" (Burke, 2004, p. 10). The cumulative effect of patronage influenced the public images of the patron, artist, and the beholder. History suggests that this created a great movement in the interest toward personal development that could be compared to the increasing momentum of intellectual and artistic flywheels.

If patronage of the arts motivated social learning, then patrons and the secular knowledge movement were partners in the community development process. To revisit the theme of the prismatic diffusion of culture, the process of focus and diffusion activated spaces of social and intellectual liminality that invited more people to join the movement. Training in the humanities created a culture divide in the bourgeois, that positioned some at the centre and others at the margins. From these spaces, marginal participants could better themselves, contribute to social discourse, and develop their individual social images; central participants could enhance their standing in the community. An inhabitant of Florence would have correctly concluded that knowledge of the humanities was key to participation in the redistribution and acquisition of wealth, a powerful motivator to join a successful and thriving cultural community.

San Francisco Renaissance – A Humanistic Social Revolution

In the 1950s, a sub-community of youthful non-conformists known as the Beats became visible and they sought to define their world through alternative poetry and literature (Gray, 2006). They were socially juxtaposed to a burgeoning high technology industry that defined the intellectual

space of the Bay Area. This unusual social intersection became fertile ground for a broadly humanistic community and the social revolution of the 1960s.

One of the main drivers of social action during those decades was public resistance to wholesale redevelopment of older neighbourhoods (Citizens vs. Developers, n.d). Housing activism preserved the stock of affordable homes in Berkley which set the stage for future zoning conflicts (Citizens vs. Developers, n.d.). Haight-Ashbury was one neighbourhood that was saved due to a cancelled bridge project: it prevented the demolition of the low-rent neighbourhood (Adams, 2012; Ashbolt, 2007) that was attractive to newcomers, artists, and intellectuals experimenting with Bohemian lifestyles.

Civic action occurred on several levels: enlightened bourgeois organized against rapid redevelopment and displacement of people, the peace movement demonstrated political power, and politicians were elected to represent stakeholders regardless of social identity. The cumulative effect was an inclusive civic identity that knitted cultural differences to become legitimate by force of collective agreement (Ethington, 2001). Ethington (2001) describes the city's politics like this:

“The ultimate victory of the pluralist liberal language and practice of social groups over the republican liberal language and practice of politics took place in the public sphere; it was the human product of public political contestation and not the natural outcome of socio-economic change” (p. 24).

In the process described by Ethington (2001), the term counterculture became associated with San Francisco's rebellious and pluralistic liberal attitudes. Novel democratic values and revolutionary movements (Grosser, n.d.) defined as peace and ecology provided incentive for uprising. Neighbourhood activism reflected the idea that “locality makes culture real” (Gray, 2006, p. 32) resulting in a mosaic of special interests and community development groups that pioneered a newly visible socio-political landscape. Less radical people joined movements at their margins, solidifying the idea that social revolution was real with enough power for “recovery of the political

community" (Friedmann, 1987, p. 343) by the masses. A recovered political environment inspired people to engage in novel community development projects. For example, the Black Panther Schools engineered environments of radical joy for people of colour (Bahls & Zarni, n.d.). A new Asian Library opened its doors to provide services to the substantial but underrepresented Asian community (Young, 2020). It featured translation services, first-language reading material, and multi-lingual librarians. Ecological awareness became a granular issue in how people understood living with nature and, subsequently, the organic food movement. Feminism and sexual equality issues emerged with a determination to be seen and felt: "one unisexual, a boy, in makeup is more revolutionary than any bombing" (County as cited in Higgins, 1971, p. 24).

These civic actions represented an unprecedented progressiveness in the monolithic culture of Americanism. They unpacked the country's sense of tradition in a way that framed basic rights for race, sexuality, and personal freedom as counterculture touchstones (Martin, 2014). A spectrum of social movements and causes inspired ordinary people to become involved in development of their community (Martin, 2014). Most important, the spirit of revolution was captured and enshrined in the planning and local laws of San Francisco. Radical civic activism had created a bureaucratic flywheel to sustain the movements they had created.

The Gulf Islands Renaissance – A Walled Garden for Humanistic Living

These islands are in the region of Southwestern British Columbia, Canada. Their culture has evolved through a process of civic responsibility and their renaissance is defined by peace and stewardship of nature (Weller, 2017). They are notable for an evolution from a rural lifestyle destination to become tourist destinations, enclaves of artists, retreatists, and liberal elites. The Gulf Islands are financially supported by tourism, landowner patronage, and commercial enterprise clientelism. Civic life is driven by the strength of the collective will to preserve an artistic and idealistic philosophy that defines the culture (Weller, 2017). As a result, preservation of the artist lifestyle has attracted affluent land buyers who appreciate the exclusivity of the laid-back and

liberal nature of the setting. Community ideals are supported by forethoughtful landowners who position themselves as conservative stewards of the rural lifestyle.

Early settlers were drawn to marketing of the Gulf Islands in 19th century England that focused on the romantic notion of a safe and tranquil oasis in the wilderness (Weller, 2017). In the 1950s, regular ferry transportation created an opportunity for summer tourists to visit from Victoria and Vancouver (Weller, 2017). The provincial government continued to actively promote the identity of the islands "as offering a relaxed, eminently desirable existence in a coastal paradise" (Weller, 2017, p. 96), which accelerated land development during the 1960s. To exercise greater control over development, "Gulf Islanders often invoked the talisman of community to establish authority and moral ownership of the land and to mount opposition to further development in the area" (as cited in Weller, 2017, p. 99). As a result of this activism, the Islands Trust was established in the 1970s by the provincial government to oversee development so that it was measured and contributed to the island lifestyle (Weller, 2017). Today, Gulf Islanders and curious weekenders participate in a cultural exchange: people who were at one time considered societal misfits and drop-outs are now viewed through a socially 'cool' lens that requires full engagement with the island culture to experience the joy of it (McLuhan & Gordon, 2015). In response to tourism, residents persevere to maintain the humanistic status quo, which simply attracts more visitors to the quirky nature of the lifestyle.

Gulf Island culture may be understood as pluralistic liberalism, or a philosophy in which many ways of life are right. It has elements of schizmogenesis, or creations of division in social identity that produce a prism-like diffusion in the social scene. Common ground in a philosophy for living is a social uplift or inspiration that meets little resistance in the form of institutional or oppressive counterforces. Interestingly, the remote islands and coastal towns were once a destination for Vietnam draft dodgers from the U.S. because they were places without much government supervision (Dimoff, 2018). Even today, some islands do not have a full-time police presence so that residents must rely on negotiation to overcome differences and manage scofflaws (Government of Canada, 2023). The result is a culture that Barken & Davies (2020) describe as a

"strength of intergenerational connections, community-embedded relationships, and care as compassionate civic engagement" (para. 1). These social dynamics point to humanistic centres and margins, and the pulse of renaissance.

To help the reader understand the personality of this region in terms of culture-as-media, I refer to two tetrads developed by Marshall McLuhan (2017) to estimate the effects of media concepts after they become fully integrated in society. His work on tetrads is relevant because this paper, in part, describes the effect of social theatre on the lives of inhabitants. He named these tetrads Dream and Court (McLuhan & McLuhan, 2017). In these examples we can see the effects of culture as a form of media on social transformation as they provide metaphors for the process.

The Dream tetrad "enhances cultural trivialities . . . obsolesces image anxiety . . . retrieves primitive experiences . . . and reverses into a way of life" (McLuhan & McLuhan, 2017, p.111). One might interpret this to mean that the idealist is drawn into the prismatic nature of the local culture and lifestyle. The appeal of its diffusing effect compels them to reclaim the personal image by enhancing their awareness of place and time (Boulding, 1961). The result is a confident new way of life that is an exultant counter to self-image anxiety. In complimentary form, the Court tetrad "enhances ambition . . . obsolesces the bourgeois . . . retrieves heroic dreams . . . reverses into bureaucracy" (McLuhan & McLuhan, 2017, p. 140). One could interpret this to mean that the traditionalist or keeper is enhanced by the patron and client relationship: Ecological heroism is allied with a land management bureaucracy, that creates a walled garden, that defines moral ecological stewardship, which elevates landowners to the status of community patron.

The Gulf Islands are near the end of their development potential due to limitations on the availability of land. As a result, the culture is continuously reforming around core values to consolidate and conserve their essential qualities as acts of civic humanism. This has a compressive effect on culture as residents become more godlike in their quest for authenticity (Plato, 1941, as translated by Cornford), resulting in exclusionary centre-margin politics: one needs to own land to fully participate. I believe that some fully developed islands, such as Salt Spring, will remain self-

aware and explore dimensions of living beyond expansionism. The Gulf Islands may destined to become living museums, like Florence, suspended in time.

Influential Environments

Freire (2017) describes an awareness of identity that evolves from critical self-reflection. He describes the awakening process in the context of emancipation through self-help. One might recognize this mindset in Florence where inhabitants were freed from dogma of the church through training in the humanities. In the Gulf Islands, one could retreat from society to focus on living-as-art. In San Francisco, revolutionaries carried a message of peace and ecology through the joy of radical thinking. In all three examples, inhabitants detached from tradition and rose to new understandings of themselves and their socio-political environment through humanistic praxis. Plato (1941, as translated by Cornford) described the ideal umwelt as "a world of unchanging and harmonious order . . . so the philosopher . . . will reproduce that order in his soul and . . . become godlike" (p. 208). Feeling godlike is a result of living intuitively and reflexively in humanistic environments: to live authentically is to live in perpetual emancipation and move ever closer to one's personal truth (Dean, 2022). A personal philosophy of living authentically awakens the senses and multiplies their effect on the psyche. The joy of emancipation may compel inhabitants to become messengers of truth by sharing philosophies with newcomers and seekers of belonging and awareness (Kirkham, 1998). This results in a culture of interconnected individuality that can migrate beyond the borders of the renascent community. When the cultural message becomes a truth broadcast back to itself, it is a validation of lifestyle which creates "place attachment ... love of place ... place meanings" (Terashima & Clark, 2021, p. 79) that further reinforces the community. For example, one of the drivers of San Francisco culture was Zen spirituality introduced to the city in the 1950s (Noble, 1996). It was a doctrine of "peace and interconnectedness ... communitarianism" (Gray, 2006, p. 25). The pervasiveness of Zen philosophy created attractive intellectual and spiritual freedom spaces for revolution that has since become synonymous with social awareness in California. In later years, a generation of practitioners, including Steve Jobs of Apple Corporation, referred to Zen philosophy to define the

aesthetics of technology products, which has the effect of validating the company's humanistic ideals (Allen, 2012).

Gray (2006) proposes that some places are "able to set us free, when other places are not able to do so" (p. 33). Terashima & Clark (2021) share this sentiment with the suggestion that senses of place are related to "holiness, grandeur, tranquility, aesthetic beauty" (p. 74). There is another dimension in which the environment is alive with reflexivity that may be felt by inhabitants as a mysterious atmospheric quality (Terashima & Clark, 2021). One might refer to it as abundance magic, or an "abstract feeling shared by the community members and repeated visitors akin to a sense of belonging and collective identity" (Terashima & Clark, 2021, p. 75). Perhaps the ephemeral qualities of abundance magic are more accessible to some communities and allow them to effortlessly "create numinous worlds of beauty and interconnection against . . . [the] 'disenchantment of the world'" (Morgain, 2010). An example of this scenario may be found in the strong separatist or 'islander' mindset that protects the culture bubbles of renaissance communities.

Phases of Renaissance: Tradition, Awareness, Action, and Keeping

To classify renascent communities in their stages of development, I have compiled four phases in which public and personal development may occur: tradition/fermentation, awareness, action, and keeping. Over time, a scaffolding effect grows from the monotonic tradition phase and follows a curvilinear path to self-actualization in the keeping phase. The common element is an internal dialogue for identity that emerges as action and an active voice (McLeod, 2024).

Tradition And Fermentation Phase

In this phase, life in the present is also a reflection of the past: love for traditional ways is embedded into community values while sentimental memories and a feeling of everlastingness permeate the culture. The community is comfortable in the present and unconcerned with the future. These are the communities in popular films that portray life as simple and wholesome, or balanced

precariously on the edge of survival. A community can exist in these states for decades, but sometimes, in special circumstances, the ingredients required for social change begin to ferment. At the point of fermentation, the community may change or remain the same, depending on the effect of social movements on the strength of their characters.

Community development may occur through cultural ideals (Barr et al., 2021) that maintain the status quo. In response to liberal initiatives, counter-mapping by conservatives may frame progress as a negative influence on the character or morality of a community (Huntington & Glickman, 2021). This can become a dialectic between young and old, rich and poor, founder and newcomer, the enlightened and their counterparts, etc. This is important to note because social conflict can become a stalemate and change can stop. Self-aware communities seem to have a mechanism to break out of traditional paradigms; to embrace pluralistic liberalism and the beginnings of renaissance.

The tradition phase may be a temporal capitulation, a balanced social and economic stasis on the verge of change. This unintentional balancing act may be a sign that a community is ripe for change in certain circumstances. In Florence, the tradition phase was represented by the unchallenged omnipresence of the church, the Gulf Islands by their comfortable inaccessibility, and San Francisco by its centrist traditions. One might recognize fermentation of tradition, that produces environments for revolution, in colourful social landscapes: new-world neighbourhoods prefixed with “little,” flamboyant low-rent ghettos, stoic and patrician enclaves, and the anomie of the community-less who wander, looking for purpose and belonging. These normally quiet sub-communities can ripen to become movements when they are awakened by unusual events. The ripeness of traditionalist communities may indicate an opportunity for revolution where revolutionaries exist.

Awareness And Identity Phase

In this phase, it appears that something happens to sharpen perceptions and enhance critical reflectivity. In Florence, shockingly beautiful works of art and architecture possibly woke onlookers to the potential of humanism and made understanding the arts an urgent priority. In the Gulf Islands, artist landowners became aware of the popularity of their culture among non-islanders and moved to protect it from interlopers. In San Francisco, the theatrical counterculture was a collective that became aware of itself in music and popular media (Andrews & Barbash, 2021). During the activist era of the 1960s, the lyrics of counterculture music appealed to self-awareness and stirred listeners to action (Stills, 1966). In Jim Morrison's (1969) Ghost Song, the subject is processing her own identity as actor and observer at the same time. It is an awareness in which perception changes and tradition is endangered; she is separate from tradition but not yet engaged in action. I suggest that self-awareness during this phase is a dialectic that recalls dreams and awakenings, like childhood perceptions (Morrison, 1969). Renascent communities seem to share these processes and may be characterized by a nascent spirituality that facilitates and supports alternative states of mind and being. In this state, people “tune in, turn on, and drop out” (Leary, 1967) with implications for becoming self-aware, interconnected harmony, and self-reliance through the wisdom of social movements.

Action And Intent Phase

This phase is about change management of the collective identity and insight; the dialect of newfound awareness shifts to a dialogue of group culture (Jay, Adshead, & Ryklief, 2022). It is a chance for participants to compare former traditions with present attitudes and adjust. Action plants the seeds of new traditions. At this intersection, communities follow their dreams and develop priorities that may define them in history. In the action phase, the renascent community has shared values of cooperation and social learning that compare to communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). There are elements of organizing and development to provide frameworks for collective action and community learning (Rubin & Rubin, 2008). Inhabitants may understand their roles as creating “capacity for sustained change and empowerment” (Rubin & Rubin, 2008, p. 6). These

communities may form and reform with intentional self-actualization, or travel on serendipitous paths toward mysterious objectives.

Some communities may reform around social constructivism, such as the Florentine patronage of the humanities and development of the public space (Crum & Paoletti, 2006). Others may organize around moral ideas such as the exclusionary drive to preserve the disorder of nature, as seen in the Gulf Islands. In San Francisco, revolutionaries organized to stand up for inclusivity and social peace. The examples seem to be driven by a sense of sanctuary, purpose, and group action. Sanctuary allows individual participants to form an identity with a sense of higher purpose, such as being a part of nature, that tempers personal frivolities (Leary, 2019). In this phase, dreams coalesce into action and exercise of talent; spirited individualism yields to a sense of community and demonstrations of competence. The sub-culture is now the mainstream and dialogue is centred on the ideals of "a new kind of utopia built on differences and alienation" (Foucault as cited in Gray, 2006, p. 35). Key to renaissance during this phase may be the embedding into civic life the values of dreamers that awakened the subject to become intentional: the dreams are externalized, and the initial psychic disturbance becomes the spiritual energy for continued community development.

Keeping Phase

Keeping is characterized by a sense of establishment based on new or re-invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2003). It is the last phase before a community becomes traditional, if it does. The community is concerned with the stewardship of the much-loved group spirit, less concerned with vigour, and more focused on stability. Keepers undertake long-term planning by engaging people with rhetoric from the action phase. A sense of holism seems to put the collective focus on well-being, if not survival.

In Florence, the culture of keeping is reflected in the immersive experience of living with spectacular, yet commonplace, examples of art in the city. It is still in the keeping phase after

hundreds of years, perhaps owing in part to the durable characteristics of the marble and stone used to create the physical environment that its people live in today. Living-as-art supports civic and individual domains, as seen in the Gulf Islands examples. Artists may express the community image as a form of public pedagogy; perhaps as a reflective device to remind inhabitants of history and teach newcomers about local community values (What is public art? 2023). The San Francisco Renaissance continues to reform social justice with legislation such as The Sanctuary Ordinance which prohibits city employee cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement so that all residents feel safe when interacting with public agencies and first responders (San Francisco Government, n.d.). The city has become a lasting symbol of the potential of personal emancipation and remains firmly in the keeping phase.

In this phase, an overarching sense of place and belonging may create a culture of sovereignty (Marques et al., 2020), which is critical, as is warmth and humour. Professionals with higher management skills emerge from the background to solidify power in favour of community interests. A natural sense of direction leads inhabitants along a path of community development. A community in keeping is settling, but it is not yet time to settle down. It is idealistic and visionary without the naive and unchecked determination of youth. There is a will to be innovative and humanistic, but it is dependent on precarious self-awareness as a source of power.

Conclusion

Renaissance communities live in a state of perpetual self-discovery sustained by a collective awareness of a cherished living environment. They are aware of their truth and belonging and have a unified belief in their own identity and way of life. They live extensively and collectively in the spirit of life-as-art so that they can grasp the abundance, beauty, and an atmospheric magic to empower themselves. Their inhabitants move freely between centre and margin so that social mobility becomes part of their social justice identity. Renaissance communities can awaken on the frontiers of movements or on the specular fringes. Residents embody the resulting lifestyle, so it becomes part of their personal identity and the joy of living in their community.

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